

A 'PERFECT FREEDOM':
RED RIVER AS A SETTLER SOCIETY, 1810-1870

by

Norma Jean Hall

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Department of History
University of Manitoba
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To persons past and present,
de qui j'ai appris de la vie,
na cho ro eile, dewch pan
fynnoch, croeso pan ddeloch,
megwich

ABSTRACT

Colonial era settlements in Newfoundland and Red River manifested quasi-stateless settler society identities for unusually protracted, approximately equal, and reasonably congruent spans of time. Reading the history of the Red River Settlement along the lines that Newfoundland has emerged in recent rereading of that historiography resolves problems attributable to investigation being carried out in isolation from other frames of reference. Settler societies formed during the Colonial era shared circumstantial similarities but displayed developmental variations. The endowment of each location profoundly influenced the kind of society that could be superimposed upon it. Yet, Red River accords with the description of quasi-stateless settlement dynamics outlined for Newfoundland in that the contradictory social relationship between producers and procurers entailed mutual dependence as well as mutual force. Métis settlers, a free and active element motivated to enhance community development, applied solutions devised through cooperative association built on consensus. Their quasi-stateless condition did not prevent development; merchant credit enabled development by providing a solution to the absence of money; and focus on the fur trade did not prevent agricultural development from becoming as extensive as the community could handle. By 1869, the Métis were a primed population, well positioned to benefit from a substantial increase in development once enhanced transportation systems allowed immigration and consequent market expansion to take place. That this did not occur supports the contention that the dissolution of the Red River Métis community was due to the application of external force, not to internal weakness.

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Introduction

The history of settlement at Red River has yet to be fully explored. Undertaking a comparative approach to studying the society which formed at that location from 1810 to 1870 constitutes a move toward addressing this lack. Members of the Métis community, affiliated with both the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies, sought the formal establishment of a settlement prior to the colonization attempt of Thomas Douglas, 5th Earl of Selkirk.¹ By 1810, Métis settlers were scattered along lake shores and rivers throughout Rupert's Land. People identified in Cree as *Otipaymsoowuk* -- *gens libres* or Freeman, their Aboriginal wives and Métis children -- engaged in farming at the forks of the Red River.² The largest community was gathered at Pembina.³ Members of families who had cultivated acreage opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine River from at least 1808, witnessed the arrival of Selkirk's first settler group in 1812.⁴ In 1814, Miles Macdonell,

¹ W.L. Morton, *Manitoba - a History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 68. J.G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor 1769-1822* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), 181, describes the earliest record of potential settlers as taking the form of a petition, submitted by William Auld to the London Office, listing HBC personnel. Provincial Archives of Manitoba [PAM] MG2 A1, Selkirk Papers, "Miles Macdonell to the Earl of Selkirk," 1 Oct. 1811, 49-50, reports that Auld, along with William Hemmings Cook, reaffirmed the interest in permanent settlement, and extended it to include members of the Métis community associated with the NWC.

² W.L. Morton, *Manitoba* 42; Barry Kaye, "Some Aspects of the Historical Geography of the Red River Settlement from 1812 to 1870," M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1967, 22-23; Robert J. Coutts, *The Road to the Rapids: Nineteenth Century Church and Society at St. Andrew's Parish, Red River* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 23; E.S. Russenholt, *The Heart of the Continent: Being a History of Assiniboia -- the truly typical Canadian community* (Winnipeg: MacFarlane Communications Services, 1968}, 47-48. See also, "Chapter 4," 56 n.15, this thesis.

³ Kaye, 39. D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of the Red River Settlement 1820-1900* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1983), 12.

⁴ Donald Gunn/Charles B. Tuttle, *History of Manitoba from the Earliest Settlement/And from 1835 to the Admission of the Province into the Dominion* (Ottawa: McLean, Roger and Company, 1880), 73, 77; Arthur S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, Being a History of Rupert's Land (The Hudson's Bay Company Territory) and of the North-West Territory (Including the Pacific Slope)* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1939), 544-45; W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 480 n. 17; Russenholt, 24-26, 28; see also, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, ID 4266; Kaye, 23.

Selkirk's agent, estimated that the colonists, numbering about 200 individuals, could count an equal number of multi-person Métis households in the immediate vicinity as their neighbours.⁵ Successive influxes of migrants internal to North America, including large numbers of Métis, continued to arrive while the Settlement remained under the auspices of Selkirk's estate. During the 1820s, at least 181 former employees, whose positions had been cut in the 1821 merger of the two fur trade companies, were free to 'retire' with their Métis families to Red River.⁶ In 1823, some 50 families relocated from Pembina to the White Horse Plain west of Red River, and to the Settlement proper. These were followed by approximately 100 more in 1824.⁷ Family groups continued to arrive from remote areas of the fur trade to the end of the decade.⁸

By comparison, the number of migrants external to North America to arrive in Red River during this period was considerably smaller.⁹ Population figures supplied by the records of the Hudson's Bay Company [HBC] consist largely of informal enumerations scattered throughout Company correspondence.¹⁰ As these were usually incorporated to bolster arguments either for or against encouraging the settlement of external migrants, the possibility of exaggeration or under reportage exists, and may in part explain the wide

⁵ W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 49. Russenholt, 28, 35, 37, puts the total "'populace' whose lives centred at the 'Forks'" on a "more or less" permanent basis at "perhaps, 2000."

⁶ Donald Gunn, 226, asserts that "The influx of families, from the fur trade, in 1822, and the following summer, exceeded in number those who represented the original colonists brought in from all quarters by his Lordship." See also, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 15; Russenholt, 52.

⁷ See, Margaret Arnett MacLeod, and W.L. Morton, *Cuthbert Grant of Grantown: Warden of the Plains of Red River* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963), 86-88, 94. Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 15. George Simpson, quoted in Russenholt, 57.

⁸ Donald Gunn, 240-41, 261, 268, and Margaret McWilliams, *Manitoba Milestones* (Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1928), 61, note the arrival of an additional sixty families "of the Company people" from James Bay in 1829.

⁹ See, Donald Gunn, cited in Russenholt, 55.

¹⁰ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 29 n. 71, note that "About thirty such inventories are found in the Selkirk Papers."

variation exhibited in the historiography.¹¹ As well, a degree of confusion can be attributed to the fact that those recruited in Europe were not all destined to be settlers, did not necessarily board the ships bound for Rupert's Land, survive the journey, or continue on to Red River once they had arrived.¹² Depending on the secondary source consulted, the declared size of the first Selkirk party to actually arrive in Red River in 1812 ranges from 18 to 23 individuals in August. A supplementary arrival of from 71 to 120 settlers took place in October. The third party of 1814 is most often broken down into two smaller groups of from 41 to 51, and 15 to 32 individuals respectively.¹³ A final contingent of between 80 to 84 Selkirk colonists arrived in November 1815. The numbers of former de Meuron and de Watteville soldiers to arrive in 1816, followed by Swiss settlers in 1821, are equally imprecise.¹⁴ Few authors supply a total of the external migrants to arrive, although in one instance the observation is made that there was "perhaps a total of 500-520 Scots, Irish, Swiss and de Meuron."¹⁵ However, depending on how the figures from various sources are handled, it is possible to arrive at a number closer to 350. There are likewise few statements as to how many of these individuals actually persisted in the

¹¹ See, Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement, Its Rise Progress, and Present State: With some account of the native races and its general history to the present day* (1856; reprint, Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972), 78, 143 (page citations are to the reprint edition); George Bryce, *The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company: Including that of the French Traders of North-Western Canada and of the North-West, XY, and Astor Fur Companies* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 213; McWilliams, 41-46, 48-49, 53, 58; A.S. Morton, 541-43, 545, 548, 550, 554-55, 564-66, 573; W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 46, 50, 52; MacLeod and Morton, 86-88, 94; MacGregor, 181, 183, 186, 189, 192, 194-98, 200-04, 220; James A. Jackson, *The Centennial History of Manitoba* (Winnipeg/Toronto: Manitoba Historical Society/McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 38-41, 43, 53; Keith Wilson, *The Red River Settlement* (Toronto: Grolier, 1983), 11, 13, 20; and Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 13-15.

¹² See for example: Selkirk Papers, "Macdonell to Selkirk," 1 Oct. 1811, 42-43, 47, and 4 Jul. 1812, 411; "Auld to Macdonell," 16 Oct. 1811, 89-100, and exchanges between Macdonell and Auld, 18 Apr. to 20 Apr. 1812, 295-320; and "Selkirk to Owen Keveny," 15 Jun. 1813.

¹³ W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, appears to combine the two parties which make up the third group, finding 83 settlers in the first, while yet retaining 15 for an additional influx. His estimates of external migrants are consistently higher than those of other authors.

¹⁴ J.M. Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body and Other Essays on Early Manitoba History* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2000), 58, 69, lists "About fifty de Meurons and a few de Watteville" as having settled in Red River, and 172 Swiss in Rotterdam as destined for Hudson's Bay. The number of these to make Red River is not clear. Russenholt, 53, 54, contends that, after several children died en route to Red River from York Factory, there were 170 Swiss.

¹⁵ Kaye, 38.

settlement after the separate mass departures of first Selkirk, then Swiss, de Meuron and de Watteville settlers.¹⁶ The suggestion has been advanced that fewer than fifty families remained.¹⁷

In any case, by 1826, most of the external migrants having decided to depart, the Métis were recognized as the principal settler group. Population growth in the Settlement increasingly reflected the Métis presence. Many of the remaining non-Aboriginal settlers were absorbed into the wider community through either their own, or their children's, marriages.¹⁸ By 1850, the Red River Métis numbered about 6 000 individuals. A 100 percent increase occurred over the next twenty years.¹⁹ Overwhelmingly in the majority, the Métis continued to actively participate in all aspects of the Settlement's development to 1870.²⁰

For Métis people of today, made aware of their history through oral traditions passed down by successive generations of their families, it is impossible not to be struck by the under representation of their numerous and accomplished ancestors in formal histories devoted to describing the Red River Settlement. As individuals and as a community, cognitive dissonance over what is personally known and what is official knowledge is a common experience. Part of the unease over perceived discrepancies may

¹⁶ E.H. Oliver, *The Canadian North-West, Its Early Development and Legislative Records: Minutes of the Councils of the Red River Colony and the Northern Department of Rupert's Land*, vol. 1 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1915), 261, 263; Donald McKenzie, writing to A. Colville in 1824, states that 180 people departed, in his estimation "a consummation much to be desired," then in a postscript mentions 5 others who left as well. Donald Gunn, 251, records a total of 243 discontented "souls" as having left on 24 Jun. 1826.

¹⁷ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 15 n. 15, 16. Bryce, 213, based on "deduction" puts the number of "Permanent Highland settlers" at 130.

¹⁸ George F. G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1936; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 12-13 (page citations are to the reprint edition). Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 142, 408. John E. Foster, "The Country-Born in the Red River Settlement, 1820-1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1973), 202, 207, dates the first intermarriage of Selkirk Settlers and Métis to the 1840s.

¹⁹ Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies, A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987; reprint, 1998), 90 (page citations are to the reprint edition). Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 18; Foster, 12.

²⁰ J.L. Finlay and D.N. Sprague, *The Structure of Canadian History*, 5th ed. (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada, 1997), 206-07: "By 1869, over 80 percent of the 12 000 people at Red River were Métis peoples."

be attributable to cultural differences. Oral transmission does not fix time in the same manner as written history.²¹ A grandparent's story can take a grandchild back to one person removed from a temporally distant human source. Time, which by chronological measurement may comprise a 150 year span, can be telescoped in oral communication so as to give a historical actor an immediacy that is difficult to achieve in written history. The sensation is no different than that experienced when a grandparent imparts to a grandchild gossip -- by which is meant an intimate report provided by kinsfolk -- heard from one neighbour about another.²² Ancestors then, are conceived as real personages, not as abstractions. There is a tendency to regard the reputations -- whether favourable or not -- of these relatives in the same manner as the reputations of those who are contemporaries. Instances of apparent misrepresentation are therefore unsettling.

Perplexity over perceived distortion in formal historiography is often compounded by the inability of a Métis individual or community to align nomenclature constructed as part of an outside naming process with their own naming practices.²³ The Métis are a people demonstrably dedicated to ensuring that future generations know who they are and where they have come from; a people who have been the subject of much study and categorization. Yet their identity, and that of their ancestors, is regarded as unfixed, open for debate and contestable.²⁴ The politics of identity are not something that objective

²¹ Carol Ezzell, "Clocking Cultures," *Scientific American: A Matter of Time*, 287, no. 3, Special Issue (Sep. 2002): 74-75; also Harold A. Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951; reprint, with introduction, 1964), 62-65 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

²² See, Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 191-92; and Frederick C. Mish ed., "gossip," *Langenscheidt's New College Merriam-Webster English Dictionary* (New York: Langenscheidt, 1996; reprint, 1998), 504 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

²³ See, Paul Chartrand, "'Terms of Division': Problems of 'Outside-Naming' for Aboriginal People in Canada," *The Journal of Indigenous Studies*, 2, no. 2 (1991): 4-8, also The Métis National Council, "Submission to Reference Group of Ministers on Aboriginal Policy," <<http://www.metisnation.ca/>>, 20 Sep. 2002; and Martin F. Dunn, "The Other Métis," <<http://www.othermetis.net/>>, 20 Sep. 2002.

²⁴ See, D.N. Sprague, "The Cultural Bias of Metis Studies," review of *The New Peoples: On Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, ed. Jennifer Brown and Jacqueline Peterson, *Prairie Fire*, 8 (summer 1987): 66-67.

scholarship can somehow rise above.²⁵ Communication is inextricably part of an ongoing process of negotiation.²⁶ Historiography reflects and contributes to that process.²⁷ The appellations that have been devised to distinguish the Métis at different points in time are constructions with traceable histories. Taken out of their specific historical context, terms such as 'half-breed' and 'mixed blood,' or conventions such as a lower case designation are inappropriate for present use. Despite the apparently infinite variety of justifications that can be offered, when making generalized statements, there are a limited number of reasons for choosing to describe a historical community with terminology that their current counterpart finds pejorative. At base, the reasons are all political.²⁸ Acknowledging that the Métis of today have Métis ancestors is indicative of an overt bias, a decided preference for arguments which seek to evoke the politics of respect.²⁹

²⁵ See, Jane Jenson, "Understanding Politics: Contested Concepts of Identity in Political Science," in *Canadian Politics*, 2d ed., ed. James P. Bickerton, and Alain-G. Gagnon (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1994, reprint, 1996), 55 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

²⁶ See, James W. Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 4-5, 13-18, 22, 25, 30-33.

²⁷ See, Thomas L. Haskell, *Objectivity Is Not Neutrality: Explanatory Schemes in History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 281, 306; Keith Jenkins, *Re-Thinking History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 69-70.

²⁸ See, Constance Backhouse, *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 6-9; Frances Henry, Carol Tater, Winston Mattis, and Tim Rees, *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Harcourt Brace and Co. Canada, 1995), 2-4.

²⁹ See, David C. Hawkes, "Final Report," *Aboriginal Peoples and Constitutional Reform: What Have We Learned?* (Kingston: Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, 1989), 56-57; also Susan D. Phillips, "New Social Movements in Canadian Politics: On Fighting and Starting Fires," in *Canadian Politics*, 189, 193, 194, 197-98. See, Finlay and Sprague, 646: Métis peoples are included under the rubric Aboriginal throughout this thesis, a practice that accords with the "definition of aboriginal peoples of Canada," in Section 35 (2), Part II, The Constitution Act, 1982.

CHAPTER 2

Historiography

The historiography about the Red River Métis has been lauded as an admirably done project; a virtually complete body of knowledge, formidable for the extent of the material generated in the course of study and for the thoroughness with which its various aspects have been described and explained.¹ This consensus emerged after the appearance in 1996 of Gerhard Ens' book, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century*. It appeared consolidated by the time *From Rupert's Land to Canada* -- jointly edited by Ens, Theodore Binnema, and R.C. MacLeod -- was published in 2001.² Although this preferred interpretation manages to fill some gaps in the historiography, it also creates new ones. If the former activity has given rise to an impasse, the latter occurrence suggests a way to surmount it.

The call for a moratorium on further discussion is understandable, given the course chosen and followed by scholars who contributed to the Red River historiography from its genesis to its maturity. Initially, histories which referred to the Métis developed within the constraints imposed by an adherence to the goals of a larger historical project -- a historiography devoted to the development of the Canadian state. Conformity to dominant themes which had originated in an antecedent hegemonic ideological base restricted interpretative scope.³ Regarded from within this framework, settlement and the immigrant experience were components of a straightforward process, the fulfilment of an expansionist ethic often enunciated as 'civilizing colonialism.' From 1763, in Canada, the dominant

¹ Thomas Flanagan, review of, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century*, by Gerhard J. Ens, *UTPJournals.Com* <[http://www.utpjournals.com/jour.ihtml\[?\]p=product/chr/79/homeland.html](http://www.utpjournals.com/jour.ihtml[?]p=product/chr/79/homeland.html)>, first published in *The Canadian Historical Review*, 79, no. 3 (Sep. 1998), opines, "there is little new to be said."

² Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Theodore Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens and R.C. MacLeod eds., *From Rupert's Land to Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001).

³ Henry, Tater, Mattis and Rees, 7, 13-14.

voicing was British. 'Anglo Saxon' triumph over vicissitude was a central motif.⁴ Given physiographic and demographic realities, historiographic assertions of superiority required that subjection of both geography and population be affirmed.⁵ Proper settlers were credited with having overcome 'primitive' conditions and imposing order on the 'wilderness' through a combination of frugality, industry and perseverance. Productive communities were presented as the result; the promise of a prosperous future, as assured. Non-Anglo Saxon norms were considered to be non-adaptive, substandard, and undesirable by those entrusted with promoting the vision of Canada as having a capable population imbued with superior standards. The assumption was that native and immigrant peoples, once enlightened through education and exposure to the ideal, would naturally strive to emulate it. Assimilation would take place; the desired homogeneous Canadian citizenry produced.⁶ It was important that obstacles to this process be identified and suggestions made regarding their removal. Resistance was attributed to a stubbornness borne of ignorance. The severely recalcitrant were thought to be individuals who, if too old to change, would eventually die off. A concerted effort was therefore directed at

⁴ See, Finlay and Sprague, 72, for a discussion of the intent of the Royal Proclamation, 7 October 1763. See also, *Report on the Affairs of British North America from the Earl of Durham, Her Majesty's High Commissioner*, excerpted in, "Lord Durham's Report, February 11, 1839," *Basic Documents in Canadian History*, James J. Talman ed. (Toronto: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1959), 70; and Bruce Curtis, *The Politics of Population: State Formation, Statistics, and the Census of Canada, 1840-1876* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 7.

⁵*Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the year 1903-1904* (Ottawa, 1905), excerpted in, "The Sifton Immigration Policy, 1904," *Basic Documents in Canadian History*, 125; Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977); see also, Roger Magnuson, *A Brief History of Quebec Education From New France to Parti Québécois* (Montréal: Harvest House, 1980), 49-50, 52; J. Brian Bird, *The Natural Landscapes of Canada: A Study in Regional Earth Science*, 2d ed. (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons Canada, 1980), xxiv; and Curtis, 10, 24-25.

⁶ Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (1975; reprint, with introduction and appendix, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 6-8 (page citations are to the reprint edition), refers to this as the "diffusion model" of political development and modernization, partly "derived from the work of nineteenth-century social theorists." He is of the opinion that, "as a model of social change this is decidedly optimistic: it does not seem to square with much that is happening in the world today." See also, Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 97-98, 100; Finlay and Sprague, 206.

Canadianizing children, primarily through education.⁷ Descriptions of their past, in what was designed to be an “entire history of all Canada,” were meant to present “Canadian nationhood” as “in fact, a fruitful experiment of dignity and value.”⁸ Regional histories conformed to this view, respectfully commemorating the advent of Canadian nationhood. The historiography devoted to the settlement of Red River was no exception. As early as 1885, academic historians began the process of “constructing a historical role for the Anglo-Canadian newcomers” in the West.⁹ A resultant historiography, devoted to Lord Selkirk and his colony, celebrated settlement at Red River as a ‘White’ achievement.¹⁰

Laudable, wise or necessary, as the original goals regarding a national historiography may have appeared in past circumstances, the methods adopted failed to prevent the problems that confront Canadians of the present. Whether depicted in a popular, educational or academic guise, the conception of Canadian history -- in which celebration of a nation formed of assimilable immigrants is the overwhelming emphasis¹¹ --

⁷ See, C.A. Dawson, and Eva R. Younge, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process*, vol. 8, *Canadian Frontiers of Settlement*, ed. W.A. Mackintosh and W.L.G. Jones (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1940; reprint, 1974), ix, 34-38, 287 (page citations are to the reprint edition); also, Howard Palmer, “Strangers and Stereotypes: The rise of nativism -- 1880-1920,” in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2d ed., ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Calgary: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 309-33.

⁸ W.L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity*, 2d ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972; reprint, 1975), 88, viii (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁹ Lyle Dick, “The Seven Oaks Incident and the Construction of a Historical Tradition, 1816 to 1870,” in *Making Western Canada: Essays on European Colonization and Settlement*, ed. Catherine Cavanaugh and Jeremy Mouat (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996), 12. See also, Sean T. Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay: Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 14.

¹⁰ See for example, Grant MacEwan, *Cornerstone Colony: Selkirk's Contribution to the Canadian West* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1977); and Wilson. Throughout this thesis, unless it appears otherwise in a direct quotation, the term ‘White’ is capitalized to reflect its function as signifying a sociopolitical category, not a colour. As well, the category so designated is regarded as non-normative for the place and time -- Red River, 1810-1870 -- of primary interest. Erica Chung-Yue Tao, quoted in Backhouse, 284-85 n. 10, argues that an alternate approach is appropriate in contexts where -- unlike in Red River -- the notion of “white supremacy” is reinforced by the numerical, practical or situational dominance of nominal or symbolic representatives of a group upholding the ‘white’ construct.

¹¹ See for example, Donald Creighton, *Canada's First Century 1867 - 1967* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970), Trudy Duivenvoorden Mitic, *People in Transition: Reflections on Becoming Canadian* (Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2001), and Milly Charon, *Worlds Apart: New Immigrant Voices* (Dunvegan: Cormorant Books, 1989).

has not generated the promised harmonic accord. Dissension has arisen over the question of how many founding nations Canada owes a debt of gratitude to; whether the First Nations peoples should be allowed recognition as Aboriginal with special entitlement; whether the Métis are to be included under this rubric; whether prehistoric migrants are also to be considered as immigrants; and whether the passage of time has erased the need to grant all such questions serious consideration.¹² The vision of Canada as a nation of immigrants, in which peaceful co-existence and progressive world participation is the goal, would seem to require that the past be relegated to the past.¹³ Yet, if Pierre Trudeau's 'just society' of 1968 and Jean Crétien's resultant White Paper of 1969 attempted to affirm as much, their critics' ongoing responses indicate that there is no simple way to effect such a proposition.¹⁴ As the discussion in 2002 surrounding Bill S-35 revealed, there is concern that the past constructed about the Red River Métis did not quell expressions of discontent. There are aspects which have not proven satisfactorily "congruent with 'the national story of Canada'" -- at least, apparently, not with one which would have present relevance.¹⁵

The origins of this discord are traceable. From the beginning, historical explanations of Canadian development tended to attempt to encapsulate then move beyond the occurrence of conflict between the Métis and the Canadian government. Early academic

¹² See, Roy St. George Stubbs, *Four Recorders of Rupert's Land: A Brief Survey of the Hudson's Bay Company Courts of Rupert's Land* (Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers, 1967), 51. Peter Goodspeed, "Custody Decision on 9,000-year-old skeleton awaited: Natives v. Archeologists -- Find suggests Caucasian presence in prehistoric North America," *National Post*, 7 Apr. 2001, contends: "The skeleton, with its distinct non-native American features immediately undermined the 'We were here first and you stole our land' theories."

¹³ Edgar McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History* (Toronto: Rinehart and Company, 1947; reprint, 1959), vii (page citations are to the reprint edition), asserts that this course defined Canada's "unique" character as a nation. See also, Glen Williams, *Not for Export: Toward a Political Economy of Canada's Arrested Industrialization*, 3d ed, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983), 16.

¹⁴ See, Thomas S. Axworthy and Pierre Elliot Trudeau, *Towards a Just Society: The Trudeau Years* (Markham: Viking Penguin, 1990), 358-360; also, Geoffrey York, "Postscript," *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada* (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1989; reprint, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1992), 272-278 (page citations are to the reprint edition); and, Arthur J. Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Lester Publishing and Key Porter Books, 1996), 332-336.

¹⁵ J.M. Bumsted, "Explorations: Revisiting Riel's Conviction," *The Beaver*, 82 (Jun./Jul. 2002): 6-7. W.L. Morton, "The Relevance of Canadian History," in *Identity*, 88, maintains that "Relevance ... may be understood to mean the relations between the history of Canada and the histories of other communities."

works implied that resolution, which saw Métis dissolution, had been final.¹⁶ Achieving tidy explanation was not an uncomplicated procedure. There was the difficulty of addressing historical records, including archived documents, eyewitness accounts and personal reminiscences, which attested to the extensive, successful, even “civilized” nature of the Red River Settlement and its inhabitants.¹⁷ As well, these settlers proved perversely persistent in maintaining a stance at odds with Canada. The installation of the Canadian nation in the West was supposed to be a beneficial occurrence. Aboriginal peoples were supposed to ‘advance’ from increased proximity to civilizing influences.¹⁸ Any suggestion that the Métis settlement of Red River, while it existed, had been a ‘normal’ or even exemplary example of community development placed Canadian expansionism in an unflattering light.¹⁹ A historical description paralleling the Acadian expulsion was a possibility.²⁰ The resort to a materialist perspective -- in which progress is linear, observable, and desirable -- circumvented the problem.²¹

A prominent nineteenth-century intellectual enthusiasm, carried into the present era, involved the borrowing of scientific theory for cross disciplinary application.²² Through

¹⁶ McInnis, vii, contends that by 1947, such conflicts had been ‘reconciled’ and ‘harmonized’ through an evolutionary process whereby compromise was central to the realization of Canada’s destiny.

¹⁷ James Carnegie, *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains: a diary and narrative of travel, sport, and adventure during a journey through the Hudson’s Bay Company’s territories in 1859 and 1860* (Toronto/Edinburgh: J. Campbell/Edmonston and Douglas, 1875), 360-1. See also, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 142-3, 407.

¹⁸ See, Joan Sangster, *Regulating Girls and Women: Sexuality, Family, and the Law in Ontario, 1920-1960* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), 175.

¹⁹ See, Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 14, 22, describing Doug Owram’s observations on eastern expansionist apologists.

²⁰ See, Bumsted, “Revisiting Riel’s Conviction,” 6, also N.E.S. Griffiths, *The Acadian Deportation: Deliberate Perfidy or Cruel Necessity?* (Toronto: Copp Clark).

²¹ See, “materialist,” *Langenscheidt’s New College Merriam-Webster English Dictionary*, 717, as distinguished from historical or dialectical materialism as enunciated by Marx.

²² Dolores Greenberg, “Energy, Power, and Perceptions of Social Change in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *The American Historical Review*, 95, no. 3 (Jun. 1990): 693-714; and Christopher Lloyd, *The Structures of History: Studies in Social Discontinuity* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 15. See also, Phyllis Deane, *The Evolution of Economic Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 2-3, 5, 85, 95, 98, 103, 105, 107, 110-11, 126-30, and Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Road Since Structure: Philosophical Essays, 1970-1993, with an Autobiographical Interview* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), for instances of, and observations on, the continuing penchant for cross application of theory.

selective interpretation, aspects of Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection, published in 1859, in *The Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, Or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, were incorporated, most notably by British philosopher Herbert Spencer, to bolster the widely held orthogenesis view of human development.²³ Under this conception, the term 'evolution' was synonymous with progress and 'survival of the fittest' was the operative principle.²⁴ Once transferred, however imperfectly, from the realm of biology, evolutionary theory proved capable of furnishing convenient explanation to all manner of observable change.²⁵ An appearance of legitimacy was conferred to conclusions about any aspect of existence provided accompanying descriptions revealed a steady course of advancement toward higher levels of development while weak and unfit components were 'sifted' out of existence.²⁶ Thus, in the story of the national Canadian advance, it was acceptable to present the Métis settlement at Red River as an anomalous historical anachronism belonging to a transitional period between the fur trade and the formation of a transcontinental nation. The period was, in terms of import, pre-'historic,' eclipsed as it was by the event of Canadian geographic completion. That the Métis must have been primitive and their community therefore destined to fail, appeared to be a rational assumption based on a predictable result. As the evolutionary representation of Canada accorded the future an ability to determine the past, all that was needed was the fabrication of a Métis construct amenable to meeting the demands of the desired historical outcome.

Reduced to an appropriate "status of inert essences," the historical Métis emerged in

²³ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, Or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (London: John Murray, 1859).

²⁴ See, Herbert Spencer, *Programme of a System of Synthetic Philosophy*, 10 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1862-1896). Spencer is credited with devising the maxim regarding survival. His theories, developed prior to the publication of Darwin's text, underlay many core assumptions in nineteenth-century biology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. See also, J. Arthur Thomson, ed., *The Outline of Science: A Plain Story Simply Told*, vol I (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1922), 55, 163, 179, who defines 'organic' evolution as a "preordained", "continuous natural process of racial change," and describes theorists of the Leplay school as influential; also Neil Campbell, *Biology*, 4th ed. (Don Mills: Benjamin/Cummings Publishing, 1996), 487.

²⁵ Thomson, 55-56: even the process of chemical decay is described as an evolution.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 242.

the historiography as imbued with an array of interrelated deficiencies.²⁷ The exact nature of these inadequacies and their relation to each other shifted over time in order to accommodate the varying emphases of different writers. The issue of a Métis perception of themselves as entitled to a consideration regarded as being beyond that given to those who had been designated by John A. Macdonald as “actual” settlers, was dealt with by evaluating the Métis in accord with conventional Western European ideas of ‘nationality’ and ‘race.’²⁸ The conflict was enunciated as one in which Whites intent on settlement acted in opposition to nomadic, unsettled Métis.²⁹ The civilized were pitted against the primitive. From a Spencerian perspective, the consequences were undoubtedly tragic but even with the best of intentions probably inevitable: in human affairs the “decrees of a large, far-seeing benevolence” separate the less able from the robust.³⁰ A supplemental disposition partitioned the Métis population along language lines reflective of the “linguistic territorialism” which preoccupied Canada: French speaking Métis were distinct from English speaking Métis.³¹ In official representations, the Métis were a “wild people,”

²⁷ Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1994), xvi-xvii. Özkirimli, 215-17, provides Craig Calhoun’s definition: “‘Essentialism’ refers to a reduction of the diversity in a population to some single criterion held to constitute its defining ‘essence’ and most crucial character” -- and a discussion of essence attribution as it relates to theories of nation and identity.

²⁸ John A. Macdonald, quoted in D.N. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988), 89, 107.

²⁹ A.-H de Trémaudan, *Histoire de la nation Métisse dans l’Ouest canadien* (Montréal: A. Lévesque, 1935; reprint, as *Hold High Your Heads (History of the Métis Nation in Western Canada)*, trans. Elizabeth Maguet, Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1982), x, xi, 9, 10, 13, 16-17, 115 (page citations are to the translated edition).

³⁰ Herbert Spencer quoted in Walter Phelps Hall and William Stearns Davis, *The Course of History since Waterloo*, 4th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), 246. See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 2, for comments on a similar perspective in Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada*. See also, Chairman, remarks, in *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson’s Bay Company; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index* (London: 1857), 246 no. 4414.

³¹ William Norton, *Human Geography* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 165. See also, Keith A. McLeod, “Bilingualism, Multilingualism and Multiculturalism: A Retrospective of Western Canada since the 1870s,” in *Heritage Languages and Education: The Canadian Experience*, ed. Marcel Danesi, Keith A. McLeod and Sonia Morris (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1993), 36-37; and Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 8-10.

whose linguistic orientation governed their intelligence, allegiance and behaviour.³² The suggestion was advanced that for the two language groups, near speciation had determined relative levels of primitivism and ability to properly assimilate Anglo Saxon norms.³³ If, in the political conflict between the Métis and the Canadian government, both parties are assumed to have acted in “good faith,” then heritable traits provide an explanation: evolution rendered the Métis subjugation by a ‘superior’ civilization a certainty.³⁴ Métis ‘pretensions’ to nationalism as evinced in Red River lacked the nascent foundations requisite for aspirations to become tenable realities. The only possible future for the West therefore, was Canada.³⁵

The substitution of a socialization emphasis for that of biological determinism, in histories written by scholars of the 1970s -- purportedly presenting “new directions” and offering “reinterpretations” -- did not challenge existing histories to any substantial degree.³⁶ Unfortunate outcomes experienced by Aboriginal populations were explained by a deficiency, if not in the victims, then in their social circumstance. For the Métis, the two European languages remained the only conveyers of cultural norms seen to function as significant variables or indicators of social orientation and future prospects.³⁷ The role of Aboriginal languages was ignored. This stance is consistent with the ‘seed society’ theory,

³² John A. Macdonald, quoted in Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 49.

³³ Marcel Giraud, *Le Métis Canadien*, vol. 1 (Paris: Institut d’Ethnologie, Museum National d’Histoire Naturelle, 1945; reprint as, *The Métis in the Canadian West*, trans. George Woodcock, 2 vols., Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986), xix, 217-26, 229, 276 (page citations are to the translated edition), advances the thesis that the environment can exert a negative influence. Civilized human beings -- meaning individuals of European origin -- placed in the wilderness for an extended period of time and interbred with the indigenous *savage* will produce degenerate offspring incapable of self-governance, possessed of a “spirit alien to subordination,” and problematically, permanently “unassimable.” See also, Jean Bodin, cited in Olive P. Dickason, *Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984; reprint, 1997), 48 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

³⁴ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 2-16, *passim*.

³⁵ See, Donald Creighton, *The Old Chieftain*, vol. 2, *John A. Macdonald* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955), and W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*.

³⁶ Glyndwr Williams, “Epilogue,” in *Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference*, ed. Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 309, 313.

³⁷ See, Foster, “The Country-Born,” 25.

posited by Louis Hartz in 1964, in which the largely homogeneous 'fragment' ideologies of European settlers are seen to have determined the political cultures of the 'New World' societies in which they participated.³⁸ It has been observed that "Hartzian analysis harmonizes almost perfectly with the most common kind of English-Canadian nationalism."³⁹ In terminology and conceptualization, it also appears strongly reminiscent of genetic theory. Gregor Johann Mendel's first principle of segregation and third law of dominance, introduced to the scientific community in 1865, have particular resonance.⁴⁰ Independent approaches to understanding population genetics presented in 1908 by Godfrey H. Hardy and Wilhelm Weinberg, and subsequently jointly expressed as the 'Hardy-Weinberg Equilibrium,' appear to have inspired Hartz's 'jelling' concept whereby some traits are universalized in a population which then remains in stasis generation after generation.⁴¹ In Hartz's description of cultural process, political economic attitudes operate as though equatable with genotype, observed behaviour with phenotype, and the dynamic as consistent with genetic determinism. In its biological incarnation, equilibrium functions as a null model. The conditions for its realization, especially that of isolation, are regarded as virtually impossible to achieve in real life. Hartz's conception has been criticized as equally unrealistic; too static to deal with the historical cultural reality of Canadian regions. It fails to factor in the potential impact of successive waves of migrant arrivals or address the influence of original host cultures.⁴² In application to Red River, the idea that political orientation may be culturally determined is reasonable enough, but the absence of consideration of Aboriginal influence, through participation, is both Euro- and andro-centric. For the most part, when Aboriginal men do figure in the historiography conceived

³⁸ Louis Hartz, ed., *The Founding of New Societies* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964).

³⁹ H.D. Forbes, and R.D. McRae, cited in Ian Stewart, "All the King's Horses: The Study of Canadian Political Culture," in *Canadian Politics*, 88, see also, 86.

⁴⁰ See, Campbell, 238-59: Mendel found that where character is inherited from two contrasting varieties of a source plant -- in his study peas -- the character of one parent plant will be dominant, the other will be recessive, though each contributes an equal amount of genetic information.

⁴¹ See, Peter J. Russell, *Genetics* 5th ed. (Menlo Park: Benjamin/Cummings Publishing, 1998), 721-723; Campbell, 419-20.

⁴² Stewart, 85, 88.

in the 1970s, the Métis appear as relatively unimpressive replicas of non-Aboriginal progenitors; more passive and less productive. Aboriginal women, described in terms of their roles -- principally as wives and daughters -- are presented as defined by the men with whom they are associated.⁴³ As 'vessels' only to a determinant European social, political, economic or cultural 'seed,' their influence is restricted to that of providing superficial contour, not core substance.⁴⁴ Under this 'new' conception, Aboriginal heritage, once deemed responsible for innate behavioural responses, seems capable of imparting only a limited set of highly site-specific survival skills. In the absence of reciprocal exchange, Europeans appear inviolable, while acculturation, assimilation or obliteration appear to be the lone alternatives available for Aboriginal peoples engaged in extended contact with carriers of 'Old World' traits.⁴⁵

The official affirmation of a multicultural designation for Canada in 1982 rendered arguments which relied on an assumed otherness in human beings increasingly inappropriate.⁴⁶ It was clear that stereotypical notions based on ethnicity and nationality, although once thought of as providing an adequate, because scientific, basis from which to develop descriptions, would furnish no useful understanding.⁴⁷ Depictions of the Métis which found explanation for their community's disintegration in an inherent peculiarity

⁴³ Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer Publishing, 1980), 8.

⁴⁴ See, Stewart, 79-80. James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, vol. 1, 1791 (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1906; reprint, ed. Ernest Rhys, 1951), 593 n. 2 (page citations are to the reprint edition), indicates that this conception of women has a history. Prior to 1800, "distinguished naturalists" had determined "that our species is transmitted through the males only, the female being all along no more than a *nidus*, or nurse ... which notion seems to be confirmed by that text of scripture ... Heb. vii. 10."

⁴⁵ See, Foster, "The Country-Born"; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*; and Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980); also Frits Pannekoek, *A Snug Little Flock: The Social Origins of the Riel Resistance 1869-70* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer Publishing, 1991). All of these works originated as doctoral theses in the 1970s.

⁴⁶ McLeod, 33: the policy, first broached in 1969 with the Official Languages Act, was fully incorporated as a concept in the revised constitution of 1982. Isaac Saney, "Canada: the black Nova Scotian odyssey: a chronology," *Race and Class*, 40, no. 1 (Jul./Sept. 1998): 78-91, first published in *shunpiking magazine*, (Feb./Mar. 1998), points out that some normative standards remained solidly 'Anglo Saxon.'

⁴⁷ See, Peter Burke, "Models and Methods," *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 25; also 134.

were identified as conforming to “myth.”⁴⁸ In effect Métis primitivism, nomadism and “non-adaptability” constituted theoretical expediences.⁴⁹ A problematic taxonomy, devised with a complicit reliance on concepts of race to distinguish presumed gradations of *métissage* -- with the result that an individual appearing as Métis at one point in the historiography may figure as non-Métis at another, if not as someone else entirely -- might be added to the list.⁵⁰ However, Ens’ contribution affected closure to the debate which ensued following the challenge to the accepted “hierarchy of credibility” built on the “defense-of-Canada” tradition.⁵¹ *Homeland to Hinterland* supplies a politically correct solution -- the argument that the Métis practised ‘agency’ -- but the stance adopted merely transfers the orthogenesis version of evolutionary theory into the realm of economics.⁵² Because the Métis had the ability “to choose courses of action, and acting upon their choices, to bring about certain structural changes,” they are seen as the adaptive but unwitting authors of their own collective ‘failure.’⁵³ The necessity of addressing instances of untoward conduct in those with whom the community was actively engaged in conflict is

⁴⁸ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 28 n. 69. Graeme Turner, *British Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 1996; reprint, 2000), 18-19 (page citations are to the reprint edition); and Graeme Patterson, *History and Communications: Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, the Interpretation of History* (Toronto; University of Toronto Press, 1990), 165-69: myths are biased constructs that explain, legitimate and sanction existing social orders by justifying and rationalizing power structures.

⁴⁹ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 16-17.

⁵⁰ See, P.R. Mailhot and D.N. Sprague, “Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-1885,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 17, no. 2 (1985): 9-10. Margaret Nahoway Sinclair is an example of confused status. Questions arising from contradictory historical assertions regarding Nahoway’s identity, that of her parents, husbands and offspring, continue to fuel seemingly endless genealogical debates among her descendants.

⁵¹ Howard S. Becker, “Whose Side Are We On?” in *Intersections: Readings in Sociology*, compiled by Susan Prentice, ed. Ralph B. McNeal, Jr., and Kathleen A. Tiemann (Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2001), 26. D.N. Sprague, review of *Homeland to Hinterland; The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century*, by Gerhard J. Ens, in *Great Plains Quarterly*, 18, no. 2 (spring 1998): 190. Thomas Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983) and, *Metis Lands in Manitoba* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1991), provides a concerted defence of the traditional view.

⁵² Gerhard Ens, “Dispossession or Adaptation: Migration and Persistence of the Red River Metis, 1835-1890,” *Historical Papers: A Selection from the Papers Presented at the Annual Meeting Held at Windsor* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 120-127, introduces the thesis. Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1985), exemplifies the evolutionary approach to economics.

⁵³ Lloyd, 94, and n. 14.

obviated.⁵⁴ The teleological interpretation of western Canadian settlement is preserved. The solution is neither perfect, nor necessarily desirable. It does not resolve central contentions regarding the portrayal of past actors in Canadian history.

Aside from the fact that the importation of a seriously flawed biological theory into other disciplines raises questions as to the utility of the ensuing ideas, acceptance of Ens' argument for agency requires that the representation of the Métis -- in which their conformity to a pre-capitalist 'peasant society' model is assumed -- be credible.⁵⁵ Economists, working together with anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists and political scientists, designed the peasant society model to facilitate study of diverse communities judged to be working below economic potential.⁵⁶ The discipline of economics shares the same foundations as anthropology and the other social sciences.⁵⁷ Although in these fields, "schemes of evolutionary stages" are regarded as having "long been out of style," there is a "subtle legacy" that lingers on.⁵⁸ Thus the supposition that economies tend inexorably towards increased complexity and an ever more perfect adaptation to the environment remains operational. This view, entirely consistent with the currently discredited evolutionary theory propounded by Jean Baptiste Lamarck in 1809,

⁵⁴ See, Robin Brownlie and Mary-Ellen Kelm, "Desperately Seeking Absolution: Native Agency as Colonialist Alibi?" *Canadian Historical Review*, 75, 4, (1994): 545.

⁵⁵ George E. Marcus, and Michael M.J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 80-81, 87, 97, and Norton, 56, 85, 129-131, counter the idea that implementing capitalist modes of production follows an unvarying progression. See also, Greenberg; and Campbell, 397, 421-22, 427, 482. Biological analogies often demonstrate either a lack of awareness of basic evolutionary theory or a failure to adjust to changes which have occurred, particularly since the 1940s. Paul A. Samuelson and Anthony Scott, *Economics*, 5th Canadian ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1980), 6-8, assert that in the field of economics "Logical reasoning" and "shrewd weighing of empirical evidence" are key; fallacious preconceptions, out of place. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 5, 70: neither the assertion of conformity to the peasant model, nor how rates of migratory behaviour exclude other possible designations, is adequately explained.

⁵⁶ Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., ed., *Subsistence Agriculture and Economic Development* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), v-vi.

⁵⁷ Deane, xiii, 7, 71-73, 75, 80, 84, 87-88, 90-91, Samuelson and Scott, 6, 906-19, and Robert Heilbroner and Aaron Singer, *The Economic Transformation of America: 1600 to the Present*, 3d ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994), 162.

⁵⁸ Johannes Fabian, cited in Marcus and Fischer, 97, provides a critique of distorting conventions adopted by social scientists.

incorporates an essentially nineteenth-century 'peasant' to 'industrial' sociocultural dichotomy -- the ergodic principle -- in which spatial distance from urban centres is confused with temporal distance from contemporary reality.⁵⁹ In order to accommodate the examination of temporally and geographically removed populations subject to varying amounts of political, cultural and social restraint, the current model of subsistence level peasantry is very loosely defined. Because the definition is so broad, it is possible to apply the label to almost any group in which individuals supply their table from their own garden plots, fields or pastures -- a condition which has left at least one commentator perplexed as to where exactly the difference between a subsistence level peasant and a commercial farmer might lie.⁶⁰ Although the Red River Métis did practice agriculture and animal husbandry and made personal use of the produce, they do not fit the peasant designation on one crucial point. In peasant societies successive generations must experience exploitation by outsiders over an extended period of time.⁶¹ According to the argument presented in *Homeland to Hinterland*, the existence of a burgeoning *bourgeoisie* within the Métis community is undeniable post 1840. After this date, the pre-capitalist peasant model, apparently operational as of 1820, ceases to function as the defining paradigm.⁶² The Métis therefore appear more properly categorized as Colonial era settlers, a variety of pioneer for whom the time frame of one generation for the realization of a farm after the British yeoman

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* See also, H.C. Brookfield, *Colonialism, Development and Independence: The Case of the Melanesian Islands in the South Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 9, and Campbell, 417.

⁶⁰ Wharton, 14-19, 458.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶² Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 27, 172-73.

-- freeholder -- model is a routine expectation.⁶³

The portrayal of the Métis as peasants, rather than settlers, marks a significant departure from previous depictions in the historiography. It is not coextensive with influential works, published prior to *Homeland to Hinterland*, in which Red River is regarded as one of many British "proprietary" colonies.⁶⁴ These include such authoritative histories as George F.G. Stanley's publications of 1936 and 1963: respectively, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions*, and, *Louis Riel*.⁶⁵ Notable examples of more recent studies are, 'Many Tender Ties': *Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870*, written by Sylvia Van Kirk in 1980; *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of the Red River Settlement, 1820-1900*, compiled by D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye in 1983; and *A Snug Little Flock: The Social Origins of the Riel Resistance, 1869-70*, from Fritz Pannekoek in 1991. This divide constitutes a "space," merited for historical investigation.⁶⁶ In affirming that acknowledgement of the colonial context is appropriate, previous works in the historiography about the Métis point to an opening for further inquiry. As Robert J. Coutts demonstrates with his research -- published in 2000 as *The Road to the Rapids: Nineteenth-Century Church and Society at St. Andrew's Parish, Red River* -- adherence to the earlier representation continues to yield

⁶³ See, Norton, 243; Leslie Hannon, *Redcoats and Loyalists 1760/1815* (Toronto: Jack McClelland, 1978), 53; also, C.T. Onion, ed., "yeoman," *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 2466: "4. A man owning and cultivating a small estate; a freeholder under the rank of gentleman... a countryman of respectable standing, a farmer"; "settle I," 1855 nos. 3a-b, 4a-b, "settle II," nos. 1-2, "settler," 1856 no. 1, "settling" no. 1: the emphasis is on establishing stability and permanent residence. See also, *Cambridge Dictionaries* <<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key+72165&dict=CAD>> 20 June 2003. See, Geo. Simpson, and W. Caldwell, "Minutes of Evidence", "Appendix, No. 2 (A)", "Appendix, No. 3: Deed of Land to Joseph Monkman," George Gladman, "Appendix, No. 8", and P.W. Classon, "Appendix, No. 16," in *Report From the Select Committee*, 68 nos. 1232-35, 308-09 nos. 5578-79, 361, 371, 392, 444; John A. Macdonald, cited in "Chapter 7," 159 n. 123, this thesis; and, n. 83 below: where the term 'peasant' is absent from primary sources, 'settler', "properly so called," 'yeoman' and 'farmer' are formally and informally applied to people "settled" in Red River, regardless of origin.

⁶⁴ Douglas Sprague, and Ronald Frye, "Manitoba's Red River Settlement: Sources for Economic and Demographic History," *Archivaria*, 9 (winter 1979-80): 179.

⁶⁵ George F.G. Stanley, *Louis Riel* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1963; reprint, 1972).

⁶⁶ Joan Wallach Scott, Prologue, "After History?" *History and the Limits of Interpretation A Symposium*, 20 Feb. 1996, cached at <<http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~sprague/Scott.htm>> 16 Jan. 2002.

cogent results.⁶⁷ Revisiting the historical record, re-placing the Red River Métis within the colonial context, and studying them as participants in the ethos of their time, removes them from the realm of museum cabinet curiosity and allows the Settlement the same consideration that has been granted to other communities formed under similar conditions world-wide. Reengaging in the process of questioning and answering provides an opportunity to investigate the dynamics of nation building, regional development and identity construction from a perspective which allows for new and potentially helpful insights.

