FURS ALONG THE YUKON:
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY - NATIVE TRADE
IN THE YUKON RIVER BASIN, 1830-1893

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Kenneth Stephen Coates
December 1979
FURS ALONG THE YUKON:
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY - NATIVE TRADE
IN THE YUKON RIVER BASIN, 1830-1893

BY

KENNETH STEPHEN COATES

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

©1980

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this thesis, to
the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this
thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this thesis.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the
thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of individuals have provided valuable assistance at various stages of this project, and I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to acknowledge their aid. The staff of the Hudson's Bay Company Archives cheerfully and ably handled my numerous and often confusing requests, and I would like also to thank the governor and committee for permission to consult the company records. I extend my appreciation as well to Brian Underhill of Vancouver, who kindly drew the maps for the thesis. Professor D. Sprague introduced me to the use of quantification for historical analysis and patiently guided me through the preliminary stages of this project. My advisor, Dr. Jean Friesen, provided a great deal of help, offering encouragement or criticism when required, and I am grateful for everything she has done. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the assistance given me by my wife, Cathy, and I hope she realizes, as I do, that this thesis would not have been possible without her.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii
LIST OF TABLES iv
LIST OF MAPS v

INTRODUCTION 1
NATIVE TRADE 8
EUROPEAN EXPLORATION 25
ESTABLISHMENT OF TRADE 57
ROBERT CAMPBELL AND THE PELLY RIVER TRADE 67
INTRODUCTION TO THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS 90
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY PREDOMINANCE 1847-1863 96
EXPANDING COMPETITION 1864-1874 123
DECLINING TRADE 1875-1893 152
CONCLUSION 176

BIBLIOGRAPHY 184
APPENDIX A 197
**LIST OF TABLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. H.B.C. Fur Returns and Outfit Costs 1847-1863</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. H.B.C. Expenses and Profits 1847-1863</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. H.B.C. Fur Receipts by Species 1847-1863</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. H.B.C. Indent 1847-1863</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Payments to Indians, Gratuities and Indian Debt 1847-1863</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. H.B.C. Fur Returns and Outfit Costs 1864-1874</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. H.B.C. Expenses and Profits 1864-1874</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. H.B.C. Fur Receipts by Species 1864-1874</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. H.B.C. Indent 1864-1874</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Payments to Indians, Gratuities and Indian Debt 1864-1874</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. H.B.C. Fur Returns and Outfit Costs 1875-1892</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. H.B.C. Expenses and Profits 1875-1892</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. H.B.C. Fur Receipts by Species 1875-1892</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. H.B.C. Indent 1875-1892</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Payments to Indians, Gratuities and Indian Debt 1875-1892</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF MAPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tribal Distributions in the Northwest</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kutchin Band Distribution</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hudson's Bay Company Exploration Routes 1831-1872</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hudson's Bay Company Trading Posts in the Yukon River Basin</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

It has been suggested, not without considerable justification, that there may have been an overemphasis on the fur trade in the historiography of the Canadian west and middle north.¹ While this may be true for some sections of western and northern Canada, it cannot be said for the Yukon River basin. The written history of the Yukon Territory, with only scattered exceptions, is the history of the Klondike Gold Rush. Numerous diaries, biographies, articles and historical studies have been written on that brief (1896-1904) period while previous historiography of the fur trade in the region is, in contrast, very limited both in scope and quantity.

Most of the literature of the pre-1900 fur trade can be classified as strictly narrative accounts of the trials and exploits of the various explorers and traders (primarily those employed by the Hudson's Bay Company) active in the area. Of these, the most comprehensive study is Prelude to Bonanza by A.A. Wright.² This work discusses the pre-gold rush activities of the non-native population in what is now the Yukon Territory, including those of American and H.B.C. fur traders, early prospectors, missionaries and scientists.

Besides Prelude to Bonanza and Clifford Wilson's Campbell of the Yukon, several articles have appeared,
primarily in the Beaver, relating to isolated aspects of the fur trade along the Yukon River and its tributaries. Unfortunately, none of these studies deal in any significant way with the Yukon trade after 1870. Following the appearance of (comparatively) large numbers of white men engaged in a variety of activities including surveying, missionary work, mining, exploration, and adventure seeking, the fur trade lost its place as the most important non-native pursuit in the area, although it did remain vital to the local natives. Discussions of the operations of the H.B.C. and other fur traders between 1870 and 1893 (when the H.B.C. withdrew from the region) have been restricted to those occasions when their activities were of consequence to other white travellers.

Within the framework of the Hudson's Bay Company's North American operations, the Yukon fur trade, especially after 1869, bordered on the inconsequential. It is not surprising, therefore, that the major works on the Canadian fur trade deal with the Yukon River basin in only a parenthetical fashion, if at all. For example, Harold A. Innis' monumental The Fur Trade in Canada uses the Yukon trade as an example of the transportation difficulties overcome by the Company in the pursuit of trade, but does not analyze the changing patterns of trade during the firm's forty-six year tenure in the region.4

The most important work on the Canadian North
after 1870, Morris Zaslow's *The Opening of the Canadian North 1870-1914*, refers to the departure of the H.B.C. from the Yukon only in passing. In a short section dealing with the declining northern fur trade, Zaslow suggests that falling fur prices in Europe, over-trapping of fur bearing animals, and a shortage of provisions had led to declining H.B.C. profits and had forced a "retrenchment" of the trade. Given the general character of his study, it is understandable that Professor Zaslow did not discuss how any of these particular factors related to the Yukon trade, or suggest why that particular region was singled out for abandonment.

There also exists an interesting and extensive body of ethnographic literature on the natives and native trade in the Yukon River area. Of these works, Adrian Tanner's thesis "The Structure of Fur Trade Relations" is the most relevant to the present study. As the title suggests, Tanner's thesis deals with the structure of relations between participants in the Yukon fur trade from the pre-contact period to the present day. The thesis contains excellent analysis of the function of native partnerships, trading chiefs, the individual debt system, and market trade. The study, however, is concerned primarily with the manner in which trade was conducted and does not discuss the effect of competition on either the H.B.C. or the natives, beyond mentioning the structural variations (i.e.
the shift of a large number of the Indians to the American trading area) in the trade. Besides Tanner's thesis, there are a number of other works which deal with the structure and function of the fur trade in native societies in the Yukon River watershed, but none link the native trade to the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company or vice-versa.  

Existing literature on the fur trade in the Yukon stops short of providing an understanding of the effect of competitive trade on either the H.B.C. or the natives' relations with the Company. Despite the continued significance of the firm in the fur trade after 1870, the few studies which exist of the post-1870 period have tended to ignore the H.B.C. and concentrate on the activities of others.

The following study is not intended to be a narrative account of the Hudson's Bay Company's tenure in the Yukon River basin. Instead, an attempt will be made to analyze the Company's motives and incentives for undertaking the costly voyages of exploration and for establishing posts in the new regions. The natives' response to the appearance of the European traders, the emergence of competition and its effects on the trade of both the H.B.C. and the local natives and, finally, the reasons for the Company's total withdrawal from the region in 1893 will also be examined.

This approach to the study of the fur trade has
been adopted elsewhere with considerable success. Robin Fisher's *Contact and Conflict* and *Give Us Good Measure* by A.J. Ray and Donald Freeman are but the most recent examples of this type of analysis. Both these works, although dealing with different chronological and geographical reference points than this study, offer valuable insights into the structure of the fur trade and the effects of competition on Indian-white trading patterns. These two studies (as do others) illustrate convincingly that the natives played a major role in determining the structure and content of the fur trade, and were ready to exploit and encourage competitive trade whenever and wherever it occurred. By developing the concepts brought forth by these authors, it is intended to place the Yukon River trade in the wider context of the Canadian fur trade, and show that the activities of the Hudson's Bay Company and the natives in this region fit into a larger pattern of Indian-white relations, a pattern extant in North America from the first days of the Company's trade along the shores of the Hudson's Bay.
NOTES - INTRODUCTION


NATIVE TRADE

Long before European traders entered the Yukon River basin, the natives of the region had developed extensive inter-tribal trading networks. Originally established to facilitate the exchange of indigenous commodities, these pre-contact trading arrangements were, with some modifications, used to pass on European manufactures after Russian and British traders arrived on the periphery of the region. After the Hudson's Bay Company penetrated the area in the 1840's, a task made extremely difficult by the existence of these networks, the Company used many of these inter-tribal connections as a means of further expanding their own trading hinterland. It is important, therefore, to the subsequent analysis of the H.B.C.'s activities in the Yukon to first understand the structure and content of this pre-contact trade.

Almost all of the goods traded before the arrival of European traders on the periphery were region-specific. The Tlingit Indians, for example, who inhabited the area now referred to as the Alaskan panhandle, traded such goods as dried fish, eulachon oil, shell ornaments and cedar bark baskets with the interior tribes. In return, they received, among other items, caribou and moose hides, moccasins, and placer copper.1

The Kutchin Indians traded through intermediaries
with natives from the Bering Strait for such coastal produce as skin clothing, oil and bone. To the north, the Inuit traded primarily sea-based products, including seal oil, walrus tusks and whale bone, although they did exchange furs as well. It is important to note that trade in many native commodities, primarily those without manufactured supplements, continued long after the H.B.C. had entered the region.²

In addition to inter-regional trade, there was limited intra-regional exchange involving native commodities and, of course, the trade of extra-regional goods by natives within a region. The Kunta Kutchin (Yukon Flats), for example, had no caribou herds in their vicinity, so in order to procure a supply of the hides of these animals, they turned to trade with other native groups, presumably offering in return such products as dried salmon which they had in abundance.³

This aboriginal trade was conducted on a fairly regular basis throughout the region. With the arrival of Russian and British traders along the Pacific coast and on the Mackenzie River, however, the inter-tribal trade networks assumed even greater importance.

The elaborate patterns of inter-tribal exchange which developed in the pre-contact period reached virtually every part of the Yukon River watershed, and involved not only the natives inhabiting that area, but also those in
contiguous geographical regions. In fact, the trade was not so much intra-regional as it was inter-regional, with the exchange being conducted between the Indians in the Yukon basin serving primarily to facilitate the transfer of goods originating outside that area. While there was, for instance, considerable pre-contact trade between the Kutchin and the Han, and the Han and the Tutchone, it was mainly restricted to the exchange of goods received from either the Inuit of the Arctic slope or the Tlingit of the Pacific north-west coast.

The latter group, the Tlingits, conducted the most vigorous and extensive inter-tribal trade of any of the native groups in the area. Originally developed in the pre-historic period as a means of exchanging coastal products for those of the interior, the Tlingits' inland connections became increasingly important in the late eighteenth century, when hunting pressure along the coast had led to a serious depletion of the sea-otter herds, the mainstay of the Tlingit trading economy at that time. Anxious to preserve their profitable trade with the Europeans, these natives expanded their inland trading operations, replacing their exhausted coastal reserves with the more bountiful fur resources of the interior.  

With access to the inland tribes largely blocked by the coastal mountain range, the Tlingits were forced to use one of five principle routes providing access to the
TRIBAL DISTRIBUTIONS IN THE NORTH-WEST

Adapted from A. Tanner, "The Structure of Fur Trade Relations," and P. Usher, "Canadian Western Arctic: A Century of Change."
interior. Four of the interior routes followed the major rivers flowing out of the mountains; the Alsek, Chilcat, Taku and Stikine Rivers, while the fifth crossed the Chilkoot Pass, later made famous by the Klondike Gold Rush. The Tlingits' inland trade was remarkably extensive, reaching as far east as the Finlay and Liard Rivers and well up into the Yukon River watershed, with trade being conducted directly with the Tagish, Inland Tlingit, Southern and Northern Tutcheone, Han, Kaska, Tahtla and Sikani Indians. Other natives, including the Kutchin, were drawn into the Tlingit trade through additional inter-tribal trading connections.\(^5\)

The coastal Tlingit, themselves a highly diverse people comprising thirteen "qwans," did not have universal access to the trails. Each of the routes was controlled by an individual clan, a sub-unit of a qwan, who alone determined who was to be allowed to cross the pass. Any attempt to break through these transportation monopolies was bitterly resented and often violently prevented.\(^6\)

At the northern extremity of the region, similar exchange had long been a feature of inter-tribal relations. This trade, which originated largely with the introduction of European manufactures, followed two principle lines. The first, travelling east-west, encompassed exchange between the Point Barrow Inuit and the approximately 250 natives (also Eskimo) inhabiting the Arctic coast between
Shingle Point and Barter Island. Additional trade was conducted along a north-south continuum, and involved the Inuit in trade with the Kutchin Indians. Following either the Coleen and Firth Rivers or the Old Crow and Babbage Rivers, Indians from the interior made regular journeys to trade with the coastal natives.\(^7\)

The intermediaries between these two trading 'blocks' were the Han Indians, centrally located in a lucrative middleman position between the Kutchin Indians and the trading hinterland of the Tlingit (Chilcat qwan).\(^8\) Trading first indigenous goods and later European manufactures with the Tlingits, the Han in turn exchanged these commodities with the Kutchin. C. Osgood raises the possibility that trading goods from the North West Company post built at Fort Norman in approximately 1810 reached the Han Indians via the neighbouring Mountain Indians, but he was not able to provide any evidence for this suggestion.\(^9\)

The Kutchin Indians, and to a lesser degree the Han as well, were not tied to the north-south trade. In addition to their connections with the Han and, indirectly, with the Tlingit, the Kutchin had also developed extensive trading contacts with native groups on the lower Yukon River. Although these networks existed long before the arrival of Europeans, they became increasingly active after the appearance of Russian traders along the coast in the late eighteenth century. By trading with the Tanana Indians, who
inhabited the region just to the west of the Kutchin, the latter natives received a relatively steady supply of Russian trade goods to supplement their receipts from the Tlingit trade. As a result of these developments in the pre-contact trade, however, the Kutchin, especially the eastern bands (Peel River, Mackenzie River, and Upper Porcupine River) were in a highly dependent position, requiring indirect, inter-tribal trade to secure a supply of the highly-valued European goods.

The arrival of European traders (first of the N.W.C. and later the H.B.C.) on the lower Mackenzie River after 1804, reversed the traditionally subordinate trading role of the Kutchin Indians. The formerly dependent eastern bands now established themselves in a highly lucrative middleman position vis-a-vis the natives to the west, including the other Kutchin bands, the Han and Tanana Indians, and the Eskimo. The Hudson's Bay Company's expansion to the Peel River in 1840 further strengthened the east-west trading network, one which, as will be seen later, the natives did their utmost to protect.

Originally established as a means of exchanging indigenous commodities between geographical regions, inter-tribal trade assumed a new importance following the arrival of European traders on the periphery of the Yukon River basin. The maintenance of these trading routes, however, depended not upon the traditional importance or the size of trade
conducted along a particular route, but on the availability and price of European manufactures. The Tlingit Indians, trading in the highly volatile and competitive market along the coast were able to retain, if not expand, their share of the interior trade despite the incursions of rival native traders and the Hudson's Bay Company. This resulted not from trading loyalty between the interior natives and their Tlingit suppliers, but simply because the Tlingits were able to provide a comparable range of trade goods at competitive prices. The Kutchin, conversely, had been largely dependent in the pre-contact period, relying on other bands for their supplies of European goods. With the expansion of trade into their area, however, they were able to reverse roles with their trading partners and establish themselves in a solid, but not permanent, middleman position.

Pre-contact trade was, it is clear, very extensive throughout the Yukon River basin. The success of this exchange depended upon the maintenance of trading relations with various native groups outside the area, Eskimo, Tlingit and Tanana, who provided either European manufactures or natural products, primarily furs. To facilitate inter-tribal trade, a variety of institutional arrangements developed to ensure the profitable continuation of the exchange. These institutions, some of which were adaptations of existing inter-tribal arrangements and others created specifically for European trade, varied greatly according
to the native groups involved.

The most important inter-tribal arrangements, at least in terms of volume of trade, were between the Tlingit Indians and the southern Athapaskans. Four of the five inland trading routes of the Tlingit reached the headwaters of the Yukon River, and the fifth, the Stikine River, enabled the coastal natives to collect the majority of the furs from the West Branch of the Liard River. Of the five routes, the one controlled by the Chilcat qwan, the Chilcat River system, was by far the most extensively used. Each of the passes into the interior was controlled by an individual clan, and the monopoly was jealously guarded. Other native traders, including those from other Tlingit qwans, were allowed access inland, but this privilege was subject to revocation at any time.\(^1\)

At least once a year, large parties would cross over the passes. At designated points in the interior, the Tlingit traders would meet with their Athapaskan counterparts and trading would commence. Each trading party of coastal natives would actually consist of a number of smaller trading groups. These smaller entities, each composed of between five and ten men and including a number of slaves, was led by a yitsati, or house leader. Within each Tlingit clan, the yitsati were the leading male members of the population, and it was through their hands that all trade was conducted. Each of these men had an Athapaskan trading
partner who, in turn, represented a group of inland hunters. At these regular trading meetings, the *Yitsati* and their Athapaskan partners would exchange goods and make arrangements for subsequent meetings.\(^\text{12}\)

The interior natives were in a subordinate position to the well-armed and powerful Tlingit Indians, but it was in the latter's economic interest to ensure that amicable relations were maintained with their trading partners. Marriages were often arranged between Athapaskan partners and Tlingit women as a means of re-enforcing the alliances. At the same time, however, the Tlingits only rarely allowed an Athapaskan to accompany them to the coast and share in the profitable direct trade with the British and Russian traders. While the inland exchange between these two groups was mutually beneficial, it is obvious that the Tlingits held the upper hand.\(^\text{13}\)

In a similar manner, partnerships served as the principle institutional medium of exchange between the Kutchin and the Inuit. Although relations between the coastal natives and their inland counterparts were often antagonistic, they found institutional means of ensuring that this mutual animosity would not prevent the continuation of trade.

Inuit-Kutchin trade was very detached and conducted without ceremony. Apprehensive about the possibility of a sudden attack, the Indians would leave their families some
distance from the coast, with only the men continuing on to trade. As soon as the exchange was concluded, the parties would separate. Very little contact was maintained between these two groups outside of their trading arrangements and no inter-marriage occurred.

The only relationships of any permanence that developed between the two trading parties was the establishment of partnerships between leading men. While these partnerships existed solely for trading purposes, the importance of the exchange to both the Kutchin and the Eskimo ensured that neither party would violate the arrangement. Indeed, this dispassionate institution allowed trade to continue in the midst of serious inter-group hostilities and, as C. Osgood has pointed out, the Kutchin even had a taboo forbidding the killing of an Inuit trading partner during war.

Unlike the formal exchange relationships between the Tlingit and the Athapaskans and the Kutchin and the Inuit, the intra-group trade of the Kutchin Indians required few special institutional arrangements. The sib-organization of these natives, which cut across band lines, ensured close and non-hostile trade. Exchange was conducted through three principle means: the funeral "potlatch," gift exchanges between leading men, and, becoming more predominant as traffic in European goods increased, simple trade, usually with chiefs acting as intermediaries for
their bands. Whereas both the Tlingit and the Inuit found it necessary to supplement their trading arrangements with permanent alliances or truces with their partners, the Kutchin were under no such constraints. Trade between the eight Kutchin bands, due to sib overlapping and frequent inter-marriage, was unattended by hostility.¹⁷

The basis for all inter-tribal trade in the pre-contact period was the native partnership. Disparate native groups, anxious to maintain or extend their trade, used this institution as a means of ensuring non-violent relations between trading parties. As one student of the pre-contact trade in the area has observed:

It [partnership trade] was most highly institutionalized where otherwise hostile relations existed between the groups, and where the trade itself was of particular importance to both groups. It was also most highly sanctioned in those cases where it was the exclusive form of trade.¹⁸

With the expansion of the Hudson's Bay Company into the Yukon River basin, the natives' dependence on their pre-contact trading networks declined. It should be noted, however, that those connections continued to function long after the Company's expansion, bringing in either native products not supplied by the firm or, as will be demonstrated in the case of Robert Campbell's operations at Dease Lake and Fort Selkirk, European manufactures which were offered at a better price than provided by the H.B.C.

The inter-tribal trading networks were to serve another valuable function after the Company's expansion.
Relying on either existing exchange connections or using the institutions created for pre-contact trade, the natives trading with the H.B.C. were able to set themselves up in a profitable middleman position. In this sense, therefore, inter-tribal trade did not end with the Company's arrival. Instead, several links in the trading chain (those of the Peel River and Upper Porcupine Kutchin) were "leap-frogged," with the natives in the vicinity of the new post at the mouth of the Porcupine River taking over the role of intermediaries and continuing the inter-tribal trade with distant tribes. That the natives realized the importance and value of maintaining control of inter-tribal exchange is very clear and will be demonstrated with reference to the Tlingit Indians and the eastern Kutchin bands, both of whom attempted to prevent the expansion of the Hudson's Bay Company's trade.

The institutions of inter-tribal trade did not disappear with the beginning of European trade along the Yukon River. Besides the continuation of exchange between native groups, several other structural arrangements were adapted to the trade with the Hudson's Bay Company. The practice of native bands selecting one of their number to represent the group in their dealings with other natives was carried over, with modifications, into the H.B.C. trade. Instead of each man bartering with the Company's traders, the terms of exchange would be set by the "trading chief"
and his H.B.C. counterpart, and would cover all subsequent exchange between the two parties. 19

The extensive pre-contact trade of the Yukon River basin prepared the natives well for the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company's traders. The exchange familiarized the Indians with the content of European trade and, aware of their own role in producing the traders' profits, the natives were able to use their knowledge to control some aspects of the fur trade for their own benefit.
NOTES - NATIVE TRADE


3. Ibid., p. 19.


5. Ibid.; Tanner, "The Structure of Fur Trade Relations," p. 27.


9. Ibid., p. 156.

10. Tanner, p. 18.

11. Ostenstat, p. 24; Tanner, p. 27.


15. Osgood, Contributions, p. 132; Tanner, p. 33.
"Sib" refers to a clan structure which united members of several bands. The Kutchin sibs were matrilineal and were responsible for preventing inter-band conflict, as the sib demanded stronger allegiance than did the band. Osgood, Contributions, pp. 128-129.