Works by social historians have demonstrated that, regardless of heritage, in groups identified as 'racially' distinct during the Colonial period, individuals intent on settlement were able to construct either identities or communities in which their social concerns, aspirations and endeavours paralleled those of contemporaries who were designated as White.⁶⁸ Accounts of Red River Métis society penned prior to *Homeland to Hinterland* are consistent with this view.⁶⁹ Even Marcel Giraud -- a writer prone to representing the Métis as "primitive" -- observes that "Métis society was in fact little different from that of the white settlers."⁷⁰ In the current Canadian context, adhering to a viewpoint in which past cultures are analyzed in a manner that demonstrates how White they were may foster a recognition of the humanness of the other. However, it may also perpetuate a sense of their being "imperfect approximations" of a mythic Anglo Saxon population.⁷¹ The existence of difference has been identified as contributing to the creation and perpetuation of colonial rhetoric, itself an exercise of power, which propagates one

⁶⁷ Coutts, xii.

⁶⁸ See, Adele Perry, "'Fair ones of a purer caste': white women and colonialism in nineteenth-century British Columbia," *Feminist Studies*, 23 (fall 1997): 501-24; Sylvia Van Kirk, "Tracing the Fortunes of Five Founding Families of Victoria," *BC Studies: Native Peoples and Colonialism*, 115/116 (Autumn/Winter, 1997/98): 149-79; Saney; Judy Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998).

⁶⁹ See for example, Van Kirk, "Quite English in Her Manner," *Many Tender Ties*, 145-172.

⁷⁰ Giraud, vol. 2, 205.

⁷¹ Haskell, 281. See also, Henry *et al*, 22, 27, 39.

view by silencing another.⁷² What is needed is an approach that allows for illumination of difference but avoids imposing deterministic assumptions, whether these be thought of as cultural “biases” or “conventions” or as societal “mainstream” currents of normative evaluation.⁷³ It is preferable to accept that culture is a contested, continuously constructed reality; that the site of contestation between antagonists inhabiting unequal power positions is that of identity; and that the Western European perspective is not necessarily advantaged in terms of achieving understanding.⁷⁴

In decentering the perspective, attention must be paid to terminology. First, it is not prudent to regard language usage from 1810 to 1870 as commensurate with 2003. There is no reason to believe that it was consistently employed during the period under study, or subsequently. Nor is it reasonable to expect expressions to have been consistently understood between groups who, although they may have had the ability to converse in a language familiar to both, came from divergent cultures that had developed vastly different conceptions of time, space and reality.⁷⁵ Second, the use of terms which serve to privilege groups purported to represent the Anglo Saxon is counter productive. Instances where terminology reinforces a culturally determined social intent -- a shared understanding of what constraints a signifier places upon the signified -- must be identified.⁷⁶ For example, in past usage, in Canada, settler was often synonymous with homesteader. Settler was reserved for members of a specific sociopolitical group which regarded its culture as

⁷² Edward Said as presented in Marcus and Fischer, 1-2, and James Clifford, “On Orientalism,” in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 255-76.

⁷³ Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 34, 61-62, 132; Haskell, 280-306, Henry *et al.*, 3.

⁷⁴ Clifford., 21-54; Marcus and Fischer 123; Aletta Biersack, “Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond,” in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 94, 96; Özkirimli, 196-97; Henry *et al.*, 18, 23.

⁷⁵ See, Mary Black-Rogers, “Varieties of ‘Starving’: Semantics and Survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade,” *Ethnohistory*, 33, no. 4 (Fall 1986): 353-83; also Kuhn, 91-94.

⁷⁶ See, Tina Loo, *Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 6-12; Turner, 17-18; Haskell, 280-81; Wallach Scott; and Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994), 58. Instances of concern include utilization of systems which describe time and space with reference to the subject. The dating adopted for this study conforms with that used in the primary sources pertaining to the settlement. Where it is desirable to fix location, Universal Transverse Mercator coordinates are appropriate.

essentially agrarian in derivation and continued orientation.⁷⁷ Even if migratory, unable to practice agriculture effectively, or engaged in occupations decidedly non-agrarian, members of this group retained the designation.⁷⁸ Members of other groups -- "anything wot isn't our sort of chaps" -- regardless of the similarity of their behaviour, were identified instead by terms such as nomad, squatter, alien, or by an occupational description such as trader or labourer.⁷⁹ Given past attitudes regarding what constituted appreciable activity, and who could be counted as active, it is not surprising to find that women were relegated to a nebulous category of their own.⁸⁰ In order to gain the appellation of homesteader, the observance of an established ritual was required. Women and children were excluded except as adjuncts of men.⁸¹ Regardless of attributed gender or age, in order to be accepted as a legitimately designated settler, it was necessary to convincingly deny any cultural heritage that did not conform to that deemed appropriately Canadian.⁸² For present purposes, a different denotation and connotation is more practical. The term settler applies to an individual who, as a member of a historical community, sought, either through association with or through the possessive designation of, a specific geographic area, the

⁷⁷ W.L. Morton, "Relevance of Canadian History," 90.

⁷⁸ Cadigan, xi, 4, 5, illustrates that acceptance of this usage continues: in his account, Newfoundland "settlers ... almost invariably made their living in the fishery."

⁷⁹ Unnamed British sailor, quoted in Wharton, 177, likely archetypal. See also, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 198-99.

⁸⁰ See, J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998), 56, 62, who notes that, according to his conception of national history, "most of Canada's history had been made by men, however unfair that might have been."

⁸¹ See, Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's West* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 192-93; "Document #5: Dominion Lands Act [1872]," in *Documenting Canada: A History of Modern Canada in Documents*, ed. Dave De Biou and Bill Waiser (Saskatoon, Fifth House Publishing, 1992), 60-61; and Thomas E. Hill, "Special Homestead Regulations, in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba," in *Making Money from the Soil, The Open Door to Independence, What to Do -- How to Do, On City Lots, Suburban Grounds, Country farms: The Provinces of Canada, Counties and Districts, Cities, Towns and Villages, with Population, Climate, Soil, Agricultural Productions and Possibilities* (Toronto: McLeod and Allen, 1915), 55.

⁸² See, W.W. Swanson, and P.C. Armstrong, *Wheat* (Toronto: MacMillan Company of Canada, 1930), 14; Wellington Bridgeman, *Breaking Prairie Sod; The Story of a Pioneer Preacher in the Eighties with a Discussion on the Burning Question of To-Day, "Shall the Alien Go?"* (Toronto: Musson Book Company, 1920); also Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century," in *Readings in Canadian History: Post Confederation*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Limited, 1982), 123-39.

recognition of their right to freely inhabit it.⁸³ How people arrived in the area does not affect the terminology. The type of habitation, whether it involved tents, sod huts or frame houses, does not alter entitlement to the name. Likewise cultural norms, including those regarding land use, are not determinants.⁸⁴ What matters is that a group of individuals demonstrated a like-mindedness in their persistent occupation of a particular area over a significant period of time. The duration of occupation is regarded as significant if historical, archaeological or oral records indicate that, to the participants, the occupation was, at some point, intended to be permanent.⁸⁵

Under this definition, superfluous distinctions based on vainglorious claims to pan-situational superiority are erased. This is not to introduce a distinction without a difference. Particularly as pertains to intent, critical differences remain between transient sojourners,

⁸³ See, "settler," *Langenscheidt's New College Merriam-Webster English Dictionary*, 1072, for an example of a current, equally inclusive definition; Norton, 268, 270-73, for like usage in the discipline of human geography; Alexander Begg, *Dot It Down: A Story of Life in the North-West* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Company, 1871), 181, for examples of corresponding past usage of the term in Red River; and n. 63 above. Harold Wheeler, ed., "settler," *The Waverley Pictorial Dictionary*, vol. 6 (London: Waverley Book Company, [c. 1922]), 3894, furnishes an example of exclusive past usage whereby the term is reserved for describing citizen agents of colonial expansion. See also, Harriet Cowan, quoted in W.J. Healy, *Women of Red River, Being a Book Written from the Recollections of Women Surviving from the Red River Era: A Tribute to the Women of an Earlier Day by The Women's Canadian Club* (Winnipeg: Women's Canadian Club, 1923), 21, describing Red River Métis families as "British settlers" acting as colonizers of Oregon.

⁸⁴ Cadigan, viii, iv, xi, 4, 5, 22, 26, illustrates the non-determinate nature of land use with regard to the application of a settler designation. Unlike the "farmer-settlers of Upper Canada, the" fishing ones" of Newfoundland, because located on a land mass that is a "generally a barren, tundra-dominated island of thin soil, vast rocky barrens, and cold, foggy weather," established "households almost completely dependent on the fishery."

⁸⁵ N.-J. Richot, "The Journal of Rev. N.-J. Richot March 24 to May 28, 1870," in *Manitoba: The Birth of a Province*, ed. W.L. Morton (Winnipeg: Manitoba Record Society Publications, 1965; reprint, 1984), 149 (page citations are to the reprint edition), cites Sir George Cartier as confirming a corresponding definition [see, "Chapter 7," 153 n. 54, this thesis]. Cole Harris, "Introduction," *The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Changer* (Vancouver: UBC Press 1997; reprint 2000), xi-xxii (page citations are to the reprint edition), comes close to suggesting a similar definition, although his discussion regarding marginalization is predicated on maintaining a culturally centrist perspective. Coutts, 49, 82, 194; Irene Spry, ed. "The 'Memories' of George William Sanderson 1846-1936," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 17, 2 (1985): 116; Mailhot and Sprague; and Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, ix n. 1, 17, 90, plainly identify the Red River Settlement Métis as settlers. See also, n. 63 above. Disavowing Métis and First Nations peoples entitlement to the settler designation may be suspected of having exacerbated distortion in the historiography about development in the Canadian West. In some instances there is a tendency is to selectively conflate Métis activity with that of the Selkirk Settlers and elide Métis presence. As a result, Métis accomplishments and activity post 1826 are ascribed to a mythic community made up of a non-Aboriginal, largely no longer present, yet supposedly dominant population of 'actual' settlers.

together with 'forced' or 'free' migrants -- people essentially engaged in a passage of relocation -- and principally or seasonally sedentary settlers.⁸⁶ The point is that Canada, as a nation formed of settlers, is populated by people who, through whatever means, have established a profound connection to the land, whether in its real physiographic or an 'imagined' sense.⁸⁷ They are people whose histories include displacement and migration. It is therefore possible to compare distinct settler groups from different time periods who inhabited the same space, such as the Hopewellian Laurel/Selkirk Peoples who lived in what is now Manitoba from about 2200 years ago to approximately 1700, the Red River Métis of 1810 to 1870, and the New Icelanders of 1875 to 1881.⁸⁸ Conversely, comparisons can be made of settler groups inhabiting different geographical spaces at corresponding times; for example the small landholder producers of Red River and those of central Ontario between the years 1861 and 1871.⁸⁹ Comparison on the basis of similarity of circumstance is possible as well.

As the Red River Settlement was created within the context of a monopolistic privilege secured on the basis of royal prerogative, to serve external and geographically removed economic interests, the repression of a pattern of general economic development deemed 'normal' for European societies -- in particular the application of *laissez-faire* principles -- has been argued to have been artificially extended. Comparison with

⁸⁶ See Norton, 118; and "Chapter 3," 45-46, this thesis.

⁸⁷ See, Norton, 54-56; and Cornelius J. Holtorf, e-monograph, "Sites of Memory," <<http://citd.scar.utoronto.ca/CITDPress/Holtorf/2.6.html>>, 22 Aug. 2001, and 'Monumental Past: The Life-histories of Megalithic Monuments in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Germany),' (Ph.D diss. University of Wales, 1998), cached at <<http://citd.scar.utoronto.ca/CITDPress/Holtorf/0.1.html>>, 22 Aug. 2001, for discussions of human actual/physical and imagined/spiritual connections to land.

⁸⁸ See, *The Archeology of Northwestern Ontario 1: The Prehistoric and Fur Trade Periods* (Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation Historical Planning and Research Branch, 1980), 8-15; Olive Patricia Dickason, "A Historical Reconstruction for the Northwestern Plains," *Prairie Forum*, 5, no. 1 (spring 1980): 24, and Steinthor Heidarsson, "A Promised Land not so Prosperous: The Exodus from New Iceland 1879-1881," submitted to *Canadian Social History* 11.489, L01, University of Manitoba, 21 Mar. 2002.

⁸⁹ See, Gordon Darroch, "Class in nineteenth-century, central Ontario: A reassessment of the crisis and demise of small producers during early industrialization, 1861-1871," in *Class, Gender, and Region: Essays in Canadian Historical Sociology*, ed. Gregory S. Kealey (St. John's Committee of Canadian Labour History, 1988), 49-71; and Kenneth Michel Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: family, culture, and markets in Montcalm, Manitoba 1870-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 5, 7-9, 12-15.

communities situated in similar political economic environments is instructive.⁹⁰ Of these, as indicated by Sean T. Cadigan's study, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay: Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland 1785-1855*, the circumstances of settlement in Newfoundland provide a particularly good match for Red River. Situated in vastly different locations in space, settlements in both places manifested quasi-stateless⁹¹ settler society identities for unusually protracted, approximately equal, and reasonably congruent spans of time.⁹² Cadigan's work suggests that an alternate approach to the history of Red River is possible: reading the settlement as a quasi-stateless society along the lines that Newfoundland has emerged in his rereading of that historiography.⁹³

⁹⁰ See, Stanley, 19-21; Ian McKay, "The crisis of dependent development: class conflict in the Nova Scotia coalfields, 1872-76," and Gregory S. Kealey, "Introduction," in *Class, Gender, and Region*, 9-48, 1-7.

⁹¹ Leslie A. Pal, "From Society to State: Evolving Approaches to the Study of Politics," in *Canadian Politics*, 39-424, defines a state as "the [administrative] institutions and practices that [Max] Weber [1968: 56] defined as possessing legitimate authority and monopoly of force within a given territory. But as well, it is the matrix of those institutions, that is, their specific structure and the interrelation of elements." Further, its "institutional materiality, its bureaux and agencies" are to be recognized as distinct from "civil society" which may include such entities as "the government, political parties, interest or community groups, social movements, professions, school or hospital systems, the media, trade unions, corporations, or non-profit agencies." A stateless society operates entirely independently of the governing authority of a state. Proprietary colonies, in which assertions to state authority were indirectly, even if only perfunctorily, enforced therefore fall under the rubric of quasi-stateless. See, n. 93 below, and "Chapter 3," 28-30, this thesis.

⁹² Norton, 48-49, defines location as: "a particular position within space." The term place "refers to a location but specifically to the values that we load onto that location," which give it a "distinctive ... identity."

⁹³ E. Ellice, in *Report From the Select Committee*, 328 no. 5824, identifies the HBC -- noted in Finlay and Sprague, 62, as having been granted a charter for the "pretended control" of Rupert's Land in 1670 -- as "the last proprietary government in existence" as of 1857. The status was maintained to 1869. Cadigan, 19-20, and Kevin Major, *As Near to Heaven by Sea: A History of Newfoundland and Labrador* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 2001), 77, describe Conception Bay as Newfoundland's first proprietary colony by charter of James I of England to the Newfoundland Company in 1610. Finlay and Sprague, 126, note that subsequently in Newfoundland, "a society developed without any of the accompaniments of British colonial tradition. By 1820 there were still no political institutions -- representative or otherwise." A.S. Morton, 820, observes that the way in which the Red River Settlement functioned as of 1857 "baffled" statesmen in England: "Possessed with the idea that the Company was the government of a continental domain, they found it hard to grasp the fact that it did not govern. No taxes, no definite postal service, other than the Company's expresses, and none to the United States, empty jails, and no school system; yet there were magistrates, and the young were being educated." Ronald Robinson, John Gallagher, and Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* 2d ed. (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1981: reprint, 1985), 496, (page citations are to the reprint edition), describing West African colonies note that, in those locations as well, "the British never really governed ... Their rule over them was much more a function of indigenous political economy than the ... highly superficial formal imperial context."

CHAPTER 3

Interpreting quasi-stateless societies

In Western European thought, statelessness has been both decried as a nightmare of anarchy, and praised -- even as it was dismissed -- as a utopian dream.¹ Though widely discussed and adopted as a rationale for many nineteenth-century political movements intent on the abolition of tyranny, ultimately conversion to statelessness is regarded as an impossible achievement, due to a lack of fitness for sustained survival. Critics hold that, as events of the Colonial era demonstrated, stateless societies cannot exist without inhabiting territory certain to be claimed, if not actively occupied, by the government of a nation-state. Therefore, statelessness can last only so long as it is not perceived as a threat.² According to Harold Adams Innis, this threat is twofold. On the one hand, a stateless society established in a desirable region may interfere with the ability of a nation-state, bent on establishing conditions of empire, to satisfactorily demonstrate its authority in the spatial realm. On the other, the stateless society might impede control of the temporal realm -- an abstract area comprised of 'monopolies of knowledge': the ideologies, discourses and myths from which societal norms are derived and upon which the legitimacy of a state relies. Economically, empire has a territorial imperative which requires expansion. Politically, it is charged with maintaining cohesion.³ Detractors argue that a stateless society is unsustainable because it requires relatively small numbers to function effectively.

¹ See, Charles A. Madison, "Anarchism in the United States," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 6, no. 1 (Jan. 1945): 46-66; Barbara W. Tuchman, "The Idea and the Deed, The Anarchists: 1890-1914," *The Proud Tower: A portrait of the world before the War: 1890-1914* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 63-113; Douglas W. Rae, "The Limits of Consensual Decision," *The American Political Science Review*, 69, no. 4 (Dec. 1975): 1270-1294; Ronald G. Landes, *The Canadian Polity: A Comparative Introduction*, 3d ed. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1991), 5-6.

² See, Landes, 5-6; Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, 278.

³ See, Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 4, 32, 64, 67, 95, 195. Also A.S. Morton, 836-37; Finlay and Sprague, 13; Brookfield, 4-5; Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (1991; reprint, with afterword, New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 1-7, 19, 21 (page citations are to the reprint edition); Glen Williams, 13; Philip McMichael, *Settlers and the Agrarian Question: Foundations of Capitalism in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), xii; and Jeremy Adelman, and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *The American Historical Review*, 104, no. 3 (Jun. 1999), 816, 839.

Population growth is associated with decoherence. Institutionalized government becomes necessary, "not because men are bad but because there are too many of them."⁴

Incidentally, this argument is virtually identical to the political philosophy, held to the end of the eighteenth century and traceable to Plato, regarding the natural limits of democracy.⁵ Ideally, statelessness should see individual self-determination exist side by side with a voluntary, "ever changing, ever modified," cooperative association in which consensus is key.⁶ Yet, it is argued, the logistics of arriving at consensual decision present a formidable barrier, one more likely to foster economic stasis and the maintenance of a social *status quo* than to promote personal freedom.⁷

Nevertheless, in North America, settler societies did emerge which exhibited aspects of statelessness to differing degrees.⁸ However, First Nations societies excepted, extending the designation of stateless to cover these variations tends to exaggerate the autonomous nature of their condition. Even in experimental colonies devised by non-Aboriginal settlers to demonstrate the efficacy of cooperative individualist anarchism, the initial association with a dominant state and the subsequent creation of, or absorption by, new formal state structures was rapid enough to appear virtually contiguous.⁹ Quasi-stateless is therefore a more accurate term for most of the settlements in which non-First Nations migrants participated. The duration of quasi-statelessness in Newfoundland and Red River is very nearly unique according to histories which evaluate Canadian regional

⁴ E.E. Schattschneider, quoted in Landes, 9.

⁵ See, Carey, 3-4.

⁶ Peter Kropotkin, quoted in Madison, 46.

⁷ Rae, 1270. See, J. Anthony Long, and Catherine Chiste, "Aboriginal Self-Government: The Search for Accommodation," in *Canadian Politics*, 234-35, for a contrasting view.

⁸ Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, xii: describes American societies at the time of contact with fifteenth-century Europeans as more varied in political organization than those of contemporary Europe. Europeans were struck by the "non-state" conditions found in various American societies: "they did not have externalized institutions, such as written codes of law. Power was not the prerogative of a class or individual; it existed in the society itself, and each man was his own master. Not only did these societies not vest coercive power in their chiefs, they were organized to prevent such a development from taking place."

⁹ Madison, 52-53, 56-57.

development through the investigation of recognized settler communities.¹⁰ As subjects for examination, both places have also generated extensive historiographies in which elements of myth are obvious enough to indicate distortion. It is this consequence, in combination with the similarity of circumstance, which makes Cadigan's theoretical approach, with some modification, suitable for emulation. A series of general observations on the dynamics of quasi-stateless settlement, in most respects readily transferable to Red River, can be drawn from his description.

Cadigan addresses his dissatisfaction with a myth marred Newfoundland historiography by studying patterns of authority and control, emphasizing an analysis of merchant-settler relations. The thesis that the imposition of a conservative system of merchant capital effectively precluded economic development is rejected. Instead, he argues that the failure of liberal reform movements to vitalize Newfoundland was due to a lack of available, readily accessible, resource potential upon which 'progressive' economic expansion could be built.¹¹ He adopts the premise that human activities are closely related to physical environments. Because people "make the decisions, as individuals and groups ... with a multitude of physical matters in mind," primacy is assigned to the opportunities and constraints intrinsic to place.¹² As levels of need are seen to have a direct bearing on the formation of the political economy, the resource endowment is fundamental to the shaping of a settler society.¹³ His study reveals a sociocultural dynamic more complex than is attributable to simple outsider exploitation of a settler community.

In the role of an associated state, Britain delegated responsibility for the governance of settlements established in Newfoundland and Red River in a manner that has been characterized alternatively as "benign neglect," callous indifference and studied hostility.¹⁴

¹⁰ Finlay and Sprague, 126. See also, Cadigan, 3, 14, 16, and Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 21.

¹¹ Cadigan, vii, viii, 15, 17, 62, 101, 117.

¹² Norton, 80.

¹³ Cadigan, ix-x.

¹⁴ Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 21. See also, David McNab, "The Colonial Office and the Prairies in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Prairie Forum*, 3, no. 1 (1978), 21-38; G. Herman Sprenger, "An Analysis of selective aspects of Métis society, 1810-1870," (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1972), 87-95; Madison, 49; Cadigan, vii-viii, x, 15, 18-22, 27-34, 127; and Major, 103, 115-16, 119, 123-124.

Far from any functional semblance of the state supplied bureaucracy, protective might or arbitrary constraint common to Europe, these settler societies, whether scattered in remote communities or congregated in organized towns, formed out of practical necessity. If they did not leave, thereby earning the appellation of sojourner from those who remained, settlers were compelled to improvise, adopt and adapt.¹⁵ Equally bereft of immediate state support, the degree of success realized by resident merchant representatives, attempting to effect the authority necessary to promote outside interests, was dependent to a significant extent on settler compliance and cooperation.

As the character of merchant-settler relations was shaped by the nature of the choices available, the structuring of the political economic framework is viewed as an accommodating response. The merchant system of advancing credit against anticipated production is therefore not regarded as determinant of, or even necessarily central to, the overall disposition and pace of economic development. Rather, it is seen as a gradual adaptation, subject to various forms of negotiation between merchants and settlers according to their relative ability to maximize access to resources at different points in time.¹⁶ This conclusion is consistent with the analyses of historians who have examined a variety of sites, from Canadian and American fisheries and regions dominated by either the fur trade or agriculture, to similarly structured instances of staples extraction in more distant locations.¹⁷ Where monopolistic interests secured regions which previously were sparsely populated and devoid of formal economies and the accompanying financial institutions equipped to facilitate commercial trade -- as opposed to ritual, reciprocal or redistributive exchange -- settlers intent on habitation could access merchant credit systems in their pursuit of a remunerative livelihood and a comfortable lifestyle.¹⁸ As these regions lacked a concentrated, captive or coercible labour force, settlers served as a feasible substitute in prosecuting resource extraction. Exchanging specialized services for merchant credit

¹⁵ See, Cadigan, 169-70; Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 143.

¹⁶ Cadigan, viii-x, 52-53.

¹⁷ See, Rosemary E. Ommer, *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990), 10-11; Brookfield; and Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

¹⁸ See, Sylvester, 8; Cadigan, 22.

provided a convenient start-up mechanism for settlers. In areas where self-secured subsistence was possible, they were free to operate independently of the system -- unlike peasants bound by feudal fealty, and material restrictions, to seigniorialism.¹⁹ Ultimately, as Cadigan finds, perceptions of isolation and perhaps more importantly its actual nature, had a greater impact than the merchant credit system on the determination of landholding value, market availability and production levels -- factors which contributed to generating patterns of general political development.²⁰

Cadigan describes sociocultural organization as having been consistent with the political economy. Social relations were not static but both reflected and compelled the economic power dynamic. Distinctions between settlers and resident merchants, based on their status as either procurers or providers of staple commodities, appear to have influenced approaches to, and conceptions of, group membership. Patterns of land use and family conformation -- size, occupations, gender roles, living standards, lifestyle choices -- are indicative of a degree of homogeneity within the two strata. However, Cadigan finds that labour agreements initiated by, and contracted between, settlers also gave rise to considerable differentiation among their households. In these instances, women's unpaid labour is accorded a key role.²¹ The same situation is evident in other similarly configured regions. For settlers, year-round survival and prosperity in a seasonally organized staples economy was heavily dependent on household, and often community, production. Merchant benefit correlated to the successful integration by settler families of different

¹⁹ Ommer, 14; Denoon, 27; Cadigan, 5, 38, 41. Cadigan notes that although settlers strove for independence, the limited resource endowment imposed a check on their ability to diversify household production.

²⁰ See, Cadigan, 24, 30-31, 55, 166-67: settlers as colonists of Newfoundland were at various times isolated from their associated state and access to other markets and goods -- particularly American. Cadigan observes, "The island's isolated position in the North Atlantic, its inhospitable climate, and its bleak landscape meant that Imperial authorities could find no reason to apply to Newfoundland any of the forms of colonial self-government which had developed in other British colonies in North America." The deciding factor in his opinion was that their isolated settlements were situated on a land-mass barren of economic opportunity beyond a fishery over which they did not establish uncontested control.

²¹ *Ibid.*, xi, 26, 38, 42, 48-52, 55, 64-80, 102, 105, 107-08, 153, 163.

modes of production.²² The household subsistence economy, operating alongside the commercial economy was conducive to population growth through natural increase which progressively enabled merchant capital to enlist the large labour force it needed.²³ Where the resource endowment allowed, settler adoption of alternate economic approaches which emphasized kinship networking gave rise to a poly-modal form of production which in turn actuated the diverse system of social relations.²⁴ As the case of Newfoundland demonstrates, the myriad approaches to securing survival and comfort that quasi-stateless 'New World' settler societies exhibited, are not readily reducible to standard 'Old World' descriptions of social hierarchy, its maintenance and reproduction.²⁵

The existence of a free, non-passive settler population meant that the implementation of policy favourable to promoting outside interests was restricted in terms of means and recourse. Replication of European institutions of affective control was not a forgone conclusion. Effective decision making power could reside with the settlers. Individuals aspiring to a particular form of *élite* status -- that of the landed gentry considered requisite for the institution of formal state structures²⁶ -- were faced with a

²² Umberto Melotti, *Marx and the Third World*, trans. Pat Rutherford (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1972; reprint, in English, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1977), 3-4 (page citations to the reprint edition), defines mode of production as "the particular form taken, at a given stage of social development, by the metabolic process between man and nature, or in other words that process allowing the production of material goods, especially the means of supporting life, and the means of production."

²³ Ommer, 14-15; see also, Cadigan, 38.

²⁴ See, James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 35 (1978): 5, 16-19, 21; also Brookfield, 6-9, 15-17; and Denoon, 12, 218, 220-21, 224-25.

²⁵ Cadigan, ix, 15, 26, 63, 68, 76, 79-80, 88, 98, 100, 112, 120, 138, 162: in the Newfoundland case, he argues, dependency on a single resource -- and competition between procurers and producers over control of its exploitation -- led to a dynamic specific to the location. Rather than adopting a poly-modal response, it was only practical for settlers to turn to "monostaple production," which was less capable of ensuring independence from merchant credit and promoting an informal system of local exchange. Instead, "those who wanted to remain solvent retreated into household production through family based labour and dependence on merchant capital." In addition, the "sometimes tumultuous" relation between those settlers who were planters and those who were their servants "did not indicate a clear separation between the two groups along class lines." See, David Monod, review of Sean T. Cadigan, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay: Merchant-Settler Relations in Newfoundland, 1785-1855*, in *Canadian Historical Review*, 78, no. 1 (Mar. 1997), cached at <<http://www.utpjournals.com/product/chr/781/hope9.html>>, for an evaluation which indicates that, from some perspectives, Cadigan's 'unorthodox' approach to class appears peculiar, ambiguous and puzzling.

²⁶ Cadigan, 62, 124, 126.

counterbalancing force: the, at times oppositional, family level solutions devised by community members intent on ameliorating their own condition, to enhance their own positioning. The introduction, by merchant interests, of systems of local governance was similarly moderated. The settlers were capable of organizing to challenge instances of suspected exploitation.²⁷ The circumstance is consistent with the observation of David Hume that, "As force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is, therefore, on opinion that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and the most military governments as well as to the most free and most popular."²⁸ In the quasi-stateless condition described by Cadigan, ideals regarding what the community was to be like and how individuals were to behave were negotiated, and even when codified, continued to be worked around. The formal legal system, although designed to regulate settler behaviour, was also used as a forum in which to contest conditions which conflicted with the settlers' sense of acceptable community arrangement. Thus, when social assertion by the ostensive authorities led to confrontation, the instigators were often required to compromise. Strength in numbers and social cohesion among settlers was demonstrably of no small consequence to the overall community dynamic.²⁹

Cadigan's separation of social from cultural analysis reflects a difference in his conception of the two realms as factors in development. Whereas social relations are read as a reciprocal, fluid response, cultural orientation was more substantial. Distinct from, but interactive with, the sociopolitical dynamic, culture acted as a determinant of aspirations and expectations. It was in a sense a community resource. Varied linguistic affiliations, traditional loyalties and world views might promote factionalization in some situations and cohesion in others.³⁰ As garnering community support was critical to advancing any cause, individuals seeking an advantageous political position underestimated the importance of

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27-32, 42, 56, 58, 128-29.

²⁸ David Hume, quoted in Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 4.

²⁹ Cadigan, 56-60, 65, 68, 99-101, 105, 109, 111-112, 163.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 24, 77.

cultural orientation -- for example religious denomination -- at their ambition's peril.³¹

Culturally determined sympathies could inhibit or encourage the acceptance and permeation of 'foreign' ideas throughout the community. Even where the intentions of political and economic reformers were no more altruistic than those of the merchants they wished to displace, ideological predispositions could cloud perceptions regarding issues related to community welfare.³² Rationales generated at a considerable remove from local conditions -- the pervasive agrarian ideology and the racialism of the Colonial era are two examples -- could be internalized over time through community consensus just as they might be rejected.³³ The confluence of cultural proclivities, combined with the freedom to self-determine community affiliation, ensured that culture remained a malleable, as opposed to fixed, attribute.³⁴ In a society where settlers were left largely to their own devices, the constant modifications necessary to ensure a level of cooperative association within the community contributed over time to a distinctive sense of identity.³⁵

Cadigan supplies an appreciation of settler communities as having been comprised of overlapping, interdependent spheres of influence. Within each sphere, displays of contestation signalled observable, repercussive change. In analyzing the relation between merchants and settlers, he arrives at a description which identifies the locational regularities of the resource endowment and political economy, while providing insight into social systems and cultural influences. Red River as a post 1870 "white settler colony" is briefly mentioned in his comparative introduction.³⁶ The possibility that conditions in the preexistent Métis settlement situated "beyond the Colonial pale" gave rise to a society with elements to some degree analogous with those of communities 'unique' to Newfoundland

³¹ *Ibid.*, 146-56, 161.

³² *Ibid.*, 62, 124, 130-31, 141, 143.

³³ *Ibid.*, 147, 170.

³⁴ See for example, *Ibid.*, 65, 80, where the "crucial role" of women's production activities "tested, at least informally, the household's patriarchal structure," a culturally determined relation of European origin; also, Denoon, 209.

³⁵ See, Cadigan, 16; Major, xiv-xv, 385, 209, 464-67.

³⁶ Cadigan, 14.

is not alluded to.³⁷ The absence is worth addressing.

Red River is a very well documented community with a reference base of primary and secondary source materials similar to that consulted for *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay*.³⁸ Primary sources located in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the Provincial Archives of Manitoba include print media accounts, missionary correspondence, and mercantile, local government and court records. Diaries, letters and memoirs written from the perspective of participants in the historical Métis community familiar with its founding and structuring are also available. Some texts are accessible as online facsimiles or in published collections. Much primary material has been correlated and condensed in secondary works, ranging from unpublished manuscripts to monographs devoted to illuminating particular aspects of the community. Useful locational and demographic work has been compiled. The extensive collection of archived material, coupled with primary and secondary literature, presents arguments from a wide range of perspectives, allowing rhetorical imaginings to be weighed against documentary evidence. The drawing of comparisons between the settlements of Newfoundland and Red River is possible at a number of levels. Applied as a theoretical template to the concomitant variation of quasi-stateless settlement at Red River, Cadigan's reading serves to provide a focus whereby analogous attributes are highlighted and significant differences are isolated. Commonality of circumstance is established without denying diversity of experience.

Judging from the findings presented in 1999 by H. Robert Baker in, "Creating Order in the Wilderness: Transplanting the English Law to Rupert's Land, 1835-1851," the process of institutionalizing a legal system in Red River was as idiosyncratic as what took

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁸ See, Sprague and Frye, "Manitoba's Red River Settlement," 179, and *Genealogy*, 9; Cadigan, i, 217-31; and Lawrence J. Barkwell, Leah Dorion, and Darren R. Préfontaine. *Resources for Métis Researchers* (Winnipeg/ Saskatoon: Louis Riel Institute of the Manitoba Métis Federation/Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, 1999).

place in Newfoundland.³⁹ Baker points out that prior to 1835, law and custom were present in Rupert's Land. What was lacking was European-style legal machinery or rules extending beyond the servants of fur trade companies.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, while overseen by Selkirk and the Douglas family, once corporate rivalry over territorial jurisdiction was resolved, the settlement at Red River was remarkably orderly; a circumstance that has been credited to the "good sense and good nature" displayed by the inhabitants in adhering to "a known pattern of life."⁴¹ When the HBC acquired the settlement in 1834 from Selkirk's heirs, George Simpson, Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land, sought -- with little success -- to 'transplant' instruments of English authority such as formalized courts, a military style police force, and a contingent of Imperial troops, to impose a 'recognizable' style of order: one geared primarily to support the Company's monopoly of the fur trade.⁴² Consequently, the court system interposed in 1835 featured a Company servant in the capacity of 'recorder' -- not as judge -- who was compelled to observe the dictates of the 1670 HBC charter. The operational model brought to the Settlement was not therefore based on a contemporary version of English common law, but statutes that were so arcane as to remain a virtual mystery to the parties involved with their application.⁴³ In addition, the formal court was introduced to a population numbering about 3 700, who, up to that point, had relied on a "smoothing system" whereby justice was dispensed on an ad hoc basis that ignored legal precision and consistency in favour of flexible approaches intended to solicit

³⁹ H. Robert Baker, "Creating Order in the Wilderness: Transplanting the English Law to Rupert's Land, 1835-1851," *Law and History Review*, 17, 2 (summer 1999): 207-246, cached at <<http://www.historycooperative.org/lhr/17.2/baker.html>>, (page citations are to the online version). See also, Finlay and Sprague, 126. Cadigan, 15-16, 28-31, 83-84, 171-74, describes some aspects of the Palliser Act of 1775 as "extraordinary in the early days of British industrial capitalism." The policies of the Act, in conjunction with aspects of that of King William of 1696 -- appended somewhat by the Orders in Council of 1729 and 1750 -- were continued, under the 1792 reenactment of the temporary Judicature Act of 1791, until 1824. Subsequently the Judicature and Fisheries Acts allowed the Colonial Office to distance itself from the "legislative confusion surrounding the wage and lien system."

⁴⁰ Baker, 7.

⁴¹ W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 68.

⁴² See also, "Extract of a letter from George Simpson to A. Colville, Sept. 8, 1833," in Oliver, vol. 1, 257. Coutts, 8, notes that "it was the quasi-military organization of the Métis buffalo hunt that served as the *de facto* constabulary within the colony, at least during its early years."

⁴³ Baker, 58; see also, J.F. Crofton, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 171 nos. 3212-3217.

equitable outcomes.⁴⁴ As Baker's analysis reveals, settler influence on the uses made of the outsider imposed law and legal system in Red River was far from minimal. Aside from accessing formal structures as forums to contest unpopular conditions -- as demonstrated by their participation in the Sayer Trial of 1849⁴⁵ -- settlers also actively shaped local law. Acceptable standards for law, order, and justice under formal judicature were determined by settler litigants, defendants, and jurors predisposed to view law as dependent on individual reason and parity. According to Baker, recorders were most effective when acting in a near diplomatic capacity -- bridging the gap between the "unknowable" law associated with the charter and the deliberations of the jury.⁴⁶ The result was a distinctive law code, with juries acting in the position of final arbitrators and "community notions" predominating.⁴⁷ The Company had never been in a position to challenge popular opinion and did not attempt any reform of the courts of Assiniboia after 1839. Nor did it attempt to control court business.⁴⁸

The relatively low number of disputes involving Métis members of the community taken to formal litigation lends credence to settler Alexander Begg's assertion of 1870 that the Métis community had their own parallel and highly effective mechanism for settling differences among themselves, by themselves.⁴⁹ Upon the regularly scheduled dates of assizes, prior to the formal proceedings, settlers discussed grievances outside the

⁴⁴ Baker, 2; Alexander Begg, *Dot It Down: A Story of Life in the North-West* (Toronto: Hunter, Rose and Company, 1871), 226; Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 175, 173. Ross estimates 5000 people based on the 1835 Minutes of Council. Oliver, 267 n. 1, argues that this is too high, citing Census Book figures. The difference suggests that not everyone was included in the census.

⁴⁵ See, A.S. Morton, 814-16, for a thorough description.

⁴⁶ Baker, 4. See also, William Caldwell, "Minutes of Evidence," in *Report from the Select Committee*, 300-04.

⁴⁷ Baker, 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 4, 11.

⁴⁹ See, Begg, *Dot It Down*, 215, 225-26; also George Simpson, and J.F. Crofton, "Minutes of Evidence," and Donald Gunn, "Appendix, No. 1," in *Report from the Select Committee*, 86, 173, 178, 364. The general consensus was that the Red River Quarterly General Courts typically had "no justice to administer; there was no crime." Cadigan, 102, 177, puts the number of writs in the Harbour Grace court records covering 1785 to 1855 at "well over 2000," which would be approximately 29 per year.

courthouse. Resolution was sought in order to avoid extra expense and “hard feeling.”⁵⁰ According to Begg, “not one-half of the cases on the docket ever found their way into Court, the parties, through the instrumentality of their friends, agreeing between themselves beforehand.”⁵¹ For the most part, in Red River people talked things out.⁵²

As “a process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people,” communication is instrumental to creating and confirming community -- by which is meant “an ordered, meaningful cultural world that can serve as a control and container for human action.”⁵³ For Red River to function smoothly without top-down control, a high level of interpersonal, intra-community communication was required. An appearance of heightened orality is not therefore indicative of a necessarily ‘backward’ population perversely disinclined to pursue literacy. Likewise, the fact that Red River was “rife” with “gossip” need not imply the existence of a terminal flaw in a ‘brittle’ society.⁵⁴ Rather, it would support an opposite contention. Oral communication served to transfer norms among the population as part of a supple consensual decision making process by which social ‘reality’ was constantly “produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed.”⁵⁵ In community, settlers exerted force, through “traditional mechanisms of social control,” to realign any “mutually antagonistic parts.”⁵⁶ Diversity was accommodated while adversity was kept within acceptable bounds. In the form of quasi-statelessness evinced in the Red River Settlement, difference and cooperation were not mutually exclusive conditions. This dynamic may account for the fact that some researchers find copious references attesting to

⁵⁰ Begg, *Dot It Down*, 225. Cadigan, 100, observes that in Newfoundland as well, “there was much room for popular negotiation and adaptation before disputes might end up in court.”

⁵¹ Begg, *Dot It Down*, 225-26.

⁵² See, Spry, “‘Memories’ of George William Sanderson,” 120, 126; and Guillaume Charette, *L’Espace de Louis Goulet*, reprint, in English as *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet*, trans. Ray Ellenwood (Winnipeg: Editions Bois-Brulés, 1976), 21 (page citations are to the translated edition), for descriptions of informal resolution.

⁵³ Carey, 15, 18-19.

⁵⁴ Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 15, 14; see also, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 193, 380.

⁵⁵ Carey, 23.

⁵⁶ Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 67-68. See also, Coutts, 39.

“unity and inter-connections” with “very little evidence of conflict, let alone ‘hatred’” within the community, while others identify obvious instances of division.⁵⁷ In either case, overall, Red River appears more overtly peaceable than the communities that Cadigan describes in Newfoundland.⁵⁸

A close correspondence between Newfoundland and Red River lies in the prominent myths perpetuated against the settlements. In both sites, a strong agrarian base has been presumed prerequisite to progressive development.⁵⁹ The ‘chimeric fable’ that Cadigan identifies in the historiography about Newfoundland, includes the notion that attempts to pursue agriculture were purposefully and consistently undermined.⁶⁰ In the case of Red River, the allegation stands that the mistaken pursuit of a flawed directional path led to non-development profound enough to account for Métis desertion of their community. It is presumed that concentration upon the extraction of a naturally occurring, apparently abundant, staple commodity was emphasized to the detriment of growth in the agricultural sector.⁶¹ Whereas Newfoundland was disadvantaged with regard to agricultural potential,⁶² Red River’s geological heritage was one of exceptional fecundity. Well into the twentieth century, the inherent fertility of the mineralizing Chernomic soils of the Black Soil Zone appeared “inexhaustible.”⁶³ However, as was the case in Conception Bay, physiographic realities meant that, despite the powerful hold that agrarian conceptions exerted -- and it is testimony to their strength that they continue to shape evaluations of development in the

⁵⁷ Spry, “Memories of George William Sanderson,” 117, and quoted in Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 10; see also, Sprague and Mailhot, 1-2; Coutts, 109.

⁵⁸ See also, Finlay and Sprague, 126.

⁵⁹ See, Cadigan, x, 3, 16, 124, 135.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 59, 140, 160, 162.

⁶¹ See, Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 172-73.

⁶² Cadigan, 51, 124, 126, 138-39, 159, notes that, “Agriculture was not totally impossible under these conditions, but required ‘Herculean labour and pains’ for the scantiest rewards of a few potatoes or turnips, and maybe a cow, sheep, or pig.”

⁶³ Hill, 44. Also Fran Walley, personal communication, Department of Soil Science, College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan, 14 July 2002. See also, Bird, 60, 137, for a comparison of Manitoba and Newfoundland geologic formations.

present -- aspirations faced decided limitations.⁶⁴

Attempts to establish commercial farming as an expansive enterprise in Red River fared poorly in part because of a series of disasters “unusual in their concentration rather than their occurrence.”⁶⁵ While there is no doubt that experiments in essentially monoculture grain production were hard hit, to present the shortfall as equatable with non-production is a misleading, if not entirely mistaken, overstatement. As the work of Mary Black-Rogers, “‘Varieties of ‘Starving’: Semantics and survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade,” indicates, records generated by fur trade merchant concerns need to be “sharply interrogated” before definitive statements are made regarding instances of ‘failure.’⁶⁶ Statements made by disgruntled individuals who eventually left the Settlement are equally suspect.⁶⁷ Even in the worst years at Red River, it appears that grain was produced -- just not enough to support large parties of improvident new arrivals or families whose household economies had not been augmented with alternate forms of production. These were almost exclusively settlers of non-Aboriginal descent, “*les jardinières*,” whose cultural baggage predisposed them to determine that they should not only subsist but profit from farming alone.⁶⁸ The agricultural product they focused on was thought eminently suitable for export. While grain production seems to have consistently fallen short of their expectations, it does not automatically follow that all crops were equally disappointing. Vegetables such as potatoes and turnips are recorded as having succeeded in years when

⁶⁴ Deane, 66, 119: from Adam Smith, to Richardo, to Marx, normative terms and systems of measurement refer to an agrarian standard. See also, Sylvester, 6-9. Kaye, provides an in depth discussion of the limitations agricultural development faced in Red River.

⁶⁵ Kaye, 78.

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Vibert, *Traders' Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 6. Black-Rogers, 353-383.

⁶⁷ Kaye 71-72, notes that settlement data to 1827 regarding agricultural production is incomplete and heavily biased. It reflects a concern with the progress -- or the lack thereof -- of the Selkirk Settlers. In later years interest in the progress of individuals intent on grain production remains at the fore. Far fewer records supply overt references to Métis vegetable production -- possibly because there was little reason to comment on the mundane.

⁶⁸ Jackson, 49; also Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 14 n. 11, 16 n. 20; and Coutts, 7. See also, Manton Marble, “To Red River and Beyond (Third Paper),” *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 22, no. 129 (Feb, 1861): 314.

cereal crops failed.⁶⁹ Nor were all grains equally susceptible to setback. Indigenous varieties of corn -- Horseteeth and Mandril -- appear to have furnished a cereal crop preferred by Métis farming families, because much more reliable than wheat, barley, or rye.⁷⁰

First Nations and Métis settlers had been growing a variety of root crops, tubers, gourds, melons, leaf greens, coles, legumes and native grains with success, and in some cases profit from sales to fur trade posts, long before the arrival of external migrants.⁷¹ Mixed farming in the Red River region required relatively minimal labour input for comparatively impressive results.⁷² At the Settlement's location, prairie grassland predominated. Localized stands of primarily deciduous trees were largely confined to the levees of streams, the east bank of the Red River, and south of the Assiniboine. Consequently the extensive clearing process typical of Canadian settlement was not required.⁷³ As the soil had not been depleted due to the generation of old growth coniferous forest, manuring was not necessary. Garden plots did not need to be very large or excessively tilled.⁷⁴ The yield potential has been estimated as from two to three times

⁶⁹ See, Marble, "(Third Paper)," 318; Sprenger, 58, 78-79, 82; Kaye: 81; W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 48, 50; A.S. Morton, 555; Coutts, 139.

⁷⁰ Marble, "(Third Paper)," 318; W.L. Morton, "Agriculture in the Red River Colony," in *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton*, ed. A.B McKillop (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1980), 75. See also, Kaye, 78-80: as the data refers to commercial production, it is not a reliable indicator of subsistence farming patterns; see also, J.F. Crofton, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 170.

⁷¹ Kaye, 20-25.

⁷² Begg, *Dot It Down*, 206; Marble, "(Third Paper)," 318, asserts that "all the garden vegetables which grow well in Canada and Northern New York flourish better in Assiniboine." See also, George Gladman, in *Report from the Select Committee*, cited in A.S. Morton, 828.

⁷³ See, Kaye, 5, 8-9; and Catherine Parr Trail, *The Backwoods of Canada: Being Letters from the Wife of an Emigrant Officer, Illustrative of the Domestic Economy of British America* (London: Charles Knight, 1836; reprint, with afterword Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989), 87-89, 110-12, 158-59, 161-63, for a description of the work, and expense, involved.

⁷⁴ O.J. Stevenson, *Country Life Reader* (Toronto: George L. McLeod, 1924), 47: indicates that an idea that earth "turned up" was "penetrated" by nitrogen -- reminiscent of the Greek myth of Gaia and Uranus, and reliant on a mistaken conflation of N₂ with NO₃⁻ -- persisted into the twentieth-century. See also, J.F. Crofton, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 172. Critics enamoured with 'expert' European opinion censured the Métis for failing to adopt new tilling practices when observation would have shown alteration of their method to have been unnecessary -- perhaps even debilitating.

greater than what was available to settlers in Ontario and Quebec.⁷⁵ Therefore, an average Red River family was more than capable of harvesting a generous supply of homegrown foodstuffs from an allotment that allowed for one acre per person.⁷⁶ No data exists on the total cultivated acreage in the Settlement prior to 1831, and demographic uncertainty compounds the difficulty of arriving at an average cultivated area per person during this period.⁷⁷ However, it appears that by 1835, the ratio of person per family to acre of cultivated area fell into the one to one range.⁷⁸ In a community where nearly everyone had a garden, the local market for excess produce was virtually non-existent.⁷⁹ Excessive production would only lead to the accumulation of piles of rotting matter -- a situation that Newfoundland settlers, desperate to augment meagre layers of topsoil with peatbog and fish offal, might have contemplated with envy.⁸⁰ Except in occasional instances of extreme aberration, Red River's environment possessed material prosperity more than adequate to

⁷⁵ Sylvester, 4, 47-48, explains that "Two or three families could make a living by eastern standards from the average holding in Manitoba." Hill 44, 80, indicates that the original Dominion lands averaged yields of 8-10 bushels of grain per acre; Manitoba averaged 20.5 bushels per acre. Alexander Begg, "Emigrant's Guide to Manitoba," in *Dot It Down*, 370-371, suggests an average of 36 bushels per acre as a conservative estimate. Henretta, 12, puts Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina at returning 8-12 bushels per acre for wheat, 15 for corn.

⁷⁶ See, R.H. Arnold, "Farmers' Bulletin 432. U.S. Department of Agriculture," printed in Hill, 256-60; also Parr Trail, 112.

⁷⁷ Kaye, 74. See also, Hudson's Bay Company Archives [HBCA], E.5, Census Returns, 1827-1843; PAM, MG2, B2, Red River Census, 1832-1849.

⁷⁸ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 36-37, establishes that by 1835, "There appears to have been little difference in cultivated acreage among the various communities in the settlement. Most families cultivated five to six acres, which works out to about one acre per person." However, this remains a tenuous estimate. Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 24, suggest that it is possible that some families inhabiting land were not enumerated because, for whatever reason, they were not recognized as formal occupants. They conclude that "about 2,000 native families were not registered ... from 1835 to 1860." The family size and amount of land they may have cultivated is unknown..

⁷⁹ See, Charette, 13; Coutts, 139.

⁸⁰ See, J.F. Crofton, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 172; also Cadigan, 51-52, 63-65, 133-34, 137-38, 162-64. James P. Howley, ed., *The Beothucks or Red Indians: The Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland* (1915; reprint, Toronto: Prospero Books, 2000), 161-62 (page citations are to the reprint edition), indicates that there were some areas where garden farming succeeded.

meet need.⁸¹ The notion that cereal crop production is the only means of measuring agrarian development in the Settlement needs to be examined. Lack of grain export may not be a reliable index.⁸² Red River, interior to the continent, faced economic competition from more favourably situated locations.⁸³ It was not uncommon during the Colonial era for settler access to international grain -- and other commercial commodity -- markets to be stymied. Typically, in such cases, other strategies, such as livestock management, were pursued.⁸⁴ Some proved successful.⁸⁵ Cadigan recognizes developmental myths as vestigial to a liberal democratic account of progress in which the British political economic path is posited as the norm.⁸⁶ He demonstrates that once myths are identified, it is possible to excise them and arrive at a more satisfactory explanation.

A particularly obvious difference between the settlement experiences in the two locations requires a modification to Cadigan's reading if it is to be effectively applied to an analysis of Red River. Culture receives markedly less consideration than economics, geography, history and sociology in his account. The settlers he describes vary in dialect but are overwhelmingly English-speaking migrants from the British Isles with histories so thoroughly intertwined as to present as close cultural relatives, despite religious differences. French settlements receive mention but no extensive analysis. The absence of an Aboriginal presence is profound and problematic. The historiography about non-

⁸¹ Arthur J. Ray, "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company," in *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*, ed. Shepard Krech (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 1-2, presents this as a logical assumption given the successful survival and persistence of generations of subsistence level settlers familiar with North American conditions.

⁸² See, Denoon, 1, 20-21, 28-29.

⁸³ See, Frank D. Lewis, and M.C. Urquhart, "Growth and the Standard of Living in a Pioneer Economy: Upper Canada, 1826 to 1851," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d series, 56, no. 1 (Jan. 1999): 151-53. See also, Cadigan, 134, on the competition that Newfoundland faced in agricultural production.

⁸⁴ See Cadigan, 57.

⁸⁵ Denoon, 46, 218-19; Cadigan, 4-5. See also, Glen Williams, 30-31.

⁸⁶ Cadigan, 135. See, Denoon, 10-11, for a discussion of W.W. Rostow's influential study of European economic history. James J. Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978); David Blackbourn, and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); and Jan Palmowski, *Urban Liberalism in Imperial Germany: Frankfurt am Main, 1866-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), supply indications of the existence and widespread impact of this perspective on historical argument.

Aboriginal settlement along Newfoundland's coast abounds with descriptions of encounters between new settlers and the Beothuck -- the dominant settler group in pre-conquest Newfoundland according to Micmaq tradition.⁸⁷ Most often, these contacts were violent and fuelled by resource competition.⁸⁸ For over three centuries, the confrontations generated concern. Within the European sphere, official enquiries, court proceedings and subsequent -- singularly ineffective -- proclamations were the standard response.⁸⁹ It has been stated that the fate of the Beothuck "resonates through the history of the Island like no other."⁹⁰ It was also relatively recently decided. The culture was not extinguished until 1829. Prior to this date -- and into the present -- a variety of Aboriginal peoples interacted with non-Aboriginal settlers and merchants in the region. Contrary to stories of unmitigated hostility, some integrated into White settlement communities while yet maintaining, however tenuously, an Aboriginal identity.⁹¹ Whatever the intention, *Hope and Deception in Conception Bay* is consistent with texts that adhere to the imperialist deduction implicit in the frontier thesis articulated by Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893, whereby 'pioneer progress' inevitably heralds Aboriginal disappearance.⁹²

Engaging in examination of merchant-settler relations in Red River between 1810 and 1870 plainly requires that the Aboriginal context be acknowledged. The existence, persistence and dispossession of the Métis are circumstances deserving of explanation. Dubious arguments based on simplistic parallels do not suffice. The significance of European manifestation and Aboriginal invisibility is much more complex than mere

⁸⁷ Howley, 25-26, 28, 33, 270.

⁸⁸ See, Cadigan, 22, for an example of settler social response as a means of resource access protection.

⁸⁹ See for example, *Ibid.*, 45, 49-61, 70-71, 90-91, 105-113, 193 n. 1, 211, 214.

⁹⁰ Major, 14.

⁹¹ Howley, 150, 152, 153, 158, 176, 189, 200, provides documents from 1822 to 1829 with references to 'Indian' individuals with English names and 'White' occupations or places of residence. See also, Elizabeth Goudie, *Woman of Labrador* (1973; reprint, Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1996). Major, 403-404, gives some indication of the difficulty that maintaining identity entails for Aboriginal peoples in Newfoundland.

⁹² See, Adelman and Aron, 814-15.

correlation suggests.⁹³ The concept of ‘borderlands,’ as applied by Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron in their 1999 study, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History,” provides an alternative.⁹⁴ Their observations support the argument that interpretations of quasi-stateless societies in North America which fail to factor in Aboriginal participation are elementally incomplete.⁹⁵ The reduction of Europe and its peoples into a single essence, and North America and its peoples into an oppositional ‘other,’ is seen as useful only if the goal is to perpetuate a historiography in which the former is clearly victorious and the latter irrevocably vanquished. Displacement is not perceived as natural, necessarily inevitable, or synonymous with extinction.⁹⁶

Adelman and Aron limit the term frontier to describing “a meeting place of peoples in which geographic and cultural borders were not clearly defined.”⁹⁷ The designation of borderland is applied to regions which historically were sites of competition; the divisive question being, where the boundaries of adjacent colonial domains should be understood to exist. Areas where formal, physical possession of territory by a state was not actively pursued, or fully realized, were open to settlement by a wide range of people of diverse identities, most of whom exhibited migratory behaviour: some moving according to traditional seasonal patterns, others impelled to flee original homelands, and still others freely pursuing an available option.⁹⁸ In these quasi-stateless areas, it is possible to conceive of ‘nomadism’ as the mobile settlement of an extensive territory in which individuals capable of self-sufficiency did not need to engage in the dependent forms of

⁹³ See, Jenson, 54-74, also Denoon, 2, 9, 26, and Olive Patricia Dickason, “From ‘One Nation’ in the Northeast to ‘New Nation’ in the Northwest: A look at the emergence of the Métis,” in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, ed. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 20.

⁹⁴ Adelman and Aron, 814-41.

⁹⁵ See also, Daniel R. Mandell, “Shifting Boundaries of Race and Ethnicity: Indian-Black Intermarriage in Southern New England, 1769-1880,” *The Journal of American History*, 85, no. 2 (Sep. 1998), 466, 500-01.

⁹⁶ Adelman and Aron, 815.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ See, Norton, 118-21.

commerce that the stationary settlement of very circumscribed territory requires.⁹⁹ Potential and resident settlers met and mingled as they sought to establish a presence, or to have a prior entitlement recognized and protected. Understanding the range and extent of intermingling of peoples of diverse identities is regarded as critical.¹⁰⁰ The heterogeneity existing among Aboriginal groups, compounded by that of non-Aboriginal groups, is seen to defy generalization.¹⁰¹ Historical borderlands, as edges of colonial empires, exhibited a distinct cultural dynamic where prolonged cohabitation between natives and newcomers prevailed -- whether the latter were migrants external or internal to the continent. Intimate relationships involved adjustment and compromise. Intercultural exchange was meaningful and reciprocal. Dual and shifting identities and affiliations were common. Negotiations and accommodations between new and seasoned inhabitants gave rise to distinctly new, syncretic approaches to community. Cross-cultural brokering is seen as formative but not determinant of patterns of co-existence.¹⁰²

Following this conception, the Red River Settlement was founded in a borderland which at different points in time was contested by rival First Nations; French, British, Canadian, and American states; and the New Nation Métis. The borderland construct supplies a broader colonial context, with explanatory potential, in which to situate a study of the Settlement. The importance of this larger political economic setting cannot be denied -- external forces do have consequences.¹⁰³ Adelman and Aron find that those displaced, when loosely defined colonial borderlands became demarcated by territorial borders

⁹⁹ See, Brookfield, 1-6; also, George Cartier, cited in, *Birth of a Province*, 149, and "Chapter 7," 153 n. 54, this thesis.

¹⁰⁰ Adelman and Aron, 816.

¹⁰¹ See also, William W. Fitzhugh, *Cultures in Contact: The Impact of European Contacts on Native American Cultural Institutions, A.D. 1000-1800* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), 2-7.

¹⁰² Adelman and Aron, 815-16, 839; see also, "syncretism", "syncretize," *Langenscheidt's New College Merriam-Webster English Dictionary*, 1196; "Chapter 2," 15 n. 40, this thesis; and "hybridization," *OneLook Dictionary Search*, <http://www.onelook.com/?w=hybridization&ls=a#all_sci>, 20 June, 2003: The combination of varying forms of belief and practical approaches to survival by people seeking to unite in harmonious community and actively attempting to reconcile divergences, is not directly equatable with the determinate biological process of 'hybridization.'

¹⁰³ Adelman and Aron, 839; see also, McMichael, xi; and Brookfield, 2-3.

formalized through international agreement, cannot reasonably be held responsible for their victimization. Rather they are perceived as having fallen outside of a state sanctioned and widely promulgated definition of which order of people properly constituted the 'nation' destined to inhabit the now rigidly defined territory.¹⁰⁴ However, the Red River settlers were not privy to the diplomatic machinations of the 'great powers.' Until 1869, it appears they had entirely misjudged the extent, positively or negatively, to which their existence was of political value to outsider interests; their worth measured in terms of strategic utility; their fate capable of generating sympathetic interest.¹⁰⁵ As of 1870, they appeared unaware of how rapidly political estimations regarding the import of their existence could change.¹⁰⁶ Up until that time, whether as individuals they were of a trusting, optimistic or merely resignedly hopeful disposition, as members of a community they sought to build a solid base capable of sustaining its members through misfortune, and providing access to whatever opportunities the future might bring.¹⁰⁷ In his historiographical analysis published in 2000 as a chapter of *Thomas Scott's Body and Other Essays on Early Manitoba History*, J.M. Bumsted notes that for Red River, as for other colonial settlements, the "question of internal dynamic versus external pressure has ... been an important one. The settlement was obviously driven to some extent by its own dynamic, which is not well understood, but the relationship between this dynamic and external factors has somehow to be taken into account."¹⁰⁸ Cadigan's approach supplies one means to explore the internal forces -- authority and control at the local level -- to examine the manner in which settlers exercised

¹⁰⁴ Adelman and Aron, 817-18, 839-40; see also, Sangster, 169-71, also Carter, 11, 19-20, 29, 133, 161, for a description of the Canadian colonial mind-set and the regulation of 'race,' 'class', and gender relations, and the maintenance of dominant British colonial ideologies: The extension of the Canadian state was accompanied by the formal and informal application of distinctions designed to determine which characteristics defined the dominant and subordinate segments of the population. In the absence of real physical differences, invisible qualities were made to suffice -- the type of 'blood' that might be lurking in one's veins, the type of savagery and brutality in one's heart, the spiteful cunning in one's brain.

¹⁰⁵ Alexandre-Antonin Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, trans. D.B. Cameron (Montreal: John Lovell, 1870), 69; J.M. Bumsted, "The Colonial Office, Aboriginal Policy, and Red River 1847-1849," in *Thomas Scott's Body*, 91-114, and McNab, 21-22, 25-28, 31, 33-34, 37; also Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 173-74, for the period to 1834.

¹⁰⁶ See, Coutts, 111.

¹⁰⁷ See, Denoon, 68; Brookfield, 205.

¹⁰⁸ Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 12.

the freedom inherent in their quasi-stateless position. Used together, the ideations of Cadigan, and Adelman and Aron, provide means to critique power structures that are adequate for assessing the genesis, natural tendencies, and disruption of the dominant community of the Red River Settlement. Both are compatible with depicting the historical forces operating in quasi-stateless conditions as part of a fluid, formative process. Explanation is arrived at independently of a reliance on fixed boundaries -- socially, politically, geographically, culturally, temporally or conceptually. Events are evaluated as loci of chance reversal; they may not be causal origins of change so much as bounded, discontinuous, observable occurrences of transformation, but their effect can be read as aggregative and reinforcing.¹⁰⁹

As the evaluation of development -- its quantity and quality -- is of central interest, its measurement is of concern, particularly as the population under consideration is predominantly Aboriginal. Although Cadigan notes the inability of liberal democratic theory to come to terms with the Newfoundland example of complete dependency on a single resource, it appears that an implicit assumption remains that European models of development set the standard for assessment.¹¹⁰ R.A. Nisbet is acknowledged as having pointed out in 1969, in *Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development*, that these models have a history spanning in excess of two and a half millennia.¹¹¹ As with terms such as progress and growth, development is a metaphor. The implications embedded in the word -- that change unfolds incrementally, cumulatively, and unidirectionally to meet a preordained potentiality -- must be kept in mind. Too often, the metaphor has been used to validate stage theories. As with flawed assertions regarding evolution and taxonomy, when differences are ranked arbitrarily in a fixed order as stages, they are mistakenly thought to demonstrate the existence of phases, thus furnishing proof

¹⁰⁹ See, Charles C. Lemert, and Garth Gillan, *Michel Foucault: Social Theory and Transgression* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4; and Sangster, 11-14, for a critique of Foucault's disinclination to connect diffuse occurrences. See also, Peter D. McClelland, *Causal Explanation and Model Building in History, Economics, and the New Economic History* (London: Cornell University Press, 1975), 84; and Lloyd, 6-7, 95, 159-163.

¹¹⁰ Cadigan, viii.

¹¹¹ Denoon, 6, 205, see also, 215, 218.

that societies inevitably move in a like direction along a single spectrum, however unevenly spaced or paced.¹¹² Donald Denoon argues, in *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere*, that the word has utility if used circumspectly to denote only “a substantial increase in the quantity of goods produced in a society, an increase proportionately greater than the increase in that society’s population.”¹¹³ Yet, he also cautions that assessment of a settler society which is situationally non-European -- especially one labouring under a ‘pigmented’ designation -- faces an additional problem. It is possible for seeming contrasts in levels of prosperity between societies to be illusory. Whereas ordinary Western mathematical systems of measurement are amply suited to deal with cash incomes, they can furnish only crude estimates of subsistence production.¹¹⁴ It has been observed that “Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.”¹¹⁵ It is therefore preferable that valuation be qualitative as well as quantitative.¹¹⁶ An observation proffered by Innis further complicates matters: “We must all be aware of the extraordinary, perhaps insuperable, difficulty of assessing the quality of a culture of which ... we are not a part.”¹¹⁷ Ideologically distant observers may perceive inherent value in a territory in entirely different ways.¹¹⁸ Historically removed researchers may not be aware of these differences and heavily mediated sources may not reflect them.¹¹⁹ Regardless of the heritage of a historical investigator, the past remains after all separate.¹²⁰

‘Improvement’ is another evaluative metaphor that was often invoked in the

¹¹² *Ibid.*, citing Nisbet; and Melotti, 1-2.

¹¹³ Denoon, 7.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* See also, Wharton, v.

¹¹⁵ Albert Einstein quoted in Brenda O’Neill, email, “Gender and Social Conference Announcement,” University of Manitoba, Fri., 4 Apr. 2003, 10:13:24.

¹¹⁶ Denoon, 9.

¹¹⁷ Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 132.

¹¹⁸ “In Years From Here: The Maisin Meet the Sto:lo - a Cultural Exchange,” *The Nature of Things* <<http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/>>, 7 Nov. 2002; see also, <sto:lonation.bc.ca>, 7 Nov, 2002.

¹¹⁹ See, Franca Iacovetta, and Wendy Mitchinson, eds. *On the Case: Explorations in Social History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 5; and Sangster, 4.

¹²⁰ Haskell 306; and Lloyd 99.

nineteenth-century in conjunction with development.¹²¹ The term is equally subjective and entirely positivist. It is used to denote observable, purposeful, material change. When this change is recognized as movement toward facilitating integration into a wider economic system -- as a necessary precursor and conducive to development -- use of the word improvement implies that further development is assured.¹²² Obviously, not all attempts at improvement are successful. Nor is effective improvement determined by one course of action.¹²³ The goods produced by a society, including architectural structures, as well as steady expansion of territory claimed for settler-driven production should be regarded as a signal of a purposefully engineered, sustained momentum potentially destined at some point to qualify as the preliminary stages of fully realized later development. It is also worth recognizing that although the borderland condition existed in Rupert's Land for approximately two hundred years, the time span for Métis settlement at Red River comprised only sixty of these. Establishing the rate of development -- including improvement -- from the Settlement's inception to the community's dispersal, is therefore as important a consideration as describing its nature and extent when addressing the myth of non-development. It is possible that given the time frame, the pace was relatively rapid, confined only by limitations such as the geographic distance from a port and a related lack of population influx.

Settler societies formed during the Colonial era shared a number of circumstantial similarities, yet displayed a wide range of developmental variations.¹²⁴ Despite having quasi-stateless identities in common, the correspondence between the settlements in Red River and Newfoundland is not complete. The endowment of each location profoundly influenced the kind of settler society that could be superimposed upon it. Divergent histories regarding the integration of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values led to differences in approach to organizing community. At the same time, if Red River accords

¹²¹ See, Cadigan, 135.

¹²² See, Deane, 13-15, on Adam Smith's materialistic and mechanistic premises; also Samuelson and Scott, 906-07.

¹²³ See, Cadigan, 124, 166-68.

¹²⁴ Denoon, 4. See also, McMichael and Cadigan.

with the description of quasi-stateless settlement dynamics outlined for Newfoundland, then the contradictory social relationship between producers and procurers entailed mutual dependence as well as mutual force.¹²⁵ As the settlers constituted a free and active element, the HBC cannot be considered a “feudal obstacle” to the progress of settlement.¹²⁶ Within the Métis community, examples of individual self-determination were evident. Successive adjustments undergone by the political economy did not compromise freedom. Motivated by a concern for enhancing community development, settlers applied solutions devised through cooperative association built on consensus. Their society had a complex dynamic, one not properly reducible to a pre-capitalist representation.¹²⁷

If the condition of quasi-statelessness was a workable means for settlers to shape the community that did not prevent development; merchant credit enabled development by providing a solution to the absence of money; and focus on the fur trade did not prevent agricultural development from becoming as extensive as the community could handle,¹²⁸ then non-development could not have led the Métis to desert their community. Rather, by 1869, the highly socialized, law abiding, Christianized community was comprised of individuals -- both educated and knowledgeable -- who exhibited a vibrancy and “vivacity” consistent with what, in the nineteenth-century, was considered increased civilization.¹²⁹ As such, the Métis were a primed population; well positioned, if their occupancy ‘rights and claims’ were recognized, to benefit from a substantial increase in development once enhanced transportation systems allowed immigration and consequent market expansion to take place. That this did not occur, that instead the settlement became part of a transition experience that placed it squarely on par with other regions identified as the “turbulent

¹²⁵ Cadigan, 52, 54, 60, 101, 162.

¹²⁶ See, Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 13, and reference to Doug Owrain's description of the Canadian expansionist view of the history of Red River.

¹²⁷ See, Melotti, 3-4.

¹²⁸ See, George Simpson, quoted in Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 74. Donald Gunn, 281 asserts that “the settlers raised abundance of grain for their own use and, in the aggregate, ten times more than the market demanded.”

¹²⁹ W.L. Morton, quoted in Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 6. See also Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 7-8; also David Anderson, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 240: “They still follow the chase and hunting; but at the same time, socially, as regards their position in life, they are much improved.”

margins of the United Kingdom,” more similar to the American borderland experiences than not, supports the contention that state racialized ‘others’ were purposely and systematically denied equal opportunity.¹³⁰ In the United States, the “virulent” state sanctioned hatred carried by incoming ‘actual settlers’ was blatantly obvious.¹³¹ In Canada, equally “bellicose” migrant aspirants to dominion evinced the same disregard of Aboriginal peoples, many with full confidence that they were similarly supported by their state.¹³² Despite representations to the contrary, Canada followed a policy as effectively hostile as the American version.¹³³ The dissolution of the Métis community is therefore explainable as due to the application of external force, not to internal weakness.¹³⁴

The following chapters address four areas germane to this argument: the integration of Aboriginal and European values in the Red River Settlement, the mutual dependence and mutual force of producers and procurers, the myth of non-development, and the “thrust of community intention into the future.”¹³⁵

¹³⁰ See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 181-83; Carter 11, 19-20, 29; also Curtis, 309-11, 313; also Aldon Morris, “Building Blocks of Social Inequality: A Critique of *Durable Inequality*,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42, no. 2 (Apr. 2000): 482-86.

¹³¹ Adelman and Aron, 839; see also, “Policy and Practice of the United States and Great Britain in Their Treatment of Indians,” *North American Review*, 24, no. 55 (Apr. 1827): 365-443.

¹³² Adelman and Aron, 816. See also, Glen Williams, 15-16; D.N. Sprague, “The Métis Land Question, 1870-1882,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 15, no. 3 (fall 1980): 76, and *Canada and the Métis*, 35; Jackson, 84; also Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 164-65, describing John Christian Schultz, the Canadian party, and other associations. Cecil J. Houston, and William J. Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links, and Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 181, Hereward Senior, “Orange Order,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2000), 1728, and Alex Rough, “The Murder of Thomas Scott,” <<http://www.orangenet.org/canada/scott.htm>>, count Thomas Scott, Schultz, John A. Macdonald, J.J. Abbott, and Mackenzie Bowell among loyal Orangemen. Programme, *Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 1871-1946, Grand Orange Lodge of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: 1946), 2, written for an event at which “Brother” John Diefenbaker was “Speaker of the Evening,” asserts that as of 1871 Orange Order confidence in Canadian dominance was such that “Lodges sprang up all over the Province, and the rebels and disloyal elements hied to their hidden holes like rats from a sinking ship. The hierarchy of the Northwest looked on, the sun of Liberty and Loyalty was rising over the eastern horizon, and ere long would penetrate the entire West.”

¹³³ See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 184.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, ix.

¹³⁵ Finlay and Sprague, 552, see also, 445-46: the phrase is in reference to George Grant, *Lament for a Nation* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965).

CHAPTER 4

Integration of Aboriginal and European values in the Red River Settlement

The cultural endowment was a resource with a formative influence on the pattern of borderland coexistence to coalesce as Red River Settlement society. The settlers were a diverse and complicated group, participants in a unique experiment in heterogeneity.¹ The genesis and formation of the prominent community, the Métis, reflected an important aspect of life in the region: the existence of the experience of choice.

From the beginning, there were men of extra-continental and North American origin who could lay claim to a wide variety of identities.² In the early years, all of the settler women and children were native to North America with a maternal Aboriginal heritage. After Marie-Anne Lagimonière's arrival in 1806, no other non-Aboriginal female settlers appeared until 1812. If anything, the number of these declined during the Settlement's expansion.³ Alexander Kennedy Isbister, a Métis barrister resident in England, writing in 1861 noted as "fact" that virtually "every married woman and mother of a family throughout the whole extent of the Hudson's Bay territories, from the ladies of the governors of British Columbia and of the Red River Settlement downwards" was of Aboriginal descent.⁴ Yet the women of Red River displayed variation.⁵ Although Anishinaabe, Cree, and Assiniboine origins may have been most common, the mothers of

¹ See, Coutts, 8.

² Ross Case, quoted in "Appendix, No. 8," *Report from the Select Committee*, 402, enumerates "natives" originally associated with: "England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland, United States of America, the Gold Coast of Africa, the Sandwich Islands, Bengal, Canada, with various tribes of Indians, and a mixed progeny of Creoles or half-breeds."

³ See, Healy, 1-2; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 3, 173, 175-79, 181; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 23. Prior to Marie-Anne Lagimonière, the only female external migrants to arrive in Rupert's Land were the "ill-starred" wife of Governor Henry Sergeant and her companion, during the 1680s, and Isobel Gunn alias John Fubbister who arrived in 1806 and returned 'reluctantly' to the Orkneys in 1809.

⁴ Alexander Kennedy Isbister, quoted in W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 91.

⁵ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 3.

these women were not restricted to any particular First Nations background.⁶ Some had fathers, grandfathers or other male relatives with European associations. Cultural distinctions, such as language and knowledge specific to site, though present, did not necessarily spell pronounced divergences which led inexorably to separate “hermetically sealed” populations.⁷ Intercultural exchange had been going on at a fundamental, interpersonal level among First Nations peoples in the area eventually designated as Rupert’s Land for thousands of years. Intergroup transfers, creating familial alliances and extended kinship support networks through child and adult adoption, spousal exchange, and marriage were customary among many First Nations.⁸ These rearrangements created and solidified inter-band and international alliances, diffused ideas and increased the potential for successful adaptation to diverse circumstances, for instance, the expansion of the fur trade.⁹

A limited fur trade with Europeans existed in North America from 1497 on the

⁶ Helen Hornbeck Tanner, “Ojibwa,” *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, ed. Frederick E. Hoxie (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996), 438: “The form *Saulteux* today is used in the western provinces of Canada to refer to Ojibwa people.” Michael Johnson, “Ojibwa/Chippewa,” *Encyclopedia of Native Tribes of North America* (London: Compendium Publishing, 2001), 44: “Their own name Anishineabe [sic] is increasingly preferred by many Ojibwa today.” John D. Nichols, “Ojibwa Language,” *North American Indians*, 440, presents the conventional Canadian spelling as Anishinaabe, which Hornbeck Tanner, 439, translates as “First (or Original) People.” Aboriginal Canada Portal, <<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca>>, 30 May 2003, indicates that the alternate spelling, Anishinabe, is equally common. Basil Johnston, *Ojibway Heritage: The ceremonies, rituals, dances, prayers and legends of the Ojibway* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1984), 15, uses Anishnabeg. Fred J. Shore, “Cree,” *North American Indians*, 140: “The Crees have as many words to refer to themselves as there are different Cree peoples, but in most cases these terms are not translatable, and the people themselves have chosen to use the word Cree as well”; see, Joseph F. Dion, *My Tribe the Crees*, ed. Hugh A. Dempsey (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1979), 1: “it has been customary to refer to any people resembling us as *Nehiyaw* people, or Cree people.” David Reed Miller, “Assiniboine,” *North American Indians*, 56-57, who presents the Assiniboine as distinct from, but closely related to, the Dakota/Lakota, observes that in Alberta the Assiniboines are also known as Stoney; Dan Kennedy, *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief*, ed James R. Stevens (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), 10, 24, observes that the Alberta Assiniboine “called themselves Nakota, and the many bands within this large cultural group had different names.”

⁷ Stewart, 81. See also, Adelman and Aron, 816.

⁸ Jay Miller, “Families,” *North American Indians*, 193; Marilyn G. Bentz, “Child Rearing,” *North American Indians*, 117.

⁹ Basil Johnston, 62, presents diversity as an Ojibway survival strategy: “There are many flocks formed to attain the same destinations, different trails leading to the same place. The safety and autonomy of the species is best served by following diverse paths in small units.” See also, Shore, 139-40; Hornbeck Tanner, 439; and Adelman and Aron, 819.

Atlantic coast, and from 1534 in the area tributary to the Gulf of St. Lawrence. During the 1600s trade undertaken as a major commercial concern crossed the Canadian shield and advanced to the interior of the continent.¹⁰ The need to engage in cross-cultural brokering would have increased as the mass migration initiated by the settlement of Europeans, the introduction of economically driven trade, and new epidemic diseases in eastern North America triggered a steadily advancing westward push.¹¹ A continuous process of accommodating alternative lifestyles met and dealt with this movement. Mixed groups like the 'Oji-Cree', 'Homeguard Cree' and Métis were a natural consequence. Europeans were treated no differently than anyone else: some band daughters opted to accept them as partners. Not all of their choices need be considered economically driven.¹² Across cultures, human beings are subject to specific physiological responses: there is a biological basis for romantic attraction.¹³ By 1810, the non-native born had been included in the intermingling and shifting populations for upwards of ten generations.

Cree was both a common language of trade and "mother tongue" throughout

¹⁰ Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, revised ed. (1956; reprint, with revised foreword, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 9-10, 15 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹¹ See, Finlay and Sprague, 33; *Archeology of Northwestern Ontario*, 18, 22; A.S. Morton, 4-5, 11-12; Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 79; and Adelman and Aron, 816-18, 820.

¹² See, Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 5-6; A.S. Morton, 306, 349-50; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 4-6, 8, 24-27, 78-79, 92, "Women in Between": Indian Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada," in *Readings in Canadian History, Preconfederation* 2d ed., R. Douglas Francis, and Donald B. Smith eds. (Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1986), 175-77, 179, and "The Role of Native Women in the Fur Trade Society of Western Canada, 1670-1830," in *Rethinking Canada: The promise of Women's History*, ed. Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1986), 60; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 12-13; Jennifer S.H. Brown, "Partial Truths: A Closer Look at Fur Trade Marriage," in *From Rupert's Land to Canada*, 62-63: The conventional historiographic assertion, that socioeconomic factors determined cross-cultural couple formation -- as distinct from continued cohabitation as mated partners -- during the Fur Trade era, has precluded representation of male and female historical actors as completely dimensional human beings. The probability of sexual attraction is acknowledged. Conspicuous in its absence, however, is consideration of the emotional side of 'love' -- a concept peoples of the present recognize as enunciated in extant written and oral sources which confirm it as both known and regarded as consequential in past, even ancient, human populations.

¹³ Helen Fischer, Arthur Aron, Debra Maslek, Haifang Li, Greg Strong, and Lucy L. Brown, "The Neural Mechanisms of Mate Choice: A Hypothesis," *Neuroendocrinology Letters* 23, suppl. 4 (Dec. 2002), cached at <http://www.nel.edu/23_s4/NEL1002R09_Fischer.htm>.

Rupert's Land.¹⁴ The term *Otipaymsoowuk* identified communities and people who were for all intents "free" or "their own boss."¹⁵ The differentiation did not turn on lineage so much as lifestyle choice.¹⁶ Identity was a mutable and multifaceted attribute.¹⁷ In a non-native context the name distinguished those born in North America, or those thoroughly acculturated and determined to stay, from foreign born contemporaries engaged in the fur trade whose tenure in the region would end with the termination of a contract. In a First Nations context, the term identified those who -- though possibly of First Nations descent -- were free of the traditional responsibilities associated with band membership. In a Métis context, the name reflected a freedom to participate in non-Aboriginal and First Nations worlds to varying degrees at different times or to construct a separate way of living.¹⁸ The settlement of Red River, one example of independent social construction, was by no means the first.¹⁹ Prolonged cohabitation among individuals of diverse identities had given rise to a cultural dynamic distinct to the region prior to the establishment of the Red River Settlement. It follows that living in North America in quasi-stateless conditions would not have presented a new challenge to the Métis who congregated there. In the mingling of natives and newcomers, the larger adjustment and need for compromise would have fallen upon external migrants. Aboriginal people comprised the dominant population in numbers and practical knowledge. It is unlikely therefore that their values were 'integrated' into a

¹⁴ Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 10, and Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 192. See also, Foster, "The Country-Born," 72 n. 88, 205 n. 118; and A.C. Garrioch, *The Far and Furry North: A Story of Life and Love and Travel in the days of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Winnipeg: Douglass-McIntyre, 1925), *passim*, for examples; Dion, 164-65; Charette, vii.

¹⁵ See, Maurice L'Hirondelle, cited in Norma Hall, "Seeking freedom to decline the fall: literary form, historiography and the determination of the Red River Métis," submitted to *Historical Method and Historiography* 11.440, S01, University of Manitoba, 12 Dec. 2001, 2. Alternate spellings are common and reflect differences in dialect.

¹⁶ Jay Miller, "Families," 194. See also, Tuchman, 69: According to a proclamation in *La Révolte*: "We know what is wrong with our society is ... that the boss exists," the choice to live as *Otipaymsoowuk* would fit one to be an Anarchist in 'deed.'

¹⁷ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 12; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 70; Van Kirk, "Five Founding Families," 149, 156, 179, and *Many Tender Ties*, 237: Métis women might just as often have their origins obscured or be referred to as 'Indian' in historical sources. See also, Adelman and Aron, 815-16.

¹⁸ Hall, "Seeking freedom to decline the fall," 2.

¹⁹ Jacqueline Peterson cited in Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 12; see also, Adelman and Aron, 816-17.

Europeanized social system at the Settlement, so much as select European values found purchase in Red River Métis society, occasionally reinforcing inclinations already present by virtue of ancestral, originally paternally derived, patterns.²⁰

A logical starting point for arriving at a telling description of Métis society in Red River -- to get at the initial source of social solutions and the means of their transference to the community -- is to study family life, beginning with marriage and family formation and turning to the socialization of children.²¹ Although in Rupert's Land, "alliances with Indian women were the central social aspect of the fur traders' progress across the country," fur trade 'society' was not synonymous with Métis society.²² There were pronounced differences. The former contributed to a past from which the latter was derived. Both existed as contemporaneous, interacting but separate social systems. To date, scholarly emphasis, in remaining fixed on the quasi-biologically derived conception of 'ethnogenesis,' has foregrounded the fur trade. Studies relating to family tend to bracket Red River, concentrating on fur trade alliances made preceding -- or removed from -- its formation, or on Métis post-dispersal experiences.²³ Little of the effort expended in compiling the historiography about either the Métis or Red River has gone toward discovering anything about Métis family dynamics during the settlement's existence.²⁴ If identity is to be understood as "conjunctional, not essential," then it is not reasonable to assume that Métis culture became fixed during the fur trade; that the original European and First Nations progenitors were the sole determining elements concerning the character of successive generations; and that nothing of consequence took place between 1810 and

²⁰ See, Coutts, 100.

²¹ Foster, "Wintering, the Outsider Adult Male and the Ethnogenesis of the Western Plains Métis," in *From Rupert's Land to Canada*, 180.

²² Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 4; also "The Role of Native Women," 59. See also, Sprague, "Cultural Bias of Metis Studies," 66-67.

²³ Frits Pannekoek, "Metis Studies: The Development of a Field and New Direction," in *From Rupert's Land to Canada*, 119-20, lists Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties*, and Jennifer Brown's *Strangers in Blood* as the principal studies illuminating conditions prior to Red River, and Diane Payment and Natalie Kermaol, "La Vie en Rose," and "Les Rôles et les souffrances des femmes métisse lors de la Resistance de 1870 et de la Rebellion de 1885," as having explored those after the dispersal. Brown, "Partial Truths," deals with non-Red River marriage dynamics.

²⁴ See, Brown, "Partial Truths," 59-80, and Pannekoek, "Metis Studies," 111-13, 119-120.

1870.²⁵ A “major research gap” still exists.²⁶

In part, the perhaps inordinate penchant for delineating the interaction of non-Aboriginal men with First Nations women is attributable to the nature of the sources consulted.²⁷ The lack of consideration given to the distinct dynamic of Métis society may be due to the fact that Red River as a place is not “hidden” so much as pertinent historical sources about the “unknown spot” are.²⁸ HBC records include private and business correspondence preponderately written by non-native men connected to the Company. There is no readily available repository of similar size devoted to material written by Métis individuals. The personal concerns of traders may appear anecdotally in their own records whereas those of the mass of Aboriginal contemporaries leading lives so ordinary that they did not inspire anyone to write a special note, do not. In Red River, Métis presence, attitude and behaviour may have been so much the norm that record keepers had little reason to refer to anyone who did not stand out from the crowd. The mundane aspects of life, having escaped notation, remain obscure. It is impossible to fathom why people were doing something without knowing *what* they were doing. The analysis of demographic information is one means of addressing this lacuna.

The tabulated marriage data in *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation* affirms that conclusions derived from fur trade studies are not definitive in a Red River context. The belief that European attitudes predominated in culturally mixed family groups appears presumptive; the idea that marriages contracted between non-Aboriginal males and First Nations females were somehow intrinsically more important to Red River community dynamics than the historical couplings of Métis to First Nations, and particularly Métis to Métis, appears unfounded. A cursory count of relevant data provided in Table 1:

²⁵ Clifford, 11. See also, Spry, “‘Memories’ of George William Sanderson,” 115; Heather Devine, “Les Desjarlais: The Development and Dispersion of a Proto-Métis Hunting Band, 1785-1870,” in *From Rupert’s Land to Canada*, 129.

²⁶ Pannekoek, “Metis Studies,” 123; see also, 116, 124, where he projects that “The real future in Metis studies lies not in Red River,” as, in his view, the period from 1900-1950 exhibits the more “relevant” vacancy.

²⁷ See, Pannekoek, “Metis Studies,” 120.

²⁸ Brown, “Partial Truths,” 60. “A Visit to Red River,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 13, no. 77 (Oct. 1856): 665.

“Genealogy of Red River Households, 1818-1870,” reveals that, according to information obtained from sources where individuals were racialized in the process of constructing records, as few as one percent of marriages were between partners who may have had any significant ‘cultural’ hurdles to overcome as a result of a pronounced difference in ‘ethnicity.’

In addition to an unknown number of marriages that for whatever reason may figure as “omissions” from the table, there are 4 033 instances of men “known to have been heads of families” in the Red River colony prior to 1870.²⁹ Approximately 3 813 of these men were united with a like number of women. The number of men is approximate because the possibility exists that despite care taken to provide as accurate a guide as possible, in the process of compiling the table one person may have generated two identities. Thomas Sinclair, ID 4384, furnishes an example. The occasion of his marriage to Caroline Pruden after the death of his first wife Hannah Cummings resulted in the attribution of a second identity -- ID 4389. The difference between the number of marriages and the number of men is a result of at least 210 identifiable instances of multiple marriages. Individuals such as Antoine La Freniere, ID 2533, and James Sanderson, ID 4327, married as often as four times. As women listed as wives do not have their own ID number, instances where they remarried are not readily discernible.

The total number of men clearly identified in the table as ‘European’ -- including those born in the Canadas or the United States -- is 693. Of these, 446 were married to women who are not also designated as European. Only 56 of the wives are identified as ‘Indian.’ Not all of the records consulted in compiling the table include ‘racial’ categorization, but if it is assumed that the identified males provide a representative sample, so that the proportion of European men married to different categories of women is consistent throughout the table, then 12 percent of the undesignated, but potentially European, males were also married to females understood to be Indian. Even with the inclusion of these marriages, the percentage of European to Indian marriages falls below five percent.

²⁹ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 9, 29.

It is worth noting that 56 women identified as European were evidently married to non-European husbands. Although none of these husbands are listed as Indian, some may well have fit criteria that would make that designation as appropriate as any other. Adding these marriages to the list of those assumed to have harboured a cultural challenge does not alter the diminutive stature of the group within the community. In addition, analysis of the 48 clearly identified alliances that were formed between designated European men and Indian women born prior to 1810 -- only eight such marriages are listed as having been contracted among those born after 1810 -- indicates that, generally, the prevalence of original trader to First Nations marriages decreased arithmetically over time while the number of Métis unions was undergoing geometric increase.

A simple calculation allows the time frame that the purportedly culturally challenged marriages existed relative to the settlement's 60 year span to be visualized. Average life expectancies for traders and their wives, based on the dates provided for 13 traders and 10 wives from within this trader to First Nations group, work out to 71 and 49 years respectively. Applying these to the remainder, for whom only birth dates are supplied, and arbitrarily fixing a date of marriage termination at the midpoint between the two projected dates of death -- giving men shorter lives, women longer, in an attempt to err on the side of caution -- indicates that the group may well have maintained its size to about 1835. It then underwent a pronounced decrease over the following decade -- a period when from one half to two thirds of the marriages might have ended due to the death of one or both spouses. Aside from being small, this community variant is made up of people of similar ages. Few of these 'founding' marriages would have carried on past 1855. It is unlikely that any would have persisted past 1860.³⁰ Even if everyone is presumed to have lived to a ripe old age, and discounting two known instances of dissolved marriages -- as well as those where 'Indian' wives were also Métis women -- by the late middle years of the Settlement there would have been a precipitous decline in original trader to First Nations

³⁰ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 65, suggests a mean age of marriage as 27.5 years for the men and 22.3 for the women. A second calculation using these figures, devised to include additional 'mixed' couples born after 1810, confirms that their numbers were small. Their presence would have done little to alter the picture given by the first calculation.

marriages.³¹

Without attempting to address any omissions in the tabulated data furnished in *The Genealogy*, or expending additional effort on more sophisticated tests, it is still plain that the vast majority of marriages in the settlement were contracted between Métis individuals. This is a circumstance that has received mention in the historiography.³² However, excepting the tabular and introductory information furnished in *The Genealogy*, the observance is largely salutary.³³ The point -- keeping in mind the extremely unfixed nature of 'racially,' 'ethnically' and 'culturally' designated boundaries -- that over the life of the Settlement probably 75 to 85 percent of the marriages were between Métis partners, is not made prominent. Nor is it emphasized that in Red River upwards of 90 percent of the marriages were between culturally congenial individuals. Studies with a primary focus on 'mixed' marriages between 'European' males and 'Indian' females during the fur trade era address a mere fragment of settlement life. A redirection of emphasis is warranted if the larger community is to be understood.

By the time the Red River Settlement was formed, most of the women who would eventually settle there were Métis as were their current or potential spouses. The 'normal' Red River family had an already thoroughly blended heritage. Cross-cultural negotiation processes were well underway. Decisions regarding instances of major divergence, the selection of values deemed worth promoting and determination of emphasis accorded to them, had already been made.³⁴ Métis families included men, women and children who were comfortable with and familiar to each other. There is no reason to extend the assumption that marriage in Rupert's Land was a site of a transoceanic cultural contestation

³¹ See, Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 180, 182, 189; and Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*: The relationship between Chief Factor Donald McKenzie, ID 3421, and his first wife -- whose identity is not firmly established -- may have ended before he lived in Red River, as was the case with Governor George Simpson, ID 4374, and his spouse Margaret Taylor. The last of retired trader, ID 379, James Bird's Aboriginal wives, Elizabeth, died in 1834. Jane Flett, the "Indian" wife of James Sutherland, ID 4520, died in 1835. Mary, the "Indian" wife of Robert Logan, ID 2988, died in 1838, as did ID 4028, J.P. Pruden's Métis wife Nancy Ann. Jane Auld, Métis wife of John Charles, ID 845, died in 1842.

³² See, W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 91.

³³ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 23.

³⁴ See, Devine, 132, 150.

to include the Red River Métis. Unlike the situation faced by transitory workers clustered in and about fur trade posts and engaging in the “partial or incomplete social sphere” that accompanied that business, living in an established community, where oral communication was a constant, meant that potential spouses, their extended families and friends had the opportunity to be aware of areas of conflict over values and outlook.³⁵ It was possible to “sit down to study the issue.”³⁶ There was time and incentive to negotiate terms.³⁷ Missionaries of the Churches of Rome and England had made the Christian rite and its exhortation to lifelong inter-gender partnership available by 1820.³⁸ Regardless of sexual orientation, settlers who took part in the ritual -- and according to Table 1 many did -- were well aware of what marriage as a concept entailed in their community and how it differed from a temporary or casual liaison. Distinctions between consensual sex and rape existed.³⁹ If the option to marry was pursued, people could decide whether a church, traditional ceremony, or combination of the two, was preferable.⁴⁰

Evidence does not support a description of Red River society as evincing or promoting a widespread racialized gender divide. If there were men in the Settlement who felt “ambivalence” about the Aboriginal character or background of their wives, they were in the minority.⁴¹ There were likely few families in which adult Métis offspring had First Nations wives or mothers present in the community to whom they could behave as

³⁵ Brown, “Partial Truths,” 69.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ See for example, Garrioch, 13, 38, 71.

³⁸ Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 50, 59.

³⁹ Van Kirk, 164, 168.

⁴⁰ Garrioch, 40, 106-107; Norbert Welsh, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, ed. Mary Weekes (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1939; reprint Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1994), 26-27 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁴¹ Sylvia Van Kirk, “Five Founding Families,” 158, see also, “‘What if Mama is an Indian?’: The cultural ambivalence of the Alexander Ross family,” in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, ed. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), and *Many Tender Ties*, 237-38.

distantly as has been asserted, even if so inclined.⁴² The Ross family, an example where a First Nations mother apparently caused embarrassment for one of her Métis daughters, was in an unusual position.⁴³ The fact that Sally was an 'Indian' may have been less of a problem than her culture of origin. As an Okanagan, she may have lacked the local knowledge, skills, or family ties that would have integrated her readily into Red River society.⁴⁴ The publication of *The Red River Settlement* in 1856, broadcasting her husband Alexander's low estimation of his Aboriginal neighbours -- who were obviously disinclined to support his attempt to introduce notions of squirarchy and install himself and his "princess" bride at the head⁴⁵ -- would not have helped. It is also possible that Jemima's personality tended to petulance. Her unhappiness may have been due to other causes and her mother may simply have served as a convenient scapegoat. Whether or not other fur traders were representative of the discursively established determinate axiomatic regarding 'human nature' -- that 'European' men and First Nations women must have had great difficulty understanding one another -- Red River Métis settlers were different. If the two sets of broadly defined cultural resources -- Old World European and New World Aboriginal -- on which their progenitors originally may have drawn are held to constitute underlying orientations that were not superficial beliefs but "deeply entrenched cultural norms," it must also be recognized that these had been subject to modification over

⁴² See, John Palliser quoted in Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 238. Coutts, 75, citing the quantitative research of Brian Gallagher refutes the "accepted view" that a reputed increase in either "racial sensibilities" or "racial tension" in fact "represented an important and even central theme in Red River history before 1870." Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 231, 239-40, would seem to confirm Coutt's position; see also, Spry, "'Memories' of George William Sanderson," 117.

⁴³ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 236-7.

⁴⁴ See, Jay Miller, "Salishan Languages," and Jacqueline Peterson, "Plateau Tribes," *North American Indians*, 564-65, and 485-89. Michael Johnson, 152, identifies the Okanagan as *Sinkaietk*. Healy, 18-19, indicates that Sally was thoroughly accepted by some elements of the community.