17 Tanner, pp. 23-4.

18 Ibid., p. 36.

19 Ibid., pp. 37-44.
EUROPEAN EXPLORATION

In 1821, the year the Hudson's Bay Company had merged with the North-West Company and had been granted a trade monopoly over most of British North America, the Yukon River basin was virtually unknown to Europeans. Captain James Cook, several Russian explorers and the traders of the Russian American Fur Company had delineated the southern and western coastlines of what is now Alaska, but the Arctic coast and the vast interior had yet to be explored. In less than thirty years, the Liard, Pelly, Yukon and Porcupine Rivers had been charted, two separate expeditions had travelled along the Arctic coast west of the Mackenzie River, and the fur trade was being vigorously prosecuted throughout the region. The Hudson's Bay Company had been the major participant in the opening of the area and had undertaken the original exploration and exploitation of the Yukon River valley.

The exploration of the Yukon River basin and the subsequent establishment of trading posts in the region occurred, not only as part of the gradual expansion of the fur trade frontier in search of new and profitable fur preserves, but also in response to certain specific incidents. As a commercial venture, the H.B.C. based its decisions primarily on the prospects for financial return, either direct in the form of profitable fur returns or indirect in
the form of such non-monetary benefits as the protection of monopoly. The Company's motivation for expansion towards the north-west was, on a very basic level, therefore, the pursuit of profit. Certain events, however, acted as catalysts in bringing the region to the firm's attention at a particular time. It is the timing, substance and effects of these catalytic events that is the concern of this chapter.

Under the 1670 charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, the firm was given exclusive trading rights in the Hudson's Bay drainage basin. Competitive traders based in Montreal pushed the fur trade beyond the boundaries of the H.B.C. grant and into the rich fur preserves of the Athabasca district, down the Mackenzie River, and over the Rocky Mountains and onto the Pacific slope. Throughout this competitive phase in the western Canadian fur trade, from 1730 to 1821, it was the Montreal traders, principally those associated with the North-West Company, who were responsible for the exploration of new territory and the initial expansion of the fur trade into those new regions. The major explorations of the Canadian west and middle north in this period, such as those conducted by La Verendrye, Pond, Mackenzie, Fraser and Thompson, were undertaken by the Montreal branch of the fur trade.

Although this inland expansion of its competitors awoke the H.B.C. from its "sleep by the frozen sea," the
Company, although forced by its rivals to move into the interior, was content to restrict its trade to those areas previously opened by the Montreal traders. Relying on the competitive advantage afforded the Company by their vastly superior supply route, the firm merely copied the inland movements of its rivals.¹

The North-West Company, extending further and further afield in search of new and profitable areas for trade, began trading along the Mackenzie River in 1803, when a post was built at the mouth of the Liard River. The following year, a second post was opened at the mouth of the Hare Indian River. The North-West Company was unable to successfully follow up these initial establishments, although they did build a trading post at the confluence of the Liard and Fort Nelson Rivers in 1805 or 1806. The exigencies of competitive trade to the south, coupled with the extremely long distances involved in transporting supplies from the Company's main depot on Lake Superior to the Mackenzie River, forced the North-West Company to abandon all its posts in the area in 1815, although the N.W.C. did return to the region briefly in 1820, establishing a post at the present site of Fort Liard.²

The merger of the North-West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 ended the bitter and intense rivalry which had plagued the fur trade of the Canadian west for more than fifty years. More importantly, the merger made
the re-organized H.B.C. the 'master' of the entire west, temporarily unchallenged for control of the fur trade throughout the region north of the American boundary and west of Lake Superior. This regained pre-eminence, a position of strength which greatly exceeded that held by the Company before the intervention of the Montreal traders, was officially recognized by the British government late in 1821. On December 5 of that year, the Company was granted the exclusive right to trade:

in all parts of North America to the northward and the westward of the lands and territories belonging to the United States of America as shall not form part of any of our provinces in North America, or of any lands or territories belonging to the said United States of America, or to any European government, state or power.

These rights, initially conferred for a period of twenty years, were extended for a further twenty years in 1838. With the fur trade rivalry between the two major competitors ended, the H.B.C. was faced with the not insignificant task of re-organizing, consolidating and, where it seemed profitable, expanding the fur trade. The burden of administering the unwieldy organization ultimately fell to George Simpson, a man who was to be the major single force in the North American fur trade until his death in 1860.

After 1821, the Company was faced with a large number of potential trouble spots. American traders were competing with the Company in the area immediately west of
Lake Superior, the Oregon trade was to be hotly contested, the King's Posts north of the St. Lawrence River faced a number of rival traders, and Russian and American traders were competing with the firm for the trade along the Pacific coast. There were also ample opportunities for the expansion of the fur trade at this time. Labrador, the lower Mackenzie River, New Caledonia (northern British Columbia) and the north-west had yet to be explored extensively, if at all, and all provided potential avenues for the enlargement of the Company's operations. Throughout the post-1821 fur trade "empire" of the Hudson's Bay Company, therefore, there were a number of areas where the firm faced conflict with rival traders, and there were other regions, unexplored or undeveloped, into which the Company could expand.

The expansion into the north-west and, eventually, into the Yukon River basin, represents therefore, only one aspect of the Company's new policies. The example is, however, highly illustrative of the activities of the post-1821 Hudson's Bay Company. The firm's fur trade empire spread over much of British North America, and yet the Company was anxious and willing to expand its operations even further. It is important to understand the factors which motivated the H.B.C. to explore the region and, subsequently, attempt to establish trading posts in the new territory.

The exploration of the Arctic coastline west of the
Mackenzie River and east of Point Barrow was completed between 1826 and 1837. Under the auspices of the British Admiralty, John Franklin conducted the first exploration in the summer of 1826. The intention of the excursion was to link up with another party, led by Lt. W. Beechey, which was to approach from the west via the Bering Strait. Ice conditions severely hampered the progress of both parties and the anticipated connection was never made. The major contribution of the Franklin journey to the fur trade, one which would not be recognized for approximately fifteen years, was the inadvertent discovery, on the return voyage of the Peel River, which the party believed to be the west branch of the Mackenzie. More significant, however, was Franklin's failure to close the gap between Return Reef, his farthest western advance, and Beechey's farthest, Point Barrow.  

With the 1826 Franklin expedition, the external contours of the north-west were, with the aforementioned exception, completely known. The interior, however, was another matter. With the exception of the few tentative steps taken by the North-West Company along the Liard River before 1820, several minor excursions organized by the H.B.C. in the same area, and Franklin's short trip up the Peel River, the landmass of the north-west was known only through scattered Indian reports of questionable reliability. Due to the nature of the terrain and difficulties with the
natives, the exploration of the region was destined to be fraught with hardship, expense and frustration.

The exploration of the Liard River drainage was a preliminary step to the discovery of the upper Yukon River and was predicated almost entirely upon the H.B.C.'s desire to prevent inland furs from reaching Russian traders along the north-west coast, particularly along the Alaskan panhandle. In order to understand the H.B.C.'s actions in this region, it is necessary to explain the development of competitive trade in the coastal waters north of 54° 40' N. latitude.

Beginning in 1785, English merchants were involved in trading for sea otter pelts along the north-west coast. In the mid-1790's, Aleut hunting parties, organized and supplied by the Russian American Fur Company, entered the region. These parties, extremely efficient at their appointed task, soon obliterated existing sea otter herds, and in the process antagonized the local Tlingit Indians. The Tlingits relied on the sea otter trade for their supply of European manufactures, and were resentful of any attempts to interfere with their trade. The Russian American Fur Company, however, drawn by the potential wealth of the area, established a post at Sitka Sound in 1799. The trade in this region was highly competitive, with large numbers of British, American and Russian trading ships vying for the available furs.6
In an attempt to meet the threat of competition, an Imperial Ukase (decree) was issued in September 1821, barring all non-Russians from Russian territory and territorial waters north of 50° N. latitude. Within four years, however, the gates to competitive trade were opened once again. Two separate agreements (1824 with the United States and 1825 with Britain) concluded by the Russian government, allowed British and American subjects to trade north of the new boundary of 54°40'. A section of the Anglo-Russian treaty which would later prove crucial granted British traders the right to navigate rivers flowing through Russian land in order to reach British territory in the interior. 7

The competitive trade which resurfaced along the coast after the agreements had been signed was of a markedly different character than that of the first years of European activity in the area. The depletion of sea otter herds and the virtual exhaustion of the land furs along the coast forced the Tlingit Indians to look elsewhere for furs to trade with the Europeans. Not surprisingly, they turned inland. Interior trade, conducted via the few mountain passes affording access inland (Taku, Stikine, Chilcoot, Alsek, etc.), had been carried on since pre-contact times. The Europeans' demand for furs and the Indians' demand for European manufactures, however, put the trade on an entirely new footing, greatly increasing its scale and importance.
The European traders also altered their trading patterns in order to meet the increased competition. Alcohol, guns and ammunition were traded with the natives, in direct contravention of the 1824 and 1825 agreements. Initially, the Hudson's Bay Company adopted a policy of following rival trading vessels around the coast, constantly outbidding them for furs. The Company, relying on its superior financial strength and on the inability of the independent American traders to absorb heavy losses, were thus able to eliminate virtually all the American trading ships.

The Russian American Fur Company, however, was not so easily subdued. With the dual advantage of position and possession, and with the establishment of reasonably amicable relations with the Tlingit Indians after 1821, the Russian firm was in a very strong position, one from which the H.B.C. would be hard pressed to wrest it. The depletion of coastal furs had forced the Tlingit Indians to expand their inland trading operations. Although the Hudson's Bay Company undoubtedly realized that the Tlingits had shifted their orientation from the coast to the interior, the extent of Tlingit (and hence Russian) trading hegemony on British territory inland was not recognized until the Company itself began to expand into the area from the east. Samuel Black, while exploring the headwaters of the Finlay River in 1824, was the first H.B.C. employee to
note the existence of Russian trading goods well within British territory and far from the Russian traders on the coast. 9

As neither the trading ships nor the establishment of Fort Simpson at the mouth of the Nass River had enabled the H.B.C. to make significant inroads into the interior trade of its Russian rivals, the Company adopted an alternate plan. Since the British possessed the right, under the 1825 convention, to navigate through Russian land to reach British territory, Governor Simpson and John McLoughlin, then in charge of the Pacific District, resolved to place a post, Fort Drew, about ten marine leagues or thirty miles upstream from the mouth of the Stikine River. As Simpson stated:

The object of this establishment is to cut off from the Russians the valuable trade they have hitherto enjoyed without interruption, drawn from the British Territory in the interior, and from this establishment it is intended to push outposts gradually in the direction of Mount St. Elias, which we learn is a rich country. 10

Fort Drew, when established, would not only cut off the trade then reaching the Russians via the Stikine, but would also provide a base for further expansion to the north-west.

Simpson, while acknowledging that this action would be "striking at the very root of their trade" had not expected that the Russians would attempt to prevent such an encroachment. When Peter Ogden was sent aboard the Dryad in 1833 to establish the post, the Russians at Redoubt St.
Dionysius at the mouth of the Stikine River, led by Lt. Zarembo, refused to allow the H.B.C. ship to pass. The Russians were supported in their action by the local Tlingit band, who disapproved of any attempt to disrupt their profitable inland trade. The incident, known as the "Dryad Affair" evolved into a significant diplomatic dispute, involving both the British and Russian governments before the issue was eventually resolved. 11

The Hudson's Bay Company, however, was unwilling to wait for the cumbersome diplomatic processes that would undoubtedly be involved before a settlement was reached. Barred from one avenue of interrupting the Russian-Tlingit inland trade, the Company looked for an alternative. Fortunately, the efforts of a relatively unknown Company explorer, John McLeod, had resulted in the discovery of a new access route to the Pacific slope north of 54°40'.

After the merger with the North-West Company, the H.B.C. had quickly moved into the Mackenzie River District. Between 1822 and 1829, however, the Company's explorations in the area were relatively minor affairs. John McLeod, A.R. McLeod and Murdoch McPherson had conducted a series of voyages west of Fort Simpson. The two McLeods, on separate excursions, had explored the Nahanni and South Nahanni Rivers. McPherson became the first European to ascend the Liard River above the mouth of the Fort Nelson River when he explored the Beaver River in 1824. The only
new post constructed along the Liard River watershed was Fort Halkett, established along the East Branch of the Liard River (Fort Nelson River) in 1829.12

Before 1830, therefore, the Company's interest in the upper Liard River was very superficial. More pressing matters, such as the consolidation of trade at existing posts and further expansion along the Mackenzie River had diverted the attention of the Company's officers in the district. A major change occurred in 1830 when an expedition, to be led by John McLeod, was commissioned to explore the headwaters of the Liard River. McLeod's 1831 excursion, which ranks as one of the most important explorations conducted in the north-west, has hitherto been completely unnoticed by historians of the region. Yet this voyage was crucial to the expansion of the fur trade up the Liard River and onto the Yukon River watershed.

When the expedition was commissioned by the Council of the Northern Department, it was intended to "get some information on the sources of the West Branch of the Liard River." McLeod's limited instructions were to ascend the West Branch as far as possible, by boat or on foot as necessary, gathering information concerning the river, the natives of the area, and the potential of the region for the expansion of the fur trade.13 Governor Simpson saw considerably greater potential in the expedition than the mere enhancement of the Company's knowledge. Ordering Chief
Factor Smith, then in charge of the Athabasca and Mackenzie River Districts, to follow up the exploration with the establishment of posts if results proved favourable, Simpson placed particular emphasis on the importance of pushing across the mountains and onto the Pacific slope. Such an extension of the trade would, in Simpson's words:

be the first step towards establishing a communication between the Settlement of Nass, which is now about being formed, and the interior, and would be the commencement of a District which in due time would deprive the Russian Fur Coy., our rivals in trade on the North-West coast, of a worthwhile branch of their business, to which they have no claim as the greater part of their Land Skins are drawn from the British territory in that quarter.14

These expectations, which were not passed on to McLeod before his departure, were not to be fulfilled as the distances involved proved to be much greater than expected, and the ferocity of the West Branch threatened to be a permanent impediment to the expansion of trade in that direction.

The importance of Simpson's comments should not be underestimated. As early as 1830, before McLeod's discoveries, before the "Dryad Affair" and even before the establishment of Russian settlements along the north-west coast, for hitherto they had restricted their operations to the coastal islands, the Company was conscious of the possibility of interrupting the Russian inland trade by expanding west from the Mackenzie River. McLeod's voyage, rather than solving the problem, merely added a new set of incen-
tives and difficulties to the situation.

McLeod and his party, unaware of the importance being placed on their efforts, departed from Fort Simpson on June 28, 1831. The exploration covered more than 500 previously unexplored miles along one of the most dangerous rivers in North America, from the mouth of the West Branch to Lake Simpson, which is located approximately one hundred miles north of the present Yukon/British Columbia boundary.15

The report of the expedition, which was forwarded to Governor Simpson, contained glowing representations of the fur trade potential of the region, causing Simpson to claim that the recently reconnoitered territory was "perhaps the richest Beaver country in America."16 McLeod was quick to caution that great distances would be involved in establishing posts at the source of the West Branch, and that the navigation of the river was fraught with danger. He did recommend that a post be opened at the mouth of the Smith River (about one-third of the distance up the West Branch), as the natives in that area were particularly anxious to have a H.B.C. post in their vicinity.17

The 1831 voyage had shown that far greater distances than expected would be involved in any attempt to intercept the interior trade of the north-west coast via the Liard River system. The expedition had not, however, closed the door to further exploration. The Dease River branch, which McLeod would likely have followed if he had known of
Governor Simpson's desire to open a route to the Pacific coast, a major tributary of the Liard, promised to provide access to the west and possibly to the Pacific slope. Also, when McLeod had ascended the Simpson River to reach Simpson Lake, he had actually turned away from the main river, thus leaving a potential avenue for further exploration to the north.

McLeod's discoveries had not satisfied the Company's expectations, but had, conversely, heightened the dissatisfaction with the situation to the west of the Mackenzie River. Particularly upsetting, especially to Simpson, was the discovery that Russian trade goods were reaching as far inland as the West Branch. According to McLeod's report, Simpson wrote to the Governor and Committee in London that the Russians "possess a valuable branch of trade within the British territories in that quarter, from which it is both our duty and our interest to drive them with the least possible delay."^18

Following the expedition, Simpson concurred with McLeod's opinion that no post should be established at the source of the Liard River but, as the explorer suggested, agreed to move Fort Halkett to the mouth of the Smith River. Simpson also decided that further examination of the headwaters of the Liard River was necessary, this time with a view to locating a route to the Pacific slope.^19 Although the discoveries along the West Branch, particularly McLeod's
observation of Russian trading goods, undoubtedly contributed to the Company's decision to establish Fort Drew on the Stikine River, it is important to note that Simpson had decided to commence further examination of the Liard system simultaneously with the attempt to establish an island trade via the Stikine.

While the latter was being attempted by Peter Skeene Ogden, John McLeod was selected to lead a second exploration of the West Branch in 1834. On this occasion his goals were more clearly defined. The party was to ascend the Dease River to its source and then, through whatever means necessary, locate a route to the Pacific drainage. If the results of the exploration proved favourable, Simpson declared, the Company would immediately expand into the area and "push our way down to the Western boundary of the British territory." At the same time, however, he exhibited little enthusiasm for the venture, and expressed concern with the "heavy expense and inconvenience" which attended such excursions.20

McLeod and his crew successfully completed all the objectives of the 1834 voyage. Reaching Dease Lake, the source of the Dease River, McLeod crossed over the height of land, falling onto the Tuya River, a tributary of the Stikine (called the Pelly by McLeod). Learning that this location was a major meeting place for interior and coastal Indians, McLeod ended the expedition and returned to Fort
Governor Simpson, upset with the unanticipated reversals at the mouth of the Stikine, greeted the news of McLeod's success with unguarded enthusiasm. Plans were quickly formulated for the establishment of trade in the area. While the ultimate intention of the Company was, according to Simpson, to place a post about 100 or 150 miles downstream from McLeod's farthest penetration, the first action to be taken was the removal of Fort Halkett to Dease Lake. The Governor and Committee approved Simpson's plan, stating that although the costs of transportation would be very high, the Company would only have to maintain a small post "to deal with the poor timid Indians of the Interior" who would undoubtedly trade "at a moderate tariff, whereas the Stikine Indians, who are accustomed to opposition prices, would give their furs to the highest bidder."  

John Hutchinson, stationed at Fort Halkett, was given the task of removing the post to Dease Lake. While warning Murdoch McPherson, officer in charge of the Mackenzie River District, of the seriousness of the undertaking, Governor Simpson cautioned that all "necessary precautionary measures be taken to ensure success [as the] character of the Company is more or less at stake." Much to Simpson's chagrin, the anticipated results were not forthcoming.
In the summer of 1836, Hutchinson and his crew departed from Fort Halkett. Four days after leaving the post, the group's scouts reported that a party of Nahanni Indians was shadowing the men. Hutchinson, who had written to McPherson earlier that year that the Nahannis had threatened to eliminate the Company's establishment on the West Branch, called off the excursion and organized a hasty retreat.25 Governor Simpson was incensed with the inability of the Company's servants to accomplish their appointed task. He wrote to McPherson that:

The Governor and Committee consider it a stain upon the character of the concern that the Russians should so long be allowed to drain our Country of its riches which form the most valuable part of their trade and enable them to oppose us so vigorously on the North-West Coast while we remain paralyzed by terror in Mackenzie's through the childish reports of a timid nervous creature who was never calculated for the enterprising life of an Indian trader.26

The failure of the first attempt to establish a post at Dease Lake did not deter the Company. Robert Campbell, who was to become the most well-known of the Company's explorers in the north-west, was appointed to replace Hutchinson.27 Campbell and his men arrived at Dease Lake in the summer of 1837 and set about building a small trading post. While the establishment was under construction, Campbell retraced McLeod's path to the Tuya River, where he found a large party of coastal Indians encamped. The winter's trade, through lack of supplies, the harshness of the winter and, principally the antagonism of the local and coastal
natives was very poor, and the Company's men came perilously close to starvation. Campbell had even returned to Fort Simpson in the autumn for an addition to his outfit, but he received few supplements to his depleted stock.  

Campbell and his party returned to Fort Halkett and there passed the winter of 1838-1839. Although Campbell was prepared to return to the scene of his past misfortunes, the diplomatic activities of the Hudson's Bay Company rendered unnecessary any further effort in this area. An agreement concluded in 1839 between the H.B.C. and the Russian American Fur Company had settled the "Dryad Affair" and had ended the competition along the north-west coast.

The agreement, formally signed on February 6, 1839, resulted from extensive negotiations between Baron Wrangell of the R.A.F.C. and Governor George Simpson. The Hudson's Bay Company, at an annual cost of 2,000 land otter skins, was to lease the coastal strip south of Cape Spencer (the Alaskan Panhandle). Additionally, the treaty provided for the purchase of a further 5,000 land otter skins from the H.B.C. by the Russian firm. The H.B.C. was to supply their Russian counterparts with foodstuffs and British manufactures, thus guaranteeing the latter a source of supplies and ending their dependence on the irregular and unreliable American traders. The contentious "Dryad Affair" was finally laid to rest, with the H.B.C. relinquishing all outstanding claims stemming from the dispute.
The effect of the H.B.C./R.A.F.C. agreement on the H.B.C.'s activities in the north-west was immediate. All further attempts to establish posts along the Stikine River or at Dease Lake were rendered unnecessary, as the Company now collected all the furs brought to the coast via the interior trade networks of the Tlingit Indians. Under these circumstances, any additional expansion towards the coast from the Liard River would have led inevitably to competition between two branches of the Company's trade.30

Campbell and his exploration crew were, therefore, now supernumeraries, and faced absorption into the regular Company trading network. However, the H.B.C. was already engaged in a second major exploratory push into the north-west, a surge which would bring the firm to the banks of the Yukon River. Campbell was directed into this second phase of exploration, and he accepted his new position with alacrity (he later demonstrated a seeming aversion to the life of a fur trader, and was much more content as an explorer).

This second attempt at unmasking the uncharted wilderness of the north-west had originated three years earlier (1837) along the Arctic coast of what is now Alaska. John Franklin, on his Arctic exploration of 1826, had been the first European to explore the coastline between Point Barrow and the Mackenzie River. His incomplete voyage left an annoying gap of approximately one hundred miles between
Point Barrow and Return Reef. In 1836, the Hudson's Bay Company organized a scientific expedition, led by Peter Warren Dease and Thomas Simpson, to undertake a major examination of the Arctic coast of North America. Although their travels would eventually take them as far east as the Boothia Peninsula, their most important, and probably their only contribution to the fur trade was made on the journey to the west of the Mackenzie River.31

Simpson and Dease descended the Mackenzie River in the spring of 1837, reaching the Arctic Ocean on July 9. By July 28, their boats had become trapped in ice and Thomas Simpson was forced to complete the journey on foot, finally reaching Point Barrow on August 4. During the return voyage, the party recrossed the mouth of the recently discovered Colville River. The force and amount of water expelled from the river was so great that the explorers were forced to go well out to sea in order to avoid the current. Commenting on the stream, which was two miles wide at the mouth, Thomas Simpson wrote:

The Colville separates the Franklin and Pelly Mountains, the last seen by us; and probably flows in a long course through a rich fur country, and unknown tribes, in the west side of the Rocky Mountains.32

No member of the exploration party had ascended the Colville and Simpson's comments were mere speculations.

The Governor and Committee in London, who had perceived the Simpson and Dease expedition as merely for "the
acquisition of scientific knowledge and information, and unconnected with a view towards advantage from trade" were understandably elated when what may have seemed to be a frivolous expense held out the prospect of financial return. Having only Simpson's off-hand remarks about the potential of the Colville drainage to rely on, the Governor and Committee nonetheless ordered the Governor and Council of the Northern Department to conduct an exploration of the interior between the Mackenzie and Colville Rivers and, if the prospects for trade appeared favourable, to establish trading posts in the new territory.33

The initial exploration of the region, which began while Campbell was still attempting to push the trade westward from the Liard River, was to occur along "any of the Rivers that fall from the westward into the Mackenzie near Fort Good Hope."34 John Bell, then stationed at Fort Good Hope, was placed in command of the necessary exploration. While encouraging Murdoch McPherson to provide Bell with as much assistance as the supplies of the district would allow, Governor Simpson warned him that Bell's explorations were not to be allowed to interfere with the extension of the Liard trade, also being conducted under the auspices of the Mackenzie River District.35

Bell explored approximately one hundred and ninety miles of the Peel River in 1839, and made preparations for the establishment of a trading post there the following
year. Before any successful examination of the region west of the Mackenzie River could be made, Bell was faced with the difficult task of locating a feasible route across the Richardson Mountains. After several attempts, Bell finally succeeded in crossing the mountains in 1842. At that time, he descended the Rat (later the Bell) River, possibly as far as the Porcupine River before he was forced to return due to the refusal of his guide to continue.

The explorations from the Peel River Post had suffered constantly from the unwillingness of the local natives (Peel River Kutchin) to assist the Company's explorers in their endeavours. The arrival of the H.B.C. traders in 1840 had placed the Peel River Kutchin in a very lucrative middleman position vis-a-vis the natives of the Yukon River valley, and they were obviously aware that the Company's intended westward expansion would rob them of this position. On several occasions, Bell had hired a local native to lead him across the mountains, only to find himself abandoned soon after leaving the post.

The Company placed a great deal of importance upon these explorations and was disappointed with Bell's tardiness in achieving the desired objectives. After his first journey across the mountains, Bell, under orders from Chief Factor Lewes, his superior officer, assigned the task of exploration to a subordinate, James Pruden. Pruden too
found himself deserted by his native guides before he had crossed the mountains. 39 Governor Simpson, upon hearing that Bell had entrusted the important task to a junior employee, ordered Bell to conduct all further explorations himself, and suggested that he consider proceeding without the aid of Indian guides. 40

Heeding Simpson's advice by selecting assistants from among those post Indians who knew nothing of the area to the west and who, therefore, had no self-interest conflicting with the purposes of exploration, Bell successfully reached the "Youcon" or "White Water River," believed by all concerned to be the Colville River, in the summer of 1845. Although counselling caution due to the tremendous difficulties involved in crossing the mountains, Bell's report nonetheless contained highly laudatory accounts of the prospects for trade along the recently reconnoitered river. If further incentive was necessary to induce the Company to expand into the area, and it is doubtful that it was, it was provided by Bell's observation that the natives along the "Youcon" and Porcupine Rivers possessed a number of Russian trading goods. 41

At the same time that Bell was exploring west of the Peel River, Robert Campbell, recently released from the attempt to establish a post at Dease Lake, was attempting to locate a route from the West Branch of the Liard River to the headwaters of the Colville. While at Dease
Lake, Campbell had learned from the natives of a large river to the north of his position. Campbell's role in the search for the Colville was to explore in the direction of this river, which he noted the Indians called "'Toucho' or 'Great Water' which is reported to be at not great distance from the headwaters of the West Branch and from Simpson's Lake discovered by John McLeod."\(^2\)

In 1840, Campbell and his crew retraced McLeod's 1831 route up the West Branch. Where McLeod had turned westward up the Simpson River, Campbell continued north, soon reaching the mouth of the Frances River which he named after Governor Simpson's wife. Following that tributary, Campbell reached Frances Lake on July 19. Leaving the majority of the party at the lake to build a small cabin, Campbell proceeded on foot. After crossing the Finlayson Lakes, he reached the banks of a large river, presumed to be the Colville, which he named the Pelly.\(^3\)

As for the resources of the new territory, Campbell reported that "few places present a more favourable appearance for establishing a post than Frances Lake; situated as it is, in an open, though cold, and mountainous country, with its extent; numerous inlets and good Fisheries. The vestiges [sic] of large and Fur bearing animals are invariably met with and Beaver still tolerable abundant."\(^4\)

This analysis was to haunt the explorer in later years when the resources of the area, which he had deemed so
favourable, proved insufficient to maintain even a minor establishment.

Three years later, one final attempt was made to locate a route from the Mackenzie River to the Colville River. In the summer of 1843, Andrew McBeath was sent from Fort Norman to explore the headwaters of the Gravel (later Keele) River and attempt to locate a pass through the Rocky Mountains. After crossing the mountains, McBeath was to find a stream flowing to the west and then follow it to its junction with the Colville.

McBeath's venture suffered from the same malady which had plagued the early explorations of John Bell. After ascending the Gravel River for several days, the party was abandoned by their Indian guides. The group attempted to continue their explorations alone, but were forced to admit defeat after several days of fruitless effort.45

This expedition also demonstrated the limits Governor Simpson had placed on the expenditure of supplies and manpower on the search for the Colville River. Upon hearing that Lewes had sent McBeath without receiving prior authorization, Simpson suggested that possibly the complement of men in Mackenzie River District was too large if the officer in charge could afford to send men off on such frivolous adventures. The Governor also directed Lewes to secure the permission of the Governor and Council of the
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY EXPLORATION ROUTES 1831-1872

A M C L E O D 1 8 3 1
B C A M P B E L L 1 8 4 0
C B E L L 1 8 4 2
D C A M P B E L L 1 8 4 3
E B E L L 1 8 4 5
F C A M P B E L L 1 8 5 1
G M C D O U G A L L 1 8 7 2
Northern Department before dispatching any additional exploration parties.46

McBeath's unsuccessful excursion marked the end of the Company's exploratory ventures, with only minor exceptions, in the north-west. Believing that valuable new fur preserves had been discovered, the Hudson's Bay Company now began the long, expensive, and in some cases futile, process of establishing trading posts in the new territory.
NOTES - EUROPEAN EXPLORATION


13. Smith to Council, November 28, 1830, HBCA, B. 200/5/6 fol. 21; Smith to McLeod, June 24, 1831, HBCA, B. 200/5/7 fol. 1.

14. Simpson to Smith, December 5, 1830, HBCA, D. 4/18 fol. 10; Simpson to Smith, June 24, 1831, HBCA, D. 4/18 fol. 91. In a letter to the Governor and Committee (July 18, 1831, HBCA, A. 12/1 fol. 389), Governor Simpson indicated that if the results of McLeod's explorations were favourable, the Company would attempt to establish trade in the area "from the Northwest Coast through Russian territory." This suggestion reflects the belief, then current in the Company, that the distance from the Liard River to the coast was actually quite short. The comments are also a recognition that navigation along the West Branch was known, by Indian report, to be very difficult and that an alternative route to the area may be required.

15. John McLeod's Journal of His Voyage up the West Branch, Summer 1831, HBCA, B. 200/a/14 fol. 1. The true extent of the danger was revealed on the return voyage when two of McLeod's men drowned while descending a rapid.

16. Simpson to Governor and Committee, August 10, 1832, HBCA, A. 12/1 fol. 72.

17. Ibid.; see also McLeod's journal, B. 200/a/14.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.; Minutes of the Council of the Northern Department, July 9, 1832, HBCA, B. 239/K/6.

21 Cooke and Holland, p. 161; Simpson to Smith, June 2, 1835, HBCA, D. 4/21 fol. 104.


23 Governor and Committee to McLoughlin, December 8, 1835, HBCA, A. 6/23 fol. 294; Governor and Committee to Simpson, March 9, 1836, HBCA, A. 6/24 fol. 34.

24 McPherson to Hutchinson, March 14, 1836, HBCA, B. 200/b/8 fol. 25; Simpson to McPherson, June 30, 1836, HBCA, D. 4/22 fol. 73.

25 Wilson, Campbell of the Yukon, pp. 14-18; McPherson to Council, November 30, 1836, HBCA, D. 5/4 fol. 211.


27 For biographical information on Campbell and for descriptions of his voyages, see A. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza, pp. 27-91; Wilson, Campbell of the Yukon; Robert Campbell, Two Journals of Robert Campbell, 1808-1853 (Seattle: John W. Todd Jr., 1951).

28 Wilson, pp. 31-41; Wright, pp. 29-30; McPherson to Council, November 27, 1838, HBCA, D. 5/5 fol. 72.


30 Anderson to Campbell, January 8, 1851, HBCA, B. 200/b/29 fol. 24. This situation appeared with the establishment of Fort Selkirk, with Campbell's post facing direct competition from Chilcat leaders who, in turn, traded with the H.B.C. steamer Beaver.


32 T. Simpson, Narrative, p. 171; Dease and Simpson to Governor Simpson, September 5, 1837, HBCA, D. 5/14 fol. 326.

33 Governor and Committee to Governor and Council, June 1, 1838, HBCA, D. 5/15 fol. 47. The expedition, not coincidentally, was conducted at the same time that the H.B.C. was the subject of a British parliamentary inquiry.
Ibid.


Cooke and Holland, p. 167; McPherson to Council, October 30, 1839, HBCA, D. 5/5 fol. 193.

Lewes to Council, November 17, 1842, HBCA, B. 200/b/15 fol. 3. Bell came very close to finding the shortest route across the divide, a path eventually discovered by James McDougall in 1872.


Lewes to Bell, February 16, 1843, HBCA, B. 200/b/15 fol. 121; Bell to Simpson, August 10, 1843, HBCA, D. 5/8 fol. 421.

Simpson to Bell, June 3, 1844, HBCA, D. 4/31 fol. 93.

Bell to Simpson, August 1, 1845, HBCA, D. 5/14 fol. 212-215.

Minutes of the Council of the Northern Department, June 5, 1839, HBCA, B. 239/k/2 fol. 176; McPherson to Campbell, March 29, 1840, HBCA, B. 200/b/13 fol. 15.

For a description of the voyage, see Wilson, pp. 41-6; Wright, pp. 36-7; Campbell to Lewes, September 10, 1840, HBCA, B. 200/b/13 fol. 22.

Campbell to Simpson, September 30, 1840, HBCA, D. 5/5 fol. 326b.

Cooke and Holland, p. 172; Lewes to Council, July 30, 1843, HBCA, B. 200/b/19 fol. 5; McBeath to Lewes, August 1, 1843, HBCA, B. 200/b/19 fol. 61.

Simpson to Lewes, December 14, 1843, HBCA, D. 4/30 fol. 39.
ESTABLISHMENT OF TRADE

With Bell's discovery of the "Youcon" River, the Hudson's Bay Company's formal explorations in the Yukon River watershed were, with one minor exception, completed. Informal excursions continued into the 1890's and greatly expanded the Company's knowledge of the region. For the time being, however, the firm turned its attention to the task of establishing trade in the newly reconnoitered territories.

The construction of a post at Frances Lake, delayed one year due to a shortage of men in the Mackenzie River District, took place under Campbell's direction in 1842. Hardships were to plague this establishment from the time of its inception. Insufficient provisions, native animosity and the inconsistent receipt of supplies due to the unpredictable nature of navigation on the West Branch, prevented the conduct of a profitable trade, and forced Campbell to cancel plans for further expansion of the trade on several occasions. In 1843, Campbell had descended the Pelly to its junction with the Lewes (Yukon) River, and had received authorization shortly thereafter to open a post at that site. This was not accomplished until 1848, when Fort Selkirk was built.

As discussed earlier, Bell had succeeded in reaching the "Youcon" River in 1845. Plans were quickly formulated
for the establishment of a trading post on the banks of that river. In the summer of 1847, Alexander H. Murray led a group of Company employees to the junction of the Yukon and Porcupine Rivers and, at a point two miles upstream from the confluence, erected Fort Youcon, the most important H.B.C. post west of the mountains. The construction of these two posts, Forts Yukon and Selkirk, marked the furthest expansion of the Hudson's Bay Company's activities in the Yukon River basin in the nineteenth century.

The exploration of, and the subsequent expansion of trade into the Yukon River watershed, was based on the sanguine expectations of the Hudson's Bay Company concerning the potential profitability of the region. From 1837, when Thomas Simpson and Peter Warren Dease first provided "concrete" information on the area west of the Richardson Mountains, until 1847-1848 when, with the erection of Fort Selkirk and Fort Youcon, the trade began in earnest, the Company was operating on the assumption that the new territory was, with regards to fur trade potential, a 'new Athabasca.' Although the trade in subsequent years was to prove that optimism misplaced, the Company had in 1847, according to Governor Simpson:

> every reason to believe that the increase in trade in this valuable and extensive district will keep pace with & make amends for the falling off in our home districts, which, from having been long and closely hunted, are becoming exhausted.

At the time of the construction of the two Yukon
River posts, large segments of the north-west, including the south-western Yukon and western Alaska, had yet to be explored. Two factors, one which prevented expansion to the south of Fort Selkirk and one which restricted the Company's actions on the lower Yukon River, accounted for the H.B.C. failure to explore and expand the trade into those regions.

While at Fort Selkirk, Robert Campbell, reluctant to settle down to the business of trading furs, repeatedly suggested that the Company should locate a route to the Pacific Ocean in order to bring in the supplies for the Yukon District via Lynn Canal. Although the Governor initially granted Campbell authority to proceed, he withdrew his permission before Campbell had had an opportunity to conduct the exploration. Governor Simpson wrote to Campbell:

That you suggest from Lynn's Canal, even if practicable, I could not recommend to the Council, as if we obtained our supplies from thence, we should be opening a communication to the most valuable part of the Northern Department by which strangers might find their way thither, and with our supplies we should be obliged to introduce the extravagant tariff of the N.W. Coast.

As Morris Zaslow has pointed out, the Company regarded the lack of access to the interior fur regions of Athabasca, Mackenzie River and the Yukon as one of their principal corporate strengths. If Campbell's suggestion had been followed, a permanent route would have been opened into
the H.B.C.'s territory, thus raising the possibility that competitive traders would enter the area. Governor Colville, reiterating the Company's position, stated that it was their intention to move the Yukon trade "in an Easterly direction into McKsR. District" and not southward towards the coast.10 The destruction of Fort Selkirk by the Chilkat (Tlingit) Indians in 1852 and the Company's subsequent decision not to re-establish the post, ended any further suggestions (until after 1870) that further exploration be undertaken in this area.

The second potential area for expansion was the lower Yukon River. When Fort Youcon was established in 1847, it was originally intended that further explorations would be made to ascertain the course of the river, still believed to be the Colville. Upon his arrival at Fort Youcon, Murray learned from the local natives that there were a number of Russian traders active a short distance downstream.11 Fearing that conflict would arise from the sudden appearance of H.B.C. explorers at Russian trading establishments, Murray postponed further explorations until he had received additional instructions from his superior officers. Murdoch McPherson and Governor Simpson both acknowledged Murray's prudence and agreed that further exploration was unnecessary at that time. Concerning the long-vexing question of the relationship between the Colville and the Yukon Rivers, Simpson declared that it was now "simply a matter of curi-
ousity which we need not be at much pains to clear up."12

Far more important than the mere satisfaction of "curiousity" was the prevention of conflict with the Russians. Any contact with the traders downstream would provide the Russian government with evidence of the encroachment of British traders on Russian territory in direct contravention of the 1825 Anglo-Russian treaty, and would also endanger relations between the H.B.C. and the Russian American Fur Company. Under the terms of the two companies' 1839 agreement, the Hudson's Bay Company had promised to refrain from trading on Russian land.

Fort Youcon, readily, but not officially, acknowledged to be within the Russian border, was another matter.13 When it was suggested in 1851 that the H.B.C. should send a surveyor to ascertain the correct location of the post, James Anderson, then in charge of "R" District, argued that the firm "may not be particularly anxious about clearing up the doubt that exists regarding the position of this Fort." As it was widely believed within the Company that the establishment was on Russian soil, the resolution of the question could only work against the H.B.C. It was suggested that the Russians, upon learning of the true location of the post, could insist upon the removal of the Fort, and the ensuing debate could disrupt the amicable relations between the Company and the R.A.F.C.14 Until 1869, when a United States government surveyor established that the post
was well to the west of the British territory, the H.B.C. continued their operations in a state of feigned naïveté concerning their location.

Between 1830 and 1847, the Hudson's Bay Company conducted a vigorous and extensive exploration of the northwest and the Yukon River valley, and followed up their discoveries with the establishment of trading posts. Initially, the firm's actions were based on a desire to intercept the interior trade along the Pacific slope which, before 1839, was falling into the hands of the R.A.F.C. The discovery of the Colville River by Simpson and Dease, and the suggestion that the river might drain a rich fur preserve, motivated the H.B.C. to begin explorations from the Mackenzie River towards the Colville. The 1839 treaty between the H.B.C. and the R.A.F.C. freed the Company from further efforts west of the Liard River and allowed it to concentrate on the exploration towards the Colville.

By 1847, the H.B.C. had, with one minor exception, concluded their formal explorations in the area. Fort Youcon, established that same year and Fort Selkirk, built in 1848, marked the outer limits of the Company's trade. Further exploration or expansion of the trade was curtailed in order to prevent conflict with Russian traders on the lower Yukon River and to preclude the possibility of opening a trail from the Pacific coast into the Company's inland monopoly.
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TRADING POSTS IN THE YUKON RIVER BASIN, 1839-1893

A Frances Lake
B Pelly Banks
C Lapierres House
D Fort Youcon
E Fort Selkirk
F Rampart House No. 1
G Rampart House No. 2
H Rampart House No. 3
It has been argued that expansion was inherent in the very nature of the fur trade. A desire to protect and consolidate monopoly, a need to locate new trading areas to replace territory where the beaver had been overhunted, and the "insatiable demand among the Indians" for European manufactures served, the argument goes, as the basic motivation for the expansion of the trade. While the first two factors have limited applicability to the example of the H.B.C.'s movement into the Yukon River basin, it has been shown that the magnitude of the effort exerted by the Company in the exploration and establishment of trade and the timing of those exertions resulted, not simply from the fur trade's inner momentum, but also as a consequence of external forces which either provoked or stimulated the Hudson's Bay Company to push on to the north-west.

The emphasis must now turn from the Company's motivations for expanding into the Yukon River basin to an analysis of the fur trade in the area between 1844, when the first Company post, Pelly Banks, was built along the Yukon River watershed, until 1893, when the firm withdrew entirely from the area. The first section will deal with Robert Campbell and the Pelly River branch of the trade; the second, and largest, with the Porcupine and Yukon River segment of the Hudson's Bay Company's operations.
NOTES - ESTABLISHMENT OF TRADE

1 Campbell to Simpson, May 26, 1842, Hudson’s Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), D.5/7 fol. 81-83; Lewes to Campbell, June 19, 1842, HBCA, B.200/b/14 fol. 86.


3 Wright, pp. 39-41; Lewes to Campbell, February 14, 1843, HBCA, B.200/b/15 fol. 101; Campbell to Lewes, July 25, 1843, HBCA, B.200/b/19 fol. 11.

4 McPherson to Campbell, March 1848, HBCA, D.5/20 fol. 3; Campbell to Simpson, September 14, 1848, HBCA, D.5/22 fol. 664.


6 Simpson to Governor and Committee, July 1, 1847, HBCA, D.4/69 fol. 56.

7 Campbell to Simpson, September 14, 1848, HBCA, D.5/22 fol. 664; Campbell to Simpson, August 28, 1849, HBCA, D.5/25 fol. 590; Campbell to Simpson, April 6, 1850, HBCA, D.5/28 fol. 47.

8 Simpson to Campbell, June 20, 1850, HBCA, D.4/71 fol. 241; Simpson to Rae or Bell, June 21, 1850, HBCA, D.4/71 fol. 194. In 1847, prior to the establishment of Fort Selkirk, Campbell had been given permission to explore to the coast. He was, however, directed not to engage in any trade or promise the natives that the Company would be returning to trade in the area. Simpson to Campbell, December 15, 1847, HBCA, D.4/36 fol. 201.