⁴⁵ Frits Pannekoek, "Alexander Ross," *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999), 2036. See also, Barbara Johnstone, quoted in Edith Paterson, "Canadian History is Exciting Says New Park Superintendent," *Winnipeg Free Press*. c. 4 July 1961. Johnstone, a Métis descendant of Isaac Cowie [See, "Chapter 5," 92 n. 39, this thesis], dismisses as "nonsense" any claims to princess status made about First Nations women.

generations.⁴⁶

The predilection for binary thinking in Western European tradition is eminently apparent in instances of abstract thought, such as racialism, and situations where 'us and them' roles are assigned and enforced by specifically set and organized circumstances.⁴⁷ However, it is not only possible but likely that these separated and limited conceptions come undone wherever the freedom exists to engage in extended contact with the abstracted 'other.' Attitudes may be deep seated, but, removed from a reinforcing context, people learn of multiplicity and diversity from direct personal experience.⁴⁸ In quasi-stateless societies formed in borderland environments, 'cultural' differences did not build into conceptions of a "stable, exotic otherness" because "self-other relations are matters of power and rhetoric rather than of essence."⁴⁹ In borderland circumstances the sources of power were diffuse and largely non-hierarchical.⁵⁰ Even within fur trade posts the idea that hierarchical models of authority would prevail when transplanted to Rupert's Land was constantly challenged by actual events.⁵¹ The subjects of extended "culture-contact" situations underwent an exchange process, experiencing what has been dubbed variously as "interculture", "interference", "interreference", "transculturation," and "intercultural intertexts," whereby, "The roots of tradition are cut and retied, [and] collective symbols appropriated from external influences."⁵² Because human beings learn throughout their lives, from their own experience and from what they observe or hear about others, changes

⁴⁶ Stewart, 79. Vibert, xii, 108, 162, 277, 287 n. 29, concludes that traders of the plateau region - even Métis individuals such as Simon McGillivray -- were conceptually unable to appreciate Aboriginal lifestyles and peoples. Samuel Johnson, quoted in Boswell, 464, shares the view. He refuses to accept that a man who had written from the American "wilds" to announce, "Here am I, free and unrestrained, amidst the rude magnificence of nature, with this Indian woman by my side ... what more can be desired for human happiness?" could be considered as anything other than a "gross absurdity" as a human being.

⁴⁷ See, Lorne Tepperman, and R. Jack Richardson, *The Social World: An Introduction to Sociology*, 2d ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1991), 83-88, 105, 107, 277-280; and Stephen F. Davis, and Joseph J. Palladino, *Psychology*, 2d ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1997), 687-88.

⁴⁸ Tepperman and Richardson, 99, 145-149, and Davis and Palladino, 689.

⁴⁹ Clifford, 14. See also, Henry *et al*, 23.

⁵⁰ Adelman and Aron, 816.

⁵¹ See, Edith I. Burley, *Servants of the Honourable Company: Work, Discipline, and Conflict in the Hudson's Bay Company, 1770-1879* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁵² Clifford, 15 n. 4.

in individual belief systems take place. Individual modifications can become influential when communicated to others. They are then reflected as changes in the overall culture of the group.⁵³

If, in some instance, a Red River woman was unable to overcome her Europe-oriented husband's cultural myopia and alert him to his good fortune in having secured an Aboriginal spouse as helpmate, the vast majority were successful in passing on to their offspring a respect for their worth as beautiful, capable and caring women.⁵⁴ After a half-century absence from Rupert's Land, during which he encountered other cultures and methods of childrearing world-wide, Sea Captain Colin Robertson Sinclair recalled his deceased Métis mother with fondness. He returned to Red River and raised a monument to her memory bearing the inscription:

Eyes of my childhood days shall meet me,
Lips of a mother's love shall greet me
On the day I follow.
Oh, what a host of memories rise;
Sadness dims an old man's eyes.⁵⁵

Although one of the few Métis of his generation to have a non-Aboriginal mother,⁵⁶ in exhorting the community to present a unified front during the Resistance of 1869-70, Louis Riel considered the veneration of motherhood vital to formulating a persuasive rallying call:

C'est vrai que notre origine sauvage est humble, mais il est juste que nous honorions nos mères aussi bien que nos pères. Pourquoi nous occuperions-nous à quel degré de mélange nous possédons le sang européen et le sang indien? Pour peu que nous ayons de l'un ou de l'autre, la reconnaissance et

⁵³ See, Norma Hall, "Contrasting context and content in *Trader's Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau, 1807-1846*," submitted to *Gender History in Canada* 11.775, S01, University of Manitoba, 12 Nov. 2002.

⁵⁴ See, Spry, "'Memories' of George William Sanderson," 116, 118; Welsh, 1; Charette, 6, 107; Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of seven years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1867-1874 on the Great Buffalo Plains* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), 154, 285; Van Kirk, "The Role of Native Women," 63-64; Dickason, "From 'One Nation' ... to 'New Nation,'" 22, 25.

⁵⁵ Healy, 166.

⁵⁶ See, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 1-3.

I'amour filial, ne nous font-ils pas une loi de dire: Nous sommes Métis.⁵⁷

The most prevalent approaches to studying the Métis appear to reflect the Euro- and andro-centric biases of source materials, historiographical traditions, and past research cultures.⁵⁸ If the contribution of Aboriginal women to community life has been downplayed or misunderstood, then, contrary to mainstream historiographic representation, women may in fact have been central to Métis community formation, the configuration of values, and social cohesion.⁵⁹ Children raised in Red River Métis families had parents with similar expectations regarding childrearing. The majority of mothers and fathers in Red River had not been raised within the walls of a trading post where European notions of hierarchy and gender were, to some degree, enforceable.⁶⁰ There is no reason to expect that the *Otipaymsowuk* would have given up a system of social organization that had proven eminently workable for generations of First Nations peoples simply to mimic European styles of living, especially when those who were stolidly European -- or brought up in that manner -- were not demonstrably adept at surviving in a free environment.⁶¹ Therefore, it is unlikely that Métis social norms were gender determined in a manner which privileged

⁵⁷ Louis Riel, as quoted in Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 10. Translation: "It is true that our native origin is humble, but it is just that we honour our mothers as well as our fathers. Why preoccupy ourselves with what degree of mixture we possess of European blood and Indian blood? Whatever small amount we have of the one or the other, in the acknowledgment of filial love, we lack no dictate to say: We are Métis."

⁵⁸ See, Marcus and Fisher, vii-ix; Beatrice Medicine, "Gender," *North American Indians*, 217-18; Sprague, "Cultural Bias of Metis Studies," 66-67.

⁵⁹ See, Beatrice Medicine, "Women," *North American Indians*, 685-89; and Jeannette Armstrong, "Invocation: The Real Power of Aboriginal Women," in *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength*, ed. Christine Miller and Patricia Chuchryk, with Marie Smallface Marule, Brenda Manyfingers, and Cheryl Deering (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996; reprint, 1997), ix-x (page citations are to the reprint edition). See also Coutts, xiv.

⁶⁰ Burley, 2, 4, 6.

⁶¹ Paul C. Thistle, *Indian-European Trade Relations in the Lower Saskatchewan River Region to 1840* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1986), 8. See also, Samuel Hearne, *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772* (1795; reprint with introduction, ed. Richard Glover, Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1972), 81-82 n.* (page citations are to the reprint edition), for the story of Mary Norton.

male European approaches.⁶² More probably, parenting roles were gendered after the manner of First Nations communities. In any case, the parents of successive generations of Métis people were individuals whose primary caretakers through infancy and early childhood had almost certainly been female as well as Aboriginal.⁶³ In assessing the incorporation of values in Red River as a settler society, the role of women as transmitters of cultural norms in Aboriginal communities needs to be acknowledged. Based on the works that are available, a different, expanded role for Métis women within their community can be posited.

Perhaps the most important element of First Nations social structure to be perpetuated by the Métis was the kinship network.⁶⁴ In a First Nations context the networks are identified as “family-clan systems.”⁶⁵ Speaking in Rousseau River, Manitoba, before the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples in 1992, Leonard Nelson testified that, “The clan system is a social order. The clan system is a justice system. The clan system is a government. The clan system is an extended family unit.”⁶⁶ In Rupert’s Land -- as in Europe -- familial systems exhibited both diversity and similarity. Different strategies were commonplace, yet, inter-band and international exchanges of membership had long been the norm. Thus the sets of basic beliefs which structured the original societies of the

⁶² Cadigan, 65, notes a contrasting situation in Newfoundland whereby, “A process of transatlantic family migration in fact established the patriarchal family structure of West County English society in Newfoundland in the early modern period.”

⁶³ Jay Miller, “Families,” 192. See also, Spry, “‘Memories’ of George William Sanderson,” 116-118; Charette, 7.

⁶⁴ See, Jay Miller, 193-97.

⁶⁵ Armstrong, ix; see also, Jay Miller, 193-96.

⁶⁶ Leonard Nelson, quoted in Patrick Macklem, *Indigenous Difference and the Constitution of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 194. See also, Jay Miller, 193-95, who notes that population density determined the degree to which the extended family groups could actively participate in decision making at the individual and immediate family level.

Americas retained a semblance of consanguinity.⁶⁷ The basic beliefs held by Europeans, because of a genesis that was entirely separate, had dramatically different emphases.⁶⁸ The Métis community began with the acceptance of European individuals, likely as husbands, as members of First Nations kinship networks.⁶⁹ Families in which European approaches to survival and comfort were allowed a consideration equal to Aboriginal approaches were distinct enough to be recognized as something new. Because the initial unit for adoption and exchange of ideas regarding family was that of the couple, the change was not drastic, sudden, or necessarily permanent. It was negotiated between individuals, of different personalities and abilities in different contexts with different outcomes. However, all of these individuals were at all times compelled to be primarily concerned with survival. Men born and raised in Europe and transported into North American circumstances were in no sense imbued with a superior ability to cope. In fact they were more often than not dependent on the knowledge of their spouses, and through them, on the support afforded by an acquired kinship network.⁷⁰

Where combined culture families formed networks modelled on Aboriginal

⁶⁷ For examples of evidence of kinship networks among the Métis and suggestions that they functioned at more than an abstract level, see, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 29, 31, 36, 37-38; Coutts, 96-97, 100, 104-05; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 33-34, 75, 98-100, 218-19; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 130, 133, 138; Spry, "'Memories' of George William Sanderson," 116-17, 118-19; and J.E. Rea, review of, *The Free People -- Otipemisiwak, Batoche, Saskatchewan 1870-1930*, by Diane Paulette Payment, *The Beaver: Exploring Canada's History* (Dec./Jan. 1990/1991): 58. Although kinship networks are discussed in the formal historiography about the Métis, the precise nature of their workings has not been thoroughly studied. Many of the Métis were of Anishinaabe descent where Clan systems were of central importance. Brown's comments regarding kinship networking within the HBC provides an explanation as to how Métis of non-Anishinaabe descent, or relation, may nevertheless have ensured that a high level of respect for, and reliance on, kinship networking was retained among the Métis. PAM MG 14, B 30, file 38, "Colin Robertson Sinclair, Estate, 1898-1903"; and Colin Inkster to Mrs. Cecil Walley, letter, 17 Feb. 1927, collection Norma Hall, suggest that kinship networking among Métis families preserved a transoceanic awareness of, and maintained access to, the Red River community for geographically removed members. Neil Ray, ed., "Cousins," *Children of the Country* 9 (spring 2000): 2; "Message Board," *Metis Resource Centre Inc.* <<http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/mboard/messages/187.html>>, 20 June 2003, indicate that among a present-day Métis, family connections are still informally acknowledged and expressed in terms of kinship.

⁶⁸ Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, xiii; Finlay and Sprague, 5-7; Wendell H. Oswalt and Charlotte Nealy, *This Land was Theirs: A Study of Native Americans* (Toronto: Wiley, 1999), 5.

⁶⁹ Medicine, "Women," 686.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*; Van Kirk, "Five Founding Families," 158; see also, Jay Miller, "Families," 194.

structures, membership in the Métis community could transcend other defining ties.⁷¹ An Anishinaabe born Métis woman could have kinship connections with Assiniboine people. Her sons might live as Cree band members with her brother, while she lived as a Nizitapi wife.⁷² Her sister might be an Anishinaabe born Métis -- whose NWC father's kinship network extended beyond Montréal -- currently living as the wife of a HBC trader, with a daughter living as an Anishinaabe with her maternal grandmother, while a son lived in the Orkneys as a member of his paternal uncle's household.⁷³ At any point in time, a decision by any of these interconnected individuals to change living arrangements, or explain them, could alter perceptions and the identity accorded to them by others. Regardless of the choices made, it was the mixed⁷⁴ nature of their extended family -- potentially the basis of a community -- that remained constant. Within Métis families, historical kinship networks are made readily observable through written documents which notate formal family structures after the European, patrilineal manner of genealogical construction.⁷⁵ Informal structures, nearly but not entirely invisible in the written record, were no less important. Of these, the network of women was fundamental.⁷⁶ Métis women, depending on their principal women's network and the consensus reached within it, could accept or reject non-Aboriginal notions to different degrees, adopting more or less of their husband's, father's or brother's cultural identity for incorporation into their individual family unit. The women's shared Aboriginal status and extended and intertwined familial affiliations

⁷¹ Hornbeck Tanner, 439.

⁷² See, Darrell Robes Kipp, "Blackfoot," *North American Indians*, 74: the name translates as "The Real People."

⁷³ Although the two women described are fictional, the example is plausible. It is loosely based on women who are not known to be related, the mother of Poundmaker and Margaret Nahoway Sinclair, as well as the kinship description of Norbert Welsh, 12.

⁷⁴ W.L. Morton, "Métis," *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, vol. 7 (Ottawa: Canadiana Company, 1958), 53, notes that the term Métis is "derived from the Latin *miscere*, "to mix" -- as is the English word mix.

⁷⁵ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 29-38; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 33-34, 75, 98-100, 218-19; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 130, 133; Garry N. Hnatowich, *Descendancy Chart for William Sinclair*, 27 Dec. 1997.

⁷⁶ For evidence of its existence see, Dion, 113; MacGregor, 178; Healy, 46-47, 85, 88, 90, 92, 95-96; Spry, "'Memories' of George William Sanderson," 125. See also, Robert F. Harney, "Preface," in *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History*, by Jean Burnet (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 1986), ix-x.

ensured a level of connectedness within the *Otipaymsowuk* community regardless of a husband's primary orientation.⁷⁷ Not only did Aboriginal women bring the distinctive Métis status designation to the emerging community, their affiliations to a large extent determined that it was a community, held together not by the work ties of husbands forging an andro-centric society based on the "company of men," but by kinship ties which crossed the divides of corporate loyalties and occupational roles.⁷⁸

Within their own sphere, women shared information and decided matters of importance to their survival.⁷⁹ Their cultural background did not predispose them to adopt an entirely passive or submissive stance with respect to their spouses and decision-making regarding their families or themselves.⁸⁰ Outward deference does not necessarily indicate inner abnegation. In many respects, First Nations women enjoyed a substantial level of autonomy relative to European women.⁸¹ Just as male external migrants were in no position to question the survival skills of Aboriginal peoples, their conception of gendered authority was vulnerable to subversion, given Aboriginal women's capacity for self-sufficiency and mobility.⁸² Nor were men equipped to interfere with native women when it came to prenatal care, birthing and the tending of infants and young children who were breastfed. The primary caretakers during the most important and influential period in terms of the transmission of cultural norms, the period during which the learning of language and its

⁷⁷ See, Van Kirk, "The Role of Native Women," 64. Carol Devens, review of *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country*, by Jennifer S.H. Brown, *The Canadian Historical Review*, 62, no. 1 (Mar. 1981): 342.

⁷⁸ Foster, "The Country-Born," 4-5, 25, contends that within the fur trade, "the 'company of men' was a principal focus of social life," and that within HBC families, "it is readily apparent that behavioural practices derived from Great Britain would be encountered with greater frequency than those of the Indian."

⁷⁹ Dion, 16; Spry, "'Memories' of George William Sanderson," 120.

⁸⁰ Dion, 17; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 84-85; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 128; John Tanner, *Narrative of the Captivity and adventures of John Tanner (U.S. Interpreter at the Sault Ste. Marie.) during Thirty Years of Residence among the Indians in the Interior of North America*, ed. Edwin James (New York: G. and C. and H. Cavill, 1830), 37.

⁸¹ See, Finlay and Sprague, 7; Jay Miller, "Families," 192-93; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 152-53.

⁸² For example see, Garrioch, 87-88, 227, 230-32, for descriptions of Mrs. Pawanis and Mrs. Flaman; also Dion, 114-15, describing community reliance upon the resourcefulness of "old ladies." Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 58.

embedded philosophies structures the neural pathways of the brain, were Aboriginal women.⁸³ Their first, and reportedly preferred, languages were usually Cree -- known in Plains Cree as *nêhiyawêwin* -- and its linguistic relative, Anishinaabemowin.⁸⁴ That their cultural orientation shaped cultural transmission to succeeding generations is undeniable.⁸⁵ The belief systems initially determined as a response to physiographic realities -- explanations that offered ways to interpret and cope with circumstance -- eventually became a given set of instructions learned by children, underpinning their intellectual and perceptual understanding of the world and shaping their experience in it. During the first decades of settlement, the number of Métis "apparently more conversant in Cree than in English or French" was adjudged "significant."⁸⁶ It stands to reason that in Métis families, well into the settlement's existence, Aboriginal values regarding early childhood socialization continued to prevail over European values, perhaps in part explaining Henry Youle Hind's comment in 1857 that "the colony was becoming less and less European each decade."⁸⁷

Certainly, Hind's conviction could not have been based on observations regarding the physiognomy of the inhabitants. A number of visitors were drawn to Red River during the period of his enquiry. The widely advertised end of exclusive HBC jurisdiction over the territory, at a time when "all eyes ... turned toward the Northwestern gold discoveries," led many migrating entrepreneurs to surmise that "the land which they [the HBC] have shut out the world from is open to capital and labour."⁸⁸ Those who left written descriptions of

⁸³ Dion, 6. See also, Evelyn Fox Keller, as cited in, Natasha Whitton, "Evelyn Fox Keller: Historical, Psychological and Philosophical Intersections in the Study of Gender and Science," *Women Writers: A Zine*, cached at <<http://www.womenwriters.net/archives/whittoned1.htm>> 22 Jun. 1999.

⁸⁴ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 192; Nichols, "Ojibwa Language," 440.

⁸⁵ See, Nichols, "Ojibwa Language," and LaVerne Masayesva, "Languages," in *North American Indians*, 441, 331.

⁸⁶ Foster, "The Country-Born," 205, 118.

⁸⁷ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 23. See also, Paul Kane, *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America from Canada to Vancouver Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1859; revised and reprinted, Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1968), 49, 51 (page citations are to the reprint edition), for a similar observation.

⁸⁸ "The People of the Red River," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 18, no. 104 (Jan. 1859): 169.

travels through Red River thought the heterogeneity of Métis appearance worthy of remark. The Métis were found to show great “diversity of their figures,” and “various hues of their complexion,” including a full range of eye and hair colour -- a circumstance which had been noted in the chronicle of Ross and the journal of Anglican parson, Rev. William Cockran.⁸⁹ The latter, writing in 1845, inferred that of one of his parishioners must have been of African American descent “by his father’s side.”⁹⁰

Not only did outside observers have a difficult time when attempting to identify who exactly was First Nations, Métis, or White by physical appearance, the “Melange of languages,” encountered within the settlement, cart brigades, and hunting encampments did not make arriving at distinctions any easier.⁹¹ Along with French, speakers might be apprehended as conversant in Gaelic, English, Cree, and Anishinaabemowin.⁹² The spoken word was sometimes enlivened “with all the wild accompaniment of mingled accent.”⁹³ At other times, what was assumed to be a second language was spoken with notable “elegance.”⁹⁴ Because fluency in more than two languages was common, reducing determination to primary and secondary orientations could be difficult.⁹⁵ Scholarly ‘impressions’ notwithstanding, no records exist to clarify the ratio of Métis men, women

⁸⁹ Manton Marble, “To Red River and Beyond (First Paper),” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 21, 123 (Aug. 1860): 294. Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 191, 200.

⁹⁰ William Cockran quoted in Foster, “The Country-Born,” 197. See also, Charette, 108; Welsh, 7.

⁹¹ “People of the Red River,” 170. See also, Foster, “The Country-Born,” 205.

⁹² “People of the Red River,” 169; and “The Red River Trail,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*, 18, no. 107 (Apr. 1859): 614. Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 68.

⁹³ “People of the Red River,” 169.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 173. Spry, “‘Memories’ of George William Sanderson,” 122, notes the instance of a “Blackfoot” girl singing in French. Cowie, 261, describes Olivier Flammand, ID 1858, as French, yet he also spoke “Saultaux” and Cree fluently while his English was ‘amusing.’ English then was almost certainly a third or fourth language for many. The tendency to categorize the Métis as either French or English may be suspected as having originated with missionaries and fur trade *bourgeois*. Clerics and clerks whose first language was French would classify and record Métis individuals who conversed with them in that language as French. Recorders who were English would adopt a similar strategy that saw their language given priority of place. Linguistic designation then, may reflect institutional bias.

⁹⁵ See, Clifford E. Trafzer, “Native American Studies,” 420, who asserts that Aboriginal peoples purposely cultivated multilingual abilities because, “it was important to be able to deal with neighbors who spoke different languages and followed different customs.”

and children among the buffalo hunting and trading parties with a dominant paternally English linguistic heritage to those with a dominant paternally French linguistic heritage, or a combination of both, or something else.⁹⁶ There is no reason to assume that patrilineal language necessarily overrode other factors that influenced participation. One commentator, writing in 1860, decided that the only sure way to divine a person's primary antecedence was to determine which language was resorted to when cursing.⁹⁷ This may not have been a fail-safe method. It has also been asserted that as the Cree language lacked "real honest-to-goodness 'swear words'," these were borrowed "from other tongues."⁹⁸ Linguistic diversity and appropriation were also observed among the *voyageur* brigades. In his published recollection, *The Far and Furry North*, of 1925, Métis missionary, the Rev. A.C. Garrioch, recounts an instance where the oarsmen entertained themselves and passengers by swapping terminology from three different languages.⁹⁹ The emergence of Michif, an entirely new, separate and complex language, combining French nouns with Cree verbs and including English and Anishinaabemowin words stands as an example of the creative potential inherent in diversity.¹⁰⁰

The wide variation between perceived cultural orientations of siblings in Red River families has also been remarked upon. External migrant Letitia Hargrave was shocked to discover that in Red River, "Some people educate and make gentlemen of part of their family and leave the other savages."¹⁰¹ The varied paths of the children of William Sinclair and his Métis wife Nahoway suggest that choices were not necessarily dictated by parents - - opportunity and inclination played a role. In their family, the options available for siblings

⁹⁶ Foster, "The Country-Born," 202 n. 106, 205 n. 119. See also, Welsh, 73. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 39.

⁹⁷ Marble, "(First Paper)," 298.

⁹⁸ Dion, 2.

⁹⁹ Garrioch, 64.

¹⁰⁰ See, Peter Bakker, "A Language of Our Own": *the Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Métis* (Amsterdam: Drukkerij Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1988), 1, 3, 7-8, 12, 23, and Sarah G. Thomason, *Contact Languages, a Wider Perspective* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1996), 2-4; "Michif," Métis National Council. <<http://www.metisnation.ca/ARTS/michif.html>>, 20 Jun. 2003.

¹⁰¹ Letitia Hargrave, quoted in Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 178.

ranged from full participation in Aboriginal societies to full participation in Europeanized societies. Of the ten children, Phoebe, Mary, Catherine and Thomas became permanent settlers in three separate parishes of Red River -- St. Andrew's, St. Johns, and St. Paul's. William worked as a chief factor for the HBC northern department before settling in southern Ontario, which is where Anne also resided. John, after marrying into a 'French' Métis family, migrated to Utah, a territory considered "sympathetic" to Aboriginal peoples.¹⁰² Jane migrated to the Orkneys, then England, as a member of a seafaring community. Of her two brothers educated in Scotland, James returned to Red River then migrated to Oregon, while Colin turned to seafaring before retiring to Red River. In this family, as in others, familial connections could influence but were not determinate of place of residence or occupation. The offspring appear to have taken maximum advantage of opportunities to diversify without direct paternal governance. The elder William died in 1818 when the children were all under the age of twenty-one and still residing in Rupert's Land with their mother.¹⁰³

When the "well-preserved" religious distinctions between parishes are also considered, it is clear that children raised in Red River surrounded by diversity, and further informed of its extent by family members, would find it commonplace.¹⁰⁴ Tenets of the Judaeo-Christian belief system and the call for homogeneity that accompanied the nineteenth-century European enthusiasm for nationalism held diversity to be unworkable, giving rise to the conventional wisdom that the Métis must have been inherently -- dangerously -- conflicted.¹⁰⁵ The representation of the Métis as 'divided' selves does not

¹⁰² Oswalt and Nealy, 87.

¹⁰³ Norma Hall, "Economic Strategies and Cultural Continuity in Northern Manitoba Communities during the Fur Trade Era" submitted to 11.373 L01 *A History of Western Canada*, 15 Nov. 2000, 10-11.

¹⁰⁴ Marble, "(Third Paper)," 316. Ens, 50, asserts that parishes constituted separate, sealed, self-perpetuating "ethnic and religious" communities. However, parish 'definition' may be suspected of hinging on the circumstance of the various religious representatives contenting themselves with limiting competitive church construction -- likely due to cost as much as any other factor -- to one church, per denomination, per parish.

¹⁰⁵ Gen. 11: 1-9, Mat. 12:25, Mark 3:23, Luke 11:17; Özkirimli, 12, 17, 19, 23; Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, vii, ix. See also, Lawrence Hill, "Black + White ...equals black," *Macleans, Canada's Weekly Newsmagazine*, 114, no. 35 (27 Aug. 2001):16-17: who "discovered, very early, that some people had strange ideas about the children of interracial unions."

hold. There was nothing psychotic about the way that children and other Aboriginal inhabitants of Red River fully engaged in a “shared world” as it was -- not as it was ‘supposed’ to be -- and thereby experienced heterogeneity as the norm.¹⁰⁶ They were comfortably acculturated to pluralism. Multiple languages, different lifestyles and varied occupations were available from which to choose routes to realize personal destinies. They were not confined by ‘either or’ choices that were limiting or final. Whatever hegemonic motives lay behind ‘civilizing missions’ during the Colonial era, the respective representatives of formal churches were successful in securing populations to their benediction in Red River. However, any introduction, perpetuation or exaggeration of divisions within the Métis community that the clergy might be held responsible for, was ameliorated by intergroup connections.¹⁰⁷ In Red River, tried and tested means were in place to prevent rifts from becoming unmanageable.

A minimal number of intermarriages ensured that “Everybody was related.”¹⁰⁸ For everyone, the classification of cousin was a commonality.¹⁰⁹ Either one was a cousin, or was constantly associating with people who were. Genealogies compiled by descendants of the Sinclair family illustrate that this circumstance was mathematically inescapable.¹¹⁰ The marriages of the ten children of William and Nahoway linked their family to equally large families: Birds, Bunns, Campbells, Cooks, Cummings, Delormes, Inksters, Kirknesses, McKays, Prudens and Spencers. As roughly representative of a generation with birthdates falling between the years 1800 and 1820, they generated 78 known offspring -- excluding those born to spouses in previous marriages. As first cousins, representing a generation born from approximately 1820 to 1840, the 78 children were entitled to refer in Cree to their father’s brother’s children and their mother’s sister’s children as *nichisan*, or brothers

¹⁰⁶ R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (1959; reprint Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), 137-38 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹⁰⁷ See, Coutts, 104; Pannekoek, 11, offers a contrasting opinion.

¹⁰⁸ Spry, “‘Memories’ of George William Sanderson,” 125; see also, 117. See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 22 n. 43, for a description of the pattern of those marriages that were recorded -- a clergy mediated decision -- between Protestants and Roman Catholics. See also Mailhot and Sprague, 27 n. 1.

¹⁰⁹ See, Spry, “‘Memories’ of George William Sanderson,” 123.

¹¹⁰ See for example, Hnatowich, 1-134.

and sisters.¹¹¹ Marriages contracted by individuals of this generation extended the family network to include at least 60 links to additional families. Not only were the approximately 311 known offspring from these marriages entitled to call themselves cousins, in Cree they were also designated as the cousins of their parents' first cousins.¹¹² Of the generation born from about 1840 to 1860 at least 185 are known to have married, adding about 180 new families to the network. The spouses of William and Nahoway's children belonged to families undergoing an identical process of expansion. The degree of network overlap which occurred within the Red River Settlement would have ensured that virtually everyone was indeed related within a few generations.

The eventually distinct if only originally loosely geographically defined Red River parishes where various known members of the Sinclair family network resided came to include many of those in the Settlement. High concentrations of 'cousins' were found in St. Norbert, St. John, Kildonan, St. Paul, St. Andrew, St. Clement and St. Peter along the Red River. Except for St. Norbert which was designated Catholic, these were predominantly Protestant parishes, primarily Anglican, although in 1851 Kildonan became officially Presbyterian. Other large interconnected family groups were concentrated in St. James, St. François Xavier and Poplar Point along the Assiniboine.¹¹³ Of these, St. François Xavier was designated Catholic. However, parishes were not populated exclusively by congregants of the predominant religious sect. St. Andrew had a mix of Anglican and Presbyterian religionists. In addition to Anglicans and Methodists, St. James was also home to adherents of the Roman Catholic faith. 'Anglican' St. Peter had Roman

¹¹¹ Gérard Beaudet, *Cree-English, English-Cree Dictionary: Nehiyawe Mina Akayasimo-Mina Nehiyawe-Ayamini-Masinahigan* (Winnipeg: Wurez Publishing, 1995), 251, 275. This may explain how 'Betsy' Sinclair, and others, came to be counted in the historiography as siblings to the ten children listed in William Sinclair's will.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 275. Spry, "'Memories' of George William Sanderson," 123-24, indicates that terms of kinship, such as "Nechiva" for brother, were applied in a broad sense when addressing fellow members of the community.

¹¹³ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, Tables 1, 2 and 4, to trace the kinship networks and parishes inhabited by relatives of James Bird, ID 379; Thomas Bunn, ID 597; Colin Campbell, ID 658; William Hemmings Cook, ID 947, and son Joseph Cook, ID 940; John Inkster, ID 2400; John Peter Pruden, ID 4026; James Sinclair, ID 4381, and brother Thomas Sinclair, ID 4384 and 4389; and John Spencer, ID 4457. Conflicting genealogical assertions based on limited information leaves specific identities of McKay and Delorme connections tentative.

Catholic parishioners as did St. John and St. Paul. In addition to Roman Catholic, St. Boniface was a centre for Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian congregations.¹¹⁴ Parish churches provided a central meeting place and religious instruction. Although a high proportion of settlers apparently attended church on a regular basis, an equally large proportion did not.¹¹⁵ Nor were all clergymen equally esteemed.¹¹⁶ For the Métis settled in Red River, parishes functioned as neighbourhoods within the settlement, each one apportioned with institutional amenities and conveniences. Whatever the ambitions and attitudes of the clergy, parishes did not operate as sealed social units which maintained religious, linguistic or 'racial' identities that superseded current or potential kinship ties. As has been observed: "The very isolation of Red River itself kept the families from being isolated."¹¹⁷

It is difficult to offer an extended description of childrearing practices. If little information that relates specifically to Red River Métis women has been compiled, even less has been done with regard to children, although indications are that at any given time they were "pretty numerous."¹¹⁸ From narrations of childhood provided by Aboriginal individuals, it appears probable that a number of basic attitudinal family precepts common to First Nations peoples carried over into Red River society.¹¹⁹ These may well have reinforced a sense of freedom to pursue individual self-determination. The children were granted a fair degree of latitude with minimal adult direction and restraint. Formal schooling was not particularly popular, so the majority of settler children were not forced to observe regimented routines. Yet, despite not having been cowed by corporal punishment into

¹¹⁴Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 89-90.

¹¹⁵Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 33; see also, Coutts, 96.

¹¹⁶See, Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 83 n. 52; Coutts, 27-28, 30, 154; Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 166.

¹¹⁷Healy, 208; see also, 212-15. See, Coutts, 23, 56, 62, 104; Ens, 177; Mailhot and Sprague, 2; also Spry, "'Memories' of George William Sanderson," 117.

¹¹⁸James Isham, quoted in Jennifer Brown, "'A Colony of Very Useful Hands,'" *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* (spring 1977), 39. See also, Stafford Northcote, "The Ottawa Diary of Sir Stafford Northcote," in *Birth of a Province*, 101: As of 1870, M. Richot is recorded as asserting that there were 10 000 children in the Settlement.

¹¹⁹Coutts, 98, in describing clergy reactions to family practices encountered in Red River, concludes that, "Family practices in Rupert's Land represented the antithesis of Victorian custom."

respecting their elders, they were apparently capable of doing as they were told when the situation demanded. Aboriginal practices of group discipline and consensual decision-making are evident. Recounting his memories of life in Red River, Métis trader George William Sanderson described how parents responded to the restlessness of sons who had formed a 'gang.' By acting in council, and concert, a solution was devised by the respective parents, the youths' desire for activity addressed, and community concerns regarding behaviour that had strayed beyond the bounds of the acceptable allayed.¹²⁰

Children appear to have been accepted as full participants in society.¹²¹ The First Nations attitude toward children is held to reflect spiritual belief systems in which every component of the biosphere, whether animal, vegetable, mineral, vaporous, liquid or other, is an entity to be accorded equal respect.¹²² Inclusion in all social, economic, and ritual activities would have ensured that, as in First Nations societies, Métis children learned primarily through observation. Throughout childhood they had the opportunity to gain local knowledge which had been refined over thousands of years on everything from hunting, butchering, fishing, and horticulture to medical care and ways to foster emotional well being through social and spiritual practices.¹²³ That spirituality and religious observances were part of everyday First Nations life would have helped to ease, first the inclusion of, and later the complete transition to, non-Aboriginal religions. The compatibility of baptism with the First Nations practice of conferring special names to give children guidance and power would go some ways to explaining its popularity among the Métis. Likewise, the tradition of marking passages into new stages of development with public ceremonies would explain the ebullient, prolonged celebrations that occurred when Métis children were married.¹²⁴

As orality was a pronounced characteristic of Red River, storytelling would have

¹²⁰ See, Bentz, 115-117; Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 22; Coutts, 50-51, 53, 98; Spry, "Memories' of George William Sanderson," 117.

¹²¹ Spry, "Memories' of George William Sanderson," 122.

¹²² Hornbeck Tanner, 438.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 119; Charette, 4-7.

¹²⁴ See, Spry, "Memories' of George William Sanderson," 123; Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 8; Healy, 208, 210-212; Coutts, 100.

served to provide children with an understanding of the world, relationships and responsibilities. As in First Nations families, it was common for children to be raised in the homes of relatives, some of whom resided in distant locations.¹²⁵ All were exposed to the diverse range of experiences recounted by extended family, friends and neighbours coming and going from the Settlement. This information was augmented by the tales and teachings of literate members of the population who had access to imported reading materials ranging from bibles and science texts, popular novels and magazines, to letters and newspapers from abroad. Métis children were aware of concepts and possibilities far beyond what the Settlement's geographic isolation would suggest.¹²⁶

From the beginning, the Métis may be suspected of having harboured a greater sense of direct connection to a wider world than other Aboriginal groups. Fathers may have been "long gone," but awareness of a distinct patrilineage was maintained in Aboriginal families with Métis children.¹²⁷ One of the earliest distinguishing characteristics of an emerging Métis culture was the phenomena of first-generation children's consciousness of their paternity through remembrance of their father's name.¹²⁸ Even if less prevalent than Aboriginal influences, an originally paternally derived non-Aboriginal orientation appears to have significantly influenced key areas of Métis life. The introduction to and acceptance of European patterns brought changes to traditional Aboriginal systems.

Religion and property allotment were realms where foreign ideas were superimposed over local practices. Aspects of traditional spiritual belief systems -- such as the fundamental importance ascribed to maintaining harmony, and the acceptance of

¹²⁵ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 30, and "Manitoba's Red River Settlement," 184; Spry, "Memories of George William Sanderson," 121; Welsh 7-8.

¹²⁶ See, Oliver, vol. 2, 1291-92, 1320, 1345; Healy, 20-21; Henry John Moberly with William Bleasdel Cameron, *When Fur was King* (London & Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1929), 15-17; Stubbs, 93, 96-97; Leslie Castling, "Peter Fidler's Books: A Preliminary List," *Manitoba Library Association Bulletin* 10, 3 (1981): 47-48; Norman Beattie, "The Red River Library," *Manitoba Library Association Bulletin* 11, 2 (1981); Leslie D. Castling, "The Red River Library: A Search for Knowledge and Refinement," in *Readings in Canadian Library History*, ed. Peter F. McNally (Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1996), 153-66; Debra Lindsay, "Peter Fidler's Library: Philosophy and Science in Rupert's Land," in *Readings in Canadian Library History*, 209-29; Donna G. Strike, ed., *Directions: A Guide to Libraries in Manitoba*. Winnipeg (Winnipeg: Manitoba Library Association, 1998), 11.

¹²⁷ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 97.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

diversity -- may have been kept by individuals in tandem with those of Christianity to greater or lesser degrees. However, the new rituals, originally introduced probably only sporadically by a few trader fathers but eventually reinforced by missionaries, came to predominate. In Red River, recognizing European-derived religious rites became the norm; annual celebrations conformed to the European calendar and Judaeo-Christian conceptions of sacrament. The decision to form a fixed settlement in which new land holding patterns were incorporated, dividing the landscape after the "rang" pattern familiar to French patrigenitors, and in particular the cultivation in individual family plots of privately held land separate from the 'commons' used for haying and pasture, was also distinct from traditional communal Aboriginal practices.¹²⁹ Although reciprocity and sharing may still have been considered proper, there was potential for personal economic gain over and above the customary conceptions of traditional subsistence systems.

Arguably the most significant shift to take place in the Red River Settlement between 1810-1870 was the adaptation of First Nations stateless sociopolitical systems to suit adoption of an increased dependency on commercial transactions conducive to maintaining stationary settlement. The shift appears to have been possible because specific cultural practices and traditions were amenable and flexible enough to accommodate it. At the same time, the shift was responsible for enhancing the cultural distinctiveness of the community. The economic strategies of the Red River Métis were profoundly shaped by their progenitors' connections to the fur trade. The introduction of non-Aboriginal traders saw cross cultural brokering, which had always had a sociopolitical function, take a pronounced turn toward addressing economic positioning. An advantageous "bargaining position" became a different sort of consideration once profit motive was appended to practices of reciprocity and exchange.¹³⁰ The Métis were roundly criticized by some First Nations communities for converting the buffalo hunt, traditionally a subsistence resource, into a large scale means of producing commodities with a commercial value -- even if the

¹²⁹ Kaye, 51.

¹³⁰ Dickason, "From 'One Nation' ... to 'New Nation'", 30. See also, Adelman and Aron, 816 n.4; and Finlay and Sprague, 6.

garnered wealth was shared through displays of hospitable largess.¹³¹

Whereas community organization on mass seasonal hunts retained enough of the original pattern to strike most non-Aboriginal outsiders as exotic, life in the Settlement proper could appear much less so.¹³² Where difference might alarm one Europe-oriented observer, another would find the recognizable. The Métis struck the Earl of Southesk as completely acceptable:

They build and farm like other people, they go to church and to courts of law, they recognize no chiefs (except when they elect a leader for their great hunting expeditions), and in all respects they are like civilized men, not more uneducated, immoral, or disorderly, than many communities in the Old World.¹³³

Similarly, from a First Nations perspective the Settlement might retain an inviting familiarity even as it appeared progressively inclined to a perilous disregard of natural balances. From 1670 to 1810, the Métis had emerged as an Aboriginal people of whom it may be said epigrammatically, as it has been about inhabitants of other Colonial era settler communities world-wide, that “they had capitalism in their bones.”¹³⁴ As settlers in Red River, active participants in an ongoing negotiation with resident merchant representatives of the HBC and North West Company [NWC], they made full use of this inclination, shaping the political economy of their settlement.

From the perspective of the Métis children of Red River, the Settlement was the normative standard against which all other communities were measured for signs of the congruous, the curious and the deviant. The observation of parental activities was one way in which acculturation into a quasi-stateless sociopolitical system allowed new normatives of Métis culture to be replicated in successive generations. As historically more attention was devoted to recording the economic interaction of members of the Métis community with commercial concerns, and to some extent between themselves, than to sociocultural

¹³¹ Welsh, 42-43, is sensitive to the criticism. See also, W.H. Draper, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 225, and R.N. Fowler, “Appendix, No. 16,” 443.

¹³² Welsh, 39-40.

¹³³ Southesk, quoted in Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 7.

¹³⁴ Denoon, 49.

activity, analysis of the political economic dynamic of the Settlement provides a sense of what it was that children were observing: what the relations between procurers and producers of the material commodities supplied by the resource endowment were like, which activities predominated, what strategies were brought into play; and with what result.

CHAPTER 5

The mutual dependence and mutual force of producers and procurers

Capitalism was not introduced to the Métis as a complete complex of structured relations at a specific, predestined phase in its, or their community's, development. Economies are neither sentient nor evolving entities. They are structures and processes. Whatever changes take place happen in innumerable increments. Sometimes connected, sometimes not, these fluctuate in pace, direction and duration.¹ All transactions are dependent on human interactions originating with decisions made at an individual level. In the quasi-stateless conditions of Rupert's Land, it was not feasible to choose to abdicate personal responsibility and rely on the dictates of a ruling *élite*. For the bulk of the population no such *élite* existed.² The policies and procedures devised to realize the transfer of vested European capital relations to new North American circumstances were not inconsequential. However, the owners and investors bent on overseeing the pursuit of trade for profit were situated in geographically removed business centres, comfortably ensconced in near total ignorance of actual conditions.³ It was inescapable that not only economic viability but physical survival required the active involvement of traders and employees in the field. It was necessary that merchant representatives resident in Rupert's Land adapt all aspects of 'Old World' economic interaction if these were to be successfully insinuated into a 'New World' environment to generate an economic process of any coherence.⁴

Sparsely settled, North America was devoid of Aboriginal populations that could be coerced into reprioritizing their concerns to accommodate fur trader ambitions.

¹ See, Henretta, 19-20.

² See, Finlay and Sprague, 7.

³ See, Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 70; *Report from the Select Committee, passim*. See also, J.M. Bumsted, "Selkirk's Agents: A Tale of Three Settlements," *The Beaver: Exploring Canada's History* (Jun./Jul. 1992): 33.

⁴ See, McKay, "The crisis of dependent development"; Brown, "A Colony of Very Useful Hands,"

Considerable effort was expended by merchant representatives intent on locating First Nations bands, negotiating terms, and ensuring compliance. The results were mixed.⁵ During the 'era of equality' of the early fur trade in the West, Aboriginal people were exposed to fundamental economic transitions. However, many First Nations peoples continued to live according to their own precepts.⁶ When choosing courses of action, bands assessed their interests their own way. Regardless of strength of entreaty or of assurances elicited, Aboriginal people weighed available alternatives and sought optimal solutions, appraising trader proposals in light of their own need to survive. Consideration of the interests, demands, and strategies of geographically removed acquaintances ranked well back of addressing the pressing imperatives imposed by contiguous realities.

First Nations people did not all arrive at the same conclusions and make the same decisions. Some family groups chose to interact more closely with fur traders. Possibly, this action reflected a desire to effect a better position respective to the trade. Estimations of the value of European trade items to First Nations peoples have been challenged, however, which suggests that a motivation to acquire objects of European manufacture was seldom sufficiently compelling on its own.⁷ Many bands experienced sociocultural destabilization and disorientation when traditional ties to the land were disrupted by displacement into unfamiliar, already occupied territories due to pressure from the "moving Indian-white frontier."⁸ Discomfiture was compounded by the loss of individuals of all ages and occupations in major disease epidemics from 1733-38 and 1782-89. There were unknown numbers of smaller outbreaks as well. These conditions must be suspected of having

⁵ See, A.S. Morton, 244, 24; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 120-22; Bruce G. Trigger, "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: 'Romantic' versus Rationalistic Interpretations," *The Journal of American History*, 77 (March, 1991): 1199.

⁶ Friesen, 4, 23. Finlay and Sprague, 206.

⁷ Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 79; Trigger, 1205, 1209, 1213-14; Finlay and Sprague, 64; Vibert, 12. Also David K. Riddle and Leo Pettipas, "An Initial Archeological Inventory and Survey of Siglunes Municipality, Western Interlake, Planning District," *Manitoba Archeological Journal* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Archeology Society, 1992), 93. See also, Christopher L. Miller and George R. Hamell, "A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade," *The Journal of American History*, 73, no. 2 (Sep. 1986): *passim*; also Bill Fox, "Dragon Sideplates from York Factory: A New Twist on an Old Tail," *Manitoba Archeological Journal* (1992): 23, 31.

⁸ Calvin Martin, "The European Impact on Native Peoples," in *Interpreting Canada's Past, Volume One, Pre-Confederation*, 2d ed., J.M. Bumsted ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 101.

induced some people to seek ties with fur traders who, if they had acquired immunity through previous exposure to a disease or offered weaponry thought sufficient to secure a safe location or promised access to food and shelter, were perceived to be in a position to assist survivors.⁹

Alliances between fur trade personnel and Aboriginal women led to the growth of Métis encampments in the vicinity of fur trade posts. The “economic origins of the Métis” can be traced to the circumstance of these Aboriginal groups, acting independently of their original First Nations organizations, eventually forming specialized, on-site labour pools -- of women and children as well as men.¹⁰ Predisposed by family ties to contribute to the success of their associated trade posts, Métis individuals, families and community groups interacted at a social and economic level with commercial enterprises. By the mid 1700s, wives, children and relatives of traders were employed as “Virtually your Honors Servants” in a variety of capacities.¹¹ They worked as, among other things, provisioners of pemmican, fish and game; suppliers of hides, furs and feathers; manufacturers of clothing, tents and snow shoes; producers of salt, sugar, vegetables, fruits and poultry products. They were hired as canoe builders, paddlers, guides, interpreters, labourers, clerks, and in a quasi-military capacity. Some, usually sons of high ranking officers, rose within

⁹ Finlay and Sprague, 67; Ray, “Trade rivalries, warfare and migration,” *Indians in the Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 6, 12, 14-16, 19, 23, and *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began*, 345-46. York, describes the effects of displacement. For the timing and effects of smallpox epidemics see, A.S. Morton, 329; W.K. Lamb ed., *The Journals and Letters of Sir Alexander Mackenzie* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970), 125; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 192; J.C Yerbury, *The Subarctic Indians and the Fur Trade, 1680-1860* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 147-48; William C. Sturtevant and Wilcomb E. Washburn eds., *Handbook of North American Indians: History of Indian-white Relations*, vol. 4 (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1988), 332; and E.L.M. Thorpe, *The Social Histories of Smallpox and Tuberculosis in Canada (Culture, Evolution and Disease)* (Winnipeg: Department of Anthropology, University of Manitoba, 1989), 28-29.

¹⁰ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 3. See also, Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 76, and “Colony of Very Useful Hands,” 39-41; Finlay and Sprague, 206; Cowie, 286.

¹¹ Glyndwr Williams, “Family and Community in the Fur Trade,” *The Beaver: Magazine of the North*, Special Issue (autumn 1983): 70; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 53, 54. See also, Brown, “Colony of Very Useful Hands,” 39, 44-45.

Company hierarchies to positions of prominence.¹²

If the capitalist model adopted for the purpose of discussion is one in which the mode of production has wage labour as its associated “characteristic of exploitation” and, as a “specific form of appropriation of others’ labour ... the private appropriations of surplus value,” then the incorporation of the Métis in international capitalist relations occurred prior to the establishment of the Red River Settlement.¹³ By 1810, “Métis labour” had already been “a critical aspect of the long-lived fur trade,” for several generations.¹⁴ Alternately, if the argument adopted employs a model that does not “substitute typology for analysis, to suggest a teleological model of historical development,” but seeks to recognize the integrated mixed economies common to the colonial experience, then Métis settlement upon family run acreage constituted a turn to what has been designated ‘settler capitalism’: a situationally new, concomitant “variant of the [European] capitalist mode” whereby settlers hoped to augment access to geographically removed capital and markets.¹⁵ In either case, Métis children were raised with the expectation that, beyond securing present subsistence, to a large extent the assurance of a comfortable future for themselves and possible dependents would rest on their buying and selling goods on account and working on contract for fur trade concerns. The advent of the Red River Settlement was equatable to the establishment of a desirable, because conveniently centralized, “company town” which offered a wide range of employment opportunities as well as a more secure connection to what was eventually the only promising source of investment capital in the region.¹⁶

Their presence was remarked upon, but little attention was paid to documenting the nature of Métis settlement during the early years of Red River’s formation. The primary

¹² Kaye, 17; Healy, 149; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 53-73; Brown, “Colony of Very Useful Hands,” 39-40; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 20; Glyndwr Williams, “The Simpson Era,” *The Beaver: Magazine of the North*, Special Issue (autumn 1983): 55, notes that by the 1860s, Métis sons “made up one-third of the officers in the Northern Department.”

¹³ See, Melotti, 3-4. See also, Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 5, 28-29.