10 Colville to Anderson, June 26, 1851, HBCA, B.200/b/29 fol. 254.
After 1863, the Company's traders at Fort Youcon undertook annual boat excursions down the Yukon River, travelling as far as the Tanana River. These voyages were strictly trading ventures and were not meant as trips of discovery. Jones to Hardisty, November 10, 1863, HBCA, B.200/b/34 fol. 157; Hardisty to McDougall, January 29, 1868, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 28.


The protection of monopoly from Russian incursions was a crucial factor in the Hudson's Bay Company's expansions and, at least in Governor Simpson's mind, the new territory was intended to serve as a replacement for depleted stocks elsewhere in the firm's trading empire. It should be noted, however, that the prime fur in the Yukon River basin was the marten, and not the beaver, although the latter were found in significant numbers. Later discussion will deal with the question of the reputed insatiable demand of the natives for European goods and will show that their desire for manufactures had relatively small and finite bounds.
ROBERT CAMPBELL AND THE
PELLY RIVER TRADE

The greatest single enigma in the Yukon fur trade is Robert Campbell. Well-known for the discovery of the Pelly and Lewes (Yukon) Rivers, Campbell nonetheless presided over one of the most expensive and unprofitable branches of the Hudson's Bay Company's trade in all of North America. Previous historians have tended to accept Campbell's own explanations for his failure to establish a renumerative trade in the southern Yukon, namely unco-operative district officers (especially Murdoch McPherson), difficult supply routes, native intransigence, and poor climate and geographical conditions.¹ No serious attempt has yet been made to analyze this segment of the Yukon trade or to comment on the role played by Robert Campbell.

In June of 1842, Campbell and ten men were sent to Frances Lake to establish the Company's first post within the present boundaries of the Yukon Territory. The project, which was begun with very high hopes, owing to Campbell's own highly laudatory accounts of the area, floundered from the beginning. In November of that year, Campbell had to break up the establishment, sending three men to winter at Fort Simpson and a fourth to Fort Halkett. This occasion also marked the first of his incessant complaints and excuses that were to mar his relations with other offi-
cers of the Company for the rest of his days in the Mackenzie River District.

Campbell suggested that the reason for his initial difficulties was the fact that John Lewes, then in charge of the Mackenzie River District, had not "followed up the plan on which we parted viz to send a sufficiency of provisions for rendering our Outfit here." In one respect, Campbell was right. Lewes had actually sent one bag of pemmican more than the two men had agreed was necessary. The break-up of the Frances Lake post stopped the Company's plans for immediate expansion onto the Pelly River, and placed an unexpected burden on the two posts to which Campbell's men were sent. 2

Despite the difficulties of the first winter and the internal strife Campbell's comments caused, it was decided to go ahead with plans for further exploration down the Pelly River the following summer. 3 The exploration was made in June of 1843, with Campbell exploring a total of 230 miles from Pelly Banks to the junction of the Pelly and Lewes (Yukon) Rivers. Campbell once again provided the H.B.C. with elaborate and favourable accounts of the prospects for trade in the new region, despite the fact that he had been forced to turn back after hearing reports of hostile Indians in the area. 4 Upon his return to Frances Lake, he found the trade in a rather ragged state. The fisheries and provision trade continued to provide few results and
inter-tribal conflicts prevented local natives from devoting themselves to the hunting of furs. At this time, Campbell began what was to become an annual ritual. He asked for permission to retire from the service of the Company.\(^5\)

With the discovery of the Lewes River, the Company, especially Governor George Simpson, began to plan for further expansion of the trade in that direction. Simpson ordered Murdoch McPherson to begin preparations immediately for the establishment of a post at the forks. In the summer of 1845, a contingent of seventeen men was delegated to take supplies up to Frances Lake. In the winter, these men were to transport the outfit over to the Pelly River and in the summer of 1846, were to proceed down the confluence of the Pelly and Yukon Rivers and erect a trading post.\(^6\) As with all the Company's ventures in the area, Simpson's orders were not implemented as requested.

On the trip up from Fort Simpson, Campbell's native tripmen deserted him at Portage La Diable. Without sufficient manpower to move his supplies, Campbell was forced to leave one-half of the outfit at Fort Halkett and continue with a reduced complement of goods.\(^7\) Campbell did send one man, William Hardisty, later in charge of Fort Youcon and the Mackenzie River District, over to the Pelly River to pass the winter and open a trade with the Indians in that quarter.\(^8\)

Hardships once again struck the Frances Lake post
and Campbell was forced for a second time to send some of his men to Fort Simpson and Liard River in order to reduce the drain on the fort's provisions. He did not seem to be aware that his actions meant privations for the men at the receiving posts. Hardisty, after a fairly successful period of trading, was also forced to retreat in January due to an inability to secure food. For reasons inexplicable to Campbell, the local Indians avoided the post throughout the winter. After trading $1640 in furs before December, no trading was conducted in the next three months. Equally important, however, the local native hunters had failed to return as promised with provisions for the post.\textsuperscript{9}

No action was taken the following summer toward the Company's primary objective in the region: the opening of trade at the junction of the Pelly and Lewes Rivers. Supplies were once again a problem, although on this occasion, Campbell was able to get the outfit up the West Branch intact. The pemmican, which had been intended for use at Frances Lake, had been used up during the voyage upstream, placing the post once again in a very difficult situation.\textsuperscript{10} As before, Campbell responded to the poor prospects by sending a number of his men to winter at Fort Simpson. Murdoch McPherson, who had recently been criticized by Campbell for not providing him with sufficient supplies, was very upset. Campbell, he wrote to Governor Simpson:
still fearing starvation sent down his men to work at this place, and left himself without the means to send out his Returns next spring, or do anything effectual on the Pelly. ... Nearly 1/4 of the Outfit of the District was sent there this last fall - including Fort Halkett, Frances Lake and Fort Selkirk. ... still the Returns from that Quarter do not exceed 1/12 of our total. 11

McPherson, along with other Company officers, was beginning to doubt the utility of continued exertions along the Liard-Pelly system.

Largely due to the lack of men and to the fact that he did not have a large enough boat, Campbell did not make an effort to expand the trade downstream. Pelly Banks, where Hardisty had spent part of the winter of 1844-1845, was put on a firmer footing and became the principle trading post for the area, Frances Lake being relegated to the position of entrepot. Campbell now began to express the opinion that there was no advantage to the Company to expand to the "Forks" as all the natives living in that area could easily reach Pelly Banks. 12 Acting on Campbell's advice, McPherson cut back the number of men allocated to that branch of the trade and did not send a boat builder to Pelly Banks as had originally been intended. 13 In a rare instance of cordial relations between the two men, Campbell wrote to "thank you for the liberal share of Goods forwarded use, and the excellent manner in which the same has been packed." Never one to refrain from complaining, however, he continued, "I should feel happy had your means admitted
sending up a larger proportion of the Articles indented for and in chief demand here."\textsuperscript{14}

Governor Simpson was not willing to accept Campbell's decision that the trade should not be expanded, and he wrote to the trader in June of 1846, ordering him to continue with the plans to establish a post at the junction of the "Pelly and Lewes." Campbell sent an extensive requisition to McPherson and requested that an additional nine men, including a boat builder, be sent in to aid in the expansion.\textsuperscript{15}

To back up his requests, Campbell proceeded to Fort Simpson in August 1847 in an attempt to secure the extra supplies he had ordered. McPherson, who was rather perturbed by Campbell's unexpected and unauthorized appearance, wrote to Governor Simpson that the man "has a strong reluctance to go down the Pelly, which he has manifested all along, but did not act sufficiently candid in that respect."\textsuperscript{16}

Campbell was, therefore, supplied and provisioned for the third time to establish a post at the forks. On March 1, 1848, McPherson wrote to Simpson that all men and supplies to accomplish the desired object were at Pelly Banks and that nothing except the expedition leader's fears would prevent a successful execution of the plans. McPherson was of the opinion that the basis for the previous failures to expand the trade was Campbell's "groundless dread of the Indians and of starvation, which unfortunately had taken a strong possession of Mr. Campbell's mind and which is more
to be pitied than blamed."  

Finally, after years of costly and difficult labour, Campbell was able to report on September 14, 1848 that he had succeeded in reaching the forks and had constructed Fort Selkirk. Having accomplished the long sought after goal, he quickly turned his attention to the possibility of opening a transportation route to the new post from the Pacific coast, specifically Lynn Canal. Immediately upon arrival at the Forks, he had sent a letter via the Chilcat (Tlingit) Indians to Captain Dodd, in charge of the H.B.C. trading vessel Beaver, which traded along the north-west coast. It was Campbell's intention to proceed with the Chilcats the following summer, but like so many of his other plans, this one never came to fruition. In July 1849, he wrote to Governor Simpson that he had been unable to make this journey as the Indians did not arrive at the proper time for his purposes.  

Transportation difficulties continued to plague the Pelly branch of the trade. That same year (1849), the Company's men at Pelly Banks had not succeeded in transporting the entire outfit across the divide, leaving Fort Selkirk short of supplies. James Stewart, Campbell's able second in command, was sent to the former post to bring down the most essential items, but the rest of the outfit had to wait for winter before it could be brought over from Frances Lake. The following year, an even more disastrous situa-
tion occurred. Supplies intended for Fort Selkirk were actually sent out from Fort Simpson a year ahead of their intended arrival. For example, the outfit for the year 1850-1851 was sent in the summer of 1849 to allow for the difficult and time-consuming passage across the Frances Lake-Pelly River portage. In 1849, however, the supply brigade turned back only five days above Fort Liard, leaving Fort Halkett, Pelly Banks and Fort Selkirk without adequate stocks. The untoward incident, which occurred as a result of the sudden illness of O'Brien, the leader of the expedition, caused desperation along the Liard-Pelly branch of the H.B.C.'s trade.20

Campbell dispatched Stewart to Fort Simpson to pass on word of their plight and to arrange for additional supplies. Stewart soon returned, having gone only as far as Pelly Banks where he was able to bring over sufficient supplies from Frances Lake to the Pelly River to keep Fort Selkirk operating.21 Although Fort Selkirk was now supplied, the trade still floundered.

For the past two seasons, Chilcat traders had entered the Fort Selkirk area and had traded for the majority of the furs. Campbell was forced to watch helplessly as the Tlingits, who were, in turn, trading with the H.B.C. S.S. Beaver in Lynn Canal, repeatedly attracted the majority of the furs of the local natives. In fact, the only thing that ensured that the H.B.C. received any furs at all was
that the Chilcats were forced to pack all their purchases out on their backs, thereby limiting the number of furs they could buy.22

In 1850, plans were laid for Campbell to descend the Lewes from Fort Selkirk to, hopefully, Fort Youcon. In June of the following summer, Campbell completed a seventy-hour voyage, finally proving that the "Youcon" and the "Pelly" were indeed one and the same. It is interesting, however, that Campbell assumed complete credit for the discovery, stating that "I had thus the satisfaction of demonstrating that my conjectures from the first - in which hardly anyone concurred - were correct & that the Pelly & the Youcon were identical."23 With his usual talent for overstatement and self-glorification, Campbell had once again distorted the facts in his own favour.

Almost immediately upon the establishment of Fort Selkirk, Campbell and Alexander Murray at Fort Youcon had conducted a regular correspondence via the natives along the Yukon River.24 In fact, Campbell himself admitted in a letter to Governor Simpson that "Communications with Mr. Murray...shows the practicability of those routes (via Pelly, Porcupine and Bell Rivers)."25 At the same time, Simpson wrote to Campbell that:

The long agitated question as to the identity of the Pelly & Youcon Rivers seems now pretty well set to rest...It is now pretty well ascertained that your establishment is situated on the Upper part of the river...some few days march above Mr Murray's post,
called the "Youcon," between which and your establishment there is believed to be good water communication." 26

Far from Campbell being the only one, or even the first, for Murray at Fort Youcon had heard of Campbell's arrival from the natives before contact was established between the two traders, to believe that the two rivers were the same, he was only echoing the view widely held within the Company. His voyage of discovery, therefore, was primarily a voyage of confirmation and does not stand, as he claimed, as a vindication of his own beliefs.

By opening the route to Fort Youcon, however, Campbell was finally able to close down the Liard River transportation route. Henceforth, though only for one year, the supplies were to be brought in via Fort Youcon. Even with the new supply route, Campbell was not able to effect any change in the local trade. The Chilcat Indians returned en masse in 1851, denuding the area of all tradeable furs. James Anderson, then in charge of the Mackenzie River District, wrote to Simpson in July 1852 that the entire Pelly River-Fort Selkirk operation should be shut down. Since 1847, Anderson noted, more than £2100 in goods and wages had been spent on Campbell's efforts and, up to that date, only £546 in furs had been realized. 27

The entire issue came to a climax that same year when, on August 21, Fort Selkirk was ransacked by the Chilcat Indians, forcing Campbell and his men to flee the area. 28
Campbell's response was to go to Fort Simpson and arrange for supplies and men to return to the area and get revenge for the attack. Anderson wisely saw that there was little to be gained from such an effort, and refused Campbell's remonstrations. Not content with Anderson's response, Campbell embarked on his famous 3,000 mile march on snowshoes from Fort Simpson to Crow Wing, Minnesota. Upon arrival there, he took the fastest possible conveyances (stages, trains and steam boats) in order to reach his final destination, Montreal, where he laid his case directly before Governor Simpson. Like Anderson, Simpson refused to expend any additional resources on what had already proven to be a disastrously expensive venture. At the next meeting of the Council of the Northern Department, the issue was finally laid to rest, with the Council deciding that no attempt would be made to re-open trade in the vicinity of Fort Selkirk.29

With the Council's decision, the Pelly branch of the Youcon trade was finally closed. It would, however, be inappropriate to end without offering a few additional comments on the role Robert Campbell played in the failure of this branch of the Company's trade. Until now, Campbell has been assessed primarily on the basis of his own writings. With one exception,30 accounts of Campbell's accomplishments and difficulties have been based on his own journal, written from memory some years after the events
had transpired. A search of the H.B.C.'s archives reveals that Campbell's recollections were, on a number of important occasions, rather faulty and that the picture he paints of his own efforts and of the roles played by his superior officers is not always correct.

In his journal, Campbell makes a number of comments on the parsimony of his superiors within the organization, especially Murdoch McPherson, and their lack of support for his efforts along the Pelly River. McPherson, for his part, reacted vigorously to the accusations and the two men conducted a lively correspondence with Governor Simpson about each other's shortcomings.

The explorer's complaints seldom contained specific criticisms of McPherson's actions, but were restricted to such general comments as "nor is any effectual effort made to support me in this desirable object (establishing a post on the Pelly River)." On another occasion he wrote, "From my own post I always saw a larger field before me susceptible (with the means) of being turned to good, and profitable advantage. But like the tempting point within the garden wall, I was forbidden to touch for want of the Key." He continued his disparaging remarks when he commented to Governor Simpson that, "The train he [McPherson] laid with such underhand, assiduity & duplicity has exploded with a shock more fearful no doubt than intended. Us at the Forks having escaped, Thank God, scainthless may
probably be the only drawback on the completion of the scheme."34 Such comments, bordering on slander, continued throughout Campbell's tenure in the Yukon district.

Governor Simpson was understandably upset with the poor relations between McPherson and Campbell and attempted on several occasions to prevent further hostilities. In 1845, for example, he wrote to Campbell that his complaints were far too general, and that if he expected action he would have to be much more specific. At the same time, he also suggested to McPherson that perhaps he should consult with Campbell more often on matters concerning the Pelly River trade.35

Within a very short time, however, Simpson began to favour the Mackenzie River District commander in the continuing written battle. This support was largely due to the fact that Campbell was placing far greater importance on his efforts than they warranted and was requesting special treatment. Simpson had written to Campbell in 1841 that he had a "Carte Blanche to use your own discretion to effect the object [opening a post at the 'Forks'] by any ways or means in your power."36 As he so often did, the explorer interpreted this to mean that he had a free hand in all matters concerning his branch of the trade. Dismayed that he was not receiving what he believed was just treatment, he complained to Simpson that:
The carte blanche you kindly granted me for carrying the Company's business through, though it procured me nothing here [Fort Simpson], would any [where] else be the ne plus ultra. But in plain private truths, I believe, that jealous of your kindness and favours to me, has turned some of my best friends to be my subtle enemies. 37

Campbell was also acting on the belief that the Pelly trade enjoyed the status of a separate district in the Company, a notion Simpson clearly disabused him of, pointing out:

You appear somewhat to have mis-understood the scope of authority I gave you for carrying out your discoveries....I armed you with authority to obtain your wants provided that means were withheld which it was in the power of the Gentleman in charge of the District to afford you. On reference to my letters you will observe that I have never hinted that your charge was to be considered separate & independent: such an idea never was entertained. 38

From the correspondence between Campbell, McPherson and Simpson, it is clear that the former greatly over-estimated the importance of his endeavours to the Company, and also his own status within the organization. Indeed, Campbell was operating under the mis-apprehension that he had been specially selected for higher service within the firm by Governor Simpson, and hence did not hesitate to maintain a continuous and voluminous personal correspondence with the Governor. It is highly important to note that in the latter years of Campbell's activity in the Yukon River basin, Simpson corresponded directly with James Stewart, Campbell's subordinate, on matters connected with the future of the Pelly River-Fort Selkirk trade and that he apparently respected the latter's advice over Campbell's. 39
As far as the Hudson's Bay Company was concerned, the Pelly River trade had been a costly failure. The opinion was expressed on several occasions that this failure was not entirely due, as Campbell claimed, to a poor transportation system and natives, but could largely be explained by his ineptness as a fur trader. James Anderson, in charge of the Mackenzie River District at the time of the attack on Fort Selkirk, wrote to Governor Simpson that:

Campbell is a zealous, enterprising man & a really estimable character I understand - but he is mad when he touches on the prospects of Selkirk. He has no idea of economy, method or arrangement and is of course perpetually in difficulties.40

It was suggested as well that he lacked some of the basic skills of a fur trader. In 1846, after Campbell had lost a number of fur caches to "animals or starving Indians" Governor Simpson felt that he had to explain to him the traditional method of concealing fur bundles from animals or Indians.41 This is after Campbell had been active in the fur trade for more than a decade.

At Fort Selkirk, Campbell had made two crucial blunders. First, he built the original post on a very poor site and had to move it downstream after only two years. His second error ended the Company's activities in the area. Knowing that the Chilcat traders would likely pass through the Fort Selkirk region in the late summer of 1852 and well aware of their annoyance with the Company's post, Campbell nonetheless all but disbanded the post's comple-
ment of men in August of that year, sending them to fish, hunt or trade in the fort's hinterland. When the Chilcats arrived, only Campbell, two men and two engaged Indians remained at the site. Needless to say, they were not in a position to offer serious resistance to the twenty-seven well-armed Chilcat Indians who descended on the post.\textsuperscript{42}

Attempting to assess the character of Robert Campbell is a difficult task, for his failings as a fur trader and his inability to co-operate with his superior officers must be weighed against his undeniable persistence and fortitude. The key to understanding this complex individual lies in the man's self-image. Well aware of his potential place in history, Campbell was not content to restrict his activities to fur trading, trying instead to earn a place for himself alongside the other great fur trade explorers of North America. Although historians have tended to grant him the position he so obviously desired, Campbell's efforts seem pedestrian when compared to the exploits of men such as David Thompson, Simon Fraser and Alexander Mackenzie. Campbell's discoveries owed a great deal to the earlier explorations of John McLeod, a debt he failed to acknowledge, and he lacked the determination to undertake the one grand exploratory venture which would have solidified his claim to being a great explorer.\textsuperscript{43} Instead of seizing the opportunities presented to him, he proceeded in a series of short, tentative steps, each one terminated by
personal choice and not geographical impediment. Although his actions did not conform to his self-image, Campbell nonetheless allowed this image to guide his fur trade career.

Campbell's belief in the significance of his efforts led him to constantly overestimate his skills and importance to the Company. Both his repeated threats to resign his commission and his continual correspondence with Governor Simpson, maintained despite the latter's suggestions that Campbell direct his complaints to the district's officers, illustrate Campbell's belief that his services were very highly valued by the Hudson's Bay Company and that he was deserving of special consideration. This belief in his own importance led to a myopic view of the Company's activities, particularly those of the Mackenzie River District, and his complaints, recommendations and actions were made in seeming ignorance of their larger implication or effects. Campbell readily identified the Pelly River trade with himself and interpreted any criticism of the latter as a personal attack. He contended, despite frequent reversals and heavy H.B.C. losses, that the Pelly trade be expanded and that he be given a larger role in controlling the operation of 'his district.'

This rather critical assessment of the character of Robert Campbell was shared by many of his fellow officers, especially those who served as his immediate superiors.
These officers, most noticeably Murdoch McPherson and James Anderson, were concerned that Campbell was intent on continuing his explorations and that he seemed unaware of the business aspects of the Pelly trade. Campbell's H.B.C. career after the Pelly trade had been suspended, which included a very short stint as Chief Factor at Fort Simpson, a longer period in the Swan River district and a rather controversial termination of employment, suggests that Campbell's image of his importance within the firm was somewhat misguided.44

To argue that Robert Campbell had a misplaced self-image, that he over-estimated his importance, and that these misapprehensions had detrimental effects on his activities in the north-west and on relations between himself and his superior officers is not intended to depreciate his accomplishments. It is, rather, to suggest that his activities in the region, which included uniformly unprofitable fur returns, numerous cancellations of exploratory ventures, and poor relations with both local and coastal natives, be viewed with a less admiring eye than has previously been the case.45
NOTES - ROBERT CAMPBELL

AND THE PELLY TRADE


2Lewes to Council, November 17, 1842, Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), B.200/b/15 fol. 3-7.

3After hearing from Lewes, Campbell placed the blame instead on Peter Pambrum, a clerk at Fort Halkett. Campbell to Lewes, May 25, 1843, HBCA, B.200/b/15 fol. 146.