¹⁴ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 3. See also, Brown, “Colony of Very Useful hands,” 39; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 54.

¹⁵ Denoon, 12, 53; see also, Brookfield, 6-9; Coutts, 7, 103.

¹⁶ Sprenger, 12; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 20; Finlay and Sprague, 120, 206. See also, Denoon, 52; Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 82.

concern of fur trade companies active in the region centred on the progress of Selkirk's colonization attempt. Selkirk, in deciding to combine business and colonial ambitions, chose to situate his settlement within a highly contested territory at a time when tension between corporate competitors -- already marked by outbreaks of violence -- was exacerbated by the 1812 declaration of war between the United States and Canada.¹⁷ NWC supply lines on which Métis families depended -- for wants, if not for needs -- were compromised. Jobs were lost as the Company adopted cost-cutting measures to offset expenses incurred through participation in Canadian military actions.¹⁸ Upon their arrival in Red River, the Selkirk Settlers appeared to be unprepared, undersupplied and, because lacking necessary survival skills, incompetent. Although they were accorded provisions, shelter and training by the Métis, ultimately their presence was perceived as burdensome. A Cree term, "moon-ee-as," originally applied to Selkirk Settlers to identify them as strangers, "quickly came to be a synonym for unhandiness or uselessness" in the Settlement.¹⁹ The NWC saw Selkirk as an unprincipled interloper, the actions of his on-site representatives as illegal, his colony as a thinly disguised pretence. In their view his settlers were pawns in a concerted HBC attempt to destroy NWC trade at a time when the concern was financially and territorially vulnerable due to war-time losses.²⁰ To the Métis, subject to NWC and HBC remonstrations and retaliatory actions, the presence of Selkirk Settlers steadily proved an unwelcome complication, compounding unfavourable conditions by compromising access to resources. Until the amalgamation of the rival companies in 1821, resources and relations remained strained. The events surrounding the Pemmican

¹⁷ See, A.S. Morton, 317-21, 324-26, 339, 508-30; Bumsted, "Selkirk's Agents," 35.

¹⁸ Donald Gunn, 115; "Visit to Red River," 665; and "People of Red River," 171. Norma Hall and Barbara Huck, "Fortitude in Distress: The North West Company and the War of 1812," *The Beaver*, 82, no. 4 (Aug./Sep. 2002): 8-9, 12-13; Glyndwr Williams, "Fur Trade Rivalry and Union," *The Beaver: Magazine of the North*, Special Issue (autumn 1983): 44.

¹⁹ J.J. Gunn, *Echoes of the Red* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1930), 33-34. See, Beaudet, "Monias", "Moniyasiwiw," 91; also, Cowie, 18, 234, whose spelling is "Moonyass." See also, Donald Gunn, 77-79; Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 24-25. Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*; and J.J. Gunn, v-vi: Gunn was the son of Métis parents, John Gunn, ID 2063, and Emma Garrioch; and grandson of Donald Gunn, ID 2064, and his Métis wife, Margaret Swain [daughter of James Swain, ID 4569, of York Factory].

²⁰ Hall and Huck, 14; Donald Gunn, 61-65. Russenholt, 25, 29-30.

Proclamation of 1814 and the Seven Oaks incident in 1816 serve as well documented examples.²¹ The historiography devoted to the Selkirk Settlers indicates that a number of factors prevented their experiencing, to a like degree, the relief that corporate restructuring afforded Métis individuals and families caught on both sides of the conflict.

Whereas Selkirk Settlers are depicted as badly undersupplied, no organized records describe the kind or extent of original Métis settler material assets. As internal migrants, it is unlikely that the Métis arrived in the settlement divested of possessions. Unlike the Selkirk Settlers, they were not indebted to the HBC for the price of their land or passage to Rupert's Land. 'Retired' HBC officers and servants with Aboriginal families who were required to purchase land had usually accumulated savings -- or were granted pensions -- sufficient to enable them to do so. Métis household economies were capable of operating independently of any one set of corporate concerns. Competing fur trade establishments existed in the region prior to 1821. It is entirely likely that from the beginning, as was the case with First Nations peoples and some fur trade employees, Métis cross-cultural brokering included playing off one trading concern against another. A variety of manufactured goods was available from any number of sources: competing fur trade posts; itinerant First Nations or Métis 'middlemen'; relatives engaged in trade in other regions or residing in the Canadas, the United States, or Europe. Unlike the external migrants, many Métis had ample opportunity prior to settling in Red River to independently acquire tools and agricultural implements, furnishings for their homes, bolts of woven material and manufactured clothing, guns and shot for hunting, nets and line for fishing, and seed, livestock and poultry. Nor were they required to purchase needed items by incurring debt that could only be worked off through agricultural or other production for the HBC. They were not forced to endure makeshift living conditions exposed to extremes of climate in rude shelters. Their tents, although not styled along lines that impressed Miles Macdonell, were practical, comfortable and sometimes lavishly appointed. That the Selkirk Settlers suffered deprivation from poor planning or neglect does not mean that their neighbours underwent a similar ordeal. The Métis were accustomed to determining their own courses

²¹ A.S. Morton, 360-64, 567-71, describes the various stages of the 1814-15 'Pemmican War'; Dick, 12-30, investigates alternate accounts to arrive at a description of "The Seven Oaks Incident."

of action. There was no contractual obligation that compelled them to be Red River settlers. That option was freely chosen.²²

For all of the unique aspects evinced in Métis society, their community at Red River had much in common with other small rural North American “voluntary concentrations of like-minded settlers.”²³ In “Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America,” James A. Henretta argues that in communities which exhibited a preference for sharing cultural identity, communal values were of fundamental importance.²⁴ The informal bonds that existed among linguistically and familiarly related neighbours and co-congregants encouraged cultural richness and diversity. Most importantly, the “linguistic and religious ties extended beyond settlement patterns to encompass economic relationships.”²⁵ Culturally determined perceptions of obligation circumscribed the scope of individual actions. As a wide range of social and cultural goals was included in the settlers’ “calculus of advantage” their economic strategies encompassed more than increased fiscal acquisition.²⁶ In typical early North American subsistence farm societies, realizing maximum profit was not as important to producers as meeting their household needs and maintaining the community’s pattern of social relationships. Consequently, in the majority of instances there appeared to be a distinct lack of ‘capitalist progress.’ Historians of the liberal tradition, seeking to demonstrate the existence of a teleological path to capitalism,

²² See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 21; Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 236; Donald Gunn, 370; Cowie, 157, 159, 299-300; Oliver, “Memorandum for Captain R. Pelly, ... 1823,” vol. 1, 251-2, vol. 2, 733, 739, 770, 787, 812. Adelman and Aron, 817; Thistle, 10; 12-13, 24, 27-30; Ray, “Periodic Shortages,” 84; A.S. Morton, 304, 557; Kaye, 15-16; Sprenger, 67; PAM, MG2 A1, Selkirk Papers, “Miles Macdonell to the Earl of Selkirk,” 1 Oct. 1811, 51-52; Russenholt, 35, 37; George Simpson, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 92.

²³ Henretta, 4.

²⁴ Norton, 271, identifies this as a “nucleated” settlement pattern common to rural settlements world-wide.

²⁵ Henretta, 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

either ignored this circumstance or tended to ascribe it to settler laziness.²⁷

Henretta argues that there is little evidence to support assertions that the North American settler norm consisted of singularly profit motivated individualists.²⁸ Prior to the advent of adequate transportation and markets, settler economies of continentally interior regions tended to stabilize “at a low level of specialization.”²⁹ Rather than focus on the production and marketing of a single crop, settlers engaged in mixed farming and mixed approaches to participating in the local economy. In any particular year, a family might choose to generate a great enough quantity of one or two of the commodities that they normally produced in order to realize a surplus. This could be used for barter within the community or sale on the local market.³⁰ Settlers had neither the technology nor inclination to risk concentrating on commercial enterprise at the expense of ensuring family subsistence and long term survival.³¹

As a member of a self-styled Red River *élite*, Alexander Ross discovered that Métis settlers were likewise unwilling to defer to ‘superior wisdom’ regarding ‘proper’ approaches to prosperity. His attempt to rise above the level of an ordinary farmer foundered when neighbours, not behaving as desired, declined to accept the station of underling labour force. Faced with the absence of indentured servants or slaves it was necessary to offer payment high enough to compete with fur trade wages. Unlike the situation in many other settlements, the availability of free land in Red River precluded the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3-4: ‘liberal,’ as critiqued by Henretta, follows James T. Lennon’s definition of an assumed ubiquitous ‘middle class’ settler orientation where the term is used: “in the classic sense, meaning placing individual freedom and material gain over that of public interest. Put another way, the people planned for themselves much more than they did for the community.” See also, Sylvester, 4-6, for an agreement with Henretta in which the findings of Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow regarding Upper Canada, and Gérard Bouchard and J.I. Little regarding late-nineteenth-century Quebec, are cited. See, Ens, 28, who maintains there was a peasant/Métis “substantive distaste for manual labour”; and Cadigan, 132, 136-37, 139, 165; for examples of allegations of a lack of industry in Newfoundland settlers.

²⁸ Henretta, 16. See also, Finlay and Sprague, 50, for a description of Adam Smith’s view of ‘adaptive’ settler *mentalité*. Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, vii, conforms to this assessment, asserting that “By character and upbringing the half-breeds, no less than the Indians, were unfitted to compete with the whites in the competitive individualism of white civilization.”

²⁹ Henretta, 15.

³⁰ See, Cadigan, 6-7.

³¹ See also, Norton, 242; Sylvester, 4-6. Cadigan, 78, extends the thesis to include ‘fishing settlers.’

emergence of a population of renters willing to pay an estate holder out of their labour and produce. Although the HBC had a land policy of sorts on its books, it was not consistently enforced. Many people simply settled where they pleased.³² Given the numerous opportunities for settlers to try alternate economically promising pursuits, large scale agricultural production was not practicable, even where palatable to individuals who channelled their ambition as Ross did.³³ Climate and seasonal weather conditions dictated approaches to agriculture in Red River. During the two demanding peak events of the farming year, seeding and harvesting, time was of the essence and all usable family labour was deployed on family acreage.³⁴ There was not a surplus work force available for hire to ambitious producers. As in other North American locations, full blown capitalism, replete with the “usual” attributes of “land speculation and agricultural production,” had to wait upon the arrival of “a (large, urban) non-agricultural population” in need of employment and food.³⁵

A telling point in Henretta’s argument when applied to Red River is that regarding surplus production. First, the fact that most of what was sold was ‘surplus’ underscores how few North American settlers -- particularly those who were primarily farmers -- were in a position or of a disposition to put profit making above meeting yearly subsistence needs and the long-run financial security of their family unit. Second, the HBC was never in a position to override the Métis settlers’ determination of what portion of their production constituted a surplus. When distributing the products of their labour, they were free to honour their responsibilities to kin, both immediate family and more distant relatives with whom agreements regarding exchange or support had been contracted, before turning to the

³² See, Oliver, 262; Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 69; George Simpson, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 92-95; Burley, 56.

³³ See, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 71-72, 194, 243-44, 272, 394. W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 88. Russenholt, 66. See also, Sylvester, 29, for explanation of a similar settler dynamic, post 1870; and Cadigan, 61-62, for a parallel example in Newfoundland. Cowie, 159, notes: “As to the want of a market for all the farmers could have raised, they had deprived themselves of that advantage by planting themselves away from all facilities for freighting anything heavier and less valuable than furs.”

³⁴ Cadigan, 38-39, 41, notes a similar response in the Newfoundland fishery.

³⁵ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 20; Percy W. Bidwell quoted in Henretta, 16. See also, Cadigan, 7, regarding surplus labour; also, Finlay and Sprague, 57, 92, 94, on the importance of land speculation to generating locally held investment capital.

HBC.³⁶

Aside from the families of fur trade personnel who had managed to amass considerable savings during their careers, only those Métis settlers capable of generating a marketable surplus were able, through the sale of their products -- of whatever variety -- to realize a discretionary income. This they could apply towards needed supplies and manufactured goods not made locally, and to items of display and celebration. For the Métis, culturally predisposed to neither Calvinism nor hedonism, meeting the circumscribed state of affairs in Red River with "realistic expectations for simple but adequate living" included factoring in enjoyment.³⁷ In part, this was because display and hospitality were important social status indicators.³⁸ Horses and ponies were indispensable accoutrements for every self-respecting male. Isaac Cowie, a member of the Métis community by marriage and eventually a grandparent to several Red River families noted that "nearly all the quarrels I ever saw among the Métis originated in disputes about the relative merits of their favourite ponies ... [largely because] the wealth and influence of a person depended on the number and quality of his horses."³⁹ And, it has been observed, at times of community celebration, the entire population vied with each other "in gay carioles, harness, saddles, and fine clothes."⁴⁰ Ironically, what some observers have derided as a predilection for wanton indulgence, a reckless excess indicative of a decidedly inferior 'class,' just as readily mirrors behaviour said to define the highest echelons of British society at the time.⁴¹ In that "luxurious and lavish world, self-indulgence was the natural

³⁶ See, Coutts, 94; Donald Gunn, 243; Russenholt, 44. Cadigan, 8, finds the same dynamic at work in Lower Canada.

³⁷ Finlay and Sprague, 59. See also, Healy, 205-20.

³⁸ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 193-94, 196-97; Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 7-8.

³⁹ Cowie, 221. Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*; and Hnatowich, 126-34: Cowie married Margaret Jane Sinclair, the daughter of ID 4383, William Sinclair and Jane 'Jennie' MacDonald, and granddaughter of ID 4384, Thomas Sinclair and Hannah Cummings. Through his wife's ties, Cowie was directly connected to the Sinclair, MacDonald, Mowat, Truthwaite, and Harriott kinship networks.

⁴⁰ Thomas Simpson, *Narrative of the Discoveries on the North Coast of America: Effected by the Officers of the Hudson's Bay Company during the years 1836-39* (London: Richard Bentley, 1843), 12; see also, Margaret Arnett MacLeod cited in Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 47.

⁴¹ Ross, Milton and Cheadle, quoted in Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 8; see also Ens, 46; and Coutts, 100, for a description of missionary disapproval of Métis celebrations.

law”; the upper class gentleman “was unthinkable without his horse. ... The man on horseback was the symbol of dominance, and of no other class in the world was the horse so intrinsic a part as of the English aristocracy.”⁴²

The similarity of the young Métis male lifestyle to that of the independently wealthy in Europe may have appeared irreverent to those with an elevated sense of propriety and social relation based on a ‘superior’ set of conventions. Only the the ‘best’ European social circles engaged in the “sporting” life, taking part in shooting and fishing parties.⁴³ A select few had ever “dined on fish, fowl and red meat at one meal” or “wrapped themselves in furs in winter” -- commonplace experiences for the Métis.⁴⁴ In late nineteenth-century England, only 45 individuals could boast of a personal land base in excess of 100 000 acres.⁴⁵ All of the Métis were accustomed to considering themselves “proprietors” of “millions.”⁴⁶ The ability to engage in display is not an accurate indicator of indolence, nor of privilege. It does suggest abundance, a freedom from want unknown to the truly “poor.”⁴⁷ Allegations of Métis “extravagance in money matters” is reminiscent of officialdom’s disapproval of what has been identified as an “aristocracy ethos” operating in another context ⁴⁸ The “busy” consumption by eighteenth-century colonists in New France of surplus capital in the pursuit of ‘extravagance’ was thought regrettable by some as it appeared to act as a “continual brake on the development of commercial culture.”⁴⁹ In Red River, “living nobly” was not entirely vain.⁵⁰ There simply was not much else to be done

⁴² Tuchman, 28, 22.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 27. See also, Dickason, “To Each a Place and Rank,” Chapter 3, *Myth of the Savage*, 43-44, 56, 59. Glyndwr Williams, “The Simpson Era,” 53, notes the penchant for emulating European patterns of social stratification among HBC personnel of the 1830s.

⁴⁴ Tuchman, 18, 68. see also, Burley, 93.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁶ Trémaudan, 115. See also, Donald Gunn, 283; Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 5-6.

⁴⁷ Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 9, uses the term to characterize Métis who followed the “chase.”

⁴⁸ Begg, *Dot It Down*, 181; see also Thomas Simpson, 14. W.J. Eccles, quoted in Finlay and Sprague, 56.

⁴⁹ W.J. Eccles, quoted in Finlay and Sprague, 56.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

with the money.⁵¹ Subsistence needs were met through self-directed and community organized work. Additional wants were readily obtained through barter and trade. As Cowie observed, “money was of no use except in the form of orders on Fort Garry.”⁵² In his opinion:

By comparison with the poor cottars and crofters in the old country, with the poor slums of the big cities, the lot of the Red River people was cast in very pleasant places. Each lived, so to speak, “under his own vine and fig tree” on his own land, rent free. He could hunt, fish, and shoot without restriction; he had building material and firewood for the cutting and hauling; his animals roamed on free pastures, and there was hay in abundance. Even their churches and schools were largely supported by contributions raised in the old country, from many classes of people, some of whom were in much less prosperous circumstances than themselves.

The good substantial clothing they wore never got out of fashion, for they did not follow those of the outer world. In a community where exchanges were made by barter more than in money, and where a man was measured more by his physical, mental and moral qualities than by mere possession of money, people did not sacrifice their time and health to its pursuit. Everyone could get clothing, shelter and plenty of good substantial food, and a rich man could buy little that his poorer neighbour might envy.⁵³

Plainly, there was no point in consumers pursuing a prescribed course of pecuniary accumulation to be applied against commercial development until the opportunity for, or probability of, success presented itself. Nevertheless, occasional affirmation of vulnerability to natural disaster, an awareness of possibilities, and access to money prevented a desultory arrival of ‘progress’ from spelling Métis stasis in a primordial way of life. Red River was not ‘Eden.’ Even contemporary writers who liked the community saw room for improvement.⁵⁴ Depicting the Métis as overly impulsive appears to have been notionally formulaic for some authors. Assertions implying an innate ‘savings ethic’ lack are almost invariably accompanied by a contradicting observation that, as with former HBC men, among the “venturesome” Métis, including French speaking plains huntsmen, there

⁵¹ George Simpson, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 102.

⁵² Cowie, 221; A.K. Isbister, *A Few Words on the Hudson's Bay Company; with a Statement of the Grievances of the Native and Half-caste Indians, Addressed to the British Government through their delegates in London*, (London: C. Gilpin, 1846 [?]), 11-12.

⁵³ Cowie, 159. Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 361, makes a similar statement.

⁵⁴ See, Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 4.

were “wealthy” individuals possessed of “investments abroad, both in England and Canada.”⁵⁵

As was the case with settlers in other farming colonies removed from deep water ports with direct connections to international markets, the settlers of Red River were constrained from seeing commercial farm production advance beyond the limits of local market consumption.⁵⁶ Most inhabitants had to turn to other sources of remuneration if they were to accumulate capital that could be put toward entrepreneurial ventures, ensuring a secure and comfortable old age, or helping children start independent lives while establishing a solid base for later generations. The fact that there was no excess timber on their land to sell as they cleared it -- a typical strategy in Upper and Lower Canada -- was partially offset for the Métis by the circumstance of land being freely available and naturally fertile. Its acquisition and utilization did not tax available family resources.⁵⁷ As for production for profit and work for wages, the economic system in which the Red River Métis were involved was comprised partly of relations brought to the settlement as they arrived, and partly of those negotiated as the settlement expanded. Throughout, kinship networking was of fundamental importance -- familial connections determined both employment opportunities and perceptions of obligation.⁵⁸ The purchasing power of HBC merchant representatives was not enough to guarantee easy overthrow of any socially or culturally determined settler concerns that posed production barriers. The Métis as free settlers saw advantages in seeking and solidifying ties to the Company but when it came to allocating the products of their labour, family and community came first. Merchant representatives hoping to procure surplus production were forced to accommodate settler preferences.

For the HBC, the principle value of the Métis as a labour force resided in their

⁵⁵ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 84. Begg, *Dot It Down*, 181. See also, Thomas Simpson, 14; Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 9; Ens, 29-30, 50-51.

⁵⁶ Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 29; A.S. Morton, 832; Cowie, 159-60.

⁵⁷ See, Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 13, 25, and Frank D. Lewis and M.C. Urquhart, “Growth and the Standard of Living in Pioneer Economy: Upper Canada, 1826 to 1851,” *William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series, vol. 56, no. 1 (Jan. 1999): 153-54, 165-66.

⁵⁸ See, Coutts, 103-04; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 20; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 20-21.

specialized skills. In areas such as agricultural production, European superiority was assumed. There were indigenous farmers. For example, members of Jean Baptiste Roi's family acted as independent suppliers of agricultural produce to HBC posts such as Fort William -- down river near present day St. Andrew's -- and the NWC Fort Gibraltar at the Forks. As well, among the Métis to arrive from Pembina, there were individuals accustomed to the practice of horticulture. They were familiar with, and in possession of, tools and techniques that the Selkirk Settlers lacked. The external migrants were dependent on Selkirk and his agents to outfit them with everything from axes to ploughshares. Their entire colony went without an adequate plough until one was imported in 1817. Métis settlers had the freedom to procure such items when and where they chose. The blacksmith at Pembina had demonstrated that he could manufacture a plough suitable for use in the region as early as 1808.⁵⁹ Despite evidence of farming behaviour, the Métis did not receive serious consideration as a potential farm population -- perhaps because they refused to consider farming a feasible option.⁶⁰

Regardless of geographic origin, cultural preference, or ability to secure implements, as independent settlers Red River farmers faced a very basic technological impediment to large scale agricultural production. The amount of grain that could be harvested was directly proportional to the available labour. A single worker using a sickle could only reap one-half to three-quarters of an acre per day. For a farm family intent on grain production and reliant on the labour of a father, one or two sons and perhaps a wife or daughter, a planting of eight to ten acres reached the practical limit for a crop that could be conveniently harvested in the time available. The average size of Red River farmsteads reflected the reality that cultivated acreage could not outstrip the population base. The Métis were witness to the failure of Selkirk's attempt to foster European agriculturalists devoted to commercial grain production. They also observed the successive collapses of a number

⁵⁹ W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 480 n. 17; Kaye, 22-23. Following Jenara Franklin, "Let the Yard Light Sing: Finding the Farmer's Voice in the Manitoba Farm Electrification Programme, 1941-1945," submitted to *Gender History in Canada* 11.775, S01, University of Manitoba, 10 Apr. 2003, the term farmer is applied to individuals, regardless of their gender or age, who lived on a farm and engaged in farm work. See also, Kaye, 21-22.

⁶⁰ See, J.F. Crofton, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 172; Coutts, 56, 94.

of equally flawed attempts under Simpson to see Red River farming follow a model that, by his reckoning, would fit it to be integrated into the British Empire's international market. The buffalo hunt held appeal for practical, rational reasons.⁶¹

Hunting and processing buffalo met community subsistence needs and had utility in producing a viable commercial product. Initially pemmican production was viewed by trade companies as the most valuable form of Métis labour. From at least the early 1770s pemmican had figured as "the first commercial return of the plains."⁶² The product's name was derived from the Cree, "*pimikenhigen*" meaning, roughly, "manufactured grease."⁶³ The proportion of fat to dried, powdered meat was about two parts to one. The high fat, low water to protein content, meant pemmican was light weight, resisted decay for years, and provided excellent energy returns. A reasonable day's ration of three-quarters of a pound per man was sometimes boosted to between one and two pounds where working conditions warranted. The HBC dependency on pemmican -- more than 60 tons per year were consumed -- persisted for as long as the primary means of distance transport was human labour intensive. By the mid 1820s, a substantial and increasing proportion of community residents were committed to pemmican production. It formed the principal source of economic opportunity for Métis settlers during the period between 1830 and 1840. The number of participants remained high to 1860.⁶⁴

Pemmican production involved far more than tracking, chasing and killing game. It

⁶¹ See, Henretta, 18; Healy, 97, 110, 118; Coutts, 138-39, 151; also, Sylvester, 47-48; "Chapter 3," 40, 43, this thesis; and Marble "(Third Paper)," 317. W.L. Morton, "Introduction to the New Edition," [1969] in Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, xxi, argues that the Métis were a "nomadic element" inexorably drawn to the hunt. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 5-7, identifies this as an explanatory device Morton had developed by at least 1950.

⁶² W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 41, 38. Russenholt, 30.

⁶³ George Antoine Belcourt quoted in Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 42. Malvina Bolus, ed., "Pemmican and How to Make It," *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* (summer 1964): 53. See also, Beaudet, "Pimikan," and "Pimikewin," 150.

⁶⁴ "Pemmican and How to Make It," 53; Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 78; Sprenger, 74; Finlay and Sprague, 118; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 12, 17-18; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 22; Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 24; and James Ross, quoted in Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 124. See also, Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997; reprint, Toronto: Vintage Canada, 1997), 34, 73-74, 80, 86 (page citations are to the reprint edition), who supplies comparable information on cod as a commercial commodity used to fuel human labourers.

was not the male dominated paramilitary sporting event that Alexander Ross in his "classic" account -- one written expressly to entertain a non-Northwestern audience -- emphasized.⁶⁵ There were two Red River hunts annually. That of early June to the end of July involved the greater number of settlers. Both nominally English and French Métis families embarked on the endeavour.⁶⁶ Parties heading west from the Forks were joined by additional families as they passed the parishes of St. James, St. Charles, Headingly, and St. François Xavier. In 1818, about 200 carts left for the Pembina Hills rendezvous. In 1820, there were 540; in 1830, 820; in 1835, 970.⁶⁷ By 1849 the cavalcade included 1 210 carts, 620 men, 650 women, 360 children, 403 buffalo ponies, 655 cart horses, 586 oxen and 542 dogs.⁶⁸ Red River was left "almost deserted."⁶⁹ The elderly, very young, infirm, and those with other responsibilities -- for example tending family fields or livestock -- remained behind. The primary product of the summer hunt was pemmican. The fall hunt late in October was smaller, about one third of the summer volume in buffalo product was harvested. Primarily 'green meat' -- meat considered to be in a "more natural state than dried"⁷⁰ -- was procured at this time. It was butchered, loaded, and frozen as a winter subsistence supply. In addition, a greater effort was made to gather buffalo hides -- frozen hides gave better tanning results than those sun dried in summer.⁷¹ The early hunt was larger than that of the fall because pemmican production, dependent on summer sun, required a much larger labour force. Women, the principal pemmican manufacturers, were helped by children --

⁶⁵ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 17 n. 24. Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, xxv, 258-259.

⁶⁶ See, Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 117.

⁶⁷ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 246, 248; Russenholt, 44, 48, 87; also, Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*. See also, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 18.

⁶⁸ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 244, Russenholt, 82. This would amount to approximately one third of the population. John Richardson, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 157, based on information gleaned from Métis crewmen on his 1819-22, 1825-27, and 1848-49 expeditions, believed that two thirds of the population -- presumably referring only to men -- hunted buffalo.

⁶⁹ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 39. See also, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 243; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 18.

⁷⁰ Kurlansky, 55.

⁷¹ Edward Ahenakew, in Ruth Matheson Buck, ed. "Tanning Hides," *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* (summer 1972): 47. Also Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 39, 75, 77, 86, 88. Sprenger, 68.

apprentices to the buffalo trade.⁷²

Finding buffalo in a large enough quantity to produce a surplus was one concern. Effective killing was another. These were dangerous pursuits in which the men were expected, reputed, and trained to excel.⁷³ After slaughtering, the carcasses had to be gathered, butchered and processed, usually within a few days. The tight time frame provides explanation for tales of waste: more than one account alleges that the Métis indiscriminately dispatched animals “only for a few ‘choice bits’ leaving the rest for the wolves.”⁷⁴ Meat spoils. Evisceration is an essential butchering procedure for good reason. The various body parts of dead animals putrefy at different rates. Microbial activity spreads rapidly. Working in an open air factory prior to the advent of technology that could prevent decomposition of all cuts equally well meant that the expedient course was to process what could be preserved using the means at hand as fast as possible. For the most part, organ meats and complicated or finer cuts had to be left aside as either impossible to manage safely or as so time consuming that other meat would be sacrificed.⁷⁵ Instances where poor weather conditions caused delay could spell massive losses. The onset of rain was to buffalo processing what grasshoppers were to wheat fields.⁷⁶

Men usually did the butchering. The tongues and bosses -- reserved for the best pemmican -- were removed first. The hide was stripped off, and the rest dressed into sixteen standard cuts. A single, adept hunter could kill and dress 10 buffalo in under 10 hours. Men were not usually as proficient at processing pemmican. Most had made the

⁷² “Visit to Red River,” 670. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 39, asserts the fall hunt was smaller because it interfered with harvest and haying. The claim that some Métis could not afford to stay on and winter in the settlement implies an inability to subsist. It seems more likely that some regarded overwintering in Red River as both less comfortable and less profitable. Sprenger, 72-73, notes that prosperous, diligent Métis wintered out.

⁷³ See Kane, 54-55, 57-59; Ens, 41-42; Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 120-21.

⁷⁴ Morton cited in Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 17 n. 24. See also, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 264; Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 122-23.

⁷⁵ See, Irma S. Rombauer, and Marion Rombauer Becker, *Joy of Cooking* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1931; reprint 1975), 516, 810-11 (page citations are to the reprint edition); Paulette Jiles, *North Spirit: Travels Among the Cree and Ojibway Nations and their Star Maps* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1995), 216: mistakes -- cutting the gall bladder for example -- could ruin the meat

⁷⁶ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 258.

decision at approximately 14 years of age to adopt the traditional male role. Their practical experience centred on hunting. Pemmican production was not a simple task. Women cut the meat into precise strips and hung these on pole frames to dry. Proper drying required at least four days. If necessary, the process could be sped up slightly by placing the poles over a fire.⁷⁷ Once dry, a proportion of the strips was rolled into 60 to 70 pound bales of “*viande seche*.”⁷⁸ The remainder was broken into fine particles by pounding. Delay and sodden conditions at any stage would greatly diminish, if not completely negate, prospects for a marketable surplus. Developing the required “rapidity and adroitness” took training and practice.⁷⁹ The skills were considered to be a series of ‘arts’ that traditionally “belonged to the women.”⁸⁰ Men, although aware of the basic steps, “paid little attention” to the finer points.⁸¹ Pemmican was evaluated and sold according to quality. Cows were preferred as their fat was free of a “rank flavour” which infused that of bulls in the summertime.⁸² The best grade pemmican was of limited quantity. It was made from very finely pulverized dried meat cut from the small three pound bosses. Only marrow fat -- “fine and as sweet as any Butter” -- extracted from broken bones by boiling was used.⁸³ Excess processed marrow fat was preserved in bladders which held about 12 pounds. The meat from two buffalo yielded from 80 to 90 pounds of standard grade pemmican.⁸⁴ This was sewn into

⁷⁷ Healy, 156; Russenholt, 89; Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 121; “Pemmican and How to Make It,” 54; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 42.

⁷⁸ Belcourt quoted in Sprenger, 76.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 75

⁸⁰ Ahenakew, 46.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² R. Littell, ed., “Game Beef and an Indian’s Appetite,” *Littell’s Living Age* 35, 447 (Dec. 1852), 512.

⁸³ James Isham, quoted in “Pemmican and How to Make It,” 54; see also, 53. See also Kane, 56-57. Russenholt, 89-90, credit men, presumably finished with their other work, with cracking and boiling the bones. Charette, 84, notes that the practice earned the Métis the designation “*les graisseurs*” -- the greasies -- among the Lakota.

⁸⁴ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 17 n. 24; “Pemmican and How to Make It,” 53; and Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 42-43. W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 41, estimates one buffalo per bag.

flattened bags made of rawhide left “with the hair on” to identify it.⁸⁵ Similarly fashioned bags filled with rendered fat were left rounded.⁸⁶

On-site production obviously demanded a large, dedicated and highly organized work force. The apparent ‘ease’ with which the Métis met these conditions belied their extensive training. Buffalo processing as a form of “non-farm work” was strenuous, time consuming and of utmost importance to family, community and HBC survival.⁸⁷ Company reliance on family groups was never in danger of being challenged by the importation of externally secured work crews. Successful families required not just superior hunters but superior processors. Women who were capable of working quickly and carefully not only ensured that family subsistence needs were met but produced a greater quantity and higher quality of surplus. Families with poor or incapacitated hunters or processors were less prosperous. Arguably, the lack of a competent processor was the more critical concern. Meat, whether shot, scavenged or received as a share of the excess, was of no benefit unless it could be properly preserved.⁸⁸

The products manufactured from eight to ten buffalo would fill a cart heading back to Red River. Once home to the settlement, household production continued. Cuts of meat that were not already processed were smoked, boiled, or dried -- not salted -- then stored for future use. Sinews that had been collected, after cleaning, served as sewing thread and the commonest form of settlement specie. Depending on whether hides were to be used for winter clothing, bedding, tents or door and window coverings, they were cured, tanned or scraped. Heated water was central to these processes, in considerable amounts. A home location close to the river was therefore essential -- as was a sufficient accumulation of firewood. The work of hauling extra water and gathering additional fuel amplified the labour intensive and time consuming demands already inherent in subsistence living. Carioles were manufactured out of the parchment produced, *shaganappi* -- rawhide strips -

⁸⁵ David Thompson quoted in “Pemmican and How to Make It,” 53. See also, Belcourt, quoted in Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 42.

⁸⁶ “Pemmican and How to Make It,” 53. See also Kane, 52-53, 56, 61.

⁸⁷ Barbara Rogers, *The Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1980), 152.

⁸⁸ See, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 87, 88.

- furnished carrying straps, old hides supplanted by those newly wrought were converted into toboggans. The HBC bought up many of these items. Moccasin production was a cottage industry in its own right. Footwear was in constant demand. The Company could go through as many as 2 500 purchased pairs a year for which it paid 6 pence per pair.⁸⁹

The buffalo harvest was more than capable of meeting subsistence needs. On summer pemmican alone a family could realize payment equivalent to a salaried HBC employee's season's wage. Surplus production sold to the Company allowed for purchases of tea, high wines, tobacco and other wares available from Company stores. Initially, the likelihood of the HBC securing any pemmican at all was highly dependent on settler motivation and success. The Company was compelled to advance goods and extend credit sufficient to convince producers to bother going beyond subsistence level production. In years where there were few buffalo or the weather was poor, production levels dropped. Hunts were occasionally recorded as having 'failed.' In most cases this was an indication that there was no surplus, not that hunting families had been left destitute. Those who had hoped to partake of the surplus faced the greater threat of privation. Between 1830 and 1870 five wholly unprofitable years were offset by an equal number of exceptionally 'successful' hunts. The remaining thirty years were of average production -- meaning that a surplus had been generated. The overall prosperity of pemmican producers was not necessarily 'illusory.'⁹⁰ It was in the Company's interest to continue to extend credit to Métis hunting families in anticipation of good results on the following hunt -- in most years the optimism was justified.

By the 1830s, if the Métis had control over determining what portion of production

⁸⁹ Healy, 6, 23, 71, 146, 149, 156, 201; Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 391; Cowie, 283; Irene Spry, cited in Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 73, see also 43, 48; Ahenakew, 47-48. Rogers, 152-55, notes that "the average user burns a ton of firewood a year" for cooking purposes alone. In areas such as Red River where population pressures saw wood become scarce, "the labour involved in this [gathering] task adds up to a considerable expenditure of time and energy." See also, Ens, 48, who notes that a cord of wood per day was used to heat homes in cold weather; and Coutts, 56, 122, who notes that the price of a season's supply of firewood "rose to between £ 9.10 and £ 14" during the winter. See also, "People of Red River," 169; Oliver, vol 2, 745, 870, also 778, 805, 819, 840, 857.

⁹⁰ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 18 n. 25; also, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 27; John Henry Pelly, cited in Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 101. Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 25. Kaye, 72, lists 1822, 1825, 1826, and 1827 as years when the products of the hunt were inadequate to "avert famine and want amongst some elements of the population" -- primarily *jardiniers*.

was surplus, the HBC had control of the amount it purchased, and from which producers. In 1829 the increase in population and the consequent increase in the amount of pemmican produced had exceeded the provisioning needs of the HBC. The Company responded by reducing prices paid. The following year, it stopped supplying settlers on credit and set limits for the inventory to be kept in Company stores. 'Delivery quotas' were introduced. Not all of the available pemmican was bought. The policy extended to other products. Producers who concentrated their energy on farming their own acreage were allowed to sell eight bushels of wheat. Those who were hunters or tripmen were allowed only four bushels. However, hunters had other options available. The HBC was not the only purchasing sector of the domestic market, nor was the 'local' market confined to the Settlement. The continual difficulties of those set on farming saw no abatement in settler dependency on the buffalo hunt. A steadily growing number of private merchants exchanged imported supplies for pemmican to sell to settlers in need. The proceeds of the hunt were a decided relief to specialized farmers -- some newly arrived from Upper Canada -- whose grain crops failed miserably in 1861 and 1864. The Métis also had recourse to American markets. By 1830, a trade route to St. Paul had been opened. Hunters found buffalo tongues particularly profitable. These were bought up by traders who had them salted and coated in molasses then shipped south to supply an Eastern gourmet market.⁹¹ By 1840 the American market was well on the way to displacing that furnished by the HBC.⁹² By 1844, buffalo robes shipped to St. Paul, New York and Montreal had become

⁹¹ Donald Gunn, 281; Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 340; Foster, "The Country Born," 220 n. 18; Sprenger 70, 74, 77; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 29; Russenholt, 65-67, 82.

⁹² Russenholt, 76, 82-83, cites examples of enterprising free traders 'blazing trails' to the south as early as 1836. D. Geneva Lent, *West of the Mountains: James Sinclair and the Hudson's Bay Company* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), xi, 67-70, 86 and Healy, 17, 21, indicate that James Sinclair -- engaged by licensed trader Andrew McDermot from approximately 1827, and a member of Norman Kittson's kinship network -- was using the southern trade route during the 1830s. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 72, 75, 85-86, in concentrating solely on the officially sanctioned fur trade maintains American markets, though expanding during the 1830s, were not accessed until after 1844. Yet Sinclair is presented as underwriting his nephew Peter Garrioch, connected to the American market from 1838. Arthur J. Ray, "Hudson's Bay Company," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 1112; Jackson, 73; also, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 79; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 19 n. 33; "Red River Trail," 614; and George Simpson, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 89: as Métis hunters continuously travelled between Pembina and Red River, it is reasonable to expect trade in buffalo product occurred on the American side when convenient.

a lucrative export.⁹³

When in the mid 1830s the need for buffalo processors no longer surpassed available labour, an increasing number of people associated with the Settlement, in particular the young who came of age, turned to wage labour with the HBC. Their availability, familiarity with the region, linguistic flexibility and willingness to work for less than it cost to induce external labourers to relocate saw the composition of the HBC work force shift from about one third Aboriginal employees to one half by 1850.⁹⁴ From the 1820s the HBC had the ability to claim, though not to enforce, command of the “greatest inland water network the world has ever seen.”⁹⁵ The transport needs of the Company furnished summer employment for a significant number of “Red River men.”⁹⁶ By 1857, approximately 700 manned the 90 HBC boats travelling to York Factory and Portage la Loche.⁹⁷

The Métis tripmen who made up the *voyageur* brigades had a reputation within the Company for being “difficult to manage successfully.”⁹⁸ Within the Red River community they were regarded as rough but gallant. The brigades were competitive, had internal loyalties, their own leaders and champions. The occupation was resoundingly masculine and one that conferred a status on par with excelling as a hunter on the buffalo plains. Cowie reports that, “Unless one had made the trip creditably to ‘the Long Portage’ he was not counted [among boatmen] and could not without challenge have the right and title to proclaim himself on festive occasions to be a man -- ‘*Je suis un homme*’.”⁹⁹ *Voyageurs*

⁹³ Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 75, 80.

⁹⁴ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 18-19; Mailhot and Sprague, 1.

⁹⁵ Russenholt, 50. J.E. Rea, “The Hudson’s Bay Company and the North-West Rebellion,” *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* (summer 1982): 44-45, points out that the very vastness of HBC water borne communication system ensured practical vulnerability.

⁹⁶ Oliver, vol. 2, 757, 760; J.J. Gunn, 30.

⁹⁷ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 12, 18-19, 36-37, and “Manitoba’s Red River Settlement,” 181; Coutts, 80; Cowie, 137; Russenholt, 49; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 43-44, 136.

⁹⁸ Cowie, 133. See, Burley, 10-11, 94.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 137-38. See also, Healy, 35-36, 41, 194-95, Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 55-56; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 36; Cowie, 129. Cadigan, 70, describes sealing, the secondary source of economic employment for labour in Newfoundland, as similarly “exclusively male.”

from Red River designated themselves *les Taureaux*. Confreres from the Saskatchewan were *les Blaireaux*; from the district beyond Portage la Loche *Poissons-blanc*. Those from the East were labelled *Mangeurs de Lard*.¹⁰⁰ The work was dangerous and demanding -- hardly fitting Métis tripmen for a description as "indolent and unsteady."¹⁰¹

The wage system reflected their worth to the HBC -- they tended to earn more than pemmican producers. As a further enticement, the Company offered to advance one third of a tripman's wages in December, pay out one third before the departure in May, and make a final instalment upon his return. In practice, tripmen's families often drew on their wages while they were away.¹⁰² A comparison of Table 2: "Family Size, Personal Property, and Geographical Location of Landowners, 1835," and Table 3: "Contract Employees of the HBC," in *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation*, indicates that wage labourers clearly identified as tripmen in 1835 rarely figure among the landholding heads of households for that year. Only 4 of the 19 tripmen with traceable ID numbers are listed as holding title: Charles Beauchamp, ID 120, John Norquay, ID 3752, Guillame Rocheleau, ID 4215, and George Ross, ID 4249. Six of the remainder -- forty percent -- are men in their early to mid twenties, apparently just starting out. A like proportion of the traceable tripmen of 1835 appear to have first signed on between the ages of 18 and 25. It is likely that novice wage labourers were sons or relatives of landholders, residing with them in the off season. As with heads of households who manned boat brigades, a portion of a younger man's income may well have gone toward supporting his family of origin.¹⁰³ The same may have been true of his available labour. In good years, it was possible for *voyageurs* who were responsible for acreage to complete spring seeding before the departure date.¹⁰⁴ Upon their return to the Settlement, if they were not to "idle about and wait for the next opportunity for

¹⁰⁰ J.J. Gunn, 32-35.

¹⁰¹ George Simpson, quoted in Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 18.

¹⁰² J.J. Gunn, 36.

¹⁰³ See, Burley, 94: who notes, "the company's terms [for labourers in general] seemed to attract mostly men who might 'be considered Boys.'" Cadigan, 43, 49, for consistent findings in Newfoundland. See also Ens, 137, who notes that Métis tripmen were "the least likely to have official title to their river lots."

¹⁰⁴ Donald Gunn, 283; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 19, "Manitoba's Red River Settlement," 182; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 44; J.J. Gunn, 36; Russenholt, 64, 66.

re-engagement,” tripmen could participate in the harvest, the fall hunt, or seek other work.¹⁰⁵ Whether in support of their family or for personal gain, work available in settlement and farther afield included fishing and hunting, cutting and hauling wood, rock quarrying, and construction. Sometimes payment for labour would be made through exchange in kind. Other times the convoluted accounting system of the HBC would be utilized to carry credits and debits from one settler over to another.¹⁰⁶

Dependency on the HBC for employment and competition for jobs due to population growth did not mean that the Métis inevitably bowed to Company dictates.¹⁰⁷ There were numerous instances of resistance among the *voyageur* brigades. Brigade captains -- the *élite* among crewmen -- considered themselves responsible not just for the conduct of their men, but for acting on their behalf as representative spokesmen in instances where Company treatment was considered unfair. This they would undertake even at the risk of losing their own contract.¹⁰⁸ That their status carried over into the community meant that, where necessary, supplementary support could be enlisted for a cause. In 1834, Thomas Simpson, the apparently unstable brother of George Simpson, while acting as a Company servant got into a dispute with a tripman over Christmas wages. Simpson's act of hitting the complainant, M. Laroque, over the head with a poker was communicated throughout the Settlement “like wildfire.”¹⁰⁹ The tripmen and their supporters held a council, formulating a demand that Simpson be subject to their discipline in a manner that “the gravity of the offence demanded.”¹¹⁰ Fort Garry was threatened with demolition unless the HBC complied. The Governor, entering into negotiation on Métis home ground, conceded that the wounded man would receive a full year's wages, discharge from his engagement, tobacco and ten gallons of rum. In another instance at

¹⁰⁵ J.J. Gunn, 36.

¹⁰⁶ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 19, “Manitoba's Red River Settlement,” 182-83; Russenholt, 60; Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 85, 198; Marble, “(Third Paper),” 316; Thomas Simpson, 12.

¹⁰⁷ See, Burley, 8; Cadigan, 112, also citations in “Chapter 3,” 33 n. 27, 29, this thesis, regarding settler resistance in the Newfoundland fishery.

¹⁰⁸ Cowie, 138; Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 56.

¹⁰⁹ J.J. Gunn, 40-41. See also, Donald Gunn, 284-86; Jackson, 72.

¹¹⁰ J.J. Gunn, 41.

Norway House in 1853, a disagreement over the date and place of termination of a tripman's engagement led to his arrest and imprisonment. His brigade, led by Paulet Paul, demanded and secured his release, resolving the incident.¹¹¹ In 1867, by which time the Company was "fully dependent on the tripmen," the Portage la Loche brigade went on strike, refused to go on to York and turned back at Norway House.¹¹² It was not an isolated incident. In the face of such general uprisings, the Company was "powerless to resist."¹¹³ Although it may have been, "the biggest employer in the area" the local population interacted in a labour market that offered other options.¹¹⁴

The economic independence of the Métis was evidenced by individuals who engaged in overland freighting by Red River cart -- a mode which eventually displaced water transport. Métis cart manufacture was an industry that had expanded with the buffalo hunt. Initially, most families were capable of making their own. During the 1830s, to meet the scope of the hunt and the various demands made on the settlers' time, large scale manufacture was undertaken by specialized craftsmen -- most of whom resided in St. François Xavier. In 1844, the HBC began to ship south overland, sending six carts to St. Paul. As the Company's reliance on carting increased, so did its reliance on independent freighters capable of organizing cart brigades. Women and children accompanied the brigades as ancillary labour. A profitable venture required dedicating the carts to ferrying trade goods. The brigades were therefore only lightly provisioned. The men, equipped as armed guards, also hunted en route. Women and children tended animals, set up and broke down campsites, hauled water, gathered food and fuel and prepared meals. A carter's pay was commensurate with that of a lake freighter.¹¹⁵ One means of supplementing family earnings was to engage in private trade as well. In 1855 George Simpson observed that

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 41-42. See also, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*: This may be Paulet Paul, ID 3870, listed as middleman and steersman from 1826-1847, or Paulet Paul, ID 3871, guide, 1852-1855.

¹¹² J.J. Gunn, 39. See also, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, "Map 1: Portage la Loche Brigade."

¹¹³ Cowie, 138. See also, Burley, 218--22, for descriptions of 'mutiny.'

¹¹⁴ Burley, 94.

¹¹⁵ Donald Gunn, 240; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 19 n. 15; Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 31; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 55, 72; "People of Red River," 175; Marble, "(First Paper)," 295, 305; Russenholt, 68.

“freighters or official carters” had become “the most prosperous class in the colony.”¹¹⁶ By the early 1860s, about 1000 tripmen were employed by the HBC and private traders for either boat or cart brigades. The overland transportation system featured “upwards of 2 500 carts,” of which only about 250 were managed by the Company.¹¹⁷

From the inception of Selkirk’s colony, the HBC had eyed the progress of independent trading warily. Partly in an effort to combat inroads made by American trading concerns, in the mid 1820s the Company conceded official licences to Cuthbert Grant, Louis Guiboche and Andrew McDermot, agreeing that they would trade both for the HBC and for themselves.¹¹⁸ In 1827, after returning from a trade expedition with “3 bateaux loaded high with 50 000 musquash and other furs; and provisions, robes and leather,” Grant was further awarded a salaried position as ‘Warden of the Plains.’¹¹⁹ It served to keep him from forming an alliance with American traders as much as to secure his services as leader of an advance guard against incursions by Oceti Sakowin ¹²⁰ reacting against

¹¹⁶ George Simpson, quoted in Giraud, vol 2, 206. The meaning of the word class as applied in Red River was malleable. See, Tepperman and Richardson, 15-17: In this instance, and many others, it is doubtful that ‘class’ was intended in the Marxist or Weberian sense, or was indicative of a widely held ‘consciousness.’ See also, “class,” *The Merriam-Webster Thesaurus* (Springfield M.A.: Merriam-Webster, 1989), 97: Frequently, ‘class’ as it appears in primary sources operates as a synonym for occupation, without necessarily implying any status valuation. In other instances it is used to mean type, sort, or classification of a person according to any one of a variety of attributes, from linguistic orientation, cultural or geographic origin, to general personality type or level of intelligence. See for examples: Cadigan, 155; Begg, *Dot It Down*, 45, 53, 54, 90, 181, 198; J.J. Gunn, 52, 58, 60; Burley, 55; Coutts, 86. Due to the adoption of poly-modal production, and the diversity of the population, one person could be simultaneously assigned to a variety of classes -- changeable over time -- the number of possible classifications limited only by the numbers and imaginations of commentators doing the assigning. See, Jean Burnet, “Occupational Difference and the Class Structure,” in *Readings in Canadian History*, ed. Douglas and Smith, 257-67, for an account suggestive of sets of parallel and contrasting social dynamics where ‘Old World’ conceptions of hierarchy were challenged in Upper Canada, particularly to 1812, but also to 1837, and again to 1860.