5Campbell to Simpson, October 3, 1843, HBCA, D.5/9 fol. 13. The principle reason for refusing Campbell's repeated resignations, other than the fact that he had a contract with the H.B.C., was that the firm would have had difficulty replacing him. There was considerable aversion among the Company's employees towards the Liard-Pelly trade as the area was one of the most dangerous in the H.B.C. empire. Although Governor Simpson did encourage Campbell to stay, he was not overzealous in this regard, suggesting that he could either retire from the service entirely or could assume a position elsewhere in the firm. Simpson to Campbell, June 3, 1844, HBCA, D.4/31 fol. 87; Simpson to Campbell, July 1, 1847, HBCA, D.4/68 fol. 603.


7Campbell to McPherson, October 4, 1844, HBCA, D.5/12 fol. 506.

8Campbell to Simpson, October 31, 1844, HBCA, D.5/12 fol. 428.
The failure of the natives to arrive as expected was possibly due to the severity of the winter, which had caused great hardships among both the H.B.C. traders and the Indians. The latter probably departed from the Frances Lake area in search of more favourable hunting and fishing conditions.

9 Campbell to McPherson, April 2, 1845, HBCA, B.200/b/20 fol. 49.
10 Campbell to Simpson, September 12, 1845, HBCA, D.5/15 fol. 69.
12 McPherson to Council, July 30, 1846, HBCA, B.200/b/21 fol. 2.
13 McPherson to Campbell, November 30, 1846, HBCA, B.200/b/21 fol. 7.
14 Campbell to McPherson, November 30, 1846, HBCA, B.200/b/21 fol. 18.
15 Campbell to McPherson, April 24, 1847, HBCA, B.200/b/21 fol. 27.
20 Rae to Campbell, January 9, 1850, HBCA, B.200/b/24 fol. 22.
22 Campbell to Simpson, August 28, 1849, HBCA, D.5/25 fol. 590; Campbell to McPherson, July 24, 1850, HBCA, B.200/b/24 fol. 60. The Tlingits possessed a substantial number of slaves, and it is not clear why they did not bring more slaves with them when they travelled into the interior.
Problems of supplying and controlling a larger party and a desire for speed by the Tlingit traders may have accounted for the fact that only small groups travelled inland.

23 Campbell, Two Journals of Robert Campbell, p. 96-8.


25 Campbell to Simpson, April 6, 1850, HBCA, D.5/28 fol. 47.

26 Simpson to Campbell, June 20, 1850, HBCA, D.4/71 fol. 241.


28 Campbell to Anderson, November 4, 1852, HBCA, B.200/b/29 fol. 170; Wright, pp. 72-3.

29 Wright, pp. 74-7; Simpson to Governor and Committee, June 30, 1854, HBCA, A.12/7 fol. 140-1; Council to Campbell, June 14, 1855, HBCA, B.200/b/32 fol. 106.

30 Wright used the correspondence of James Anderson, district commander at Fort Simpson at the time of the assault on Fort Selkirk. C. Wilson, in Campbell of the Yukon, does draw on a very few of Campbell's letters.

31 It is interesting to note, in light of Campbell's complaints, that the outfit forwarded to him for the establishment of Fort Selkirk in 1846 was valued at £117.8.1. That same year, supplies sent to Peel's River for use in the opening of Fort Youcon totalled £121.13.8, hardly a substantial difference. Campbell believed that he had unlimited right to tap the meager resources of "R" District and appeared totally unconcerned about the potential ramifications of his requests.

32 Quoted in Simpson to Campbell, June 1, 1845, HBCA, D.4/32 fol. 181.

33 Campbell to Simpson, April 6, 1850, HBCA, D.5/28 fol. 47.

35 Simpson to Campbell, June 1, 1845, HBCA, D.4/32 fol 181; Simpson to McPherson, June 3, 1845, HBCA, D.4/32 fol. 219.

36 Simpson to Campbell, June 3, 1846, HBCA, D.4/34 fol. 182.

37 Campbell to Simpson, August 22, 1847, HBCA, D.5/20 fol. 133.

38 Simpson to Campbell, June 12, 1848, HBCA, D.4/37 fol. 183.

39 Stewart to Simpson, October 19, 1851, HBCA, D.5/32 fol. 81; Stewart to Simpson, October 5, 1852, HBCA, D.5/35 fol. 28a.


41 Simpson to Campbell, June 1, 1845, HBCA, D.4/32 fol. 181. The procedure involved burying the skins and then burning a fire over the hole.

42 It would be inappropriate to indict Campbell for the first error, the misplacement of his post, as the relocation of a fort was a regular occurrence. Peel River, Lapierres House and Fort Youcon were all moved after natural forces endangered the establishment. On the second matter, the defense of Fort Selkirk, Campbell was definitely remiss. He expected the Chilcats to arrive and he knew of their hostility to the H.B.C., yet he disbanded his men. While it may be argued that this action was intended to prevent violence between the traders and the Chilcats, it is illustrative to note that Campbell's response to the assault was to request that an armed force be sent to the area to punish the coastal natives. Campbell to Anderson, November 4, 1852, HBCA, B.200/b/29 fol. 170.

43 On three occasions, 1839, 1843 and 1849, Campbell was in a position to conduct the type of exploration which would have earned him the status he so obviously desired. For personal reasons, including fear of unfamiliar natives, he terminated his voyages.

44 Wilson, Campbell of the Yukon, pp. 164-170. Wilson notes that there is some confusion as to whether Campbell was dismissed or whether he resigned. Regardless, it is clear that the Company was not very satisfied with Campbell's efforts.
Wright, the only one of the three principal historians of Campbell's career to resort to sources other than Campbell's reminiscences, notes the opinions of Simpson and Anderson regarding Campbell. He does, however, tend to reject most criticisms of the explorer, referring to Simpson's comments as "a hardheaded assessment, and not strictly a fair one." For the most part, he relies on Campbell's journals and accepts his explanations uncritically. Wright, pp. 27-77.

C. Wilson, whose work is strictly a narrative of Campbell's efforts, is even less critical, and he based his study almost exclusively on the explorer's memoirs. Wilson claims to have compared the journals with H.B.C. records and concluded that "there is almost no disagreement between the two." While that may be the case regarding names and dates, there are considerable discrepancies in interpretation. The author paints a very romantic portrait of Campbell, highlighting his courage, physical stature, attachment to fellow workers, affection for natives and his kindness. Wilson, Campbell of the Yukon.

C. Parnell's analysis is even more lauditory than Wright or Wilson, referring to Campbell as "a true hero of whom Canadians will be proud." Parnell's articles grant Campbell the place in history he desired, calling him "one of Canada's greatest explorers." The uncritical assessment of Parnell, like the work of both Wright and Wilson, was based almost entirely on Campbell's memoirs. Parnell, "Campbell of the Yukon, pt. 1-3."
INTRODUCTION TO THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Before discussing the Hudson's Bay Company's fur trade along the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers, it is necessary to offer a few comments on the methodology used for this segment of the study. Unlike the section on Robert Campbell and the Pelly River branch of the trade, which was based entirely on written sources, the analysis of the Fort Youcon-Ramparts House trade is based on a combination of literary and quantitative sources.

During the period 1847-1893, the H.B.C. maintained only one major post to the west of the Richardson Mountains, Fort Youcon from 1847-1869, and Rampart House from 1870 to 1893, and the study will focus on these establishments. Lapierres House, which was moved from its initial location to the confluence of the Bell and Waters Rivers in 1852, was open throughout the period as an entrepôt for the Company's principal establishments. Its proximity to the Peel River post (later called Fort McPherson) meant that it attracted little, if any, trade. The Company discouraged trade at this post, at one point going so far as to forbid it. Since Lapierres House was an integral part of the transportation network of the Yukon trade and was only responsible for a minor segment of the H.B.C.'s trade in the region, it will not be included in this study.

The Pelly River branch of the trade was not sub-
jected to statistical analysis because the records of the three posts (Frances Lake, Pelly Banks and Fort Selkirk) in this area were poorly and inconsistently maintained. With very few records to deal with, it was impossible to include this region in the analysis.

The major source of data was the financial records of the Hudson's Bay Company. Of primary importance among these records were the account books of the posts in the Yukon River basin. Of the forty-six years under investigation, account books are available for thirty-six years. The only major gap was between 1871 and 1877, although a number of values for these and other missing years were located in other sources. Throughout the period in question, the account books did not follow a consistent format, and therefore contained varying amounts of data (See Appendix A for a more detailed discussion of the structure and content of the account books).

Statistics for the Mackenzie River District ("R" District) were located in the various account books kept at Fort Simpson, the district headquarters. These records were also used to fill in the gaps in the data from the Yukon post account books. The financial records of the Northern Department (kept at York Factory and, after 1870, Winnipeg) were an additional source of information.

The compiled data can be basically sub-divided into two main groups: financial records of the H.B.C. and
native supply and demand statistics. In the first group are all the values which represent the Company's expenditures on the Yukon trade and the firm's returns from that trade. In this instance, information was gathered on both the Yukon River posts and the entire Mackenzie River District. The second data set represents the number and type of furs supplied to the H.B.C. by the natives, and their demand for European goods from the firm. The recapitulation of fur returns, which was listed in all account books and which accompanied the fur returns to the district headquarters, was the source of the fur supply data. Indian demands were measured by the trader's indent or annual supply requisition. As there was no records kept of actual goods sold, the indent provides the best reflection of the natives' demands for trade goods as perceived by the resident trader. After 1885, indents were no longer sent to Fort Simpson as supplies were merely sent out by the officer in charge of the district on the basis of the previous year's sales, with an accommodation for the specific requests of the trader. For this reason, invoices (records of supplies received) were used instead of indents as the source for demand statistics for the period following 1885.

Analysis of the financial records was based primarily on a comparison between the Yukon River posts and the entire "R" District trade. Variables such as comparative allotment of outfit and comparative value of returns
allows for an investigation of the relative importance of the Yukon trade to the larger entity. In strictly economic terms, therefore, these and other variables will allow for a reconstruction of the information upon which decisions pertaining to the Yukon trade were based. Other compound variables (such as total expenses and profitability) were derived relating exclusively to the Yukon River basin posts.

Similarly, data on fur supplies will be analyzed in a comparative manner. The basis for these comparisons is the total number of furs traded annually, and each major fur species (marten, beaver, fox and deerskins) will be expressed as a percentage of the total. Analysis of the demand statistics is based, not on comparisons between variables, but simply on fluctuations in the demand for specific items during the period in question. The selection of items for this section was based on two criteria: goods in greatest demand during the Company's first years of operation in the area, and goods which were ordered in consistent units. The first limitation was instituted because an analysis of the goods which fit this criterion will reveal not only changing native demands, but also the H.B.C.'s response to initially high demand. The second restriction is to ensure that the items under investigation were ordered in standard measurements from 1847 to 1893, and will allow for more meaningful comparisons.

The basic hypothesis of this study is that competi-
tion for the Yukon River trade, which increased markedly between 1847 and 1983, not only caused a diminution in the Company's fur returns, but also engendered a major reorganization of the natives' approach to the Hudson's Bay Company's trade. For the purposes of analysis, the forty-six year period under study will be divided into three recognizable stages of competition. Within each period, the structure and content of the H.B.C.'s trade in the Yukon River basin will be assessed according to Company expenditures and returns, and to the response of the natives to the ever-changing trade. The divisions are as follows:

Period of Hudson's Bay Company Predominance (1847-1863),
Period of Expanding Competition (1864-1874), and Period of Declining Trade (1875-1893).
NOTES - INTRODUCTION TO THE

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

1 Anderson to Peers, January 25, 1852, Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), B.200/b/29 fol. 34.

2 McPherson to Hardisty, September 2, 1948, HBCA, B.200/b/23 fol. 11.

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY PREDOMINANCE
1847 - 1863

The Hudson's Bay Company predominance, which spanned fifteen years between 1847 and 1863, was one of expansion and consolidation for the traders at Fort Youcon. The Yukon basin had, in the minds of the Company's officers, the potential to be to the fur trade of the nineteenth century what the Athabasca district had been to the fur trade of the eighteenth century. The returns from Fort Youcon, though profitable, were to prove quickly that these hopes had been misplaced.

For the first three years, the size of the Company's returns were governed entirely by the size of the outfit. Due to a shortage of particular goods in high demand, the officer in charge of Fort Youcon was unable to trade for large numbers of furs brought to the post. The existence of the Russian traders, reported by the natives to be only seven or eight days downstream, made it imperative that the Company satisfy the Indians' demands as quickly as possible.¹

By 1849, the optimistic forecast which had characterized the first years of the trade along the Yukon River were replaced with considerably more pessimistic prognostications. This negative attitude was based on the belief, largely true at this time, that the establishment at Fort Youcon was of no real benefit to the Hudson's Bay Company.
Peel River Post, established in 1840 as a staging post for the exploration of the area to the west of the Richardson Mountains, had proven to be highly profitable before the construction of Fort Youcon. Furs trapped in the vicinity of the post on the Yukon River had previously found their way across the mountains via the Upper Porcupine and Peel River Kutchin, who acted as middlemen for the Indians to the west. Fort Youcon, maintained at considerable expense to the Company, was, at this time, doing little more than saving the Yukon River Indians the trouble of dealing with native middlemen, and was forcing the Company to undertake the difficult and costly task of carrying the furs across the mountains.²

James Anderson, placed in charge of the Mackenzie River District in 1851, was very pessimistic concerning the prospects for the Yukon trade. In 1852, he began cutting expenses west of the mountains by reducing the complement of men at Fort Youcon.³ Anderson also suggested at various times that the trade to the west, including Fort Selkirk, be abandoned, that the size of the establishments be curtailed substantially, or that Fort Youcon and Fort Selkirk be closed and replaced with a post at the mouth of the Deep (later White) River.⁴ The ransacking of Fort Selkirk by the Chilcats in 1852 added ammunition to Anderson's attack, and he was successful in over-ruling Robert Campbell's remonstrations that the demolished fort be re-
By 1854, however, the trade along the Yukon River was firmly established. Communications had been opened with distant tribes to the west, north and south, with the Fort Youcon Indians acting as intermediaries and middlemen between these Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company post. At about the same time, the returns at Peel River Post began a significant, if unspectacular, rise. No further suggestions were made that the Yukon River trade be abandoned and the Company's efforts were directed toward extending their influence over distant tribes, including Inuit, and supplying the establishment with the items in greatest demand. Although there were suggestions made that the firm undertake boat excursions both downstream and upstream after the abandonment of Fort Selkirk, these plans were deferred until the appearance of competitive traders in the post's hinterland made such voyages necessary.

Between 1847 and 1863, the Company's returns at Fort Youcon grew steadily. In the first five years, when the firm was attempting to match their supplies to the natives' demands, the returns fluctuated between £950 and £1800. It was this unspectacular situation which led to James Anderson's understandable pessimism concerning the future prospects of the Yukon trade. After 1852, however, the receipts increased dramatically, rising as high as £5450 by 1862. Without expanding from their single post
at Fort Youcon, the Company had still increased their returns more than five-fold in sixteen years (see Table 1).

Table 1

H.B.C. Fur Returns and Outfit Costs
1847-1863

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>RETURNS (£)</th>
<th>YUKON RETURNS &quot;R&quot; Dist. Returns</th>
<th>OUTFIT (£)</th>
<th>YUKON OUTFIT &quot;R&quot; Dist. Outfit</th>
<th>RETURNS Outfit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>1557</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>1332</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>1374</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>1760</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>1191</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>2172</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>4545</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>2501</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>2023</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>4290</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>3256</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>5448</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>4627</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More important, perhaps, to the future of the Yukon trade was the substantial gain in the importance of Fort Youcon to the Mackenzie River District. Prior to 1857, the returns from Fort Youcon were consistently below 10.5 percent of the total returns for "R" District. The single exception was in 1847, when 15.5 percent of the returns were from the Yukon. By 1863, the percentage had increased to 23 percent. Almost one-quarter of the Company's returns
in the entire Mackenzie River District, by far the largest in size in the H.B.C.'s trading empire, came from the single post situated on the banks of the Yukon River (see Table 1).

In order to meet the growing demand for H.B.C. supplies, the outfit for Fort Youcon was increased constantly throughout this period. In fact, there was a very strong positive trend in the outfit cost, as it grew from a low of £121 in 1847 to a high of £742 in 1863. The outfit was enlarged to satisfy specific Indian demands for goods, such as guns and beads, and in order to allow the trader to extend his trading hinterland. The Yukon trade's proportion of the entire "R" District outfit increased similarly. Only accounting for 4 percent of the district's supplies in 1847, by 1863 Fort Youcon was annually receiving between 10 and 11 percent of the total outfit. It is interesting to note that in 1863, Fort Youcon, while providing 23 percent of the "R" District receipts, was consuming only 11 percent of the district's allotment of trading goods (see Table 1).

The best available measure of the success or failure of the Yukon River trade is the "profitability" of Fort Youcon. This measure, which is computed by subtracting the costs of conducting the trade (see below) from total returns, allows an analysis of the ability of the H.B.C. to achieve a financial return from their efforts in the
area. During this first phase, profitability increased markedly. The lowest recorded value was for 1852, when the Company realized only £602. By 1862, the profit had grown to £4400, making Fort Youcon one of, if not the, most lucrative posts in the Mackenzie River District (see Table 2).

Table 2
H.B.C. Expenses and Profits 1847-1863

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>EXPENSES (£)</th>
<th>EMPLOYEES (#)</th>
<th>SALARIES (£)</th>
<th>PROFIT (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>1185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>3939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>1207*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>1127</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>3103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>2274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>3538</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No listing for gratuities for this year.

An important indicator of the type of fur trade being conducted is the ratio of fur returns to outfit cost. This ratio shows, in effect, whether the natives were de-
manding, in total, expensive trading goods like kettles, blankets and fine clothes, or trading goods for which the Company received a high proportion of furs in relation to the value of the goods traded, such as guns and beads.

There was a negative trend in this variable between 1847 and 1863. Thus, in this period, the natives' demands were becoming more expensive as they purchased goods closer in value to the furs they traded than they had in the first years of the trade. The ratio fluctuated fairly erratically, perhaps due to the periodic entrance of distant tribes with less costly demands into the Yukon trade, ranging from a high of 14.6 in 1855, when returns were valued at 14.6 times the cost of the trading goods, to a low of 4.3 in both 1852 and 1857. During the final seven years, however, the ratio remained fairly constant, varying from 4.3 to 7.0. Even these lower values indicate that the Hudson's Bay Company was trading a high proportion of goods which, when compared to the value of the furs received in return, were quite inexpensive to the Company (see Table 1).

Total expenses, or more precisely, the cost of conducting trade, which was the sum of outfit cost, employee salaries, payments to Indians and gratuities, expanded steadily during the period of H.B.C. predominance. This measure is actually imprecise as it does not include the cost of provisions, the cost of supplies used by the Company's employees, nor the cost of transporting supplies
from Peel's River to Fort Youcon. Beginning at a total of £575 in 1847, of which £349 was employee salaries, the Fort Youcon expenses rose to a high of £1130, of which £374 was salaries, by 1860. They levelled off at this time and remained between £1000 and £1100 for the final three years of the period (see Table 2).

One final point must be made concerning the trade in this period, and it pertains to the supply of provisions. Despite it's seemingly unattractive location, Fort Youcon was probably the most well-provisioned post in the entire "R" District. Privations and hardships, almost annual occurrences in all the other posts in the district, were unheard of at Fort Youcon. The supply of fish, primarily salmon and whitefish, was close at hand and plentiful. Large animals, especially moose and caribou, were readily available in the post's hinterland. In fact, on a number of occasions, the establishment was requested to attempt to provide food supplies for other H.B.C. posts to the east of the mountains. This factor, which had obvious benefits to the Company's traders, making them less dependent on the local Indians, also meant that the Yukon River Indians, if able to maintain their supply of game, were not likely to be a burden on the post.

For the Hudson's Bay Company, the first sixteen years at Fort Youcon had proved quite successful. Although the trade was slow to be established, leading to pessimis-
tic reports and suggestions that the region be abandoned, by the early 1860's the Company had developed a profitable trade. As has been shown earlier, the firm's reluctance to enlarge the number of posts in the area was based on diplomatic considerations. Although the fur trade along the Yukon River had not become the 'new Athabasca' forecast by Governor Simpson in 1847, it had proven itself to be a valuable addition to the Company's operations.

For the Kutchin Indians in the vicinity of Fort Youcon, the H.B.C.'s trade had inauspicious beginnings. Before the establishment of the post, the Company's officers had attempted to send word, via the Rat (Upper Porcupine Kutchin) Indians, that a fort was to be built at the mouth of the Porcupine River in the summer of 1847 and that the traders wanted the local natives to begin hunting for provisions for the post. The Rat Indians, who vigorously opposed the Company's decision to expand westward because the expansion eliminated their lucrative middleman position with the Yukon River Indians, had failed to pass the message along. Consequently, there was considerable confusion and no surplus of provisions among the Yukon River natives when the expedition arrived.9

Through insufficient knowledge and a lack of preparation, the Hudson's Bay Company was not properly equipped for the trade in this area. The Indians, accustomed to the use of European goods before the arrival of the
H.B.C., had very specific demands. The outfits for Fort Youcon in the years 1847-1852, were not only far too small to satisfy the natives' demands, but were also lacking in specific goods in greatest demand.\(^\text{10}\) This is partly explained by the length of time required to make major adjustments in the outfit. Indents had to be sent first to Fort Simpson, where surplus supplies were seldom available, and then to York Factory. At least four years were required before a substantial alteration could be made in the Fort Youcon outfit.\(^\text{11}\)

The shortage of goods affected not only the post's returns, but also the activities of the Indians. There were three normal responses to an insufficiency of supplies. First, the natives could curtail their trapping and inter-tribal trading operations. Secondly, they could leave their furs in storage at the fort and, finally, they could pass their furs on to the Russians downstream. The extent of the availability of the second alternative will be shown later under the discussion of Indian credit balances. The third option was unacceptable to both the natives and the H.B.C. because to the natives it meant taking a substantial reduction in the price for their furs, and to the Company it opened the possibility that most of the Yukon trade, and not just the fur bundles of a few disgruntled Indians would shift to their rivals downstream.