¹¹⁷ Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 126. See also, Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 88-89, 44; Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 31; “People of Red River,” 172.

¹¹⁸ Russenholt, 59, 62.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 64. See Beaudet, 239: the word ‘musquash’ probably represented “maskwa,” which is Cree for bear.

¹²⁰ Albert White Hat, “Lakota Language,” and Karen D. Lone Hill, “Sioux,” in *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, 328, and 590: the name translates as “The Seven Council Fires.”

increased pressure on their homeland.¹²¹ By the 1840s the contingent of independent procurers engaging in what the Company deemed 'illicit' trade was noticeable. Ultimately HBC annoyance with these traders led to the defeat of its pretence to authority. Concurrent with a widespread enthusiasm for liberalism as a political philosophy, which culminated in political overthrows across Europe, *laissez-faire* received community sanction in Red River. Even with the importation of a garrison from Britain, the HBC was not adequately empowered to contest the 1849 community supported decision arrived at with the conclusion of the Sayer trial: individuals could henceforth engage in trade free of Company harassment.¹²² After 1850, the economy and culture materializing in Red River became "increasingly removed" from whatever "pervasive influence" HBC representatives may have hoped to wield.¹²³

Children raised in the settlement worked as soon as they were able at tasks that matched their ability. When they reached the point where it was possible to opt for adult employment, the strength of family ties to people of influence in specific occupations could determine the likelihood of their securing a position. George W. Sanderson's physical disability did not preclude his being taken to work on a buffalo hunt and on cart brigades to learn about conducting trade. A Selkirk Settler child without Métis relatives was not as likely to have those particular opportunities. The son of a family with longstanding connections to the HBC upper ranks -- chief factors and chief traders -- stood a better chance of securing a postmaster position than a son of a family that had originally worked for the NWC as pemmican producers.¹²⁴ In as much as family networks were weighted to

¹²¹ See, Finlay and Sprague, "Chapter 16.4, Extinguishment of "Indian Title," online version, revised text, cached at, <<http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~Sprague/chap16.htm>>, 15 Nov. 1999, who note: "If the Red River settlers operated as traders or freighters rather than as producers -- if the main producers of the robes transported to St. Paul in the 1850s were First Nations people as was the case traditionally -- Metis involvement as carriers or intermediaries diminished their identification with Red River no more than other summer freighting activity."

¹²² Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 66; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 19; Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 29-30, 32; see also, Denoon, 46, regarding Britain and attitudes towards free trade; and Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 252, on the republicanism of the Métis.

¹²³ Coutts, 86.

¹²⁴ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 22; see also Glyndwr Williams, "The Simpson Era," 55; Burley, 49, 54.

reflect particularly pronounced occupational leanings and loyalties, they could either help or hinder a younger member's attempt to secure employment in any given field. In this way distinctions between settlers and resident merchants, based on their status as either procurers or providers of staple commodities, can be seen to have influenced approaches to, and conceptions of, group membership.

Social relations as product and factor in ordering conditions exemplify the complexity of the economic dynamic. Commercial production for credit -- and sometimes cash -- existed alongside subsistence household production for barter. Both utilized family and community organized labour. As well these modes could be augmented by individual wage labour, contracted formally with the HBC and informally between settlers.¹²⁵ The largely unrecorded contribution of women -- and of children -- as providers of labour and capital, in paid and unpaid work, and as investors as well as producers was key to achieving family comfort at a level beyond subsistence.¹²⁶ At the same time, the stable, relatively static condition of the commodity market meant that, economically speaking, the community lived to a fairly uniform standard. As Cowie asserted, patterns of land holding, family conformation and levels of material comfort appear to have been relatively homogeneous. In surveying the historiography about the Métis, it is possible to select out and compile into a list the names of individuals noted by contemporary commentators, or latter day historians, and presumed to be 'élite' either in behaviour, level of affluence or in terms of ability to act as leaders within the community. It is also possible to find that of this group, those who figure in Table 2, of *The Genealogy*, comprise at least one third of the heads of households listed for 1835. A comparison within this group of the material assets

¹²⁵ See, Mailhot and Sprague, 8.

¹²⁶ HBCA, F.34/1 fos. 1-16, "Buffalo Wool Company. Miscellaneous papers 1822-24," lists Red River women such as, 'Widow' Scarth, Mrs. W.C. Livingston, Mrs. Jas. Livingston, Mrs. Bunn, Mrs. McKenzie, Mrs. James Sutherland, Mrs. Elizabeth Sutherland, Mrs Wm. McKay, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Murray, among investors, creditors, debtors, and wage earners. HBCA, F30/1 fos., 1-33, "The Assiniboine Wool Company, Deed of Partnership etc. 1829-36," lists women as well, including, Mary Kennedy, Isabelle Kennedy, Mrs. Thomas, Eliz. Thomas, and Frances Thomas. Sprague and Frye, "Table 1," *Genealogy*, indicate that these women are Métis. Seven Oaks House Museum, pamphlet, *The Story of Seven Oaks House, West Kildonan - Manitoba, Home of John Inkster* (Winnipeg), indicates that Women living as the wives of independent traders and merchants, such as Mary Sinclair who married John Inkster, ID 2400, participated in running these businesses. Reportedly, Mary's "ability to add up columns of figures and balance accounts was remarkable."

associated with their households by the census -- including cultivated land -- reveals that anywhere from 70 to 75 percent owned as much as the Red River inhabitants judged to be 'wealthy' -- usually portrayed as a definite minority -- in the historiography.¹²⁷ Thus it appears that at least one quarter of the people enumerated in that year were more than comfortably well off. In addition, of the entire household count, only 77 families, or 24 percent, appear even remotely close to what might be considered a mere subsistence level -- all but 34 appear perceptibly above that standing. A number of the less materially endowed families, such as that of 25 year old François Bruneau, ID 578, and wife Marguerite Harrison, may well have been households in the process of just starting up.¹²⁸ Fully 50 percent of the people listed in the Settlement, when they compared their households with their neighbours', would have been able to consider themselves to be safely 'middle class.'¹²⁹ According to Simpson, Métis individuals, whatever they worked at, displayed "a certain feeling of pride, independence and equality among them which is subversive of good order in society."¹³⁰ It has been argued that the elitist social "proclivities of the clergy

¹²⁷ See, Coutts, 116, 123, 191, 193; also Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 6: In most cases, it appears that attributing an *élite* designation rests on the presumption -- particularly noticeable in Giraud's influential work -- that on the whole, the Métis constituted a less than advantaged socioeconomic group. The tendency has been to take at face value the self-aggrandizing statements and descriptions of social hierarchy proffered by the small number of definitely Europe-oriented, overwhelmingly White, usually English-speaking, Red River inhabitants to leave written records. The majority of these texts were composed by men as explanations and justifications for their own performance as either HBC merchant representatives or church funded missionaries. The various, often petty, cliques that formed among these individuals lacked any means of asserting dominance over any but the members of their own, numerically diminutive, social set. That a Métis individual, because recorded as demonstrating competency as a settler, must necessarily be regarded as outstanding, and therefore accorded an *élite* status within the Métis community, is an assumption unlikely to provide a reasonable or accurate reflection of the social dynamic operating among that larger population, arguably comprised of equally competent fellows.

¹²⁸ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, indicates that the 1835 Bruneau family of four included 2 year old Thomas, ID 579. Although without cultivated acreage, they nonetheless possessed two implements, a cart, a horse and six cattle. Giraud, vol. 2, 205, lists the Bruneaus as having expanded their livestock base to 20 animals, increased the number of carts to 6, and put 10 acres of their St. Boniface holding under cultivation by 1849. For an additional example of a family whose apparent lack of wealth is similarly explainable, see Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, ID 2453: James Flett, 20 years old, wife Catherine, 18 years old, and one other person, likely an infant, are listed as living in St. James at lot 26 with only 2 horses and 3 cattle.

¹²⁹ Norma Hall, "Identifying and Quantifying the *Élite*: A Description of an Historical Investigation of the Métis of Red River, 1820-1870," submitted to *Canadian Social History* 11.489, S01, University of Manitoba, 10 Apr. 2002.

¹³⁰ George Simpson, quoted in Coutts, 92.

and company squirarchy” -- numerically a very small group -- mattered little to the wider settlement population.¹³¹ Continuous interfamilial, intra-community interaction “helped blur social and economic divisions” among Red River people.¹³² The most pronounced social stratification appears to have been determined more by the inclination to mix with families identified as having the same primary occupation. This identity owed more to the traditions held by the principal kinship network that an individual acquired either through birth or by choice than to the accumulation of personal wealth.¹³³

Red River was similar to other settler societies in that attempts to prescribe capital relations were proscribed as sociocultural adaptations to physiographic conditions were negotiated by both producers and procurers. The richness of the resource endowment and the borderland condition of the territory presented opportunities and constraints. Capacity for mobility, desire for stability and perceptions of capability shaped merchant-settler approaches to economic interaction.¹³⁴ For the Métis, household production was a primary means of maintaining independence from corporately dictated economic policy.¹³⁵ Self-secured subsistence was possible for producers but comfort levels were enhanced by forming ties which increased access to merchant capital. Resident merchant representatives attempting to promote outside interests were incapable of instituting a despotic system of exploitation. They could expect to access surplus production only. Extending merchant credit was a means of encouraging surplus production in the resident, non-subservient population. Settler decision making was fundamental to establishing and maintaining levels of prosperity at an individual, community and corporate level. Pronounced capital accumulation by individual settlers was inhibited by factors such as geographic isolation, available technology, and a culturally determined sense of social obligation. The last factor

¹³¹ Coutts, 77, 104.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 105.

¹³³ See, Irene Spry, as cited in Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 9.

¹³⁴ See, Norton, 80; Cadigan, viii-x, 52-53; also Lewis and Urquhart, 151.

¹³⁵ See, Cadigan, 5, 38, 41, for descriptions of Newfoundland settler attempts to achieve independence through this means; also Ommer, and Denoon, as cited, “Chapter 3,” 31, this thesis.

also served to safeguard individuals from suffering extreme poverty.¹³⁶ Kinship networking was an aspect of social formation central to the pattern of mutual socioeconomic force and interdependency that emerged in Red River. Aside from consolidating settlers, it established ties to merchant representatives. Ability to achieve equitable levels of prosperity throughout the settlement meant that Aboriginal settlers judged themselves to be as worthy as those who imported a set of middle class aspirations - increasingly popular in the outside world on the peripheral edge of the Red River perceptual *orbis* -- into the community. Experience and experiment proved some of these aspirations to promise viability over time, some to be discarded. The impact of Red River's quasi-stateless status on development becomes the question of interest.

¹³⁶ William Cockran, quoted in Coutts, 96-97.

CHAPTER 6

The myth of non-development

The Red River Settlement was located on an ill-defined and transitional edge of the British Empire.¹ Vast stretches of geographic space separated it from similar societies of persistent settlers. A combination of factors -- a longstanding corporate-imperial agreement, awkwardness of access, commercial dependence on cooperative indigenous populations -- meant that a governing authority equipped with a military force sufficient to compel "comprehensive plans of social and economic development" was absent.² Yet the political economic environment did not unduly restrain development. The economic relations that formed in the settlement were unique in the sense that the formative combination of the locational and cultural resource endowment was specific to a particular location and time, but, the ensuing pattern of development was not entirely atypical. It resembled that found in other continentally interior, contemporary North American settler societies more than it did not.³ In nature and pace, economic changes were not suggestive of a backward momentum likely to see devolution to a more primitive state. If the appearance of economic stasis was to some degree unavoidable, given the necessity of waiting on technological advances that could overcome transportation difficulties and production problems, there were indications of self-directed progress occurring wherever and whenever it could be accomplished.⁴

¹ William MacD. Dawson, "Appendix, No. 8," in *Report from the Select Committee*, 395-6.

² Finlay and Sprague, 42; A.S. Morton, 820.

³ See, Henretta, as cited, "Chapter 5," 89-91, this thesis; also, observations of W.J. Eccles, and Finlay and Sprague, as cited, 93, this thesis. See also, Sylvester, 4-6, citing the findings of Gordon Darroch and Lee Soltow, Gérard Bouchard and J.I. Little; and Lewis and Urquhart, 151-52, 162, 174-76, for descriptions of Upper Canada and late-nineteenth-century Quebec: though in locations more favourably situated with regard to water transport, in suggesting that ensuring ongoing family success was prioritized, basic settler strategies show similarities.

⁴ See, A.S. Morton, 810, 832, 834, for descriptions of limitations, and note that the protestations of "utter impoverishment" of "enterprising ... settlers at Red River of mixed race," due to HBC avarice, are brought forward by some of the most 'successful' Métis: J. Louis Riel, James Sinclair, and A.K. Isbister, on behalf of some "977 persons" representing equally comfortable, if dissatisfied, households.

In many respects, Red River compares favourably to other settlement sites.⁵ Limitations integral to the location did not prevent prosperity from improving enough in the space of thirty years -- from the failure of the Selkirk Colony to hold White settlers in 1826 to the expiration of the HBC license, the deliberations of the Select Committee in London, and the launching of the Dawson, Palliser and Hind expeditions -- for the "foreign country" to attract Canadian and American attention as a desirable emigrant destination.⁶ The supposition that development was dependent upon the arrival of non-Aboriginal "actual" settlers, depicted as 'heroic' in accounts that imply that they alone had the knowledge, skills and outlook required for its initiation, is refutable.⁷ Evidence supports a counter interpretation which posits that during the Colonial era large influxes of White settlers external to a region did not occur until conditions inspired a sufficient level of confidence to overcome resistance to the idea of migration.⁸ Settlement had to have already begun; original settlers -- regardless of pigmentation -- to have demonstrated an ability to thrive following a familiar mode of existence. Beginning in the late 1860s, incoming settlers displayed enthusiasm for, and vigour in, displacing the Red River Métis, especially those

⁵ See, Cadigan, as a particular instance: the description of Newfoundland's limitations imply definite Red River advantages; also Bumsted, "Selkirk's Agents," 35, who describes Selkirk's Baldoon Settlement in Upper Canada, "while well located in most respects," as nonetheless situated in a malarial swamp. See also Marble, "(Third Paper)," 318; Sylvester, 4, 47-48; Henretta, 12. Red River's advantages included the superior fertility of the soil, ease of access to fish, bird and game animals, and the convergence of major North American river systems. An obvious additional advantage was the scope for freedom in the borderland. For example, some settlement difficulties were eased by the fact that land was freely available.

⁶ A.S. Morton, 829, see also, 830; Stanley quoted in Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 5; and Thomas Flanagan, "Dawson, Simon Jones," in *The Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 5, *Reference*, George F.G. Stanley, Thomas Flanagan, and Claude Rocan, eds. (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985), 243.

⁷ J. Ross, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 7 no. 67, 9 no. 98; see also, 1-2, where J. Ross, not to be confused with James Ross of Red River, is described as a member of the Canadian Parliament from 1848. He became Solicitor General, Attorney General, and by 1856 was Speaker of the Legislative Council. Subsequently he became "head of the trunk railway of Canada." See also, R.N. Fowler, "Appendix, No. 16," 441, who argues that although throughout the colonial dominions, "the aboriginal proprietors of the soil have been viewed as an obstruction to the advancing interests and exigencies of the white settlers who have displaced them," in his opinion the reality, as demonstrated in Red River, was that "the native races of Hudson's Bay, ... are the support of an important and lucrative commerce, and the real producers of the vast wealth ... with which the fur trade has enriched England."

⁸ Denoon, 67, 214-15. See also, "Report," and J. Ross, John Richardson, and Edward Ellice, "Minutes of Evidence," in *Report from the Select Committee*, iv no. 11, xii, 9, 158, 350.

identified as cultural 'enemies' on the basis of a political tradition intolerant of difference.⁹ The concerted push by new arrivals for the usurpation of Métis land, including individually held farm sites and communally reserved territory; for the toppling of Métis sociopolitical dominance; and for the securing of control over economic opportunities, is indicative of original settler success, not failure.

Commonly, nineteenth-century settler communities regarded as successful -- those which displayed expansive, 'progressive' development -- engaged in an economic relationship which Innis described as "dominated by the discrepancy between the centre and the margin of western civilization."¹⁰ A dependency dynamic was fostered. Concentration on staples extraction was the distinguishing characteristic. Most often, Europe-oriented settlers caught up in the dependency dynamic of staples trade did not see the possibility of manifest development in their region without attracting capital investment from the outside. A location is attractive to outside capital only in so far as it shows promise. Prudent investors of the nineteenth-century, educated to prefer empiricism over faith, sought to qualify promise by basing it on quantitative evidence of successful settlement. In a best case scenario, settlers who demonstrated that improvements had taken place in their community attracted investment conducive to promoting development. This encouraged an increase in agricultural activity and attracted a population influx which in turn promoted further investment in the development of transportation systems capable of optimizing links to the international market.¹¹

The dynamic was one which encouraged a 'cargo cult' mentality: in attempting to fill the gap between material wants and the available means of satisfying them,

⁹ Norma Hall, "Ritual, myth and identity in gendered space: the secret rites of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Loyal Orange migrants in Manitoba," submitted to 11.775, *Gender History in Canada*, S01, University of Manitoba, 10 Apr. 2003, 1, 10-11, 16, 27. See also, Donald A. Smith, "Donald A. Smith's Report," in *Birth of a Province*, 43-44.

¹⁰ Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 385.

¹¹ See, Glen Williams, 45; Denoon, 69; also, Sprague, "Métis Land Claims," in *Aboriginal Land Claims in Canada: A Regional Perspective*, ed. Ken Coates (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992), 195, for a description of parallel expectations in Ontario, 1867.

improvement was in itself thought to have a direct causal relation with development.¹² Hence energy was expended in delineating its proper aspect and expounding its virtue, often at considerable, and as often futile, expense. Believers in the inevitability of progress, whose own attempts at inducing it were confounded by the practical limitations of a location, tended to vent frustration by ascribing the failure of development to follow on the heels of improvement to a lack of energy expended by froward fellow settlers.¹³ To those of the nineteenth-century whose minds were enamoured with Western European 'truths' uncovered in the study of physics and subsequently transferred into other disciplines, the equation was simple: informed individuals who applied energy to accomplish 'work' had the power to unleash the force of progress.¹⁴

Among observable development trends found in Red River, a cluster of HBC cash expenditures on "weird and wonderful experiments" connected to official colonization stand out as prime examples of near complete improvement failures.¹⁵ The prominent instance is that of the 1812-1826 attempt to mould external migrants -- European crofters, watchmakers and mercenaries lacking either adequate start-up capital or knowledge -- into

¹² See, Victor Barnouw, *Culture and Personality* 4th ed. (Chicago: Dorsey Press, 1985), 443-45. See also, "Cargo cult," *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, <<http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cargo%20cult>> 20 June 2003, which notes that the term "is invoked as an English language idiom, to mean any group of people shallowly emulating practices of a [successful] group," citing the example of physicist Richard Phillips Feynman's criticism of pseudoscientific studies in, Ralph Leighton, Edward Hutchings eds., *"Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman": adventures of a curious character* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985).

¹³ See, "froward," *Webster's 1828 Dictionary*, Electronic version (Independence MO: Christian Technologies, 1998), <http://65.66.134.201/cgi-bin/webster.exe?search_for_d/inetpub/wwwroot/cgi-bin/webster/web1828=froward> 20 Jun. 2003: "Perverse, that is, turning from, with aversion or reluctance, not willing to yield or comply with what is required; unyielding, ungovernable, refractory, disobedient, peevish, as a froward child"; See also, Deut. 32: 20, 26, 28; also Alexander Ross, *The Fur Hunters of the Far West: a narrative of adventures in the Oregon and Rocky Mountains* (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1855), 234-35, who uses the term in describing "sons of the wilderness ... clogged with large families" and bound for Red River as settlers in 1825.

¹⁴ Greenberg, 694-96, 702-03, notes that nineteenth-century ideas about energy use and work have had long-term interdisciplinary repercussions. In the social sciences the persistence is notable, particularly in the cultural anthropology of the 1950s. Portrayals of non-White societies as low energy users bolstered an "energy stage" theory of history compatible with the liberal tradition and with relegating Aboriginal and other 'uncivilized' groups to a static category of "societies without history and progress." See also, Coutts, 40-41; Henretta, 3-4; Sylvester, 8; Cadigan, 132, 136-37, 139, 165, 166.

¹⁵ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 21.

agriculturalists. Whatever degree of altruism underlay Selkirk's motives, in the end only corporate rewards were realized, in a fiscal tangle that renders the isolation of settlement expenditures from those of the fur trade a near impossibility. The various other developmental projects he instigated and supported in the Settlement to his death in 1820 were primarily aimed at bolstering the position of a select few inhabitants.¹⁶ George Simpson, as "on-site manager of operations" after his 1821 appointment as HBC Governor, followed Selkirk's lead in contracting the Company to underwrite similar schemes.¹⁷

In 1817, Selkirk established the first model farm, Hayfield, under William Laidlaw. Servants and livestock were imported, workers were hired, but the enterprise folded after several unimpressive years. All traces of farm property, implements, livestock, even large buildings had 'disappeared' -- including a central mansion that, having cost £600 to erect, promptly burned to the ground. Those items not destroyed had likely been informally redistributed throughout the Settlement. The HBC was out approximately £2 000.¹⁸

The Buffalo Wool Company, an attempt to make commercial use of a hitherto unexploited buffalo byproduct, ran from 1820-1825. Lady Selkirk was unable to overcome the fact that the wool was aesthetically unappealing. No buffalo wool fashion trend followed her modelling of the cloth in public. A yard of the finished material, which could command only 45 shillings 6 pence in London, cost 2 guineas to produce. Six partners are listed as having held "Stocks or Shares at the rate of £100 for each share."¹⁹ A number of individuals of the Red River community received advances in expectation of returns, others who were owed money did not collect.²⁰ When all debts were cancelled, the HBC -- out

¹⁶ See, W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 65; J.M. Bumsted, "Selkirk's Agents," 33, 37, 41.

¹⁷ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 18.

¹⁸ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 77; Donald Gunn, 236; A.S. Morton, 644; Russenholt, 59. Cadigan, 136-37, describes similar attempts to establish model farms in Newfoundland.

¹⁹ HBCA, A.37/49, Search File - 1.

²⁰ HBCA., F.34/1, fos. 1-16. John Pritchard as instigator and agent had 3 shares, Robert Dickason 2 shares, Robert Logan 2 shares, Alexander McDonald 2 shares, Archibald McDonald 1 share, and Thomas Thomas 1 share. It is difficult to determine duplicated or amalgamated identities, but there were at least 35 individuals identified as debtors to the BWC; an additional 36 who were advanced goods on credit; 11 who either accumulated credit on account or were owed money; and 20 who received wages.

perhaps as much as £4 500 -- was the biggest loser in the "industrial enterprise."²¹ Métis individuals -- including women and children living near the Frog Plain factory -- were among the main beneficiaries. For a few years high wages had been paid for work: gathering, sorting and spinning. While the amount of time and energy expended on the labour intensive finishing of buffalo hides was not reduced, more people were employed in the process and unfinished hides were commanding a higher price than dressed skins. Much of the money earned went to purchasing newly imported livestock.²²

In 1827 the predilection for promoting civilization led an Academy for instruction in Latin, Greek and mathematics to be "warmed into existence."²³ It attracted few pupils from the greater Red River population. This in part was because it was not intended for their edification. Instead it was to serve as a boarding school for the children of the "great nabobs of the fur trade" stationed in the interior.²⁴ These men did not necessarily envision a permanent stay in Rupert's Land. Their concern was that their 'country born' sons and daughters be equipped to meet the possibility of leading lives in a fully Europeanized context. The Academy was wanted to ensure that the children acquired social graces befitting a position that a father's status as a HBC officer might confer.²⁵ On the other hand, educating the children of the predominant sector of the Red River Métis community was in Simpson's view "a wasted enterprise."²⁶ For their part, Métis parents likely viewed missionary proposals to improve their children after a foreign fashion in such skills as "carpentry, farming, animal husbandry, spinning, weaving, and knitting," which they

²¹ Alexander Ross, 69-72; A.S. Morton, 663; Donald Gunn, 232; HBCA., A.37/49; and HBCA., F.34/1, fos. 1-16.

²² Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 70-72; Donald Gunn, 231-32. See also, A.S. Morton, 662-63; Jackson, 71.

²³ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 132.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 11; Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 132. See also, Thomas F. Bredin, "The Red River Academy," *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* (winter 1974): 11, 17; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 145-47.

²⁶ Coutts, 30; see also, Bredin, 11, 17.

could learn at home, rather than in academic subjects, as equally pointless.²⁷ Enrolment in the Academy in its various incarnations remained small in comparison to the population increase. There were sometimes as few as four, occasionally as many as 16, and for five years only -- 1833 to 1838 -- about forty-five pupils.²⁸ Whatever benefit the education was to confer was moderated by the perception of various parties from equally varied perspectives that the whole was an exercise in pretentiousness. The cost to the HBC was largely offset by mission contributions and fees from parents. However for “nearly thirty years” the Company provided an allowance of £100 per annum -- a contribution that was ultimately inadequate.²⁹ The Academy suffered an extended decline to its final close in 1859.³⁰

The Assiniboine Wool Company ran from 1829-1836. A joint stock venture, its purpose was to open “a branch of Trade with England in the article of Merino wool,” and so integrate the settlement into the wider colonial economy.³¹ Rupert’s Land would thus be raised “to a standing of high selfstability [sic] among her sister colonies of the British Empire.”³² This time, care was taken to broaden the investment base in the community, perhaps to ensure that more people felt that they had a stake in seeing it succeed.³³ In the event it did not. Members of the community laid the blame on Simpson’s decision to send “Mr. Rae, a gentleman of the fur company” to accompany the Métis representatives, led by J.P. Bourke, on their journey to buy sheep in Missouri.³⁴ Rae, “destitute of the experience

²⁷ Coutts, 51. See also, Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 194, for comments on formal schooling as peripheral to learning.

²⁸ Bredin, 12-13, 16-17.

²⁹ George Simpson, quoted in Bredin, 17.

³⁰ Coutts, 32-33, 50-51, 54; also Bredin, 12, 14, 17; and Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 147-52. By 1845, enrolment had dropped from a high of 38 boys and 14 girls in 1838, to 14 boys and 9 girls. In 1858-59 there were no boys and only four girls.

³¹ HBCA., F30/1 fos. 1.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ HBCA, F30/1, fos. 1-33, list almost 200 stockholders in the “association,” all of whom are identifiable as residents of Rupert’s Land, most in Red River.

³⁴ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 146. Oliver, vol. 1, 273; and Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, indicate that Bourke, ID 467, was one of the few Selkirk Settlers to stay on at Red River. He married Nancy Campbell, Métis daughter of ID 662, John Campbell and Catherine Demontigny.

which qualified his sagacious and equally stubborn colleague” insisted on a detour to Kentucky.³⁵ It proved impossible to get the flock back to Red River without great additional expense and loss of animals. Of 1 475 sheep, only 251 made Red River. Many of these died shortly after arrival. The settlers were incensed and the Governor was obliged to return the investors’ money.³⁶

A new experimental farm was established in 1830 under Chief Factor McMillan. Its express purpose was to promote the “rearing [of] sheep and the preparation of Tallow or Wool and of Hemp and Flax for the English Market.”³⁷ The HBC was to ensure that “the necessary means be afforded that object.”³⁸ Spacious buildings were erected. The chief problems that had undermined earlier endeavours were not addressed. McMillan, though a “gentleman” was “unacquainted with agriculture”; cheap labour was impossible to secure; workers familiar with flax preparation were exceedingly scarce.³⁹ The quantity of raw material produced was greater than what could be processed. The farm was sold off at a loss of at least £3 500, but possibly twice that amount, after 6 unprofitable years.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, those settlers who had aided the undertaking by growing exceptional amounts of unutilized flax had been rewarded out of HBC coffers with prizes for their enthusiasm. Red River horsemen, making the most of the farm’s costly stallion and imported brood mares, saw their stock “decidedly improved.”⁴¹

Simpson acted as Chairman of the Red River Tallow Company begun in 1832 to “promote the welfare of the colony.”⁴² It failed under the direction of Alexander Ross in 1833.⁴³ One thousand pounds in capital had been obtained from the sale of shares at £5 per

³⁵ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 147.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 148-50; Donald Gunn, 277.

³⁷ A.S. Morton, 642.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Donald Gunn, 278.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 270-71, 273, 278-79; Russenholt, 64.

⁴¹ Donald Gunn, 271, 279. See also, Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 392-93.

⁴² Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 150.

⁴³ HBCA., F31/1 fos. 1-5: James Bird is listed as Deputy Chairman, Andrew McDermot as Alexander Ross’ co-Director.

share to be paid up in cattle -- one share equal in value to one yearling, two shares to a two year old etc. A herd of 473 cattle was purchased. Settlers such as John Spence, Jean Baptiste Sigmonier and Donald Livingstone were employed as principal herdsman at £50 per annum. They oversaw crews made up of their sons, friends and relatives.

Exceptionally harsh weather conditions diminished the herd. Optimism, that the herdsman, the numerous settlement dogs, and bounties offered for wolf skins would prevent "an evil [purportedly] never contemplated" at the outset, was misplaced.⁴⁴ Predation by wolves apparently prevented herd growth. No tallow or hides from cattle slaughtered for meat was ever exported. The surviving animals were sold off to refund initial investments to stockholders.⁴⁵

In 1837 yet another experimental farm was begun. In excess of 80 acres was marked out at 'Red River Flats' just north-east of Fort Garry. Thirteen families of external migrants were imported as indentured servants. Métis settlers were expected to benefit from exposure to the example set by these twenty or so wonderful workers. The project was overseen by high priced co-import Captain George Marcus Cary. Impressively expensive implements were brought along.⁴⁶ In ten years, the Captain and staff were unable to raise any more than what was needed to feed themselves. Only twenty acres were ploughed in the first year. Only 40 more were realized subsequently. Métis settlers such as those of Maxime Dauphinais' household, residing across the river in St. Boniface and managing 24 cultivated acres by 1835 on family labour alone, or of that of James Bird, with at least 30 acres under cultivation, had little reason to be impressed.⁴⁷ The only new information

⁴⁴ HBCA., F.30/1 fos. 4; F 31/1 fos. 2.

⁴⁵ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, 153; Donald Gunn, 271-73.

⁴⁶ Donald Gunn, 280.

⁴⁷ D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, *Genealogy*, Tables 1, 2, 4. See also, Russenholt, 63; Giraud vol. 2, 205, 209. Dauphinais, ID 1032, and household of 5, also kept 6 horses, 40 head of cattle, and owned 6 Red River carts -- a strong indication of participation in the buffalo hunts. The 7 member Bird family, ID 379, was also diversified. They kept 2 horses, 37 head of cattle, and owned 3 carts. Additional family members lived nearby. James' son, William, ID 399, oversaw a family of 7, had 2 horses, 10 cattle, and a garden plot of 2 acres. By 1838, Jas. Bird had increased his livestock by 28 animals, and had 33 cultivated acres; 5 sons cultivated from 10-25 acres each; William had erected a windmill.

gleaned was that scythes were more efficient than sickles when harvesting grain.⁴⁸

Forays into formally establishing Red River improvements exhibited a singular pattern. Settlers from the sector of the community most closely affiliated with the HBC -- including Simpson -- were listed as instigators, investors and managers.⁴⁹ Debts or losses that they incurred were either forgiven or reimbursed by the HBC. Failed enterprises were sold off, sometimes at a substantial discount.⁵⁰ At no time did the Company receive anything close to an acceptable return on investment.

Whatever estimations of Selkirk are presented in the historiography, Simpson is not portrayed as a stupid man.⁵¹ He is credited with possessing an administrative ability indicative of "resourcefulness and toughness."⁵² He reputedly "brought to the fur trade his own particular insistence on the virtues of economy and regularity."⁵³ What little is known of his personal life reveals him to have been self-interested and calculating in his private affairs. Yet there has been no attempt to account for this decade's long apparent lapse in judgment. The persistent sinking of HBC funds into unproductive ventures is inconsistent with his reputation for "sensible" management; for being a man possessed of "remarkable business ability"; and for according him renown as "a great business leader who contributed much to his Company and to British North America" -- all judgments

⁴⁸ Russenholt, 78.

⁴⁹ See Burley, 55: From 1821, these individuals, as 'wintering partners' of the amalgamated HBC and NWC concerns, had also been counted among shareholders in the HBC. The men "might have considered themselves 'wintering partners' -- a term originating in the NWC where officers really *were* partners, but HBC officers were in fact very highly paid and privileged servants. They were partners only in the sense that their income depended on the profit their efforts produced."

⁵⁰ For example see, Russenholt, 60; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*: The HBC imported Mitchell from Scotland to set up a windmill at a cost equivalent to \$7 500 then abandoned it. Robert Logan, ID 2988, was allowed to buy it, and 100 acres of surrounding land, for \$1 500. He prospered.

⁵¹ J.M. Bumsted, "Another Look at the Founder: Lord Selkirk as Political Economist," in *Thomas Scott's Body*, 37-55, supplies an analysis, and concludes that Selkirk "deserves to be remembered in its [the discipline of political economics] annals, and to be treated in Canadian history as more than merely a misguided or self-interested colonizer."

⁵² Glyndwr Williams, "The Simpson Era," 51.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 52.

apparently “beyond rebuttal.”⁵⁴ The stated goal, gracing documents addressed to the London Committee and bearing his signature: to see Red River become a “comfortable retreat” for men who had contracted Aboriginal families, is likewise at odds with the contempt Simpson expressed in his private journals and correspondence for Aboriginal spouses and children -- including his own.⁵⁵ It is doubtful that he intended the benefits of ‘civilization’ to substantially profit the Métis.

As a man versed in matters of international trade it seems probable that Simpson indulged in prognosticating trends. As early as 1821 he was aware that fur bearing animals, particularly beaver, were being depleted. Buffalo were progressively less prevalent in the vicinity of the Settlement. Although quota systems were imposed, and trapping areas restricted, fur volumes in trapped-out areas remained low.⁵⁶ He may have intuited that they were unlikely to rise, perhaps could not even be maintained, at least not indefinitely. He may also have harboured the conventional belief that the arrival of civilization inevitably led to the ‘extinction’ of “brown” people.⁵⁷ There were other colonial locations from which Simpson could draw conclusions -- and find inspiration. From their example it would be possible to envision a New World ‘Little Britain.’ In that setting, those who had enjoyed wealth and power in the fur trade but were unlikely to excite the same degree of admiration or afford a comparative level of opulence in England -- in Simpson’s case because of his flawed background -- would be allowed to retain their elevated sense of self worth. James Douglas and his wife Amelia Connolly -- whom the Governor-in-Chief of Rupert’s Land considered to be his social inferiors due to their mixed heritage -- had accomplished as

⁵⁴ John S. Galbraith, “The Enigma of Sir George Simpson,” *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* (spring 1976): 4, 9. Glyndwr Williams, “The Simpson Era,” 51.

⁵⁵ HBCA, F30/1, fos. 3. See also, Glyndwr Williams, “The Simpson Era,” 53, 55; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 161; Burley, 52.

⁵⁶ Glyndwr Williams, “The Simpson Era,” 52, 57, 58; Coutts, 105.

⁵⁷ See, Mr. Christy and David Anderson, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 244-45, discussing the view that “the long history in America” had “proved” the “fact” that people “with Indian blood in them” inevitably “disappeared” when exposed to “civilized man.” The “general statement” holds that “the brown population dies out as the white population advances ... wherever colonization by the white man takes place the brown man disappears ... The more civilized man conquers the less civilized man.” See also, R.N. Fowler, “Appendix, No. 16,” in *Report from the Select Committee*, 442.

much in British Columbia.⁵⁸ It stood to reason that Simpson, newly availed in 1830 of a “lovely, tender exotic” English bride, his cousin Frances Ramsey Simpson, stood to fare extremely well.⁵⁹ An “impressive stone residence” which Simpson had arranged to be built at Company expense in 1829 within the walls of a new 13 acre Lower Fort Garry still under construction, awaited her arrival.⁶⁰ However, setting himself up as a “Little Emperor” over a stagnant backwater that a ‘refined’ wife could only find repugnant clearly would not invoke the desired result.⁶¹

Simpson’s actions are consistent with his being an ambitious individualist who, aware of the prosperity enjoyed by the Métis settlers -- to his mind decided inferiors to whom all impediments to progress could be attributed⁶² -- believed in the location’s potential. It needed only that a commodity with colonial appeal sufficient to “bear the high cost of transportation and still return a handsome profit” be produced in abundance.⁶³ Money, poured into improvements, would kick start a development momentum. According to available contemporary economic theory, inevitably progress would take care of the rest.⁶⁴ A ‘proper’ settlement would flourish. A privileged few men, those who like Simpson considered their HBC social circle to constitute the upper echelon of Red River society, would be in a position to establish impressive estates. Their “founding families” would furnish landed dynasties suitable for a ‘respectable’ colony.⁶⁵ Whether formulated as

⁵⁸ See, Galbraith, 5; Jean Barman, *The West beyond the West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991; reprint, 1995), 46-47, 59-60, 63 (citations are to the reprint edition); and Van Kirk, “Five Founding Families,” 152-53.

⁵⁹ Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 182-83.

⁶⁰ Donald Gunn, 269; Healy, 175. “Lower Fort Garry,” *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 208: The fort, unfinished, served as the governor’s residence only briefly.

⁶¹ Galbraith, 4. See also, Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 197.

⁶² See, Thomas Simpson, 13, for a reiteration of views likely shared by his brother: “Governor Simpson has long endeavoured, by arguments and rewards, to excite an exportation to England of hides, tallow, flax, hemp, and wool for the benefit of the settlers, ... but, above all, the roving and indolent habits of the half-breed race ... seem to preclude the probability of this colony rising to commercial importance.”

⁶³ Finlay and Sprague, 96.

⁶⁴ Oliver, vol 2, 1291-92, 1320, lists *Joyce’s Analysis of Smith’s Wealth of Nations* among the 500 books “belonging to the Red River Settlement, June, 1822” and kept in various library collections to 1852. See also, Castling, “Peter Fidler’s Books,” 47-48; and Strike, 11.

⁶⁵ Van Kirk, “Five Founding Families,” 149.

a conscious plan or not, as long as Simpson and other men similarly connected to the Company had their investments protected until the right solution was hit upon, they would be well placed to engage in land speculation when an opportune moment arose. The necessity of periodically renewing the Company's license -- as was the case in 1834 -- rendered such a moment a distinct possibility. That some were better positioned to benefit was especially so as few of the Métis settlers had any clear sense of where they stood with regard to land title -- a situation Simpson did little to address, even when pressed by formal complaints. Simpson and his coterie would not have been the first to contemplate the possibility of speculative activity. Selkirk had been accused of harbouring the same as a primary motivation as early as 1815.⁶⁶

After Cary's farming experiment, enthusiasm for improving enterprises involving large expenditures of HBC capital dropped off dramatically. Representations made by John Henry Pelly and Simpson, expounding alleged HBC improvement success, proved adequate to secure a new HBC license from the Colonial Office in 1838. However, the Simpsons had lost all personal interest in remaining in Red River after the death of their infant son, George Geddes, in 1832. In 1833, Frances had returned to England. The Governor had relocated his headquarters to Lachine where he invested in transportation schemes.⁶⁷ Ironically, the Métis community was the main beneficiary of the failed Red River corporate ventures. Women, children and men benefited from jobs, influxes of cash into the Settlement, a chance to evaluate the worth of foreign methods through first hand observation, and opportunities to pick up expensive materials and costly structures at a discount. They undoubtedly formed opinions regarding the intentions and strategies of the HBC "chosen few" as well.⁶⁸ Evaluations were not enhanced by the Company's failure to disclose by posted proclamation -- the usual means of conveying news on business matters

⁶⁶ See, Donald Gunn, 283; A.K. Isbister, 11; Roderick Kennedy, "Appendix, No. 15," in *Report from the Select Committee*, 438; E.E. Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 223; J.M. Bumsted, *Fur Trade Wars: The Founding of Western Canada* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 1999), 77.

⁶⁷ See, Donald Gunn, 281; Shirlee Anne Smith, "Sir George Simpson," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2167.

⁶⁸ Donald Gunn, 287.

-- that the Douglas family had sold their claim to the North American territory back to the HBC.⁶⁹

It wasn't until 1847 that a new, pronounced wave of enthusiasm for delineating Red River improvement began to form -- this time the impetus originating at a remove from the Settlement. Expatriate in London, Alexander Kennedy Isbister petitioned Earl Grey, the Colonial Secretary, on behalf of inhabitants of Red River to secure tenure and "natural rights and privileges" commensurate with their status as enterprising "free born men" native to "the country of their forefathers."⁷⁰ His advocacy drew attention and inspired many in Red River who had become progressively open about their opposition to HBC attempts to restrict their economic activities.⁷¹ Elsewhere all and sundry were alerted by Isbister's eloquence to a host of opportunities apparently lying dormant in the geographic expanse cradling the Settlement. There was an allegedly profitable "whale fishery" as well as desirable "salmon, porpoise, and seal fisheries along the [western] coast," all languishing under HBC neglect.⁷² In addition, "valuable mines of silver, lead, and copper" were waiting to furnish a "new channel for British expertise and employment of capital."⁷³ Money was to be made "by leasing, or letting pasture lands, until the country could be brought into more general cultivation."⁷⁴ In the mean time, "the establishing of a good export trade in wood, tallow, wool, corn and other natural production of the country" was presented as perfectly feasible.⁷⁵

What Isbister's "incisive" argument and "subtle" approach did not manage to do was alter existing estimations of the capabilities or 'natural' proclivities of indigenous

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, and Charles R. Tuttle, 297; George Simpson, *Report of the Select Committee*, 71; Isbister, 7, 10, 11.

⁷⁰ Isbister, 24.

⁷¹ See, A.S. Morton, 810-12, 814-16; Denise Fuchs, "Embattled Notions: Constructions of Rupert's Land's Native Sons, 1760-1860," *Manitoba History*, no. 44 (autumn/winter 2002-2003): 15-16.

⁷² Isbister, 24.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* See also, George Simpson, letter dated 1837, "Appendix, 11," in *Report from the Select Committee*, 417.

peoples anywhere in the Empire.⁷⁶ European societies were distinguished by a deeply entrenched view of Aboriginal peoples: they personified “antistructure,” the state of humankind prior to acquiring ‘culture.’⁷⁷ Their supposed lack of ability to institute an ordered existence left them little different from animals. Simpson made use of, and lent credence to, these beliefs in his writings, both personal and published. Along with his habit of referring to Aboriginal women in terms of pigmentation, he was comfortable with asserting that they bore a greater resemblance to monkeys than to human beings. He and Pelly had enhanced their presentation to Lord Grey and the Board of Trade regarding the HBC license renewal with statements which pointed to an inherent civil deficiency in the Métis.⁷⁸ Pelly had painted the “half-castes” of Red River as “difficult of management,” and requiring “the most vigilant attention” of resident Company representatives.⁷⁹ Allegedly, they were of “so mixed a character, and so little used to the restraints of civilized life, that mismanagement would inevitably lead to an outbreak among them.”⁸⁰ Out of his personal experience, Simpson had confirmed that it was the HBC presence and expertise in dealing with the “Indians and half-breeds” which had prevented any extreme “breaches” of the “peace, order and tranquillity” in the area.⁸¹ Rather than elicit active support from either the British, or Canadian governments, Isbister’s ambiguous expressions regarding ‘natives’ -- they had intelligence but, because some Aboriginal peoples were not yet fully ‘improved,’

⁷⁶ Barry Cooper, “Alexander Kennedy Isbister, a Respectable Victorian,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes Ethniques au Canada*, 17, no. 2 (1985), 45. See also, Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 91.

⁷⁷ Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, 273.

⁷⁸ See, George Simpson, quoted in Vibert, 38; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 166, 201; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 128. See also, Charles Kingsley, quoted in, Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 1995), 6. Also, Fowler, “Appendix, No. 16,” in *Report from the Select Committee*, 441.

⁷⁹ J.H. Pelly, letter dated 1838, “Appendix, No. 11,” in *Report from the Select Committee*, 429. Mr. Gordon, and J. Ross, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 10 nos. 129-30: Gordon as questioner, Ross as responder, affirm the assertion in 1857: “Is it not practically found that a population consisting, as that of the Red River Settlement does, of a very great proportion of half-breeds and Indians, is more difficult to govern than one consisting entirely of whites? -- I think so; all half-breeds are difficult to govern. ... You think a half-breed population is more difficult to govern than a white one? -- I think it is less governed by those rules of order and that sense of propriety which prevail in a white population.”

⁸⁰ Pelly, “Appendix, No. 11,” in *Report from the Select Committee*, 429.

⁸¹ George Simpson, “Appendix, 11,” in *Report from the Select Committee*, 417.

all were in need of 'protection' -- served only to confirm the conviction of the Colonial Office that HBC "rule," no matter how imperfect, was preferable to the "only alternative."⁸² It was considered unconscionable that the Métis, as one of the "inferior or less powerful races" whose propensity for unruly behaviour was exacerbated by an inordinate susceptibility to alcoholic excess, should be allowed the "perfect freedom" to embark on a course of "anarchy."⁸³

Within the British colonial sphere of influence, nineteenth-century interest in development potential was thoroughly enmeshed with ideas of empire. The Canadian opinion regarding HBC control over adjacent territory may have first found public expression in a *Toronto Globe* article published by editor George Brown in the same year as Isbister's assertions of western commercial opportunity. A printed lecture by Robert Baldwin Sullivan warned that American settlement of the North-west would leave Canada "no more than a British colony on the Atlantic, hemmed in by the Republic to the south and west."⁸⁴ Subsequently, overt expressions of positive interest in acquiring Red River proliferated. Arguments in favour of preemptive Canadian expansion presented the region as a promising, fertile expanse fit to serve as a repository for whatever surplus migrant population Great Britain by way of Upper Canada could muster.⁸⁵ Members of the Métis community, as literate subscribers to various journals and as correspondents with individuals residing in other centres, were aware of external conditions and the discussion surrounding their settlement's status.⁸⁶ Some, such as Isbister's uncle, Captain William

⁸² Herman Merivale, quoted in McNab, 31; see also, 21-22, 25, 26, 28-29; also Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 99, 103; and John Packinton and J.F. Crofton, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 178, whose exchange illustrates that the term 'native' could mean different things to different people.

⁸³ Merivale, 31. See also, Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 185; Cooper, 45.

⁸⁴ A.S. Morton, 825.

⁸⁵ Allan McDonnell, quoted in R. Littell, ed., "The Hudson's Bay Company," *Littell's Living Age*, 55 (Oct.-Dec. 1857): 363.

⁸⁶ Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 4-5, 11-12, 66, 69; Isbister, 7, 17, 24; Fowler, "Appendix, No. 16," in *Report from the Select Committee*, 441. Jill McConkey, "The Nor'-Wester in Red River," submitted to *Topics in the Cultural History of Canada (Cultural, Communications and Intellectual History)* 11.729, 24 April 2002, 11, notes that "letters and newspapers (among other things) travelled through the post office, linking Red River ... with the HBC's network of fur trade posts, and to Toronto and St. Paul (and from there to places even more distant)."

Kennedy -- a Métis son of trader Alexander Kennedy and Aggathas⁸⁷ -- engaged directly in the debate and attempted to establish a favourable position for themselves, friends and families. From 1854, Kennedy travelled the Canadian lecture circuit speaking on temperance and his 1851-1852 search for the Franklin expedition.⁸⁸ By 1856, as a member of a consortium of "capitalists in Toronto" vying to compete in the North-west fur trade, Kennedy had become a strong proponent of Canadian annexation; was working "diligently" to open a direct transportation route between Red River and Toronto; and was championing the development of the seaport at Churchill.⁸⁹ He had an extensive, enthusiastic audience. The last of Canada's agriculturally promising native land had been claimed for resettlement.⁹⁰ Sir Edmund Walker Head, as Governor General of British North America,⁹¹ informed the Colonial Office:

All sorts of dreams and speculations are floating in the public mind here, even among sober and good men. We do not, as I have told them, now govern properly the territory belonging to Canada, but it seems to be assumed in some of the papers that there is an inherent right on the part of Canada to some of the spoils of the Hudson's Bay Company. I do not know accurately the legal position of this body, but I should not be surprised if the subject were to be talked of in our Legislature.⁹²

Head was in turn informed of an upcoming inquiry of the Committee of the House of Commons into the "affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company."⁹³ The news, communicated to the colonial legislature, spread rapidly. Canadians set their sights on Red River -- the

⁸⁷ Sprague and Frye, Genealogy, ID 2306; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 207; Fuchs, 15.

⁸⁸ See, Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 184; Cooper, 44, 46.

⁸⁹ A.S. Morton, 827; Shirlee Anne Smith, "William Kennedy," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*; 1239. See also, Van Kirk, "What if Mama is an Indian?" 212.

⁹⁰ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 19.

⁹¹ George MacLean Rose, *A Cyclopedia of Canadian Biography: Being chiefly men of the time: A collection of persons distinguished in professional and political life: Leading in the commerce and industry of Canada, and successful persons* (Toronto: Rose Publishing, 1886), 377: identifies Edmund as "kindred of the impulsive and enthusiastic Sir Francis Bond Head." He was "assailed with ... harsh criticism" and impugned as having given John A. Macdonald and George Cartier's Conservatives unfair advantage. D.G.G. Kent, "Sir Edmund Walker Head, 8th Bart," *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 101: Head served as Governor of the HBC from 1863-68, almost completing negotiations for the transfer of its territory when he died suddenly.

⁹² A.S. Morton, 827-28.

⁹³ *Ibid.* Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 20.

practical locus of territorial commerce in Rupert's Land.⁹⁴

Obtaining knowledge was essential to wresting title, asserting authority and securing colonial supremacy over the area. Questions about who and what presented obstacles to conquest needed to be resolved. Hearsay evidence regarding future promise required statistical proof. A spate of descriptions of the Settlement and its record were fashioned by 'experts,' both resident and itinerant. These were widely disseminated for the enlightenment of potential outside investors and prospective owners. Alexander Ross addressed his evaluation, penned in 1852 and published in 1856, as *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State, with some account of the native races and its general history to the present day*, to "those who love enterprise and honour and endurance."⁹⁵ In the book, Ross included valuations of economic enterprises and statistics on improvement related to agricultural activity. An Appendix to the volume reveals that as of 1849, the 5 391 settlers included in the HBC census had built 745 homes, 1 066 stables and 335 barns. Cumulatively their farmsteads included about 6 393 acres of cultivated land. There were 1 068 implements to work the land with. There were 2 085 horses, 6 015 head of cattle and 3 096 pigs to tend.⁹⁶ Transportation needs were met with 1 918 carts and 468 water craft. The Métis had contributed labour and funds to build 7 community churches.⁹⁷ Their children had access to 12 schools. The onerous task of milling grain was ameliorated by the presence of 2 watermills and 18 windmills -- 'modern' structures for the time, without which the commercial production of flour could not proceed.⁹⁸

A comparison with census data from 1835 indicates that in just over a decade, there had been a population increase of about 1 745 people or 48 percent. Cultivated acreage had expanded by 82 percent. The number of horses had increased by 190 per cent; the number

⁹⁴ A.S. Morton, 827.

⁹⁵ Alexander Ross, *Red River Settlement*, "Preface," xxv.

⁹⁶ Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 169, notes that the first pig arrived 1818.

⁹⁷ See, Coutts, 58.

⁹⁸ See, Alexander Ross, "Appendix A," *Red River Settlement*; A.S. Morton, 832; Greenberg, 697, observes that, industrialization rhetoric notwithstanding, on both sides of the Atlantic, "as late as the 1860s, more than half the demands for power in manufacturing were supplied by people and animals, and by increasingly efficient windmills, water wheels, and turbines."

of cattle by 23 per cent; pigs by 53 percent. The number of farm implements had grown by 154 percent; the number of carts by 385 percent.⁹⁹ The increases are reflective of successful settler driven initiatives, undertaken during a period when the HBC experienced successive experimental failures. It must also be remembered that HBC censuses did not account for everything. They did not include measures of material increase indicative of the full range of settler endeavour. There are no figures on the number of tents produced by the Métis, or the number of seasonal cabins built outside of official settlement bounds. Livestock reserved for breeding are not clearly differentiated from those raised for consumption or sale; nor beef cattle from dairy. The extent of poultry production is not clearly articulated. Carioles and dogs -- critical to winter transportation -- were not enumerated. The degree to which outlying lands were utilized for pasturing and the cutting of hay was not measured.¹⁰⁰ Figures on the buffalo trade do not include tallies of all products, private sales, or barter arrangements. Likewise there are no precise figures on other forms of off-farm production such as maple sugar manufacture, or of the extent of salt works, or fisheries. The 'illicit' fur trade, because clandestine, is an obvious area where the HBC could not compile accurate information.

At the request of Captain Kennedy, settler Donald Gunn, who had a passion for accumulating scientific data, compiled tables which illustrated weather conditions in the Settlement as of 1856 and inventoried population, livestock, agricultural implements and machines, as well as homes, barns and commercial buildings.¹⁰¹ These findings were submitted to the Canadian Executive Council and in turn forwarded to the Select Committee

⁹⁹ See, Sprague and Frye, "Table 2," *Genealogy*; Coutts, 138-39; also Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 36, 38.

¹⁰⁰ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 37, notes that for the river lots in Red River "everyone in the colony observed a four mile limit: an inner two miles of wooded land from which people took their fuel, crops and building timber, and an outer two miles left in prairie sod as hay land." That the HBC surveys neglected to include the outer lands led to a mistaken notion that Red River farms were exceptionally small. See also, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 24; Sylvester, 47-49, who notes that from 1860 to 1900, "In both Ontario and Quebec, the proportion of farms smaller than ten acres grew with every census."

¹⁰¹ "Donald Gunn," *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 49; Debra Lindsay, "Science in the Sub-Arctic: Traders, Trappers, and the Smithsonian Institution, 1859-1870" (Ph.D. diss., University of Manitoba, 1989); and Sprague and Frye, "Table 1," *Genealogy*; ID 2064: born in Scotland in 1797, he married Margaret Swain, Métis daughter of James Swain, ID 4569.

in London. Gunn's figures indicate that from 1849, for a period representing less than a decade, the population had increased by 1 232 persons or 23 percent.¹⁰² The number of houses had increased by 24 percent; stables by 16 percent; barns by 19 percent. Not included in his figures are the number of extensions added to existing buildings to increase the area of sheltered space available for accommodating larger families, more livestock, tools and other possessions. The number of acres of cultivated land had risen by 31 percent. At 8 371 acres, the previous averages of .96 cultivated acres per person set in 1835, and 1.18 acres per person in 1849 had increased to 1.28 acres per person by 1856. Given the high yield capacity of Red River soil, this must be considered a generous allotment -- especially as the volume of buffalo products harvested continued its increase unabated.¹⁰³ The number of horses had increased again by 34 percent; cattle by 54 percent; pigs by nearly 200 percent. In addition, 2 429 sheep had been added to the livestock base.¹⁰⁴ There were 18 windmills, and 9 water-mills available for threshing and grinding grain, and for carding wool. As well there was a new combination grist and saw mill. Threshing machines, reapers and winnowing machines had added about 28 new implements to the Settlements' expanded total of 1 315 ploughs and harrows. The number of carts had risen to 2 145; water craft to 577. There were two new churches and the number of schools had risen to 17. A total of 56 shops and stores manufacturing and selling a variety of items had appeared. Members of the Métis community occupied formal medical, teaching, and ecclesiastic positions.¹⁰⁵ Métis representation on the board of the

¹⁰² Gunn's population figures differ slightly from those of Ross. Curtis, 4-5, 15-16, 17, points out that "an empiricist concern with 'accuracy'" is bound to be confounded in attempting to treat census information as "hard knowledge" on the basis of its "numerical form." The census making process generates records as prone to being infused with political 'bias' as any other. Conversely then, they present no less valid a source for indications of what 'may have been' than any other.

¹⁰³ See, Coutts, 139; Sprenger, 68, lists the summer hunt volume of 1823 as 45 tons, 1840 as 500 tons, and 1860 as 640 tons.

¹⁰⁴ Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 175, asserts that the first sheep arrived in 1838.

¹⁰⁵ See for example, Stubbs, "Dr. John Bunn," 91-134; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 146, regarding school mistresses Angélique and Marguerite Nolin; Healy, 160-61, on Janet Gunn; Coutts, 200 n. 93, on Joseph Bunn; and Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 122, listing Henry Budd, Charles Pratt, Luke Caldwell, James Settee, Peter Erasmus, and Henry Cochran among clerics.

HBC nominal arm of civil government, the Council of Assiniboia, was increasing.¹⁰⁶ Quarterly and Petty Local Courts were in place. The low number of cases saw no significant generation of revenue. By Gunn's calculation the settlement assets could be valued at approximately £111 032 "exclusive of the Company's forts and provisions."¹⁰⁷

In London, the Select Committee gathered a prodigious amount of written and oral evidence from an extensive array of sources. Expert opinions on the state of the territory believed actively administered by the HBC were solicited from thoughtful and intelligent men, a number of whom had never spent any time in the area but had heard or read about it. Circumstances that rendered careful consideration a vital "duty" of the British Parliament and Government were identified as:

... the growing desire of our Canadian fellow-subjects that the means of expansion and regular settlement should be afforded to them over a portion of this territory; the necessity of providing suitably for the administration of the affairs of Vancouver Island, and the present condition of the settlement which has been formed on the Red River.¹⁰⁸

The "interests and feelings" of Canada were adjudged to be "entitled to the greatest weight on this occasion."¹⁰⁹ Canadian citizens and government representatives were among those consulted and allowed to witness the proceedings. No great effort was made to ensure that similar privileges were extended to the Métis, the principal settlers in Red River. Their input was largely limited to what had been previously communicated by way of petition, correspondence or conversation.¹¹⁰ Nor were the Red River settlers officially informed as to the nature of the evidence given about their community, or of the conclusions drawn. Like the rustic classes of England -- farmers with families deemed suited to manual labour

¹⁰⁶ See, Lionel Dorge, "The Métis and Canadian Councillors of Assiniboia," Parts 1-3, *The Beaver: Magazine of the North* (summer, autumn and winter 1974): 12-19, 39-45, and 51-58.

¹⁰⁷ Marble, "(Third Paper)," 322, quoting Donald Gunn, "Appendix 1," in *Report from the Select Committee*, 364.

¹⁰⁸ "Report," in *Report From the Select Committee*, iii no. 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, no. 3.

¹¹⁰ See, Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 93-94; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*. A.K. Isbister, and John McLaughlin -- nephew of Andrew McDermott ID 3304 -- both responsible for having generated petitions opposing HBC trade restrictions during the 1840s, were directly questioned.

and servant work, and 'n'er-do-wells' prone to poaching -- they were considered countable, not consultable.

If the Committee's findings satisfactorily resolved any questions about the Red River Settlement then outstanding in Britain, the desire in North America for collecting and disseminating information remained strong. Communication had become critical. The desire for precise information about the target's exact dimensions were directly linked to concerns over establishing systems that would effectively supplant the control over communication previously enjoyed by the HBC and thus their formal authority over the territory. The issue of establishing a means sufficient to promote trade and ensure influence had been intensively investigated during the Committee hearings. While technological advances promised a solution, they were also expensive to implement. A thorough inventory of the territory, its scale and extractable wealth was required.¹¹¹ The Canadian Government sent out geologist Henry Youle Hind to survey HBC holdings in 1857, 1858 and 1861. His report included a dismissal of the Red River Métis as "half-breed," hence "naturally improvident, and perhaps indolent," and therefore unworthy, settlers.¹¹² He was equally certain, however, that they were resourceful and energetic enough to constitute a "formidable enemy" if the takeover of territory was not carefully handled.¹¹³ Articles written by travellers to, and sojourners from, Red River began to appear in popular American magazines. Some of those with less damning estimations of the people of Red River described them as easygoing and "quaint."¹¹⁴ Others contrasted Métis individuals extremely favourably with "white" neighbours of British extraction found living in squalor.¹¹⁵ The residents of Red River continued to attempt to have their views heard.

The medium of print spoke from the Settlement with Canadian journalists William Coldwell and William Buckingham's first edition of the *Nor'-Wester* in December 1859.

¹¹¹ See, Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 3, 27-29, 32; Curtis, 38, concurs, observing that "the possibility for central state agencies to rule distant localities depends on the centralization of knowledge." See also, A.S. Morton, 836; also, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 22.

¹¹² Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 23. See also, Sprague, "Métis Land Claims," 195.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ People of Red River," 169.

¹¹⁵ Marble, "Third Paper," 306.

Alexander Ross's son James attained a measure of control by becoming co-editor by February 1860, a position he held to 1864.¹¹⁶ During his tenure, residents of Red River were able to express and assess the "nuances of opinion" circulating in the Settlement and challenge the 'monopolies of knowledge' being constructed by non-resident observers.¹¹⁷ Articles affirmed the surety of Red River's agricultural progress. Editorials summed up foreign opinions. Notices regarding public meetings organized for the discussion of issues raised were published. The views of settlers who had weighed the desirability of campaigning for various colonial or territorial arrangements with Britain, Canada, and the United States were printed.¹¹⁸ The ambition to augment access to foreign markets by taking advantage of technological advances was a "consistent theme" to 1863.¹¹⁹ Steamships, railways, and the telegraph were recurring subjects. Letters from Simon J. Dawson and Sanford Fleming upheld projections of Red River's future role as a transportation centre connecting and channelling progressive migration routes from Canada, Minnesota and

¹¹⁶ Van Kirk, "What if Mama is an Indian?" 212; McConkey, 8-9.

¹¹⁷ McConkey, 5, see also, 31, for the following citations in the *Nor'-Wester*: "Native Title to Indian Lands," 14 Feb. 1860; Andrew McDermott, 28 Feb., 1860; and Donald Gunn, 28 Apr. 1860. See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 22-24, on the tenor of Hind's assessment. It should be noted that it is possible to counter an argument that the majority of the Métis remained illiterate to 1860 and therefore would have no way of knowing what was printed in the *Nor' Wester*. John Richardson, quoted in, A.S. Morton, 822, asserts that in his experience, Aboriginal populations "were mostly able to read and write" after a generation of contact with missionaries; J.H. Pelly, quoted, 811, asserts that by 1846 there were "500 scholars" in Red River. Obviously, those who could read were available to supply information orally to those who could not. Robert Darton, "History of Reading," in *History and Social Theory*, ed. Peter Burke (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 150, 154, argues that, "for most people throughout history, [written or printed texts] ... had audiences rather than readers." He notes as well, that in the past, reading was learned independently of learning to write. As a consequence, "literacy estimates based on the ability to write may be much too low, and the reading public may have included a great many people who could not sign their names."

¹¹⁸ See McConkey, 13-14, for the following citations in the *Nor'-Wester* regarding agriculture: "What May Be Made by Red River Farming," 28 Dec. 1859; two articles on flax production 28 Jan. 1860; "How to Farm Properly with Little Capital," 14 Feb. 1860; and "An English Farmer on Red River Farming," 28 Apr. 1860. McConkey, 11-12, also provides citations on political positioning: "As Others See Us," 28 Jan. 1860; and editorials, 28 Mar. 1860, and 14 Apr. 1860, 12 May 1863, and 11 June 1863; articles, "Minnesota and the North," 28 Jan. 1860, and "Red River to be a Crown Colony," 14 June 1860, "Position of Red River in a Colonial Federation, 1 Feb. 1861, "The Political Condition of this Country," 28 Apr. 1863, and "The Present Political Crisis," 12 May 1863. See also, P. B. Waite, ed., *The Nor'-Wester*, Upper Fort Garry, February 5, 1862, and May 28, 1862," in *Pre-Confederation*, vol. 2, Canadian Historical Documents Series (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1965), 147.

¹¹⁹ McConkey, 16.

British Columbia.¹²⁰

In 1863, James Ross, having devised a “Memorial of the People of Red River Settlement to the British and Canadian Governments,” contracted Fleming to act as its presenter.¹²¹ In the piece, Ross attests that “the people of Red River have long desired to see the Lake Superior route opened up for commerce and emigration.”¹²² As “Chairman of Public Meetings” held in Red River, he urges that establishing road, water, railway and telegraph links be considered “from Lake Superior to this settlement, if not through the whole extent of country from Canada to British Columbia.”¹²³ Fleming compiled a set of “Remarks to Accompany the Memorial” from the reports of informants such as Captain Palliser and members of his expedition; Dawson, who had explored the country between Red River and Lake Superior; and Lorin Blodget, a “celebrated” American climatologist.¹²⁴ After describing the production successes of settlers in the area, Fleming cites Palliser’s botanist E. Bourgeau to confirm what innumerable observers had contended for years: the only brake on agricultural development was the lack of adequate communication with external markets.¹²⁵ Other sources are quoted to reinforce optimistic descriptions of conditions and expectations for pronounced development to follow the removal of this barrier. His report supports the view that Red River was prosperous, the settlers’ economic subsistence secure and their society harmonious. In his concluding remarks Fleming observes that, as the ability to provide labour is a form of a settler’s available investment capital, population growth is indicative of economic advance.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17, for the following citations in the *Nor’-Wester*: S.J. Dawson, 28 Dec. 1859; “Our Country,” 14 Feb. 1860; “Times Changing,” 25 June 1862; and Sanford Fleming, 11 Jun, 1863.

¹²¹ See, Sanford Fleming, *Memorial of the People of Red River Settlement to the British and Canadian Governments: with remarks on the colonization of Central British North America, and the Establishment of a great Transportational Road From Canada To British Columbia* (Quebec: Hunter, Rose and Company, 1868 [?]).

¹²² James Ross, “Memorial of the People of Red River Settlement to the British and Canadian Governments,” in *Memorial of the People of Red River Settlement*, 6.

¹²³ James Ross, “Memorial,” 7.

¹²⁴ Sanford Fleming, “Remarks accompanying the Memorial, submitted to the Government of Canada,” in *Memorial of the People of Red River Settlement*, 9-31.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31. See also, Finlay and Sprague, 47, for similar conditions in New France.

Though not overtly expressed, a particular implication couched in that statement would be clear to anyone who had studied the Report from the Select Committee in London. Evidence which affirmed Aboriginal population growth among those engaged in ‘civilized’ settler pursuits in Red River could have a significant impact on plans for the future.¹²⁷ If Aboriginal settler success bode well for attracting migrant White settlers and thus enabling territorial and economic expansion for Canada, it ran contrary to expectations regarding population composition. It suggested that those who intended to exert dominance over the current inhabitants of the North-west would have to consider a continued high rate of increase, accumulation of wealth, and possession and development of land by Métis, and even First Nations peoples, as a real possibility. To those whose political philosophy equated human diversity with chaos -- as a significant proportion of the adult males residing in Upper Canada almost certainly did¹²⁸ -- it would appear that the contest for control and the imposition of order might in fact become more difficult over time. Establishment of a direct communication route was one means of effecting a swift rebalancing of the population through mass migration, but would only complicate the search for a solution to already existing “rep by pop” problems in the Canadas.¹²⁹

Although direct transportation improvements had not yet been accomplished, by the late 1860s migrants from Canada, as well as some originating in the United States, had begun to appear in the Red River borderland region. Though their numbers were not exceptionally large, the imminence of change and suggestions as to its consequences were made manifest with their arrival.¹³⁰ The newcomers exhibited traits associated with the most “enterprising” of their contemporaries, those who were “seeking economic opportunities and economic freedom,” anticipating a “boom” arising from a “gigantic

¹²⁷ See, David Anderson, John McLaughlin, and William Caldwell, in *Report from the Select Committee*, 244-46, 278, 306, 308.

¹²⁸ See, Cecil J. Houston and William J. Smyth, cited in Hall, “Ritual myth and identity in gendered space,” 2-4.

¹²⁹ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 24, see, also 25; also A.S. Morton, 837.

¹³⁰ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 24 n. 53, note that “more than forty families” arrived from Ontario.

exploitation of unparalleled resources,” and a complete “metamorphosis of society.”¹³¹ This outcome they envisioned as assured by the importation of “peoples and patterns of life” – of which they imagined themselves the vanguard -- capable of “diffusing the means of light and truth throughout the region, where so much of the power to preserve or to shake it resides.”¹³² The ensuing competition for settlement sites and economic opportunity in the Red River borderland reflected nascent attempts on the part of new arrivals to define and fix not only geographic but cultural boundaries which to this point had been fluid. Hopeful writers in Red River continued to attempt to direct the impetus of change through the medium of print. New arrival Alexander Begg, sympathetic to the original inhabitants, was inspired to contest misapprehensions promulgated by “scribblers in the public press” who “vilified” the Métis.¹³³ Long-time resident, Alexandre-Antonin Taché, Bishop of St. Boniface, in composing his *Sketch of the North-West of America*, confidently asserted that “the country is progressing day by day in every way” and that “The inconvenience of changing will pass away with time, and be succeeded by real improvement” although he believed that the Métis would likely face “extreme difficulties.”¹³⁴

Beyond verbal slurs from a vociferous if small contingent proclaiming the arrival of a “new order,” the changes Métis individuals found difficult to contend with included noted incursions of Canadian “adventurers,” who “in various localities had been industriously marking off for themselves considerable, and in some cases very extensive and exceptionally valuable tracts of land” -- some of which were understood to have been already occupied.¹³⁵ Having watched development in the Settlement proceed not so much

¹³¹ Thomas C. Cochran, and William Miller, *The Age of Enterprise: A Social History of Industrial America*, revised ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), 2, 43, 5-6, 27.

¹³² Cochran and Miller, 36, and Edward Everett, quoted, 37. See also, William McDougall, quoted in Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 26, and John A. Macdonald quoted, 30, 33; Mailhot and Sprague, 2; also, *Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 1871-1946, Grand Orange Lodge of Manitoba*, 2.

¹³³ Begg, “Dedication,” *Dot It Down*, iii.

¹³⁴ Taché, *Sketch of the North-West of America*, 155, 177. See, Coutts, *passim* for observations on the clergy’s attitudes toward the Métis, and a corresponding -- often equal parts tolerant and condescending -- disregard which the Métis evinced for the clergy in return.

¹³⁵ Donald A. Smith, quoted in, *Birth of a Province*, 43-44. See also, W.G. Hardy, *From Sea Unto Sea: Canada--1850 to 1910: The Road to Nationhood*, vol. 4, the Canadian History Series, ed. Thomas B. Costain (Garden City N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), 202-03.

because of authoritarian efforts to induce it as in spite of them, the expectations of the original community of self-governing individuals had never, and did not now include being unceremoniously “supplanted by the stranger.”¹³⁶

The attractiveness of Red River to new migrants owed much to Métis initiative, competence and patience. By the 1860s, the Settlement was thriving.¹³⁷ The population was approaching the 12 000 mark.¹³⁸ Inability to establish grain as a staple export and progressive difficulty in accessing buffalo herds had encouraged the husbandry of domesticable livestock.¹³⁹ Recognition and understanding of the sort of economic change to expect in the near future had been accompanied by a concerted and partially successful drive by the Métis to ensure that title to individually held land could be secured.¹⁴⁰ Instances of extreme environmental aberration such as the floods of 1852 and 1861, and grasshopper infestations of 1857-58 and 1868, were known to loom as possibilities but the community had demonstrated an ability to cope with such disasters, recover, and not only maintain a level of material prosperity above what was required to meet basic need but surpass previous levels.¹⁴¹ Conspicuous failures are attributable to corporate mismanagement or the ignorance of external migrants, not to the failed initiatives of persons native to the country. In light of their collective achievement, rather than contemplate deserting their community, the Métis had every reason to imagine an auspicious future -- one that they, as the dominant population, were positioned to oversee.¹⁴²

By 1869, individual self-determination had proved compatible with cooperative

¹³⁶ Donald A. Smith, quoted in, *Birth of a Province*, 43-44.

¹³⁷ See, Cadigan, 138, for contrasting conditions in Newfoundland.

¹³⁸ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 75: “According to the ‘French Report,’ there were 5,757 ‘French Half Breeds’ and 4,083 ‘English Half Breeds’ in a total population of 11,963. The English enumerators reported 5,696 of the first group and 4,082 of the second in a total of 11,967.”

¹³⁹ See, Kaye, 269-70, 274-75; Coutts, 141-44; Mailhot and Sprague, 8.

¹⁴⁰ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 24.

¹⁴¹ W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 115.

¹⁴² George Keyne, quoted in Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 26 n. 60, sums up the Métis stance in 1869 as “we own the country and don’t want to part with it.”

association in Red River. A consensual approach to decision making had not been a barrier to economic change. Maintaining the social *status quo* had promoted an egalitarian attitude more conducive to promoting personal freedom than restrictive, as it was socially acceptable to circumvent or ignore attempts to impose rigid economically based class barriers.¹⁴³ The manner in which people began to imagine and discuss the ways a new aspect could be devised and secured for their borderland country reflected a strong sense of Métis communal responsibility and respect for diversity. Contrary to contemporary estimations of Aboriginal peoples, the Red River Métis were as endowed with “a capacity for seeing beyond the immediate time and the present circumstances” as anyone else.¹⁴⁴ As a community they would demonstrate their ability to conceptualize, formulate and implement an agreeably structured future existence.

¹⁴³ See, Joseph Kinsey Howard, *Strange Empire: The Story of Louis Riel* (1952; reprint, Toronto: Swan Publishing, 1965), 84 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

¹⁴⁴ Rose, 557-58.

CHAPTER 7

The 'thrust of community intention into the future'

In the years 1869 and 1870, members of the Métis community continued to operate as conscious and active agents committed to building and safeguarding common goals for the future. To this point, the small number of early external migrants to stay in Red River, along with an influx of more recent arrivals, had not altered that aspect of the dominant community's approach to quasi-statelessness. Through dint of numbers, it was still possible for the Métis to regulate the expanding community by perpetuating highly effective traditions.¹ Kinship networks were honoured and accorded importance. Behaviour consistent with respecting diversity and maintaining harmony -- social ideals central to Aboriginal belief systems -- was accepted as normative. Intra-community orality was key to decision making and planning. Positions of leadership were conferred by the populace on the basis of ability. It remained as easy for groups to revoke the position of representative spokesperson as it was to grant it. Consensus was sought on all issues of governance. Red River Settlement was home to a community with a sense of rights to possession, access and utilization of an extensive land base.² The Red River Métis fit criteria developed by Canadian regionalist scholars that identify them as a distinctive sociopolitical 'natural behavioural group.' In "Sociology and the Canadian Plains," M.L. Lutt describes qualities exhibited by such groups as:

a variety of shared reasons for their existence, marked by adaptability, flexibility, some degree of independence and self-sufficiency, characterized by an organic solidarity, and having such features as a particular dialect, group songs and

¹ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 24 n. 53, posit the number of new arrivals to be something "considerably" over the 38 "white, male householders who were born in Ontario" enumerated in 1870. See also, Mailhot and Sprague, 10.

² See, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 111, 116; Coutts, 96-97, 99-100, 104, 109.

symbols, common heroes, and an acceptable myth about the origin of the area.³

Given their exposure to contemporary intellectual and political discussions taking place elsewhere in the world, it is not surprising that the Métis considered themselves “already” a nation “in the nineteenth-century sense of one people with a unified sense of purpose and destiny.”⁴ This self-perception underlay their response to Canada’s method of realizing territorial expansion.

Upper Canada, having become the Province of Ontario in 1867, had made no secret of its desire to expand. The amount of press devoted to Red River’s development potential was considerable. The Canadian fixation was noted and commented upon in American publications. On the whole, opinions regarding the North-west’s promise ranged from positive to extremely confident. The inhabitants of Red River were well aware of the attention their territory was commanding. That their settlement was about to undergo extensive changes suggested to many that a world of new opportunities was about to unfold in their midst. It would have been difficult for anyone in the vicinity of Red River not to have been party to the optimism of the era communicated through textual and oral means.⁵ Red River settlers could not but imagine that their small community was very

³ M.L. Lutt, “Sociology and the Canadian Plains,” in *A Region of the Mind: Interpreting the Western Canadian Plains*, vol. 1, Canadian Plains Studies, ed. Richard Allen (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1973), 128, also, 125-26. See also, Tepperman and Richardson, 512, 535-36; Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, vii; Özkirimli, 17, also 25-26, 34: That the Red River Métis quasi-stateless society exhibited characteristics of organic solidarity -- in that the economy was not ‘primitive,’ occupational diversity was present, individual expression was not subject to “harsh and automatic” repression, and yet there was collective cohesion -- challenges Emile Durkeim’s definition and British imperial notions of Anglo Saxon preeminence, social ‘evolution,’ and the superiority of populations acceding to, and abiding by, hierarchical organization and state imposed “moral regularity.” Basil Johnson, 59, provides a description of Anishinaabe stateless society that is likewise at odds with Durkeim’s schemata. See, Margaret Arnett MacLeod, ed., *Songs of Old Manitoba: With Airs, French and English Words, and Introductions* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1960), 5-7, 11-13, 27-28, 36-38, 52-54, 62-64, for examples of Métis songs which are indicative of Red River dialect, symbolic expression, the celebration of heroes, and myth construction.

⁴ A.S. Morton, 877, quotes “one of Sir John Macdonald’s correspondents” as observing: “They claim to be a nation already, along with the English half-breeds, whom they claim as their brethren, in possession of this country.” Finlay and Sprague, 553. See also, Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 182: who notes “the eastern newspapers circulated widely in Red River.”

⁵ See, W.L. Morton, ed., “Introduction,” *Birth of a Province*, ix., *Manitoba*, 105; Mailhot and Sprague, 2; Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 181; and for example, Littell, “The Hudson’s Bay Company,” reprinted from *The New York Journal of Commerce*, 8 Sep., 1857, 363-64.

definitely poised “on the threshold of great things to come.”⁶ Their pride of place, and conception of their settlement of the District of Assiniboia as entitling them to be designated a ‘colony’ is understandable.⁷

Red River was peopled by rational individuals practised at meeting all eventualities with a measure of consideration. It was usual for reactions to be tempered by restraint. Even aggressive impulses seldom progressed beyond agonistic display.⁸ As settlers, they had demonstrated a preference for prudence when it came to embarking on economic endeavours. Awareness of material comforts available to other communities that had undergone increased economic development fostered a desire for like access to similarly obtained amenities. As people accustomed to considering themselves the masters of their own environs, they proceeded on the understanding that they would determine the shape of its future.⁹ The obvious solution to the problem of geographic isolation was to align with another nation capable of providing the capital needed for upgrading transportation routes using new technology. It was equally apparent that suitable, willing partners were available.¹⁰ At the same time, Métis individuals were conscious that they were a people in a “peculiar” situation.¹¹ Clearly, any decision adopted by the community could have momentous repercussions. As a community, the people of Red River were determined to be cautious and protective.

By 1869 the Métis had already had the benefit of over a decade’s worth of time, experience and information from which to draw judgments on the tenor of intent enunciated by Canadian, British and American interests. During that period, the majority had come to prefer contemplating a direct connection with Great Britain. The “noisy” representatives of the Canadian Party at the new village of Winnipeg -- a group that had become “irritating

⁶ Finlay and Sprague, 41. See also, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 24.

⁷ A.S. Morton, 842.

⁸ Basil Johnston, 67-69; Tom Holm, “Warriors and Warfare,” *North American Indians*, 667-68, suggest this to be characteristic of North American stateless societies generally.

⁹ A.S. Morton, 872.

¹⁰ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 24.

¹¹ James Ross, “The Proceedings in the Convention, February 3 to February 5, 1870,” in *Birth of a Province*, 15.

when it ceased to be amusing" -- had not inspired a widespread wish to have the colony handed over to any like-minded "friends from Canada."¹² Rather, a general alarm and apprehension at the possibility of Canadian expansion into their region had spread throughout the Settlement. Most had decided in favour of seeing Red River made a Crown Colony -- an opinion John A. Macdonald had shared in the early 1860s.¹³ Some residents continued to court American interests.¹⁴

The Métis had also had time to become aware of a tendency on the part of other powers to act without taking the Red River community's views into account. Extreme offence was taken by the settlers, including 'wintering partners' of the HBC who were shareholders, at not having been consulted at any point during the negotiations held from 1864 to 1869 over the transfer of rights and claims, previously accorded the HBC, to Canada.¹⁵ That Canada had peremptorily passed an "Act of Temporary Government of Rupert's Land" in June of 1869 -- before the transaction had been completed -- intensified the level of displeasure.¹⁶ That the Settlement had been "bought and sold" without any reference to the rights of the settlers was the height of insult.¹⁷ In fact, the terms of the "Deed of Surrender" of the Imperial Government, signed 19 November 1869, rendered the settlers invisible.¹⁸ The promise of a payment of £300 000 by Canada to the newly reconstituted HBC was recorded, as was the Company's right to retain 450 000 acres around its trade posts and an additional 7 000 000 acres in land grants -- a reservation

¹² W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 111, *Birth of a Province*, x. See also, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 55; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 35.

¹³ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 25.

¹⁴ See, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 78-81; Hardy, 198, 226.

¹⁵ A.S. Morton, 841-42, 876-77; Hardy, 204; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 29.

¹⁶ A.S. Morton, 872.

¹⁷ Northcote, in *Birth of a Province*, 86; also, A.S. Morton, 873; Hardy, 196. See also, Dorge, "Part II," 39, who notes that in 1859, "a petition in French was circulated, expressing opposition to the annexation of Assiniboia by Canada without guarantees for the inhabitants."

¹⁸ A.S. Morton, 888. See also, W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 117: "One of the greatest transfers of territory and sovereignty in history was conducted as a mere transaction in real estate."

amounting to one-twentieth of the most fertile North-west lands.¹⁹ Questions of compensation for exchange of Aboriginal ownership were settled without reference to Métis entitlement. Individuals from all sectors of the Red River community were displeased about the weight such behaviour on the part of foreign states gave to the assertions of Canadian party members that the Métis were to become a conquered people and reduced to “slavery” when the “new order” instituted itself.²⁰ Alarmed settlers were unable to elicit much in the way of reassurance from local HBC Governor William Mactavish. He insisted that he was not kept informed on policy matters pertaining to Red River that were decided by the Governor and Committee in London.²¹

The lack of assurances regarding recognition of Métis land ownership, a longstanding grievance, was particularly worrisome.²² There had been a HBC survey in 1835 which had ensured that the rights of settlers who had actually purchased land after 1811 would be respected.²³ Until new settlers wanting tenure protection began to arrive from Upper Canada, nothing was done to safeguard non-purchaser families, even though - by Company calculation -- from about 1835 they had occupied river fronted vacant land, on lots of a width of approximately 800 feet and a depth of about two miles, amounting to about 200 acres, without arousing Company ire. A new ordinance passed through the Council of Assiniboia in 1860 secured occupancy rights for approximately 2 000 of these previously officially landless families. However, the HBC had not been overly assiduous

¹⁹ W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, xi; see also, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 28. Hardy, 196, 200; and McInnis, 307-08, note that news of the 1863 sale of the HBC to the International Finance Company organized by the “indefatigable” Edward Watkin had been equally unfavourably received in Red River.

²⁰ Northcote, 86. Alexander Begg, quoted in A.S. Morton, 874. See also, W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 116; and Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 35.

²¹ See, A.S. Morton, 842, but note that Northcote, 93, refutes Mactavish’s claim.

²² Hardy, 202-03.

²³ Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, including the negotiations on which they were based, and other information relating thereto* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke and Co., 1880; facsimile reprint edition, Toronto: Belfords Clarke, 1991), 14.

about entering all families occupying property into the Company Land Register.²⁴ It is also possible that some settlers regarded recognition by the HBC, a commercial enterprise allowed to operate in the territory by the good graces either of sovereign Aboriginal peoples, or of free but “loyal subjects to Her Majesty the Queen of England,” to be of questionable value.²⁵

By 1869, the views of the Red River settlers -- individuals who freely formed and expressed their own opinions -- were likely as inchoate as the various divisions within the community, and the fact that the Métis were human beings, suggests they might be.²⁶ However, the settlers were united in that they were deeply concerned and were talking about it.²⁷ There were differing estimations of their situation and of whether sufficient evidence confirmed that precautionary measures were called for. That these differences were articulated then circulated in the form ‘general rumour’ throughout the community was ultimately enabling not divisive. For Red River people, resort to rumour was not a conscious tactic so much as a habitual trait -- a distinctive community behaviour. The political economic structure in concert with sociocultural dispositions specific to the settlement had at all times provided all individuals with “an adequate share of the benefits of expansion [and] with the possibility of influencing [their] fate in a world of flux and

²⁴ See, Sprague and Frye, “Manitoba’s Red River Settlement,” 185-86, and *Genealogy*, 24; Mailhot and Sprague, 2; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 33. See, Cadigan, 57, 59-61, for a Newfoundland parallel: In 1849, the Board of Trade in England “finally admitted that a resident fishery was a *fait accompli* in Newfoundland,” thus recognizing unofficial settlers by allowing “small leases” that allowed settlers to “enjoy what land they had enclosed and till’d for the use of raising vegetables for their families.”

²⁵ Louis Riel, as quoted in Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 65. See also, Mailhot and Sprague, 27 n. 6; Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 81.

²⁶ See, Gerald Friesen, quoted in Coutts, 4.

²⁷ See, William Ross, quoted in Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 186, James Hargrave, cited, 187, and Alexander Begg, cited, 192, see also, 190; Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 53, 56; Pannekoek, *Snug Little Flock*, 166; see also, Coutts, 88, 89, 109, 123, who argues that emphasizing the negative tone preserved in written records generated by Europe-oriented inhabitants of Red River-- often sojourners or unacculturated new arrivals -- tends only to “illustrate the social tensions within the elite [a group which he qualifies as a self-designated elite only] of Red River but do not necessarily shed light upon the evolution of that society as an organic whole.”

change.”²⁸ What has been decried as rampant gossip was actually a communications practice that allowed democratic consensus building to work.²⁹ The sharing of information within a community gives everyone the opportunity to weigh individual assessments of issues against other perspectives, and so avoid “pluralistic ignorance.”³⁰ Awareness of the tone and emphasis that neighbours use in expressing opinions helps to clarify purpose. The likelihood of exacerbating divisions through jumping to mistaken conclusions regarding the intentions of various factions is decreased. Intra-community discussion encourages cohesion in that perceptions of membership in an active group with a distinctive identity is strengthened. A heightened sense of the existence of a “communal conscience” arises out of the “profound sharing of the latent value positions which give each group its special character and integrity.”³¹ In the Red River instance, whatever the fractured state of opinion, if events warranted, the Métis were eminently capable of responding in an organized fashion. There was a common history of coordinated group activity to draw on -- one evident in, but not limited to, their manner of conducting the buffalo harvest: information was orally distributed, councils were held, and representative spokespeople were appointed to positions of authority on the basis of ability.³²

²⁸ E. Herrera Faure, quoted in Colin Sinclair Walley, “A Model for the Illumination of Participant Values in Educational Goal Setting,” Ph. D. diss., University of Ottawa, 1979, 12. See also, Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 41, 191, for comments on the strength, adaptability and flexibility of a culture based on an oral tradition.

²⁹ See, James Hunter, cited in Coutts, 167-68, a clergyman who asserts that “All who know Red River and have lived in it ... know how addicted it is to gossip and scandal.” The Settlement was “alas! all too famous” for the practice of circulating information “mouth to mouth.”

³⁰ B.J. Biddle, cited in Walley, “Model for the Illumination of Participant Values,” 8. See also, Coutts, 105.

³¹ Walley, “Model for the Illumination of Participant Values,” 13.

³² See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 39; see also, 36, for a description of effective parish organization in response to outsider intrusion. See, Cadigan, 58, for an instance of parallel strategy adoption by Newfoundland fishing servants in 1817. Basil Johnston, 61-62, furnishes a description of how leadership roles and responsibilities were perceived in a stateless society: when necessary, a leader was selected to enunciate community direction on the basis of “force of character and persuasion.” The position -- always only “temporary and intermittent” -- demanded that the chosen individual not merely command but be “first in action.” Moreover, as a speakers, leaders did not dictate their own convictions, but those of the people. The people were at all times free to follow according to individual preference and equally “at liberty to withdraw.” If desired, it was legitimate for members of a community to divide, and adopt alternate approaches by committing to different leaders. Leadership was considered a burden, not something to be sought through contest to gratify personal ambition.

After a summer of dissatisfaction over the behaviour of surveyors sent from Canada, a number of factions arose. Louis Riel emerged as a spokesperson for the families whose land was under the most immediate threat.³³ His education in the Canadas had made him familiar with power politics and the manner in which legalities could be invoked for persuasive argument.³⁴ He proved his effectiveness by bringing survey activity to a halt on 11 October. During the fall, the normal Métis approach to consensual decision making remained operational. Factions continued to express differing opinions and to rally to different degrees in support of various causes over the course of the month or so following Joseph Howe's reconnaissance visit to the Settlement. It had ended 16 October without supplying any concrete information to community members about the course of events to expect.³⁵ Despite the increase in politically motivated activity -- such as the barricade set on 21 October by the "*Comité National des Métis*," against the entry into the territory of designate "*Régner en potentat*" from Canada, William McDougall; as well as the installation in Fort Garry of a contingent of armed guards made up of *les Taureaux* brigade men and St. Vital and St. Norbert buffalo hunt captains -- there was no cessation of regular community functioning.³⁶ The Métis retained control.³⁷ The HBC and the ostensive authorities of the Council of Assiniboia did not attempt to do anything beyond attend to their usual duties and, as in past instances, concede to community will with remonstrance - an exercise which in fact ensured that their opinions were contributed to the community

³³ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 35; Hardy, 205, identifies André Nault, an individual on whose pasture land a surveyor had trespassed, as Riel's cousin. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 39, identifies Edouard Marion as similarly offended by surveyors.

³⁴ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 39, points out that among Riel's attributes that fit him to represent a large proportion of the French/Cree/Anishinaabemowin, and Michif, speakers of the Red River population was the fact that "He spoke English."

³⁵ W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 120. Hardy, 206; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 27, 198: Joseph Howe, a "Repealer" in Nova Scotia, apparently overcame his skepticism about Canadian colonial policy and his objection to the British North America Act of 1867, once appointed, after his "jaunt" to Red River in 1869, to the positions of Superintendent General of Indian Affairs and Secretary of State for the Provinces.

³⁶ Hardy, 205, Pierre Falcon, in *Songs of Old Manitoba*, 36.

³⁷ Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 62, 67; W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 121-23; Hardy, 211.

mix.³⁸ They accessed that avenue to address the barricade issue with National Committee spokespersons John Bruce and Riel on 25 October, as they had earlier over the imposed halt to survey activity.³⁹

The basic course of events during 1869-70 has been well described, often, in the historiography about the Red River Resistance.⁴⁰ A point that has not received adequate acknowledgement is that -- even if their quasi-stateless condition is not considered -- as a community, the Red River settlers overcame extensive attempts at obstruction to function very well politically. Even as 'outsiders'⁴¹ were inciting serial disturbances, practising intimidation, and issuing incautiously worded complaints, the Métis organized and, remarkably efficiently, effected intelligible coherence.⁴² Whatever the differences that arose over what procedure to follow regarding McDougall's appearance or anything else, ultimately, the Métis were agreed on basic principles and acted accordingly.⁴³ By 6 November, when a "Public notice to the inhabitants of Rupert's Land" was issued by the

³⁸ A.S. Morton, 878, describes the following of this procedure as "characteristic of the rulers of the colony, for theirs was a government with the consent of the governed, and that consent withdrawn, the only resort left was moral suasion. It was clear that the half-breeds had no reason to fear the rulers of the colony."

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 881.

⁴⁰ Hardy, 195-237, provides one of the more entertaining versions, although the characterization of Riel as a "Hitler-like ... juvenile delinquent with a gang behind him," is an instance where the 'history as farce' treatment becomes decidedly heavy-handed.

⁴¹ See, Alexander M. Witherspoon, *Common Errors in English and How to Avoid Them* (New York: Garden City Publishing, 1943; reprint, New York: Permabooks, 1946), 15-16 (page citations are to the reprint edition): who provides definitions that suggest that in Red River, designating a new arrival as a 'stranger,' indicated that the person was "merely one who is unknown or without acquaintance in a given place." Descriptions of the Settlement indicate the status did not preclude ones ready acceptance into the Red River community. An arrival was not automatically regarded as an 'alien' without citizenship. The choice to belong resided with the new arrival. Choosing to retain status as a 'foreigner' -- to maintain a primary allegiance to another nation -- meant an arrival, though part of the social structure, was left 'outside' of consideration for leadership roles, and was only peripherally involved in community decision making.

⁴² See for example, Hardy, 201, 213: In relating instances of disregard for local law and custom by newly arrived Canadians, Hardy includes references to earlier examples such as the G.D. Corbett jailbreak of 1863, and the 1868 formation of the "Republic of Manitoba." Even in such instances as the 30 November 1869 report that "Scottish and English half-breeds" were armed and practising drill downstream from Fort Garry, he clearly implicates Canadians as instigators and perpetrators. More commonly, writers adhering to historiographical orthodoxy invoke such breaches as evidence of the original community's fractured nature -- a purportedly terminal internal flaw.

⁴³ A.S. Morton, 879-80, 885.

party identified as “Representatives of the French-speaking population,” an enormous amount of discussion and consideration of voiced concerns had already taken place.⁴⁴ The tenor of community consensus had been evaluated.

The notice was produced with the help of erstwhile challenger from an English-speaking faction, James Ross. He, like Riel, was familiar with other political forms and more than capable of appropriating terminology in order to make the desired impression.⁴⁵ Thus, for example, spokespersons such as Bruce were presented as ‘presidents’ and ‘leaders.’ Key to instances where cooperative cohesion was achieved despite difference -- for example that attained by parties styled as ‘French’ and ‘English’ on this occasion -- was a desire to protect the community that had been built over the course of in excess of a half-century of settlement. Red River settlers were united in their determination to resist the unsanctioned actions of a foreign state, such as Canada, in their country as well as summary proclamations of foreign governance, unless negotiations over terms of self-government and expected benefits were satisfactorily undertaken and concluded.⁴⁶ They therefore took advantage of events that presented a means of securing this end. In adapting cross-cultural brokering techniques to play one potential political suitor off against another, the worth of their territory had been established. If Britain was determined to remain aloof, the Métis decision to turn to resistance ensured that negotiations with Canada on the terms of the transfer, and on the securing of benefits commensurate with their country’s value, would be initiated.⁴⁷

The approach adopted to retaining control of the course of their community’s development was consistent with the traditional Métis group management process. Individuals were chosen in twelve independently held councils as spokespersons to attend the Convention slated for 16 November. The existence of kinship networks ensured that

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 884; see also, Bruce Peel, *Early Printing in the Red River Settlement 1859-1870 and its effect on the Riel Rebellion* (Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers), 1974.

⁴⁵ Van Kirk, “What if Mama is an Indian?” 213; Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 180.

⁴⁶ W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, xi; see also, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 35.

⁴⁷ See, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 65-66; W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, xi-xii; Hardy, 217; Mailhot and Sprague, 2, 27 n. 9; Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 3.

quite literally “all the families of the Red River and the Assiniboine” were represented.⁴⁸ Delegates to the convention met concerted interference from some of the newer residents in the Settlement. In particular, members of the Canadian party under John Christian Schultz - characterized as “violent” in some accounts, as highly unpopular in others -- and the rejected Governor McDougall, acting through the medium of his “lieutenant,” John Stoughton Dennis who was aided by Canadian militia major, Charles Arkoll Boulton -- were openly defiant.⁴⁹ Despite their efforts, the institutions of the Settlement continued to function, including the Quarterly Court.⁵⁰ The Red River representatives were not prevented from producing, in concert, the first written ‘Bill of Rights’ for the Settlement. Explicit in this first draft, as well as in successive versions -- for the Métis, codification of community aspiration did not preclude modification⁵¹ -- is the consensus that Red River people had an implicit right, as a distinct community of persistent settlers and developers of an area described in Canada as a “foreign country,” to be taken seriously as the representative nation of that country.⁵² In accepting direct political association with another sovereign political entity, they wanted status commensurate with being a nation with a

⁴⁸ W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, xiii.