The Company had a long-standing policy that items
in greatest demand, in the case of the Yukon trade, beads and guns, were to be traded for only the finest furs, fox and marten at Fort Youcon. Since the Fort Youcon outfit prior to 1852 and on several occasions after that date was not sufficient to meet demand, the Company's traders were willing to forego this policy until proper supplies were on hand. The natives, however, were unwilling to abandon the arrangement, even though it worked against their interests in the past. Instead of trading their most valuable furs for items other than guns and beads, as the Company had hoped they would, the Indians withheld these furs until the H.B.C. was able to supply them with the goods they felt they deserved. By withholding these valuable furs, the natives were able to force the Hudson's Bay Company to move quickly to adapt their outfit to suit the natives' demands for, unless they did so, there was every likelihood that the Indians would redirect their trade to the Russian posts on the lower Yukon River.

Throughout this period, the Hudson's Bay Company used the trading chief as a means of organizing the fur trade. The trading chief, a non-hereditary position among the Athapaskans, was selected by a group of natives to represent them in their dealings with the white traders. The Company attempted to adapt to this native practise to ensure that the proper furs were trapped by requesting that the trading chief direct his group to trap in a cer-
tain area or for certain species. In the years when the Company had insufficient supplies, they attempted to consolidate the allegiance of these "principal men" by trading guns and beads to them alone. By so doing, it was anticipated that the trading chiefs would ensure that "his" natives would continue their trapping efforts and would continue to trade at Fort Youcon. The decisions of the trading chiefs, however, were not binding on the group he represented, and on several occasions, individual natives went against the dictates of their trading chiefs and took their furs downstream to the Russians.\textsuperscript{13}

The Hudson's Bay Company relied on the trading chiefs to bring "their" Indians to the post to trade on an annual basis. Timing their arrival to coincide with receipt of the Fort Youcon outfit, which was brought down from Lapierres House soon after the ice broke up on the Porcupine River, the majority of the natives congregated at the post in late June and early July.\textsuperscript{14} This schedule not only suited the needs of the H.B.C., but also allowed the Indians dealing at the post to undertake trading expeditions to other, more distant native groups before the onset of winter. At the height of the trading season, when as many as five hundred natives could be found in the immediate environs of Fort Youcon,\textsuperscript{15} most of the Kutchin bands were represented at the post and, on occasion, Han Indians from above the fort and Tanana Indians from the
Lower Yukon River, travelled to the H.B.C. establishment.

The demolition of Fort Selkirk in 1852 by the Chilcat Indians had important effects on the Yukon trade. The weakness of the H.B.C. and the vulnerability of their posts had been demonstrated, and there were fears that a similar event would occur at Fort Youcon. The Company's refusal to retaliate against their attackers further weakened the firm in the eyes of the native population. The natives upstream from the fort, in the direction of Fort Selkirk in particular, became "indolent and forward" and repeatedly warned the Company that an attack on the post was imminent.16 To protect the fort, James Anderson suggested that William Hardisty, then in charge of Fort Youcon, gather the Yukon Indians together and explain to them that it was to their advantage that a post be maintained in their region, and that economic hardships would follow if the establishment was dislodged.17 It is highly illustrative of the relationship between the Company and the local population to note that the H.B.C. made no appeal to loyalty or tradition to protect their fort, but, realizing the priorities of the Yukon River basin natives, merely emphasized the material benefits of the continuation of the firm's trade.

Fort Youcon had major effects on the Indians in the immediate vicinity of the post, on those in its trading hinterland, and on relations between those two groups.
The post Indians, repeatedly characterized by the Company traders as lazy, indolent and turbulent, were not themselves trappers, except on a limited scale, but engaged in a profitable trade by acting as middlemen for distant tribes and by serving as provision hunters for the post. A number of these Indians were drawn, on a strictly temporary basis, into the employ of the Company as labourers or tripmen, although as part of an attempt to reduce expenditures, it was ordered in 1852 that Indians were to be hired only when absolutely necessary. The post or trading Indians often acted under the direction of the Company's officers in their solicitation of trade. In 1853, for example, a party of post Indians went, on the suggestion of the resident commanding officer, to trade with the Inuit along the Arctic coast. The appearance of the H.B.C. trade pulled the local natives away from their former pursuits and had turned them into quasi-employees of the firm. The arrangement was far from an imposition on the Indians, however, and they greatly resented the attempts of other natives to interfere with the trading structure.

The appearance of the post at the mouth of the Porcupine River, however, "drew" distant bands towards the fort. The guaranteed source of European goods was a substantial inducement to the western and northern tribes and, in the opinion of the H.B.C. traders, they gradually shifted their residences in the direction of Fort Youcon.
Attempts to trade directly with the Company, however, evoked the animosity of the post Indians who were jealously protecting their middleman profits, much as the Peel River and Upper Porcupine River Kutchin had attempted to do when the Company first expanded into the area, and often led to thievery, murder and serious inter-tribal feuds.²⁰ The firm's traders quickly realized that their returns depended largely on the activities of those Indians outside their immediate area, and that inter-tribal feuds had an immediate and serious impact on the post's trade. On more than one occasion, the traders at Fort Youcon were required to mediate an altercation between two bands and, in the interests of their trade and safety, restore amicable relations among all concerned.²¹

The supply of furs to the H.B.C. during the initial phase was governed by two factors. The first, and most obvious, was the availability of the fur-bearing animals. Animal cycles, harsh winters, or the flooding of habitats would all affect the quantity of certain species available in the field. The second factor was the ability of the Hudson's Bay Company to purchase the furs or, more correctly, to supply the natives with the goods they requested in return for their furs.

The trade in marten skins, the principle fur type of the Yukon trade, is illustrative of the second factor. In 1847, the first year of the trade, martens made up 70 per-
cent of the total number of furs traded at Fort Youcon. Many of these furs, however, were traded by Indians who did not receive the goods they desired in return. Having come to trade with very specific demands to be met, the natives found the H.B.C. unable to supply the requested merchandise in sufficient quantities. For the next five years, the time the H.B.C. required to adjust its Yukon outfit, the percentage of martens dropped steadily, reaching a low of 35 percent in 1851. The natives either took their marten skins down to the Russians, left them in trust at Fort Youcon, or, as is most likely, refrained from trapping and/or trading martens until the Company could supply them with the goods they demanded. After 1852, the proportion of martens increased once again, reaching a maximum of 74 percent in 1854, and then levelling off at approximately 60 percent for the remainder of the period (see Table 3).

Interestingly, the supply of beaver pelts followed an inverse pattern to that of the martens. While marten were declining (1847-1851), the percentage of beaver skins increased from 14 to 46 percent. The proportion of beavers declined thereafter, and between 1853 and 1863, fluctuated between 18 and 32 percent. There is one possible explanation for the continued supply of beaver. Unlike the marten, the beaver served as a minor source of food for the Yukon River natives. They would, therefore, continue to hunt beaver even when they had curtailed their marten trap-
ping (see Table 3).

Table 3
H.B.C. Fur Receipts by Species
1847-1863

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>% MARTEN</th>
<th>% BEAVER</th>
<th>% DEERSKINS</th>
<th>% FOXES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of fox and deerskins (moose and caribou hides) traded at Fort Youcon varied greatly during the first period, and followed no clear pattern. The fox, a highly valued fur, constituted from 2 to 8 percent of the total while deerskins, traded principally to meet the Company's own needs for leather, ranged from 2 to 17 percent (see Table 3).

The type and quantity of fur traded at Fort Youcon was not determined solely by availability. The fluctuations in marten, beaver, and to a lesser extent deerskins, closely
adhered to the changes in the Fort Youcon outfit. When the natives were able to get what they demanded for their furs and in the case of the middlemen traders, what their trading partners requested, they either reconstructed or extended their trapping and inter-tribal trading operations. It is important to observe, however, that this is not just a general statement, but also refers to specific species of fur-bearing animals. For example, the natives did not refrain from trading and trapping all animals when they were unable to satisfy their demands, but, unable to get guns and beads for their martens, they either curtailed their marten trading and trapping activities and concentrated on other, possibly more accessible furs such as beaver, or they took their martens elsewhere to trade.

Total Indian demand for European trading goods at Fort Youcon increased greatly between 1847 and 1863. This is attributable not to an increase in the consumption of these goods by individual natives, but to the expansion of the Fort Youcon trade to incorporate distant tribes and bands. Guns, shot, powder, blankets and beads were the items in greatest demand. The indent for guns increased from 30 to 70 in this phase, with similar rises in the requisition for shot and powder. The demand for blankets, as measured by the indent, rose more than three times between 1847 and 1863, from a low of 32 to a high of 107. This rise, although dramatic, is not overly significant for
an analysis of native consumption. The number of blankets requested, when the total population in the trading hinterland of Fort Youcon is taken into account, is not very impressive. It was estimated that the male population in the immediate vicinity of the post in 1847 was between 250 and 300.²² By 1863, the Yukon trade had been expanded to include tribes far to the north, west and south. With this in mind, it is clear that blankets had yet to be incorporated in a major way into the material culture of the Yukon River Indians and that the natives still relied on their traditional clothing sources (see Table 4).

Table 4
H.B.C. Indent - 1847-1863

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOBACCO (Bales &amp; Rolls)</th>
<th>GUNS (#)</th>
<th>BLANKETS (#)</th>
<th>BEADS (Cases)</th>
<th>KETTLES (cases)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The item in greatest demand in the Yukon trade was the bead. Beads acted as a form of currency among the
Athapaskan Indians in this area, and the accumulation of large quantities of beads increased not only a man's wealth, but his social standing as well. W.W. Kirkby, an Anglican missionary who visited the post in 1861 and 1862, commented, "Beads constituted the Indian's wealth. They are strung up in lengths of yards and fathoms and form a regular currency among them. A fathom being the Standard and equivalent to the 'Made Beaver' of the Company."23

Only three cases of beads were indentied for in 1851, but this amount was increased to ten by 1856. For the remaining seven years of this period, the indent was for either eight or nine cases. The natives were highly selective about the type of bead they would accept. One certain type of bead (actually a shell), which was found in abundance along the Pacific coast and which the Yukon Indians had previously traded for with the Chilcat Indians, was particularly highly valued. Responding to their demand, the Company had John McLoughlin, the officer in charge of the Pacific District, collect the shells and forward them to Fort Youcon.24 On another occasion, the Company sent in an order of beads which, due to their small size, were totally unacceptable to the natives. The Fort Youcon Indians claimed that their trading partners downstream would not accept the beads and would resort instead to the Russians for their supplies (see Table 4).25

Certain goods, particularly kettles and vermilion
(red dye), were subject to short-term demand. In the initial period, vermillion was in great demand as a cosmetic, but by 1861 the demand for this item was very small. Kettles, primarily iron, which represented an occasional and long-term investment, and which the natives had had access to for many years through their inter-tribal trade, went through cycles of demand. In 1858, for example, the Fort Youcon indent included a request for three cases of kettles. The following year, the indent was reduced to a single case (see Table 4).

Tobacco, which had an important ceremonial function in the fur trade, was given to each Indian trading at the post and was indented for in steadily increasing amounts. In 1851, the first recorded indent, five rolls of tobacco were requested. By 1863, the requisition had doubled to include one bale and nine rolls of the highly desired substance. Tobacco, like beads, was light, compact and quickly consumed and as such was particularly well suited for the migratory hunters who frequented Fort Youcon (see Table 4).

In this period, the Company did not find it necessary to rely extensively on Indian labour. The use of natives for Company business was curtailed early in this period in an attempt to reduce post expenses and payments to Indians never exceeded £45 at this time. The firm did hire natives for short periods to act as tripmen to accom-
pany the annual boat to Lapierres House or to deliver important messages, but the practise was not extensive (see Table 5).

Table 5
Payments to Indians, Gratuities and Indian Debt - 1847-1863

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PAYMENTS TO INDIANS (£)</th>
<th>GRATUITIES (£)</th>
<th>INDIAN DEBT* (MB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>602 (190)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>161 (937)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>778 (302)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1283 (286)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>868 (411)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1858</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indian credits are in parenthesis.

Gratuities, similarly, did not constitute a major factor in the native trade. Although certain items, such as tobacco, were dispensed in limited quantities before the commencement of trade, these gifts were merely to indicate the desire for amicable trade, and did not themselves represent an attempt to attract Indians to the post. In
addition, the natives were expected to make gifts of furs or provisions in return, thus negating any economic benefit from the gratuities. The greatest Company expenditure on gratuities, most of which was dispensed in the form of assistance to ill or lame Indians, in this period was a mere £11 (see Table 5).

Native debts increased substantially during this first phase. From 1849 to 1851, between 530 and 600 Made Beaver (MB)26 worth of supplies were provided to the Indians annually on credit. Within ten years, this amount had more than doubled, exceeding 1300MB in both 1860 and 1861. This increase reflects the expansion of the Company's trade, the firm's dependence on native middlemen and, possibly, the expansion of Russian competition to the west.

In order to encourage the Indians to trade further afield, the traders would provide them with trade goods on credit, allowing them to pay for the supplies when they returned from their trading venture (see Table 5).

The Indians often left their furs in the Fort Youcon storehouse if the trader was unable to provide them with the supplies they desired.27 The value of these furs (native credits) varied between 1847 and 1855, the last year this variable was recorded. The lowest value was 190MB in 1850, while 930 MB were deposited in trust at the post the following year (see Table 5).

During the initial phase of the H.B.C.'s trade in the Yukon River basin, the supply and demand functions of
the Yukon River Indians were very closely related and the natives acted very much like European consumers. Unless certain goods were available for trade, it was likely that the furs most desired by the Company would not be brought to the fort for trade. Although the demand for many items increased between 1847 and 1863, it was due primarily to the expansion of the Fort Youcon trading hinterland, and not because there was a greater demand by Indians for European goods.28 Certain goods, especially beads, were in constant demand. The Indians, however, would trade for these items only if they conformed to their rather rigid specifications, including size, type and colour in the case of beads, and would reject outright any that did not come up to their standards. Despite the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed an overwhelming advantage over their Russian competitors, due largely to the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company had extensive experience with the Athapaskans and was prepared to re-arrange its trade to accommodate the demands and, in some cases, the dictates, of the natives, it is clear that the natives, and not the Company, were primarily responsible for determining the extent and content of that trade.
NOTES - HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY

PREDOMINANCE 1847-1863

1 Murray to McPherson, November 12, 1848, Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), B.200/b/23 fol. 35; Youcon Journal, June 27, 1847, HBCA, B.240/a/l fol. 1; Murray to Simpson, November 13, 1849, D.5/26 fol. 486.

2 Hardisty to Simpson, November 16, 1851, HBCA, D.5/32 fol. 326.

3 Anderson to Hardisty, January 26, 1852, HBCA, B.200/b/29 fol. 31.


6 Using the Spearman's Rho statistical test for trends, \( r_s = .94, N = 17 \), indicating a very strong positive trend.

7 Spearman's Rho, \( r_s = -.61, N = 17 \).

8 Hardisty to Jones, August 23, 1862, HBCA, B.200/b/33 fol. 153; Simpson to Governor and Committee, October 25, 1847, HBCA; D.4/69 fol. 220. One particularly harsh winter 1852, there was considerable suffering among the natives with an attending decline in the H.B.C.'s returns. The employees of the Company, however, suffered no privations. Hardisty to Anderson, May 31, 1852, HBCA, B.200/b/29 fol. 184.

9 Youcon Journal, June 27, 1847, HBCA, B.240/a/l.


11 There was a further reason for McPherson's inability to substantially increase the Fort Youcon outfit. The search for the lost expedition of John Franklin was then
underway and the H.B.C. was committed to supplying the required materials for the land-based rescue parties. Youcon Journal, June 5, 1848, HBCA, B.240/a/2 fol. 1.

12 Murray to McPherson, November 12, 1848, HBCA, B.200/b/23 fol. 35.


14 The Fort Youcon traders travelled up to Lapierres' House soon after the ice had cleared off the Porcupine River. This would allow them to return to the post with the new outfit before the Indians arrived to trade. Murray to McPherson, June 24, 1849, HBCA, B.200/b/23 fol. 9.


16 Hardisty to Anderson, October 15, 1853, HBCA, B.200/b/32 fol. 24.

17 Anderson to Hardisty, January 1, 1854, HBCA, B.200/b/32 fol. 42.

18 Hardisty to Anderson, October 15, 1853, HBCA, B.200/b/32 fol. 24.

19 Hardisty to Anderson, November 17, 1854, HBCA, B.200/b/32 fol. 85. This development of a group of post-connected natives, commonly referred to as "Home Guard Indians" in the fur trade literature, is observable throughout the history of the trade, beginning with the first Hudson's Bay Company posts along the shores of Hudson's Bay. The attractions of the trading establishment, both economic and social, were sufficient to pull the natives out of their traditional setting and draw them to the post.

20 Hardisty to Gentleman in Charge of R District, August 12, 1855, HBCA, B.200/b/32 fol. 129; Ross to Council, November 29, 1858, HBCA, B.200/b/33 fol. 15.

21 Ross to Lockhart, March 26, 1861, HBCA, B.200/b/33 fol. 103.

22 Murray to McPherson, November 20, 1847, HBCA, B.200/b/22 fol. 15.
23 C.T. Best, "Biography of R. McDonald" (unpublished manuscript), Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupertsland, #4001, Box J, p. 81.


26 "...the company invented a system of value measurement which could be applied to both the furs and goods bartered with the Indians. This accounting system was based on a unit called the made beaver (MB). The MB established an equivalence between volumes of goods traded and furs taken in return in terms of the number of prime, whole beaver pelts which they represented." A. Ray and D. Freeman, Give Us Good Measure (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 54.

27 There is only one instance of controversy involving the depositing of furs at Fort Youcon. In that case, Strachan Jones, the H.B.C. trader, refused to acknowledge that a leading native had left any skins. The latter claimed he had deposited 100MB worth. The dispute resulted in Jones' removal from the post. Hardisty to Jones, April 1, 1865, HBCA, B.200/b/35 fol. 99.
EXPANDING COMPETITION
1864 - 1874

Between the years 1864 and 1874, the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Yukon River basin underwent a number of very significant changes. For the purposes of this study, the most important of these was the gradual expansion of competition for the area's trade. Other factors, some external to the Yukon trade and others integral parts of it, also have to be considered.

In 1862, a servant of the Russian American Fur Company ascended the Yukon River as far as Fort Youcon. Although the trip itself was completed without controversy, it caused great consternation among the Company's employees, both at Fort Youcon and at the district headquarters at Fort Simpson. Some feared that the long-anticipated expulsion from their location on Russian territory was about to occur. Others, more concerned about the trade than the potential diplomatic ramifications, were apprehensive that the appearance of the Russians signified their intention to compete more vigorously for the Yukon River trade in the area upstream from their post at Nulato. The second contention, which proved to be correct, was the one to which the Company's officers directed their attention.

Well aware that the bulk of the post's martens, the
mainstay of the Yukon trade, originated downstream, the men at Fort Youcon organized boat excursions to go down the river to trade directly with the distant tribes and to meet the expanding Russian competition. These voyages, which extended as far as the Tanana River, became a regular feature of the firm's trade during the remaining years at Fort Youcon, and were responsible for a short-term surge in the Company's returns.  

Hudson Stuck, a Protestant missionary active at Fort Yukon from 1904 to 1920, learned of these voyages from the natives in the vicinity of the Tanana River. Describing the trade that took place in an area about two hundred miles below the Hudson's Bay Company post, he wrote:

> Long before any steamboats plied these waters, the Hudson Bay voyageurs from Fort Yukon came down through the rapids in large flat-bottomed boats loaded with trade goods, and returned with furs for which these were bartered. Old natives at Tanana still tell with admiration of the Batteaux with six pairs of oars which brought them guns and blankets and powder and shot and tea and tobacco, and gave them better terms than the Russians from Nulato gave.  

The last sentence is particularly instructive, for it indicates that the H.B.C. traders were adopting a very competitive stance to the new trade and that the Russians were not restricting their trade to their Nulato post, but were instead travelling upstream to compete, albeit unsuccessfully, with the Hudson's Bay Company.

> A scarlet fever epidemic, introduced into the area
by the Hudson's Bay Company's boat crews, swept through the Yukon River basin in 1865, decimating the local Indian population and exasperating the effects of the Russian competition. No exact figures indicating the severity of the epidemic are available, but the Company's officers estimated that between 170 and 200 of the post-Indians died from the disease. The financial effects of the fever were mitigated somewhat by the fact that the majority of the Company's furs came from natives some distance from the fort who were insulated by that distance from the full effects of the illness.

The period was also one of great uncertainty concerning the future of the Yukon trade. The fact that the Russians knew in 1862 that Fort Youcon was on Russian territory raised the possibility that the Russian government would request that the post be abandoned. The sale of Alaska to the United States of America in 1867 once again placed the Fort Youcon site in jeopardy. Two years after the sale, Captain Charles Raymond of the U.S. Navy ascended the Yukon River to Fort Youcon. After ascertaining that the post was indeed on American soil, Raymond ordered the H.B.C. to vacate the site. Due to the lateness of the season, the abandonment was deferred until the following spring, although the Company was required to refrain from trading any furs. Interestingly, it was the Company's boat excursions
which had initiated the intervention of the American government. American traders, active on the lower Yukon almost immediately after the purchase of Alaska, realized that they were losing valuable trade to the H.B.C. and began to protest to the U.S. government. The government approached the Company through diplomatic channels, asking the firm to voluntarily vacate their post.\(^7\) The Company refused, claiming that the location of the establishment had never been conclusively proven and that the firm would not leave until such proof had been provided.\(^8\) In response, the Americans had immediately sent Captain Raymond to conduct the necessary surveys and provide the required verification.