⁴⁹ Hardy, 201, 214; see also, Mailhot and Sprague, 2; also, Bumsted, 164-77, for a characterization of Schultz as ‘ordinary’ -- in a contemporary ‘entrepreneurial man’ sense. W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, xiii. See also, Hardy, 223, 232; and Jackson, 84; Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 50, and *Louis Riel*, 160; Howard, 83-84, 89-90. Donald J.C. Phillipson, “Dennis, John Stoughton,” *Canadian Encyclopedia*, 650; and Hardy, 178-79, 205, note that there were serious questions regarding Dennis’ performance as a lieutenant-colonel of a Toronto militia battling Fenians in 1866 -- he fled “apparently at the first sight of the Fenians” and faced a court martial. Also, Henry James Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of their Time: A Hand-book of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), 102: Retired from service in the British army’s Royal Canadian Regiment, Boulton received an appointment as major in the new Dominion militia in 1868. Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada: From Champlain to Kosovo* 4th ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1999), 90: observes that “Political patronage helped fill out a militia staff of half-pay British officers and impecunious military veterans.”

⁵⁰ A.S. Morton, 885.

⁵¹ See, Samuel Johnson, cited in Boswell, 442, discussing a contrasting conception of codification as it pertains to British law: “it is necessary that it be permanent and stable ... To permit a law to be modified ... is to leave the community without law.”

⁵² John A. Macdonald, quoted in Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 42; A.S. Morton, 877.

history of self-government and capable of maintaining and expanding the same.⁵³ In return for entering into such an association, they were concerned with: securing recognition of private and community land ownership, including *tenant feu et lieu*;⁵⁴ improved communication with other centres; protection of rights to self-determine language and religious affiliation; and the right to exercise self-government.⁵⁵

Contrary to historiographic assertions that, having produced the list, the conference subsequently 'failed' due to an inability of community 'leaders' to effectively proceed to other issues, delegates merely recessed for one week in order to seek approval of the list and to present arguments in need of consideration -- in particular those regarding the wisdom of instituting a formal provisional government -- to their constituents for evaluation.⁵⁶ Aside from condensing approximately 12 000 opinions into one list of rights only 15 items long, before the recess the delegates had affirmed that, "McDougall was not to be allowed to enter the country."⁵⁷ Community consensus supported those who had determined to take effective action after all. This is understandable, given that McDougall, as a journalist lauded for his "trenchant" style, had been reported in the *Ottawa Times* and the *Toronto Globe and Mail* as having observed on 4 December 1867 that he wanted to see the West "peopled with a race the same as ourselves."⁵⁸ According to a later statement made

⁵³ See, W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, xi; also, Captain William Kennedy, quoted in A.S. Morton, 878.

⁵⁴ N.-J. Richot, "The Journal of Rev. N.-J. Richot March 24 to May 28, 1870," in *Birth of a Province*, 149, records Sir George Cartier's definition of *tenant feu et lieu* as including: "all the *métis* who were winterers or tripmen who had not left the country to establish themselves in another; but who passing a great part of their lives on trips or in wintering, regarded the Red River Settlement as their home. The [Canadian] government knew that part of the *métis* are nomads, and it considers them to be settlers of the Province of Manitoba," [italics in the Morton translation]. See also, Mailhot and Sprague, 2-3.

⁵⁵ See, Alexander Begg, *The Creation of Manitoba; or, A History of the Red River Troubles* (Toronto: A.H. Hovey, 1871), 110-11; W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, ix. Hardy, 205-06; Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 3; and, J.Y. Brown to John A. Macdonald, cited in A.S. Morton, 877, who provide an alternate version of the terms of the first list which includes "4. That 300 acres shall be granted to each of their children" and "8. That Dr. Schultz and others shall be sent out of the Territory at once"; see also, 878-79; also, A.G.B. Bannatyne, quoted 885.

⁵⁶ See, Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 80-81, *Louis Riel*, 71; also, Hardy, 212.

⁵⁷ A.S. Morton, 886. W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, 91 n.75, states that the 1871 census reported 5 720 French and 4 080 English "half-breeds" and 1 600 "white" settlers.

⁵⁸ Rose, 557. W. McDougall quoted in Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 26.

by Rev. N.-J. Richot, the people of Red River had in fact reached conclusions about McDougall's acceptability expressly through such "reports in the paper."⁵⁹

The Red River settlers spent the week of 23 November to the 30th, meeting and discussing issues, formally and informally, in private and public forums.⁶⁰ Once general satisfaction on the course to take had been arrived at within the twelve council groups, the delegates reconvened on 1 December at Fort Garry to continue the Conference.⁶¹ The Canadian party and their "hapless" representative McDougall had not been pleased with the turn events had taken.⁶² The local system of community government, not at all familiar, along with settler solidarity despite difference was no doubt unexpected and probably appeared threatening. To outsiders such as Dennis -- whose experience as a lieutenant-colonel of a Toronto-based militia suggests that he would view 'uprisings' as prone to become personally distasteful affairs -- the Red River settlers' behaviour reeked of an "insurrection" to be quashed before it progressed any further.⁶³ A 'counter-plot' was formulated. Apparently operating under the belief that power in Red River was invested in a single leader and that ordered authority devolved from above, Riel, as "prime conspirator" was targeted.⁶⁴ Dennis was charged with raising a force, seizing the 'rebel' by "stealth" and by a "*coupe de grâce*," [sic] installing Canadians as the Settlement's "masters."⁶⁵ McDougall was informed.

In a tight knit community where orality ruled, it was inevitable that along with James Ross and A.G.B. Bannatyne -- both of whom were personally familiar with Dennis

⁵⁹ Richot, 145, describing a conversation with the Governor General who apparently conceded the point. See also, Captain Kennedy, quoted in A.S. Morton, 878; Hardy, 203.

⁶⁰ A.S. Morton, 886.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Finlay and Sprague, 208. See also, Pierre Falcon, "Les tribulations d'un Roi Malheureux," in MacLeod, *Songs of Manitoba*, 36-38.

⁶³ McDougall quoted in A.S. Morton, 890. See, also Hardy, 209; also, 172-179, for a description of the Fenian threat, Dennis' involvement, and, 178, for a reference to John A. Macdonald as Minister of Militia evincing a preference for promoting the development of "counterespionage" tactics over building efficiency into the military chain of command.

⁶⁴ John S. Dennis, quoted in A.S. Morton, 891.

⁶⁵ McDougall, quoted in A.S. Morton, 890. A.S. Morton, 889; see also, Hardy, 210.

and so furnished a means of having Canadian views presented at the Conference -- Riel had divined the plot as well.⁶⁶ It would have been hard not to. Significant networking was in place. William Mactavish, the Governor installed by the HBC, was married to Mary Sally 'Sara' McDermot, "a strong Roman Catholic" and daughter of Andrew McDermot -- another confidante of the Canadian Party.⁶⁷ Of Sara's brothers, Henry was married to Sarah Logan, the daughter of Robert Logan, while Miles was married to Guillemine Goulet. Both wives belonged to families with extensive networks.⁶⁸ Guillemine was sister to the wife of Riel's cousin Elzéar Lagimonière.⁶⁹ Prior to her marriage to A.G.B. Bannatyne, Sara McDermot-Mactavish's sister, Annie, had been educated in the Catholic faith at the Grey Sister's School as well. Despite his affiliation with the Canadian party, Bannatyne was later described as "the Post master, who took Riel's part in the early days of the troubles."⁷⁰ Regardless of her husband's reasons for association, Annie -- in company with two other Red River women -- had previously publicly demonstrated a disinclination to quietly countenance the obnoxious -- racist -- sentiments of Canadians such as Charles Mair.⁷¹ Whether or not she was instrumental on this occasion, it is Annie's husband who is credited with alerting Riel to the danger.⁷²

When the Conference delegates met 1st December, a formal copy of the initial List of Rights was approved as drafted -- as was the case with subsequent versions.⁷³ That it reiterated the first version underscores the degree of commitment attached to those basic terms. The outsiders' "hair-brained" plot faded a few days later, apparently due to a lack of settler support unforeseen by Canadians who, unlike Red River people, were used to

⁶⁶ See, A.S. Morton, 891.

⁶⁷ Northcote, 107; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, ID. 3568; Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 232.

⁶⁸ See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, ID. 3303, ID. 2988; and Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 133.

⁶⁹ Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, 38 n. 87.

⁷⁰ Northcote, 107.

⁷¹ See, Hardy, 203; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 238-39; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 35-36; Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 183.

⁷² A.S. Morton, 891; see also, Mailhot and Sprague, 13-17.

⁷³ See, Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 106, 109; A.S. Morton, 887; Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 74; Hardy, 215, 217.

thinking of different religious and linguistic leanings as necessarily oppositional.⁷⁴

Other attempts at Canadian “appeals to force” proved no more successful.⁷⁵ On every occasion throughout 1869-70, for all the apparent turmoil that the historiography reports, Métis delegates and settlers ultimately responded to outsider disturbances with an impressive show of unanimity and restraint.⁷⁶ Even the “unhappy” deaths in mid February of two Settlement sons, Hugh Sutherland and Norbert Parisien, did not divide the community.⁷⁷ Although accorded scant attention in the historiography, this event matrix, imbued with a violence exceeding the Settlement norm, was not without moment.⁷⁸ Parisien, presumably a Roman Catholic, was the agent of Protestant Sutherland’s demise. However, the community regarded the actions of a Canadian contingent of thugs -- “loyal” Orange Association brethren such as Thomas Scott among them -- as the precipitate

⁷⁴ Robert Tait, and James McKay, letter, quoted in Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*; 141. See also, Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 82, *Louis Riel*, 75. Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*, ID 4576, Robert Tait and wife Jane Inkster were Métis, as were their neighbours, ID 3397, James McKay and wife Margaret Rowand.

⁷⁵ See, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 76-77.

⁷⁶ A.S. Morton, 908.

⁷⁷ W.L. Morton, *Manitoba*, 136. See also, Hardy, 233; Healy, 230. See, Healy, 221-22; Howard, 159; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*; and Thomas Flanagan and the Gardner Indexing Service, “Biographical Index,” *Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 5, 321, 346: Hugh Sutherland, ID 4515: the son of Selkirk Settlers, resided in St. John’s parish with his wife Barbara Fraser, whose parents were likely also Selkirk Settlers. Christie, two years old in 1871, is listed as their child. Sources are vague and contradictory about Norbert’s age and identity: he is presented as no older than 15, as well as no younger than 52; he appears to have died once in the latter half of February, and then a second time in April; reputedly he was suspected throughout the Settlement of espionage activity in the capacity of a double agent, while yet he was recognized as, and extended sympathy for being, a mentally challenged member of the community. He apparently was related to ID 3826, Narcisse Parisien, and wife Marguerite Sabiston, who lived at or between lot 77, St. Andrew’s Parish. One source implies they were his parents, but none of the sources consulted establish linkages adequate to overcome the problem of Norbert having nominal duplicates.

⁷⁸ See, Sprague and Frye, “Manitoba’s Red River Settlement,” 185: violent death at times befell community members but usually at a remove from the Settlement and as a result of territorial disputes involving resource access -- primarily with the Oceti Sakowin. See, Marshall Sahlins, quoted in Peter Burke, “History of Events and the revival of Narrative,” *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, 244-45, who argues that the perception and interpretation of events are culturally ordered and that therefore the study of an event can reveal “the structures of the culture” under consideration. As well he contends that “there is a dialectical relationship between events and structures.” As events have a “place in the process of ‘structuration’” that takes place in a community, the consequences of occurrences can have profound repercussions.

cause.⁷⁹ In the course of a terror fuelled bid to escape a night-long abduction, Parisien shot Sutherland, mistaking him for a member of the party actively attempting to effect the escapee's recapture. The group, successful in recovering their prize, subjected Parisien to a hatchet attack and battering that resulted in his death "not very long after."⁸⁰ Scott managed to distinguish himself as the man "alleged to have been personally responsible."⁸¹

According to accounts, despite the dying Sutherland's pleas on Parisien's behalf, Scott, in lieu of a hanging, looped a belt around the neck of the "unfortunate" captive, then dragged him "behind a horse for a quarter mile."⁸² When informed of the incident, Sir John A. Macdonald characterized the entire escapade as "foolish," the outcome as "criminal."⁸³ The leading agitators of the Canadian party disassociated themselves from the event: Schulz and Mair by leaving the Settlement with little delay; Boulton, by shifting the onus onto Scott.⁸⁴

Historiographically, the subsequent death of Scott -- traditionally accorded a

⁷⁹ Thomas Scott, as quoted by Riel, in J.M. Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 200; see also, 201-02; and Healy, 221-23: As in Healy, Bumsted places Scott among the group "searching for Riel" in Kildonan who abducted and imprisoned Parisien in the schoolhouse. See, Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*; W.E. Ingersoll, "Yarns of early Winnipeg: The Sheriff was an Encyclopedia," newspaper clipping, Winnipeg, c. 1934, collection Norma Hall; and Harry Shave, "The 'Sheriff' was Great Sportsman and Athlete," newspaper clipping, Winnipeg, date unknown, collection Norma Hall: It is worth noting that aside from his interview with Catherine Black [see, n. 80 below], Healy's account was likely informed by his close association with 'Sheriff' Colin Inkster -- avowedly no fan of Riel's -- whose take on Red River history owed much to oral traditions. In addition, although one Parisien family lived in St. Andrew's, there were additional families located in St. Norbert, Poplar Point, St. Peter and St. Clement, with over 35 direct kinship ties to other families -- Protestant as well as Catholic -- in the Red River Settlement.

⁸⁰ Catherine Black, quoted in Healy, 221-23. See also, Major A.C. Boulton, cited in Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 387 n. 30; Sprague and Frye, *Genealogy*; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 35, 234: Catherine, daughter of Alexander Sutherland, ID 4494, and Christiana McBeath, was Hugh Sutherland's sister. She married William Ross Black, the eldest son of Rev. John Black, ID 345 and Henrietta Ross, who was a sister to James Ross. Both Rev. Black and Henrietta were witness to the event's immediate trauma. Kinship connections provided ample means to disseminate detailed descriptions of the occurrence to Riel. Given its sensational nature, they were probably relayed rapidly.

⁸¹ Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 202.

⁸² *Ibid.* See also, Hardy, 223; Howard, 158-59; and Riel, as quoted in, "A2-001. Interview with a Correspondent of the Winnipeg *Daily Sun*. (St. Vital). 83/06/(28)," *Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 2, 416.

⁸³ John A. Macdonald, quoted in Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 112.

⁸⁴ A.S. Morton, 905; Bumsted, *Thomas Scott's Body*, 183; *Louis Riel*, 107-08, see also, Boulton, as cited 106 n. 30, 386-7. Also, Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada*, 82-83, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 46: Dennis had left the Settlement two months earlier after the failure of his "illegal and unwise" attempt on behalf of McDougall.

“pivotal” significance -- has also been disassociated from the earlier killings. References to the death of Parisien are particularly obscure. Arguably, the act of isolation may account for the “enigma” that the later incident and its associated nexus present.⁸⁵ The disjunction may have been inadvertent. The source of the unaccountability -- the lack of records that supply clear explanation for questions such as those raised by J.M. Bumsted in two essays: “Why Shoot Thomas Scott? A Study in Historical Evidence,” and, “Thomas Scott’s Body” -- may lie in the dynamic of the Settlement itself.⁸⁶ According to Bishop Taché, writing in July of 1870, the people of Red River regarded the three deaths as inextricably linked.⁸⁷ He found the Métis extremely reluctant -- in his opinion, out of fear -- to refer to Parisien or Sutherland at all.⁸⁸ It is possible that participant observers such as Taché -- neither Métis nor thoroughly acculturated to Aboriginal lifeways -- though aware of a silence, mistook both its basis and meaning.⁸⁹

The nature of the traditions surrounding Scott -- from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sources -- suggests that some, if not most, of the inhabitants of Red River considered him to be a form of “*wihktigoo*”: a murderous, infectious force which, once loosed within a community, was dedicated to its physical extermination.⁹⁰ Cree and Anishinaabe accounts provide insight into contemporary Aboriginal law and the practices

⁸⁵ A.S. Morton, 908. Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 163, 197.

⁸⁶ Bumsted, *Thomas Scott’s Body*, 1-10, 197-209, 211-13, 254-58.

⁸⁷ See, Catherine Black, as quoted in Healy, 227, the description is consistent with confirming that the connection was considered important within the community.

⁸⁸ See, Alexandre Antonin Taché, letter, “A Son Excellence Sir John Young, Gouverneur général du Canada, 23 juillet 1870,” in *Histoire et Origine des Troubles du N.-Ouest: racontées sous serment par sa Grandeur Mgr l’archevêque de St-Boniface* (1874?), 36.

⁸⁹ See, Louisa Passerini, quoted in Marlene Epp, *Women without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 13, regarding the importance of being alert to silences.

⁹⁰ Napaysoosee, quoted in David T. Williamson, “Killing of a Wetigo,” *Alberta History* (spring 1979): 2. Bumsted, 3: observes, “Even before his execution, Scott’s fate had begun to be shrouded in mystery and mythology.”

that had been devised to deal with such an occurrence.⁹¹ There was a specific set of procedures that had to be followed if the cycle of malevolence begun by the force -- characterized as the "ultimate threat" to society -- was to end.⁹² The transgressing party had to be isolated and restrained from inflicting additional harm on community members. Interviews were required to determine the extent and source of the hostility. Spiritual counselling was given in an attempt to heal what was regarded as a horribly aberrant, extremely serious but possibly surmountable affliction. If the perpetrator showed a capacity for remorse, a susceptibility to moral suasion, and an ability to behave reasonably, the penalty assigned was forcible, permanent eviction from the community.⁹³ In extreme cases, recourse to spiritual council did not effect a transformation that indicated the offender yet retained a modicum of humane feeling. For incurable individuals, those believed wholly unable to refrain from violent behaviour, execution was regarded as "the only solution."⁹⁴ The decision was not one that could be lightly made. Action was not taken in a easy spirit.⁹⁵ Communities typically had a mandatory method, different from ordinary funeral practices, for disposing of the remains in a case where capital punishment had been enforced. Once resolved, community silence on matters connected to the incident was not

⁹¹ See, Williamson; and, Thomas Fiddler and James R. Stevens, *Killing the Shamen* (Moonbeam O.N.: Penumbra Press, 1985): whose accounts deal with occurrences that took place from approximately 1891-1906, and 1899 respectively. Fiddler and Stevens, 32-35, 111, 113, establish awareness on the part of Métis and non-Métis individuals, some of whom had family connections to the Red River community, of both the law and procedure [see n. 95, below].

⁹² Fiddler and Stevens, 213; see also, 100.

⁹³ See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 8; Hardy, 235: the method of realizing the expulsion of William Gaddy from Red River accords with adopting this course.

⁹⁴ See, Williamson, 1-5. See also, Fiddler and Stevens, 88-89, 93, 95, 97. Also, John Burrows, *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Aboriginal Law* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), xii, 4. Also, Raymond Huel, ed., "Mémoire ayant trait aux difficultés de la Rivière-Rouge," *Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 1, 199, for a description of Scott's intransigent, unrepentant stance.

⁹⁵ See, Fiddler and Stevens, 111, 113 and n. 33: who quote a petition c. 1906, signed by, among others: William Campbell, James Begg, Edward Paupanakiss, Donald A. McIvor, Donald C. McTavish, A.A. Sinclair, J.K. MacDonald, Donald Flett, and John Taylor, in which they assert that in cases where execution is required, an "entire" community harbours "perfect sympathy with those, who because of possessing a little more nerve than the rest, are detailed to do the gruesome task. Their actions in this respect is [sic] the very opposite of what we call murder."

unusual.⁹⁶ The various versions of Scott's story all include indicators that in his case, the foregoing steps were believed either to be warranted or to have been followed.⁹⁷ Alternative histories have differed as to whether he was to be banished or executed. In Red River it is entirely possible that both intentions were held simultaneously by members of different factions.⁹⁸ The wonder is not that he met his end when and as he did but that, from the time of the attack on Parisien to descriptions of Scott's volatility and inability to expire, he apparently persisted in presenting as the most abhorred manifestation of human degradation conceivable to the people among whom he had chosen to situate himself.⁹⁹ There is no incongruity in finding that in his role as leader of the Provisional Government, by accepting responsibility for what was ultimately a community determined conclusion -- one pursued "because necessary for the country's good" and one that he "could not interfere with" --

⁹⁶ See, *Ibid.*, 12-13, 50, 75, 97, 99; 101; also Riel, as quoted in Bumsted, 10; and, Riel, "Interview," *Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 2, 415-16. See also, Taché, *Histoire et Origine des Troubles du N.-Ouest*, 36: It is unlikely that anyone in the community felt that it was safe to openly discuss these matters. The response in Ontario to Scott's death indicated that all families in Red River -- whether participants in a decision making council or not -- were at risk of retaliation. See, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 160-61; Hardy, 242; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 8-9; Coutts 216 n. 73, who indicate that the fears were well grounded. Ontarian "reprisals" began with the 13 September 1870 stoning death of Elzéar Goulet. There followed the killing of François Guilmette, and the deaths of Bob O'Lone, and James Tanner. André Nault was "bayoneted and left for dead." Catholic clergyman, Father Kavanaugh, and Thomas Spence were also attacked. Women were not immune from the "frightful spirit of bigotry." The wife of Captain Kennedy was distressed at being targeted in an editorial printed in an "Eastern newspaper" which identified her as having "counselled and insisted on the murder of poor young Scott."

⁹⁷ For example see, Donald A. Smith, quoted in A.S. Morton, 907-08, who provides a description which includes the requisite steps. Riel, as quoted by Smith, in *Birth of a Province*. 41; Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 106, 108-09, 113; Healy, 226-27; and Bumsted, 9-10, 203-04, provide evidence of community participation in decision making on life and death issues, obvious distress at having to impose a death sentence, and the extraordinary measures adopted toward disposition of the body. The suggestion is that formalization of the steps for dealing with *wihtiko* had developed over time to enable individuals of a community -- originally First Nations -- to maintain a deep personal aversion to mandating death yet accede to its imposition in instances where violent community division akin to 'Civil War' would otherwise seem unavoidable.

⁹⁸ See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 50-51.

⁹⁹ See, Spry, "Memories of George William Sanderson," 129-31; Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 50-51.

Riel won esteem as an honourable and heroic man.¹⁰⁰

On 19 January 1870, prior to undergoing the communal trauma Scott's presence occasioned, a crowd of settlers comprised of "more than a thousand buffalo-coated or capote-clad men and scores of women," had gathered at Fort Garry to spend five hours standing outdoors listening to a presentation by "ambassador" Donald Alexander Smith -- connected to the community through kinship ties -- that outlined his understanding of the Canadian government's intent.¹⁰¹ An even larger number, present the following day, cheered assurances that the rights they were "entitled to" would be accommodated.¹⁰² The assembled settlers carried a motion, put forward by Riel and seconded by Bannatyne, to again hold a convention of community representatives, their numbers increased to 40, on the 25th. Enough time was allotted for smaller councils to take place throughout the Settlement before the elected delegates met "to decide what would be best for the welfare of the country."¹⁰³

The convention, begun on 26 January, produced the Settlement's 'Second List of Rights' by the 29th. It clarified the extent of public land to be considered exclusively under territorial jurisdiction. A circular area that fell "inside a circumference, having Upper Fort Garry as the centre," was to be recognized.¹⁰⁴ The radius of this was to "be the number of

¹⁰⁰ Riel, as quoted by Father André, in *Thomas Scott's Body*, 10; see also, 214. Riel, as quoted by Reverend Young, in *Thomas Scott's Body*, 4; see also, 203. Also, Riel, as cited in Hardy, 227, reiterating the position that the Provisional government could proceed on any given course "only if the people wished it." See also, Stanley, "Foreword," *Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 1, xxxii; Riel, "Interview," *Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 2, 415-16.

¹⁰¹ Hardy, 228. See also, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 47. Also, Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 89; Hardy, 219-21; and "Smith, Sir Donald Alexander, 1st Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal," *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 337-38: Smith was a nephew of HBC Chief Factor John Stuart -- some of whose descendants lived in Red River -- and married to Isabella Sophia Hardisty, one of the daughters of HBC officer Richard Hardisty and his Métis wife, Margaret Sutherland.

¹⁰² Louis Riel, quoted in Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 91. "We claim no half-rights, mind you, but all the rights we are entitled to. Those rights will be set forth by our representatives, and what is more ... we will get them [loud cheers]"; see also, 90.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* See also, Hardy, 229.

¹⁰⁴ W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, 243.

miles that the American line is distant from Fort Garry.”¹⁰⁵ Because no economic progress could be expected without establishing adequate commercial communication, a five year time limit was set for Canada to meet upgrading needs. A previously expressed wish to avoid the possibility of militaristic confrontation -- appearance of invasion and occupation by a foreign force had been forestalled by a stipulation that “The military is to be composed of the people now in the Territory” -- was dropped.¹⁰⁶ Even if a fear of Canadian military action still existed, for the time being the community was quite safe. Moving an army into the territory during winter “was physically impossible.”¹⁰⁷ To protection from extra-local taxation, protection from all liability for the £300 000 owed to the HBC was added. As in subsequent lists, the terms are cautiously reasonable in that they are framed to accord with Canadian conventions.¹⁰⁸ French and English are the only languages specifically safeguarded. No requirement that women and children be accorded equal consideration with men appears. There is no request that they be extended the franchise. Nor are First Nations peoples singled out to obtain the same. However, the call to respect “all properties, rights and privileges, as hitherto enjoyed” in the region, and the further statement that “the recognition and arrangement of local customs, usages and privileges” were to remain under locally determined control, might have been interpreted by some as safeguarding Aboriginal lifeways and languages as readily as land.¹⁰⁹ No distinction is made among Red River settlers regarding rights and claims along language, religious, or ‘racial’ lines. Primary political allegiance, however, appears to have distinguished some settlers from others. A distinction is made between those considered settlers of Assiniboia, including First Nations

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* Sprague, “Métis Land Claims,” puts the radius at 120 kilometres. See also, John Warkentin and Richard I. Ruggles, eds., “A Section from ‘J.C. Hamilton’s’ Map of Part of Western Canada. 1876,” in *Manitoba Historical Atlas: A selection of facsimile Maps, Plans, and Sketches from 1612 to 1969* (Winnipeg: Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 1970), 276-77; Hardy, 239: The area asked for was roughly equivalent to the ‘postage stamp’ area eventually allotted -- about 11 000 square miles. Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 83: calculates this to be approximately 9 500 000 acres.

¹⁰⁶ See, Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 111.

¹⁰⁷ Finlay and Sprague, 208.

¹⁰⁸ See, W.L. Morton, “Appendix I,” *Birth of a Province*, 242-50.

¹⁰⁹ See, Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 111, 158; W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, 243, 245, 248.

people, and those who were regarded as “uncivilized and unsettled Indians.”¹¹⁰ The terms deserve to be interpreted with caution -- a study of the “meanings, contexts, and messages” of the word “civilized” along the lines of Black-Rogers’ sociolinguistic analysis of usage is needed.¹¹¹ Certainly, in the Rights document, those groups maintaining distinctly First Nations approaches to self-sovereignty are represented as not to be considered under the jurisdiction of any Legislature or Dominion Parliament without first having negotiated treaties of their own, on their own behalf.¹¹²

The Third and a final Fourth List of Rights were drawn up on the 22 March, after a convention, held from 7 February to the 10th, had seen the Provisional Government accepted by the population.¹¹³ The Rights were to be taken by a deputation to Ottawa and laid before the Dominion Government as “the terms upon which the people of Assiniboia will consent to enter into confederation with the other Provinces of the Dominion.”¹¹⁴ The Third list is the first to request provincial rather than territorial status. Reasons for approving that modification had been supplied by Riel at the previous convention.¹¹⁵ Its inclusion had waited upon the larger community finally deciding in its favour. The rightness of provincial status had been argued by settlers such as Captain Kennedy and Donald Gunn as early as 22 October 1869 at a council held in St. Andrew’s. Widespread acceptance of the view had been delayed in order that those “hopeful” that the Canadian government would eventually deign to “unfold its policy” on the matter were given time to determine if that anticipated event was likely to ever occur.¹¹⁶ The settlers’ preference for provincial status suggests that some at any rate were aware that Section 146 of the British

¹¹⁰ See, W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, 244, 246, 249; also Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 63, for comments attributed to Riel whereby some Red River Métis are described as “uneducated and only half-civilized.”

¹¹¹ Black-Rogers, 353.

¹¹² See, Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 111, 158.

¹¹³ Hardy, 231, 233, indicates local HBC representative Governor Mactavish expressed his support -- of which Riel was aware -- exhorting hesitant settlers to “Form a government for God’s sake, and restore peace to the settlement.”

¹¹⁴ Thomas Bunn, “Commission,” quoted in Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 123.

¹¹⁵ Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 93.

¹¹⁶ Hardy, 213. Donald Gunn, quoted in A.S. Morton, 878.

North America Act implied that “additions to Confederation were to enter as provinces.”¹¹⁷ The Fourth list is notable for its explicit request for a separate school system, indicating that no one in Red River desired to see the future life choices of children limited.¹¹⁸ The Fourth also differs from the Third in that a significant portion of the seventeenth item of the latter document is excised. The extra wording, perhaps considered an unnecessary or undiplomatic rhetorical flourish, contains a firm declaration of settler solidarity:

the French and English-speaking people of Assiniboia are so equally divided in numbers, yet so united in their interests, and so connected by commerce, family connections, and other political and social relations, that it has happily been found impossible to bring them into hostile collision, although repeated attempts have been made by designing strangers, for reasons known to themselves, to bring about so ruinous and disastrous an event.¹¹⁹

Under the Métis system of self-governance, bolstered by the creation of the Provisional Government, the disaster of community disintegration had not taken place. As the people of Red River understood events, they had entered confederation on their own terms.¹²⁰ A bill to accept their province as they had envisioned it was put before the Canadian Parliament in April. The community had formulated and secured a possible future through a consensual acceptance of change. In embracing the possibility of transformation - - rather than seeking to retreat from it -- they had actively worked to affect the the nature and pace of transition. The structural means to ensure continued settler success in their region was created in common, all in the space of a few months, in spite of troubling interference and “confusion.”¹²¹ The Manitoba Act was enacted in May. Although it differed in some respects from the Settlements’ Bill of Rights, it was ratified by a “jubilant”

¹¹⁷ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 28; Raymond Huel, “Introduction,” *Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 1, xiii; see also, Finlay and Sprague, “Appendix II, Part A: The British North America Act,” 640.

¹¹⁸ Stanley, *Louis Riel*, 125-26.

¹¹⁹ See, W.L. Morton, “Appendix I (2) The Third ‘List of Rights,’” *Birth of a Province*, 247. See also, John Tait, quoted in Coutts, 109.

¹²⁰ Hardy, 239; Mailhot and Sprague, 1; Finlay and Sprague, 209; see also, Flanagan, *Riel and the Rebellion*, 82.

¹²¹ Hardy, 210.

Legislative Assembly of the Provisional Government on 24 June.¹²²

The wording of the 31st clause of the Manitoba Act introduced a distinction that had not been present in the Lists of Rights formulated by the Métis community and presented to Canadian government representatives. In framing a 'promise' to appropriate 1.4 million acres to be distributed among the dependent children of Red River settler families in recognition of Aboriginal title, the non-Aboriginal composers of the document, including Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir George Cartier, and the delegates from Red River, Abbé Richot, Alfred H. Scott and Judge John Black, racialized the Métis. The settlers of Red River were separated into distinct categories, determined on a 'biological' basis, rather than on a history of settlement that confirmed rights of prior occupation -- rights that originally had commonly been extended through a matrilineally conferred estate inheritance.¹²³ Although Richot insisted that he had worked on the Bill "for the people of the country, as a whole, without distinction," and although section 30 appeared to concede ownership of occupied territory, the signal of Canada's intent to consider different settlers in the Northwest, differently -- meaning unequally -- was officially recorded.¹²⁴ It is significant that, in a state document, the Métis were able to secure for children as a discrete population accord as a propertied legal entity and therefore possessed of the most basic requirement for consideration as full citizens. However, from the vantage of historical hindsight, the allowance or acceptance of the inclusion of 'race' as an identity marker appears to have

¹²² Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 90. See also, Richot, quoted in Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 379.

¹²³ See, Hardy, 200; John A. Macdonald, quoted in *Riel and the Rebellion*, 62, argued in the House of Commons in 1870 that "Those half-breeds had a strong claim to the lands, in consequence of their extraction, as well as from being settlers." See also, Boswell, 593 n. 2, for a discussion of the British estimation of arguments attesting to the logical error inherent in according women an ability to confer property rights -- expert opinion and biblical testament agreed that women have "no connection whatever" with their children through "blood"; also "Chapter 2", 16 n. 44, this thesis. Note that Johnson refutes the argument.

¹²⁴ Richot, quoted in Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 380. See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 89; also Macklem, 4-5, whose work points out a core conceptual stumbling block for those accustomed to thinking along Western European lines when confronted with Aboriginal thought: that of the relation of difference to equality. He argues that "Aboriginal people face unequal challenges in their ability to reproduce their cultures over time. Aboriginal territorial interests warrant constitutional protection because Aboriginal people are entitled to at least the same level of protection that Canadian law provides to non-aboriginal proprietary entitlements and because they lived on and occupied their territories before the establishment of the Canadian state."

proved an extremely vulnerable 'Achilles' heel' for the Métis community.¹²⁵ Clause 31 became central to the undoing of their vision of a progressive community, peopled by successive generations of their ever expanding families, and fully integrated into the political economic system of a wider world.¹²⁶

Section 32, a corollary to section 31, and framed in keeping with the Métis lists of rights, does not exhibit the same desire to differentiate on the basis of biology -- including on such factors as gender or age. All settlers are covered equally by protective measures designed to facilitate the recognition of their entitlement to occupied Red River lands as distinct from those that could be considered the "ungranted or waste lands" that were to come under Dominion administration according to section 30.¹²⁷ The Métis perception of the Manitoba Act -- shared by non-Aboriginal residents, including the delegates to Ottawa, irate critics of the Bill in Ottawa, and imported individuals involved in administering the transition in Manitoba -- was that as a community they had not only a recognized right to control disposition of their Settlement's land base but were positioned to maintain that control.¹²⁸ What they could not know was that the elected leaders of the Canadian population considered "local control of land" to be an "inadmissible" proposition -- whether legally ruled into a supposed "permanent and stable" written record to confirm a negotiated "solemn treaty" condition or not.¹²⁹

A second signal of Canadian intent is visible in the styling of the 1870 Archibald

¹²⁵ See, Curtis, 26-27.

¹²⁶ See, Thomas R. Berger, "Forward," in *Canada and the Métis*, vii; Douglas N. Sprague, "The Manitoba Land Question," in *Louis Riel: Selected Readings*, ed. Hartwell Bowsfield (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988), 62-68, first printed in *The Journal of Canadian Studies*, 15 (1980): 74-84, see also, "Métis Land Claims," 197.

¹²⁷ See, W.L. Morton, "Appendix II: The Manitoba Act," *Birth of a Province*, 258; Sprague, "Manitoba Land Question," 65, *Canada and the Métis*, 89. See also, Richot, as quoted in n. 54 above; and Mailhot and Sprague, 28 n. 14, 29 n. 31, who observe that "Section 30 is usually interpreted as a prescription for Dominion control of all land in Manitoba, but the significant exception of land that was granted prior to the transfer meant provincial control of the old settlement belt in the opinion of the delegates who negotiated the act, and Governor Archibald concurred."

¹²⁸ See, Mailhot and Sprague, 3; Sprague, "Manitoba Land Question," 64, and, *Canada and the Métis*, 78, and 89: those designated "Ontario expansionists," Taché, Archibald and Cartier are presented as of the same opinion.

¹²⁹ Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 89. Samuel Johnson, as cited in n. 51 above. Riel, quoted in *Riel and the Rebellion*, 83. See also Mailhot and Sprague, 3, 28 n. 13.

census. Named lieutenant-governor of Manitoba and the North-west Territories, Adams G. Archibald personally oversaw the compilation of “a list of the names of all persons who, on the 16th July 1870, were resident within this Province.”¹³⁰ The primary object of the census was set out as:

to enable the lieutenant-Governor to ascertain the number of persons who come within the designation of ‘Families of half-breeds,’ mentioned in the 31st clause of the Manitoba Act, with a view to the division among those who come under that designation, of certain un-granted lands of the Province.¹³¹

Its “secondary object” was “to ascertain the actual number of inhabitants of the Province, at the date of the transfer to Canada.”¹³² The manner in which people were counted fixed the Red River population by itemizing them according to racialized criteria. Separate columns were provided for those deemed “White,” “Halfbreed” -- or “Métis” on census forms filled out in French -- and “Indian.”¹³³ Biology, specifically “White and Indian blood” which was assumed to course independently while it yet co-mingled in the “veins,” was surmised determinate of Métis identity -- regardless of cultural or social preferences.¹³⁴ One was designated a “half-breed” if one was “descended however remotely, either by father or mother, from any ancestor belonging to any one of the native tribes of Indians, and also descended, however remotely, from an ancestor among the Whites.”¹³⁵ An indication of who was a “British Subject” and who was a “Citizen of U.S.A.” was given.¹³⁶ Determination of the proportions of those who could be classed as “English Halfbreeds” to those considered to be “French Halfbreeds” was made.¹³⁷ As well, an indication of how

¹³⁰ PAM MG 2 B3, Document 3, “Instructions To be observed by the enumerators appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor, to take the Enumeration of the Province of Manitoba/Instructions que devront observer les Enumerators appointes par le lieutenant-Gouverneur de manitoba,” 1870; also “Fort Garry, October 13th, 1870,” *Canada Gazette, Sessional Papers*, no. 20 (1871), 74.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

many could be classed as either “Catholic” or “Protestant” was sought.¹³⁸ Subsequently, on the basis of the census, the community was sorted into “Insurgents” and “Loyalists.”¹³⁹ Those in the latter category were awarded “cash indemnities and patronage.”¹⁴⁰ Those in the former were not.¹⁴¹ Effectively, the census design attenuated, then measured and codified, presumed Métis difference.¹⁴² The valuation imposed normative standards that allowed ready transference of religiolinguistic antagonisms, that had marked political formation in the Canadas, into the Settlement. It did nothing to provide information about the values of Red River people. An opportunity to assess differences in group values -- a “first step in avoiding the onset of intergroup stereotyping” that once taken and given time can lead to “the resolution of value differences” -- was missed.¹⁴³ The reduction of the diversity and pluralism evinced by the Red River population into binary descriptions was amenable to being interpreted as proof of oppositional difference. To those who agreed with the pronouncements of renowned British political theorist John Stewart Mill published in 1861, the existence of such difference was believed antipathetic to the realization of practical nationhood.¹⁴⁴ The viability of a polity was assumed to rest on its absolute unity -- paradoxically, a unity sought through the imposition of terms of equally

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Sprague, “Manitoba Land Question,” 64.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ See, Van Kirk, “What if Mama is an Indian?” 214; Coutts, 99: James Ross was among those subjected to “the ignobility” of being denied a position in the “new Anglo-Protestant order” in favour of “newly arriving Canadians.” He died, apparently disillusioned, in 1871.

¹⁴² See, Curtis, 3-11, 24-27, 306-311.

¹⁴³ T.O. McQuire, cited in Walley, “Model for the Illumination of Participant Values,” 9.

¹⁴⁴ See, Özkirimli, 24-25; also, 38, 40, who states, “for him [Mill], free institutions were next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities.” See, J.S. Mill, quoted in *Mill on Liberty*, by Chin Liew Ten, 1980, cached at Victorian Web, National University of Singapore, <<http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/victorian/philosophy/mill/ten/ch6c.html>> 20 Jun 2003. To Mill, nationalities had “a feeling of nationality” by which he meant “the effect of identity of race and descent. Community of language, ... religion, of political antecedents, ... [and] national history.” In his view, “Among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist.” There were critics of this stance. Lord Acton countered that “those states are substantially the most perfect which ... include various nationalities without oppressing them.” To his mind, states in which “no mixture of races has occurred are imperfect,” and enforced cultural homogenization of a citizenry left states “decrepit.”

absolute division.¹⁴⁵

The Métis were acculturated to regard diversity as workable. Likely, the majority had no intimation of what harbouring a deep aversion to difference or belonging to a society bent on the fervent pursuit of homogeneity was like, let alone that such tempers might be directed against their community by reasonable people. It may have seemed incredible to many, that the “obtuseness” attributed to Canadians alleged to view land acquisition as paramount and to regard “half-castes” as inconsequential, meant that the Red River Métis in fact fit into the category of disdained “wild people.”¹⁴⁶ Within the Métis community, individuals with more outside experience, especially younger men like Riel and Ross who had made recent forays abroad, appear to have been less sanguine and less generous in their evaluation of foreign habits and attitudes. On the issue of outsider non-accommodation of cultural difference, the distrust of Canadians was strongest among Roman Catholic Métis.¹⁴⁷ They were aware that the politics of the day were not separate from religion, that Red River was not separate from contemporary issues, and that Canadian people took their religion seriously. English Canadian Protestant ‘loyalism’ had a distinctly onerous cast for Catholics in Red River that was not felt as directly by Protestants.¹⁴⁸ Still, the Roman Catholic parishioners were integral to Protestant kinship

¹⁴⁵ See, Arlene W. Saxonhouse, *Fear of Diversity: The Birth of Political Science in Ancient Greek Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), x-xi, 233. C. Kluckhohn, cited in Walley, “Model for the Illumination of Participant Values,” 4, observes that “it is recognized that values are intimately related to goals.”

¹⁴⁶ A.S. Morton, 871, and Macdonald quoted, 871, 872.

¹⁴⁷ See, A.A. Taché, quoted in Hardy, 202; see also, W.L. Morton, *Birth of a Province*, x, and as cited in Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 8, offering the opinion that, “Canadian expansion westward seemed to be only for the benefit of English Canada.” ‘English Canada’ was predominantly Protestant Canada. Even the Colonial Office felt it necessary to be “‘emphatic’ that the Canadians first had to negotiate a settlement acceptable to the ‘Roman Catholic settlers.’”

¹⁴⁸ Hall, “Ritual, myth and identity”: this is not a reference to United Empire Loyalists, but to the Orange Association where loyalism was synonymous with a hatred of Roman Catholicism. See also, Louis Riel, “1-132. Lettre à Marie Riel. St. Paul. 72/04/27,” *Collected Writings of Louis Riel*, vol. 1, 204.

networks and esteemed community members.¹⁴⁹ Their concerns were therefore familial and community concerns.¹⁵⁰ As members of a quasi-stateless society, the Métis settlers' combined experience as a polity differed from that of Canadians. In Red River, resolution of all issues, through democratic participation was not only assumed eminently possible, but as a rule, was the only acceptable outcome. In such groups, politics is conceived as a:

lively, democratic process of decision making. Participation of the greatest number exercising the highest responsibilities is not merely a guarantee of collective efficiency, it is also a precondition for individual happiness, a daily assumption of power in society and over things, a way of freely influencing fate. The citizen's job is no longer to delegate his power but to wield it, at all levels of society and stages of life.¹⁵¹

If they were aware that Macdonald, on 6 Dec. 1867, had assured Parliament, without compunction, that the settlers of Red River were "incapable of the management of their own affairs" and not worth consulting on issues concerning their futures, most settlers probably believed that, over time, a closer association would alert him to his error.¹⁵²

As prescience is not generally counted among usual human talents, possible implications of the wording of clause 31 in the Manitoba Act, and the shape of the census design, very probably went unnoted by the average Red River settler. Language may well have contributed to complaisance. The nuances of meaning attached to the French and English terms applied to identify their cultural group differed from each other and from Aboriginal terminology. There is no reason to assume that when discussing community issues among themselves, the Métis commonly made recourse to European linguistic forms. They may well have substituted terms of kinship, such as *nichisan*, or the Cree designation *Otipaymsoowuk*. It is also possible that the meanings inherent in those terms -

¹⁴⁹ See, Cecil J. Houston, and William J. Smyth. *The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 120; also Hall, "Ritual, myth, and identity," 22: As of 1869, Orange Association ordinances forbade members to marry Catholic women; allow their children to be "educated in the Roman Catholic faith"; or fraternize with men who objected to or contravened these strictures. The established admonition was: "He who is not with us is against us."

¹⁵⁰ See, Coutts, 89, 109; Healy, 225.

¹⁵¹ Faure quoted in Walley, "Model for Illuminating Participant Values," 2.

¹⁵² Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 26.

- their culturally determined social intent -- figured in conceptions of what constraints the Métis as signified placed upon English and French words used as signifiers. This is especially to be expected of persons whose first languages were Aboriginal.¹⁵³

Given the widely held perception that negotiations with Canada had reached a successful conclusion, the Red River Métis had ample reason to believe that they faced a promising future. They had evidence that theirs was a cohesive society capable of dealing with difficult situations well. They had demonstrated a collective ability to set goals and to meet them. The community, structured to allow an “open stance toward decision making” on political issues, had secured provisions for responsible government that appeared compatible with their tradition of a dispersed distribution of decision making powers.¹⁵⁴ Experience had not given the settlers reason to assume that the new system would be any less effective at taking “public debate beyond the confines of confrontation and acrimony” that people of other polities might be more likely to regard as “typical of political activity.”¹⁵⁵ Given their 60 year history of successful regulation of an ever expanding and always vibrant community, the Métis had no reason to expect that acute and problematic divisions external to the Settlement would prove unmanageable. They had every reason to expect that they would henceforth be accorded consideration and protection commensurate with being recognized as worthy co-citizens of a larger political entity.¹⁵⁶ Racialization, applied through the instrumentality of the state, prevented a timely attainment of that possible outcome.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ See, Edmund S. Glenn, “Semantic Difficulties in International Communication,” in *The Use and Misuse of Language*, ed. S.I. Hayakawa (Greenwich: Fawcett Publications, 1962), 48-49, 68-69; and Kuhn, 4, on the incommensurability of language.

¹⁵⁴ S.M. McMurrin, cited in Walley, “Model for the Illumination of Participant Values,” 10.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ See, Coutts, 109, 111.

¹⁵⁷ See, Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*; “Manitoba Land Question”; “Métis Land Claims”; and “Government Lawlessness in the Administration of Manitoba Land Claims, 1870-1887,” *Manitoba Law Journal* 10 (1980): 415-441.

Conclusion

The Red River story did not end in 1870. It remains ongoing. Obtaining the Manitoba Act did not mark the termination of community intent. Nor was the dissolution of the Red River Métis community a resolution. Just as the date selected to define the culmination of the foregoing study is not meant to signal the completion of an event, the finished thesis is not intended to suggest the termination of historical interrogation. What is furnished is a preliminary framework, suggestive of contours and of the directions more extensive inquiry might take.¹

A core objective in formulating this project was to demonstrate that a 'closed' historiography can be opened to productive and potentially instructive review.² A positive result was achieved by adopting and adapting Sean T. Cadigan's interconnective political economic approach to historic regional analysis, an interpretive approach devised in the context of Canadian scholarship yet conscious of the transnational nature of history. There is affirmation that, where debate is desirable, static conceptions which serve to monopolize knowledge need not pose barriers to ongoing communication.³ The richness of the North American, and especially the Canadian, intellectual resource base is confirmed. That Canadian history can remain a site of continuing relevance promises 'the possibility of Canada' to diverse Canadians equally.⁴

¹ See, Peter Burke, "History of Events," 240.

² See, Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, xi; Jenkins, 67-68.

³ See, Robert A. Williams, "Laws of Indian Communities," *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, 335; Dickason, *Myth of the Savage*, 125-28, regarding cultural arrogance and the "Doctrine of Discovery"; Herbert Spencer, "First Principles of a New System of Philosophy," in *Modern Classical Philosophers: Selections Illustrating Modern Philosophy from Bruno to Bergson* 2d ed., ed. Benjamin Rand (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1908; reprint 1952), 714-17, 724-25, 727, 731-32, rationalizing outsider naming in support of 'raciology'; Innis, *Bias of Communication*, 133, asserting "the work of Spencer on progress was the basis for the claim to supremacy of Anglo-Saxons"; Sprague, "Cultural Bias of Métis Studies," 67, identifying Spencerian inspired subdivisions as bringing the historiography about the Métis "Willy-nilly ... back to the colonial theme"; and Henry *et al.*, 18, 25, on "new" and "nationalistic" racism and associated attitudes toward cultural difference.

⁴ See, Grant, 68.

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