James McDougall, in charge of Fort Youcon at the time of the removal, was initially ordered to destroy all buildings before leaving the site in order to prevent their falling into the hands of "Yankee" traders.\(^9\) Later, the H.B.C. began negotiations with Hutchinson, Khol and Company of San Francisco for the sale of the buildings. Raymond, while at Fort Youcon, had claimed that all the structures on the site were U.S. property and had turned over ownership to Parrot and Co., the trading firm which had provided him with transportation up the Yukon River.\(^10\) McDougall was sent back to the fort in the summer of 1870 to complete the transfer, but the representatives of the American firm failed to arrive. The post was subsequently abandoned, and was soon occupied by American traders.\(^11\)
The Hudson's Bay Company officers responsible for the Yukon trade were reluctant to surrender that branch of the firm's business. It was initially believed that the firm would be allowed to navigate American rivers in order to reach British territory, a right they had enjoyed prior to 1867 under the 1825 convention between Britain and Russia. With this in mind, it was proposed that supplies for the Yukon district should be brought up the Yukon River by steamer, that the area should be placed under the jurisdiction of the Pacific Division, and that the Company's activities in the region should be expanded to once again include the upper Yukon River basin. The Americans closed this avenue forthwith, insisting that the British enjoyed no such right of free navigation. The Treaty of Washington, signed by the United States and Britain in 1871, granted freedom of passage along the American portions of the Yukon, Porcupine and Stikine Rivers, a concession won largely by the intervention of Donald A. Smith, Chief Commissioner of the H.B.C., but by this time the Company had already begun to contract its operations west of the Richardson Mountains.

American traders had first appeared on the lower Yukon almost immediately after the purchase of Alaska. Parrot and Co., the firm which had carried Raymond upstream aboard their steamer Yukon, was the first to push well up into the interior. For the next four years (1870-
1874), the Americans were themselves required to adapt to
the Yukon trade, and their unfamiliarity with local condi-
tions and customs forced them on several occasions to at-
ttempt to entice men away from the Hudson's Bay Company. 15
In an attempt to break the established patterns of trade,
the Americans offered significantly higher prices for furs,
lower prices for goods, and more generous gratuities. The
competitive trade, both with the H.B.C. and amongst the
various American traders was irregular and unreliable.
Supplies were difficult to procure and shipments were not
guaranteed to arrive as expected. Despite the considerable
advantage afforded the American traders by their vastly
superior supply network via steamers on the Yukon River,
the high costs of competitive trade forced the less stable
operations to fold or to merge with the more successful
firms, specifically the Alaska Commercial Company.

The actions of the Hudson's Bay Company in this
period were no less erratic than those of the Americans and
Russians. After being forced to vacate Fort Youcon, James
McDougall had initially removed the establishment to the
new site of Howling Dog, or Rampart House, below the ram-
parts on the Porcupine River. That same year (1870), how-
ever, it was decided to abandon the new location and re-
orient the trade west of the mountains around Lapierres
House. 16 The judiciousness of this move was shown by the
discovery in 1871 that the temporary post had been located
on American soil. Learning from their error at Fort Youcon, where the Company's decision not to destroy the post had meant that the buildings had been turned over to their rivals intact, McDougall was ordered to burn down the establishment before he departed.¹⁷ One year later (1872), after the Lapierre House trade had not lived up to expectations, the focus of the Company's activities was once again shifted to the west as the firm re-established Rampart House at the upper end of the ramparts, believed to be well within Canadian territory.¹⁸

The decision to maintain the trade to the west of the mountains was founded on two precepts. First, the Company believed, somewhat naively, that the Indians, due to loyalty to the firm and the unpredictable nature of the American trade, would resort en masse to Rampart House.¹⁹ Secondly, by maintaining a post along the Porcupine River, the Company was preventing the American traders from spreading into the H.B.C.'s lucrative trade at Peel River and along the lower Mackenzie River.²⁰

The Yukon trade was by no means the only segment of the Hudson's Bay Company's operations undergoing major reorganization at this time. In 1863, the Company had been purchased by the International Finance Society, an investment syndicate interested, not surprisingly, in making a profit. Within one year, the I.F.S. had publicly disposed of its shares in the H.B.C., realizing a 30 percent profit
in less than one year. As a public corporation, the H.B.C. was changed dramatically, and the new shareholders, also desiring a return on their investment, forced the firm into new endeavours, primarily land speculation. Six years later, in 1869, the Company surrendered its monopoly over the British North America fur trade to the Canadian government, receiving in return a cash payment of £300,000, fifty thousand acres of land surrounding its old posts, and 1/20 of the land in the Fertile Belt. The 1871 Deed Poll, which revamped the pay and command structure of the H.B.C. is further evidence of the many changes faced by the firm and by its employees in this period.

The most important internal development in this period, a somewhat more nebulous transformation, was the growing conservatism of the Company. Under Governor George Simpson, who died in 1860, the Company had conducted a vibrant, expanding fur trade. With Simpson's death, however, and especially after, the firm came increasingly under the control of men who were less enthusiastic about the fur trade, and who emphasized the value of other Company holdings, primarily land. A conflict of sorts developed between the new leadership of the Company, both in London and in Canada, and the Simpson-trained fur traders still active in the field. An excellent example of this occurred between 1870 and 1873 and related to the Yukon trade.

At the time of the forced removal from Fort Youcon,
a number of traders in the Mackenzie River District, especially William Hardisty and James McDougall, resented the intrusion of Americans into the H.B.C.'s trade. Anxious to remain competitive for the trade on British territory, these men forwarded a proposal to Donald A. Smith, the Chief Commissioner of the Company, which called for the expansion of the trade into the upper Yukon River basin and the supplying of the Yukon district either via Lynn Canal or the Yukon River,24 a move prevented by the United States' refusal to allow British subjects free navigation of American waters. With the signing of the Treaty of Washington, however, the diplomatic road-block had been removed. The potential importance of the treaty to the H.B.C. was shown the following year, when a survey conducted by James McDougall opened up the possibility that the Yukon-Porcupine river system would be used to import all the Company's supplies for the entire Mackenzie River District.

In the summer of 1872, James McDougall was appointed by William Hardisty to survey a route across the Richardson Mountains suitable for a cart trail. The pass he discovered, which now bears his name, exceeded all expectations. Hardisty was enthused with the discovery and seconded his suggestion that a track be built across the new route. It was Hardisty's intention to use this new pass, by placing steamers on the Yukon and Porcupine Rivers, to import all the supplies for the Mackenzie River District. The idea,
however, was quickly vetoed by Smith and the London Committee, who cited high construction and start-up costs, and the route was never used by the Hudson's Bay Company. Although the Company officials had argued against the specific proposal presented, it is clear from their actions in this period that the northern Canadian fur was beginning to lose its importance to the H.B.C.  

By 1874, the lines of competitive trade had been clearly drawn. The Company had demonstrated its intention to continue to trade along the Porcupine River, although plans to compete directly with the Americans had been vetoed. The Americans, although some of their supply difficulties would remain after 1874, were an established fact along the Yukon River. Leroy McQuesten, Albert Mayo, and Arthur Harper, three prospectors who had entered the Yukon River valley in 1873, gave up mining and joined with the Alaska Commercial Company and represented the principal competitive force to the H.B.C.  

The Fort Youcon and Rampart House returns for the second phase reflect the erratic nature of the Company's trade. In 1864, the first year competitive trade seriously threatened the post, the returns declined £2050, from the previous year's figure of £4550 to £2500. As the Company expanded their operations downstream, their returns grew dramatically, reaching an all-time high of £6074 in 1866. After one final year of substantial returns, £5890 in
1867, the value of the receipts dropped precipitously. In 1868, furs received at Fort Youcon valued only £2400. The following year, it dropped to approximately £1000, and for the remainder of the period, the value of the returns ranged between £745 and £1500 (see Table 6).

Table 6
H.B.C. Fur Returns and Outfit Costs 1864-1874

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>RETURNS (£)</th>
<th>YUKON RETURNS &quot;R&quot; Dist. Returns</th>
<th>OUTFIT (£)</th>
<th>YUKON OUTFIT &quot;R&quot; Dist. Outfit</th>
<th>RETURNS Outfit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>2631</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>4139</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>6074</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>5888</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>2477</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>1274</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>1085</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>1505</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>904</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>1499</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>1213</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of the Yukon trade to the Mackenzie River District varied greatly as well. For the years 1866 and 1867, Fort Youcon accounted for more than 29 percent of the district returns. By 1871, this percentage had fallen off to only 3 percent. For the last six years of the second phase, the Yukon trade would provide an average of only 5 percent of the total "R" District receipts (see Table 6).
Lack of complete data on the cost of the Yukon outfit makes it difficult to comment on trends in this variable. Between 1864 and 1868, the outfit grew substantially, rising from £700 to more than £1200. In 1869, the final recorded value for this period, the outfit cost had declined to only £688. The ratio of the Yukon outfit to the "R" District outfit followed an identical pattern, rising from 8 to 16 percent from 1864 to 1868, then falling to 9 percent in 1869. It is interesting to note that in 1867, Fort Youcon had provided 29 percent of the district returns and had consumed only 11 percent of the outfit. Two years later, the post collected only 5 percent of the returns while using 9 percent of the district's supplies (see Table 6).

As suggested earlier, the ratio of returns to outfit provides an excellent indication of the relationship between the value of furs traded and the expense to the Company of the goods given in return. Prior to 1868, this ratio remained fairly high, ranging from 3.8 (1864) to 6.0 (1867). In 1868, however, the ratio declined to less than 2.0, and the following year fell even further to 1.6. This fluctuation shows, in effect, that after 1867 and the appearance of the Americans on the lower Yukon, there had been a substantial alteration in the Company's trade. With the arrival of the American traders and with their more competitive pricing tactics, the returns at Fort Youcon had declined substantially and, importantly, the value of goods demanded for those furs had increased markedly (see Table 6).
The incompleteness of the set of account books for this period makes detailed analysis difficult. There are, for example, only two values for the total cost of conducting trade (total expenses), and they are for the years 1864 and 1865. The profitability of the Fort Youcon trade, however, indicates better than any other variable the transformation that had occurred in the post's trade. Profits grew to an all-time high (£4722 in 1866) as a result of the Company's downstream endeavours. Two years later, the profit had dropped to one-fortieth of its former value, although the values for both these years are somewhat higher than reality as no value was given for gratuities dispersed at the fort during these outfit years. However, as gratuities did not normally constitute a major segment of the Company's trade, the profit figures are probably fairly representative. The dramatic decline in profits was to foreshadow the future results of the Company's trade at Rampart House (see Table 7).

This period was one of great transformation for the Yukon trade as the Hudson's Bay Company saw its returns and profits reach the heights long expected from the area and then plummet dramatically in less than two years. The H.B.C. had adopted two very different responses to the increased competition. The threat of Russian encroachment was met with Company expansion downstream and the vigorous pursuit of trade on the lower Yukon River. The American
traders, aided in their assault on the H.B.C. by a sympathetic government, proved much more difficult to contend with. Rather than counter-attack, as the firm had done with the Russians, the increasingly conservative Hudson's Bay Company chose to retreat quietly up the Porcupine River. They were not, however, prepared to totally abandon the Yukon trade to the American intruders.

Table 7
H.B.C. Expenses and Profits 1864-1874

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>EXPENSES (£)</th>
<th>EMPLOYEES (#)</th>
<th>SALARIES (£)</th>
<th>PROFIT (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>1518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>1138</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>3001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4722*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>4536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>106*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No listing for gratuities for this year.

The natives of the Yukon River basin were likewise required to adapt to vastly changing circumstances between 1864 and 1874. The scarlet fever epidemic, the appearance of American competitors and the Company's retreat up the Porcupine had had significant effects on the Hudson's Bay Company's trade. Similarly, the Yukon basin Indians were
required to re-orient their trading patterns to suit the new economic situation.

A major aspect of the competitive trade was the liberal use of gratuities as a means of attracting native traders and trappers. Before the appearance of intense local competition, the H.B.C. had limited their gratuities to a ceremonial exchange of gifts at the outset of trading, and as a form of assistance to ill or lame Indians who would otherwise face privations. The Americans, however, began distributing large amounts of tobacco, sugar, tea and ammunition as a prelude to the conduct of trade.²⁷

The Americans also introduced a variety, both in kind and quality, of goods into the Yukon trade. The natives now had something with which to compare the trade goods of the H.B.C. The Company was nonetheless confident that "a considerable quantity of Furs will fall into our hands from the Indians lower down the Youcon river, who will be induced by the superiority of our goods to continue our traffic with our Indians."²⁸ The natives were faced not only with the new and more favourable price structure offered by the American traders, but also with a wider range of goods of varying quality. The relatively simplistic trade of the initial period, where the only major question was whether there were sufficient supplies of the right type to cover demand, was replaced with a far more complex structure.
Another factor which has to be taken into account was the animosity of the Yukon River Indians toward the American traders. In 1873, the Company learned from their post Indians that plans were being formulated to have the Yukon natives band together and "exterminate" all the Americans. Although the authenticity of this particular report is questionable as no such attack occurred, it does reflect what seems to have been a genuine anti-American bias among the native population. The basis for this animosity, according to the Company's native informants was that the Indians resented the interruption of their trade with the Hudson's Bay Company. Whereas the H.B.C.'s trade was centred around and largely controlled by the Yukon basin natives, the American trade, which had the advantage of relying on both miners and Indians, was not under the same constraints to reach an accommodation with the natives.

Indian loyalty, not so much to the H.B.C. as to individual traders, was also an important consideration. James McDougall, who developed an excellent rapport with the natives was able, by his presence at Rampart House, to attract a large number of the Black River Indians to the establishment. It is impossible to tell what particular qualities McDougall possessed which were responsible for the relationship, but this particular fur trader had been very popular with the natives throughout his tenure in the
Yukon.

Missionaries also affected the lives of the Yukon River basin Indians during this second phase. The Reverend W.W. Kirkby had first visited Fort Youcon in 1861, and had returned the following year for a short visit. That same year, Robert McDonald was sent from Red River to assist Kirkby and he was assigned to Fort Youcon. McDonald, however, fell ill in 1864, and he was forced to leave the post to recuperate. By 1865, he had recovered sufficiently to return to the Yukon and, together with newly recruited William Bompas, who had been appointed as a missionary at large and who made occasional trips into the Yukon, commenced his missionary work in earnest. The missionaries, not unlike the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, did their utmost to accommodate themselves to the seasonal movements of the natives. In this regard, the missionaries made every effort to travel to the hunting, fishing or wintering camps of as many of their diocese charges as they could. These frequent journeys, however, were conducted very informally and no detailed records were kept of the routes followed or the destinations. The missionaries, representing the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England, received considerable assistance from the H.B.C. employees in the area, particularly when it came to competition with the Roman Catholic clergy who attempted to follow the Anglicans into the area. The introduction of
Christianity into the Yukon River basin and the subsequent upheaval of native life was a major disruption in the lives of the indigenous population.

This period also provides one of the most striking examples of native control of the fur trade. In 1865, Strachan Jones, then in charge of Fort Youcon, was forced to resign his post as the result of the development of animosity between himself and a local Indian chief. The dispute centred around the number of furs the natives had left at the post, with Jones claiming that the chief had left none while the latter maintained that he had left furs valued at more than 100MB. Rather than risk upsetting the natives further, the Company complied with their request that Jones be removed.35

For the Yukon River Indians, the period of expanding competition was one of transformation and re-orientation. The appearance of American fur traders, missionaries, miners and other white travellers altered the simplicity of the pre-1864 fur trade. The Indians' response to the forces of economic change in this period demonstrates quite graphically that they were able to exploit their new position exceptionally well.

It is important to point out at this time the tremendous decline in the total number of furs traded at Fort Youcon and Rampart House in this second phase. The apex was reached in 1867, when 8899 furs were traded at Fort
Youcon. By 1873, this number had dropped to approximately 2100 furs. This decline in absolute numbers much be taken into account when analyzing the relationship of certain species of furs to the total number traded. The trade of one band at Rampart House after 1870 could easily distort the percentages if they arrived with a substantial number of one fur type. This problem of relative amounts does not really apply to the first or the last period as the number of furs traded in both those phases was more or less constant.

In 1864, marten skins made up 74 percent of the total number of furs traded at Fort Youcon and the following year this percentage grew to 81 percent. By 1869, the proportion had fallen as low as 27 percent, only to recover thereafter to reach 60 percent in 1873. This fluctuation, which appears quite erratic, actually fits very closely the changing circumstances of the fur trade. Prior to 1868, the Company had expanded downstream, trading directly with the natives on the lower Yukon River. It was from these natives that the H.B.C. had always received the greatest number of their marten skins. The decline to 1870 corresponds to the period when American traders, first from bases on the lower Yukon and later from the site of Fort Youcon, interrupted the Company's access to those furs. The recovery after 1869 was due primarily to the fact that the Company's traders directed those Indians
still trading with the firm to apply themselves specifically to the trapping and/or trading of martens, intimating that unless their marten returns improved, the H.B.C. would abandon the area.36

As had happened in the previous period, the production of beaver pelts proved to be closely linked to the fortunes of the marten trade. While marten skins were declining, the percentage of beaver skins increased from 15 percent in 1864 to 52 percent in 1868. The ratio remained high for one more year before declining to 25 percent in 1873. The supply of beaver pelts, in both the first and second phases, was the inverse of the supply of martens. Foxes, interestingly, tended to increase in percentage terms after 1867. Until that year, foxes had constituted only two percent of the total. In 1868, this increased to 14 percent. The following year it declined to four percent, only to rise to nine percent by 1873. The increased importance of foxes is largely attributable to the new location of the Company's post. Foxes were traded primarily with the Indians north of the Porcupine River and the Inuit, and the Rampart House site placed the H.B.C. in closer proximity to the supply of these furs. Deerskins constituted an almost irrelevant proportion of the Company's trade, never rising to more than five percent of the total number of furs traded at Fort Youcon or Rampart House between 1864 and 1874 (see Table 8).
Table 8
H.B.C. Fur Receipts by Species
1864-1874

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>% MARTEN</th>
<th>% BEAVER</th>
<th>% DEERSKINS</th>
<th>% FOXES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td></td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is an unfortunate deficiency in the demand statistics, as no indents are available for the 1869-1873 period. This means that the analysis will be restricted to the five years between 1864 and 1868. This period, however, covers the Company's initial expansion downstream from Fort Youcon, and therefore the direct incorporation of the 'distant' tribes into the firm's trade, and the first years of American competition along the lower Yukon River.

The indent for guns, shot and powder, followed the Company's movements very closely. When the H.B.C. first sent men downstream to trade, the demand for these items grew rapidly. For the first time, the tribes of the lower Yukon could trade directly with the Company, and not through native middlemen. The high demand for guns, which
rose to 100 guns for both 1865 and 1866, was founded primarily on the inability of these natives to get this particular item though their previous trading networks. The Fort Youcon Indians had refrained from trading large numbers of firearms to the distant tribes largely to protect their own economic position and to ensure their military strength. 37 By 1868, before the expulsion from Fort Youcon, the indent had fallen to only ten guns, as the natives below the Company's post possessed a far more accessible supply of arms and ammunition as a result of the expansion of American trade on the lower Yukon River after 1867 (see Table 9).

Table 9
H.B.C. Indent - 1864-1868

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOBACCO</th>
<th>GUNS</th>
<th>BLANKETS</th>
<th>BEADS</th>
<th>KETTLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other items, however, did not decline at similar rates. Blankets, which reached a peak demand of 145 in 1865, fell only slightly to 132 in 1868. This suggests that, despite the arrival of the Americans, certain of the Company's trade goods still maintained their attraction to the natives. Kettles, as had been the case in the earlier
phase, went through fluctuations in demand rising to two cases in 1865, but falling to a single case the following year and remaining at that level for the remainder of the period (see Table 9).

The Company's tobacco, so much in demand in the earlier phase, retained its importance after 1864. The indent for tobacco stayed between nine and twelve (combined number of rolls and bales) from 1864 to 1868. It is clear that the H.B.C.'s tobacco, both as a gratuity and as trade good, remained a major inducement to the natives, even after increasing competition had lessened their demand for other H.B.C. merchandise (see Table 9).

In their attempt to keep the costs at the post to a minimum, the Hudson's Bay Company employed natives only when absolutely necessary. The pay to native labourers, which amounted to £71 in 1864, declined steadily in this period to a low of £17 in 1868. Neither the H.B.C. nor the natives viewed employment with the firm as a viable Indian occupation. Information on gratuities is almost non-existent, although it seems clear that the Company did disperse supplies in marginally increased amounts in an attempt to induce natives to trade at Rampart House. There was no way, however, that the Company could have hoped to match the generosity, due both to the cost and to the fact that the Peel River Indians would have protested, of the American traders.
Indian debts, which had been substantial during the first phase, were not a factor in this second period. William Hardisty, Chief Factor in charge of the Mackenzie River District, had abolished the debt system in the district in 1865, with a provision that it may be continued for one year in order to allow the natives to adjust. With unexpected suddenness, the natives were forced to change their trade from one based on debt to what was, in effect, a market system in which goods were paid for at the time of purchase. The Yukon River Indians adopted the new arrangement with no apparent difficulties (see Table 10).

Table 10
Payments to Indians, Gratuities and Indian Debt 1864-1874

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PAYMENTS TO INDIANS ($)</th>
<th>GRATUITIES ($)</th>
<th>INDIAN DEBT (MB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1080*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No reason was given for granting debt in this year.
The period of expanding competition was one of great change for the Yukon River basin natives. Despite the decrease in their importance, having lost, for the most part, their middleman position in the H.B.C.'s trade with the lower Yukon River natives, they were still able to control the actions of the Hudson's Bay Company. In fact, the Company's decision to remain active in the Yukon trade was based largely on the natives' assurances that they would remain loyal to the firm. Despite their apparent dislike of the Americans, however, it is clear that the Indians' loyalty, or lack thereof, was determined principally by the H.B.C.'s wares, and by the Company's willingness to adapt to native demands. The type and quantity of furs supplied to the H.B.C. depended not only on their availability, but also on the relative demand of the various competitive traders for the individual species, with fox being an exception to this rule, as the Americans lacked access to the principle fox areas of the northern Yukon. As the natives desired certain goods which only the H.B.C. could provide in the quantity and quality demanded, such as tobacco and blankets, they found it necessary to trade furs which the Company desired. The natives obviously valued the firm's trade, due to the supply of certain goods and not the Company's prices, and seemed determined to prevent their withdrawal.
NOTES - EXPANDING COMPETITION 1864-1874


5. McDougall to Hardisty, September 25, 1865, HBCA, B.200/b/31 fol. 43; Hardisty to MacTavish, November 27, 1866, HBCA, B.200/b/35 fol. 201; Hardisty to McDougall, August 28, 1866, HBCA, B.200/b/35 fol. 174. Note also that the epidemic was not limited to the Yukon River area, but had previously spread throughout the entire Mackenzie River District.


12 MacFarlane to MacTavish, July 26, 1869, HBCA, B. 200/b/37 fol. 183; MacFarlane to MacTavish, January 22, 1869, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 134.

13 MacTavish to Hardisty, July 2, 1869, HBCA, B.200/b/36 fol. 255.

14 Smith to Hardisty, October 14, 1871, HBCA, B.200/b/38 fol. 143.

15 McDougall to Hardisty, January 3, 1870, HBCA, B. 200/b/38 fol. 16.


17 McDougall to MacFarlane, December 2, 1871, PAC, MacFarlane Papers, MG29 All, Vol. 1, fol. 210-21.

18 Hardisty to McDougall, March 10, 1871, HBCA, B. 200/b/40 fol. 5.

19 Ibid.; Hardisty to Council, August 2, 1870, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 255.

20 Hardisty to McDougall, March 21, 1870, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 239.


22 Sealey, pp. 99-100.

23 Ibid. Sealey provides a good analysis of the character of the H.B.C. in the post-Simpson era.

24 MacFarlane to MacTavish, January 22, 1869, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 134; MacTavish to Hardisty, July 2, 1869, HBCA, B.200/b/36 fol. 255; Hardisty to MacTavish, August 16, 1867, HBCA, B.200/b/35 fol. 240.

25 Hardisty to Smith, August 6, 1872, HBCA, B.200/b/40 fol. 54; Smith to Armit, April 16, 1873, HBCA, A.12/14 fol. 373-376; Smith to Hardisty, October 9, 1873, HBCA, B.200/b/41 fol. 4.

27. Hardisty to Council, November 30, 1870, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 277; Hardisty to Graham, December 1, 1874, HBCA, B.200/b/40 fol. 102; Hardisty to Smith, November 30, 1870, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 272. Interestingly, alcohol, an item used frequently throughout North America in circumstances of competitive fur trade, was not a factor in the Yukon River basin in this period. The H.B.C., having recently relinquished their monopoly and being closely watched by the Church Missionary Society missionaries, probably avoided the sale of liquor in order to prevent a political attack on the Company.


29. Hardisty to Smith, April 1, 1873, HBCA, B.200/b/40 fol. 48.


32. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza, pp. 118-65.

33. See for example, Bompas to Church Missionary Society, December 6, 1872, PAC, Church Missionary Society Papers (hereafter cited as CMS), MG17 B2, Series C. 1/0; M. McDonald to Bompas, January 22, 1875, PAC, CMS, MG17 B2, Series C. 1/0.

34. The connections between the H.B.C. and the C.M.S. workers were actually very close. The missionaries travelled via H.B.C. canoe brigades, had their supplies imported along with the H.B.C. outfit, enjoyed the hospitality of H.B.C. officers on numerous occasions and established their missions alongside H.B.C. posts, although this latter situation also ensured that the missionaries would be able to contact all the Indians trading with the H.B.C. One missionary, Kenneth McDonald, resigned his position with the C.M.S. and was hired by the H.B.C. to work at Rampart House. Robert McDonald to Church Missionary Society, September 11, 1875, PAC, CMS, MG17 B2, Series C. 1/0.
35 Hardisty to Jones, April 1, 1865, HBCA, B.200/b/35 fol. 99.

36 Hardisty to Smith, August 2, 1870, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 255.


38 Circular from W. Hardisty, March 10, 1865, HBCA, B.200/b/35 fol. 94. In other areas of competition, the standard procedure was to increase debt and allow more extensive credit. While the reason for Hardisty's action is not clear, it must be remembered that he was dealing with the entire Mackenzie River District, most of which was free from competition, and not just the Yukon River basin. Also, although competition was increasing in the latter region, the H.B.C. still maintained a very strong position. Although there was no official revocation of the policy, credit was granted at Fort Youcon in 1868, only three years after it had been officially abolished.
DECLINING TRADE - 1875-1893

The last eighteen years of the Company's participation in the Yukon trade were quite unspectacular. The process of deterioration which had begun during the preceding phase continued apace. The activities of the missionaries, miners, surveyors, explorers and adventure seekers increased in frequency and intensity throughout this period. The American traders, primarily the monopolistically oriented Alaska Commercial Company, maintained their competitive tactics and forced the Hudson's Bay Company to reciprocate in order to maintain their share of the trade.

The Company, however, had to be very careful in its selection of tactics to combat its rivals. The proximity of Peel River to Lapierres House and Rampart House made it imperative that the firm not take any actions at the latter posts which might antagonize the Peel River Kutchin. When the Americans had first appeared at Fort Youcon and had spread their lavish wares freely among the local Indians, the natives trading at Peel River Post (later Fort McPherson) had threatened to take their furs across the mountains to trade.1 Although they never followed up on the threat, the H.B.C.'s traders were aware that their activities, especially concerning the adjustment of the tariff, were being monitored by the natives of the Mackenzie River basin. This condition made it impossible for the Company to alter
their tariff at Rampart House in order to meet their competitors' prices.²

The major alteration in the Yukon trade during this final phase was the appearance of American whaling ships off Herschel Island in 1889. The year before, an obscure whaler named Joe Tuckfield, an employee of the Pacific Steam Whaling Company, had journeyed to the Yukon's Arctic coast to investigate claims made by the Inuit that large herds of whales were to be found in the waters off Herschel Island. Reporting back the following year (1889), Tuckfield not only confirmed the natives' reports, but also found that considerable profit was to be made by trading for furs. In August of 1889, seven ships arrived at Herschel Island, marking the beginning of the infamous Herschel Island whaling industry and the commencement of the maritime fur trade.³

The arrival of the whaling fleet, as has often been noted, had immediate detrimental effects on the local Inuit population. The fact that the whaling crews established sexual relations with the Inuit women has often been cited as evidence of the degenerate nature of the American whalers and of the serious social impact of the appearance of the fleet at Herschel Island.⁴ From the perspective of native-white trade relations, however, another conclusion is possible. It has been shown in another context that Inuit males loaned their wives to other men as a means of
solidifying a partnership. Since trade, as will be discussed shortly, was the basis for Inuit-American contact at Herschel Island, it is probable that the so-called illicit relationships between the native women and the whalers were socially sanctioned by the Inuit and were intended to strengthen trading ties.

Of importance to the Hudson's Bay Company, however, was the fact that these whalers, taking up Tuckfield's original idea, also conducted a fairly extensive fur trade. The most important item of trade (along with alcohol) was the Winchester repeating rifle, an item the H.B.C. was prevented from trading by the Dominion government. The Herschel Island trade drew the Indians located to the north of the Porcupine River, who formed the basis of the H.B.C.'s trade, towards the Arctic coast, further reducing the Rampart House returns. John Firth, in charge of Rampart House at the time, commented that he did "not so much mind the opposition from down the River, but it is difficult to oppose the trade from the coast, as they are giving higher prices than ever."

Throughout this period, the Company was forced to send its men into the field to contact the natives and attempt to convince them to resort to the H.B.C. rather than the Americans. In 1875, John Wilson, the Rampart House clerk, allowed the Americans to reach the "Gens du Large" Indians first, which resulted in the loss to the
Company of all of the furs of that band. In order to meet the Herschel Island competition, John Firth made a trip to the Arctic coast in order to make trading arrangements with the Inuit, but he apparently had little success in regaining this branch of the firm's trade.

The American traders, especially Leroy McQuesten of the Alaska Commercial Company, who opened Fort Reliance approximately six miles downstream from the present site of Dawson City in 1875, utilized a number of practises in their attempts to attract what remained of the H.B.C.'s trade to their posts. Their most popular tactics were the frequent adjustment of the tariff and the granting of ever larger gratuities. On one occasion, they hired an Indian to circulate among the "H.B.C.'s Indians" trading them goods on credit and thus forcing them to resort to the American trading posts. At least twice in this period, American traders entered the immediate vicinity of Rampart House and attempted, without a great deal of success, to trade for the furs of the local Indians. They also outfitted natives from the upper Porcupine River with a complete complement of trading supplies and encouraged them to open trading posts near the Company's establishments. Perhaps the most damaging move was made in 1881 when the Americans introduced English goods into their trade and then, according to the natives, charged one-half the price the Company asked for the same item.
By 1890, it was freely admitted that the Yukon trade held out little potential for immediate or future profit. Rampart House, discovered that year to still be on U.S. soil and subsequently relocated upstream, was considered to be a 'frontier' post, and as such was not expected to return a profit. For the next three years, the establishment was maintained primarily to prevent American traders from penetrating even further inland. Starting in 1892, it was realized that the post was losing too much money to be of any value to the Company and plans were formulated to abandon Rampart House and Lapierres House in 1893, after giving the local natives adequate notice of the Company's intention. After the H.B.C.'s withdrawal, thirteen years were to pass before Dan Cadzow, an independent trader, would reopen fur trade at Rampart House.

The final eighteen years of the Hudson's Bay Company's tenure in the Yukon River basin were marked by steadily declining fortunes. The period of expanding competition had been very difficult for the firm, and had reduced the Yukon trade from a position of pre-eminence in the Mackenzie River District to that of a single, unimportant post and a small outpost to the west of the Richardson Mountains, merely marking time until the inevitable withdrawal occurred.

The Company was able to maintain respectable returns for only one final year. In 1875, the Rampart House re-
receipts were valued at £1364. The following year, they began a serious decline which eventually ended in 1880, when the returns amounted to only £399. For the remainder of the period, the returns fluctuated erratically, never reaching more than £950 nor dropping below £400. By this time, the Yukon trade was essentially localized, conducted primarily but, as will be seen later, not exclusively, with those natives in the immediate vicinity of Rampart House. As important as the low returns was the continued decline of the Yukon trade in relation to the trade of the Mackenzie River District. From a high of 11 percent in 1875, the ratio declined swiftly to only 2 percent in 1879. Until 1888, the last recorded value for this variable, the Yukon post contributed no more than 4.5 percent of the "R" District returns (see Table 11).

The Rampart House outfit also decreased in value in this period. From a value of £755 in 1878, the total outfit cost fell to £389 in 1892. The outfit cost did not, however, decrease at the same rate as the fur returns. Indeed at one point (1886) during the final phase, the ratio of returns to outfit actually amounted to only .9 This meant that returns were valued at only 90 percent of the cost of the outfit. The Company, therefore, lost money on the trade alone. At no time did the ratio exceed 2.2 and it averaged only 1.5 for the entire period. During the first phase, ratios as high as 14.6 had been observed, and
the average for the period of expanding competition was approximately 4.0. In the final phase, therefore, the Company's ability to trade at a profit was almost completely eroded. There is insufficient data to assess the relationship between the Yukon and the "R" District outfits. The only available value (for 1890) shows that Rampart House received 9 percent of the total district allotment, the same year providing only 3 percent of the district's returns (see Table 11).

Table 11

H.B.C. Fur Returns and Outfit Costs
1875-1892

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>RETURNS (£)</th>
<th>YUKON RETURNS &quot;R&quot; Dist. Returns</th>
<th>OUTFIT (£)</th>
<th>YUKON OUTFIT &quot;R&quot; Dist. Outfit</th>
<th>RETURNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>1364</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>628</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>699</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Company, in response to the realities of competitive trade, cut back substantially on their expenses at Rampart House. Total expenses in 1878 equaled £1102, but this amount decreased rapidly to only £619 by 1892. The saving was principally achieved by reducing the complement of men at the post. Eight men were assigned to the establishment in 1875; from 1887 to 1892, this number was reduced to only two. Salaries, which had amounted to between £200 and £240 before 1883, declined to less than £130 for the last ten years of the trade. It is highly illustrative of the Company's approach to the Yukon trade to note that, in response to increasing competition, the firm chose to decrease their commitment to the area, rather than expanding their operations, as they had done in 1864, to meet the competition.

In the final analysis, it was the inability of the H.B.C. to make a profit from its Yukon operations which led to the decision to abandon the trade. Despite the firm's attempts to reduce expenditures, in 1878 Rampart House incurred a loss of £350. Although the profit would subsequently rise as high as £203 in 1892, it was clear by the early 1890's that the Yukon trade held out little prospect for financial return (see Table 12). The appearance of the whalers off Herschel Island further reduced the Company's incentive to maintain a post along the Porcupine River. In addition, the "opening" of the upper
Mackenzie River valley to travellers, trappers and independent traders by the late 1880's made it no longer imperative that the Company block access to the Mackenzie River by maintaining a post to the west of the mountains.

Table 12
H.B.C. Expenses and Profits
1875-1893

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>EXPENSES (£)</th>
<th>EMPLOYEES (#)</th>
<th>SALARIES (£)</th>
<th>PROFIT (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>1102</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>-350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>-238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>-193*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* No listing for gratuities or payments to Indians for this year.

One other factor which must be mentioned is that of the protective government. As early as the Raymond expedition of 1869, the United States government had indicated its willingness to act in the economic interests of its
citizens and against the Hudson's Bay Company. Unfortunately for the H.B.C., the Canadian government was neither willing nor in a position to adopt similar measures to protect the Company's trade. American traders traded at Herschel Island and on the upper Yukon River without paying customs duties and without being required to observe Canadian laws. The Canadian government did not make their presence felt until 1894, when Inspector Constantine of the N.W.M.P. entered the Yukon district, but this action was too late to protect the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The period of declining returns marked the end of the Company's operations in the Yukon River basin. The H.B.C., unable to adopt 'normal' competitive techniques due to the vigilance of the Peel River Indians and suffering from the high cost of transporting supplies to Rampart House, a cost their competitors did not share, saw the financial viability of the Rampart House trade destroyed. The American traders, with the advantage of a much less expensive supply route and with the ability and willingness to compete effectively for the native trade, were able to attract the bulk of the Yukon trade away from the H.B.C. There were few regrets within the firm when the last two posts were closed down and the H.B.C. withdrew to the east of the Richardson Mountains.

Native response to the continued decline of the
Hudson's Bay Company's trade was similar to the previous period. American traders continued to offer substantial inducements, both in terms of prices and variety of goods, to encourage the Indians to trade with them. The natives of the Yukon River basin had never before had so many opportunities, and the constant and intensive competition worked continually to their benefit.

The major change in the trade, from a native point of view, was the opening of the fur trade at Herschel Island. This trade, which operated at even lower tariffs than that offered by the Americans along the Yukon River, and which included several items such as alcohol and repeating rifles, which could not be purchased in the Yukon River basin, offered an attractive incentive for the natives to abandon the Hudson's Bay Company.

It was during this period that the mining operations which would eventually lead to the discovery of gold along Rabbit Creek, and which in turn led to the Klondike Gold Rush, began in earnest. Although the number of miners and other whites active in the region was small in 1875, it was expanding steadily. The final phase of trade was, in reality, the last period of native predominance in the Yukon. Most of the activities of the white men in the area, especially the fur traders and the missionaries and to a lesser extent the miners and travellers, required native time or labour in order to be successful.
tition for the natives' services, either as trappers, traders, tripmen, labourers, provision hunters, or heathen souls in need of salvation, was at its apex. It was an ideal situation for the Indians, and it was one they utilized to its utmost advantage.

The supply of furs to the Hudson's Bay Company after 1875 was at a greatly reduced level from the trade of the first two periods, averaging 1146 furs annually, down from 4674 in the second phase and 4572 in the first. The trade was, in this final period, largely local, involving primarily those bands in the immediate vicinity of Rampart House. Occasional forays were made to contact northern natives (both Kutchin and Inuit), but for the most part, the Hudson's Bay Company had abandoned the trade of the Yukon River to the Americans and were resigned to its toe-hold on the Porcupine River.

Martens maintained their importance throughout this period, although there were rather large fluctuations in supply. The highest recorded value was for 1881, when 72 percent of the post's furs were the highly valued marten. Just two years earlier, this percentage had been only 13 percent. The erratic nature of the marten supply, due to the much smaller area now trading with the H.B.C., appears attributable primarily to the availability of these animals in the field. Beavers followed a similarly inconsistent pattern, ranging from 25 percent in 1875 to 6 percent in
1884 (see Table 13).

Table 13
H.B.C. Fur Receipts by Species
1875-1892

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>% MARTEN</th>
<th>% BEAVER</th>
<th>% DEERSKINS</th>
<th>% FOXES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important changes in this period relate to the supply of foxes and deerskins. Foxes had previously formed an inconsequential segment of the trade, averaging only 5 percent of the total furs between 1847 and 1874. For the final phase, this average jumped to 13 percent. In 1878 and 1880, foxes constituted more than one-quarter of the total number of skins traded. This increase is an indication of the abrupt change in the orientation of the trade after 1875. Prior to that time, the trade had been
conducted largely along an east-west continuum, with the northern trade, from whence came the bulk of the foxes, only incidental to the principle effort. After 1875, however, the Company was forced to expand their north-south operations, incorporating northern Indian bands and Inuit into their trade, and largely abandoning the bulk of their western operations to the Americans (see Table 13).

The supply of deerskins, which grew substantially in this period, also indicates an important feature of the trade in the years of declining trade. The Hudson's Bay Company, which utilized the deerskins to make leather for harnesses and packs, was the only trading outfit willing to purchase large quantities of these skins. The deerskins increased from 5 percent of the total in 1879 to 18 percent in 1883. Also important, however, is the fact that the average number of deerskins traded annually also went up. During the initial phase, the Company traded an average of 265 deerskins each year. This dropped to 134 during the second period, then significantly, increased to 170 per year after 1875. This change indicates two important aspects of the final trading phase. The first is that, since the Company was the only firm in the Yukon River basin willing to trade for the deerskins, natives downstream from Rampart House and along the Yukon River were passing their deerskins, through inter-tribal networks, on to the Company. Secondly, by this time the natives had
begun to partially adopt European clothing and housing and, consequently, no longer required as many of their deerskins for their own use (see Table 13).

Native demands for the wares of the Hudson's Bay Company in this period reflected not only the changing realities of the Yukon trade, but also the changing personal demands of the Yukon Indians. Demand fluctuations in the previous years had been caused primarily by the introduction or the removal of large numbers of natives from the Company's trade. Individual demands had, for the most part, remained fairly constant. In this final period, however, it is clear that the Indians had undergone a major transformation in their attitudes towards European goods.

Guns, shot and powder, which had earlier constituted a major segment of the natives' demands, decreased in importance. Up to 100 guns had been indent for during the second phase; in the final period, the average indent/invoice for guns was only 6.4. Similar declines, although less substantial due to the fact that numerous guns purchased before 1875 were still in use after that date, occurred in the demand for shot and powder. A major reason for this decline was the availability of the far superior Winchester repeating rifles from the Herschel Island whaling fleet (see Table 14).

Demand for blankets dropped significantly in this period from a high of 104 in 1875 to a low of 37 in 1888.
The average for the period, 64, however, matched the demand for this item in the initial phase of the Yukon trade. Much smaller numbers of natives were involved in the post-1875 trade, and it is clear that, although total demand decreased sharply from the preceding period, the demand by individual Indians had actually increased. Also important was a shift in demand observed by the H.B.C. trader to encompass the fine cloths sold by the Company, including manufactured shirts, pants and coats. After thirty years of contact with the European traders, the natives were showing signs of changing their dress to resemble that of their trading partners (see Table 14).  

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TOBACCO</th>
<th>GUNS</th>
<th>BLANKETS</th>
<th>BEADS</th>
<th>KETTLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beads, once a mainstay of the trade, were almost insignificant in this period, although the firm did continue to bring at least part of one case each year. Kettles followed an identical pattern, with only a portion of a case being sent in annually (see Table 14).

The one item used in this analysis which reveals the strength of the attraction of the Company's "standard articles of trade" is tobacco. Despite the ever-decreasing size of the native population at Rampart House, the indent for tobacco remained high. From a low of four bales in 1875, the requisition rose to 11 by 1882, and remained at between 8 and 10 for the rest of the period. This level of demand, which equalled that of the previous two phases, was not maintained solely by the Rampart House Indians. The post Indians were able to trade tobacco to other native groups throughout the Yukon River basin, as the H.B.C. tobacco was in uniformly high demand throughout the area. In this one case, the Hudson's Bay Company was in a stronger position than its American competitors, and its advantage was due to quality rather than location of the trading post or the price of the commodity (see Table 14).

The attachment to the Company of those natives still trading at the post grew steadily in this period. Although such attachment is usually represented as being the result of a Company attempt to tie the Indians to a post, it must also be pointed out that this arrangement had substantial
financial benefits for the natives involved. The first of these benefits was possible employment with the firm. Payments to the Indians, which averaged £20 and £38 during the first and second phases respectively, averaged £54 per year for the final period, despite the fact that far fewer Indians were involved. By 1892, the annual payments had reached £79. It is important to note as well that for the first time, the Company was hiring the natives for more than short-term employment. Several Indians were hired on a full-time basis or for extended periods of six months to serve as post hunters, tripmen, or labourers.

Gratuities, usually seen as the best way of enticing native traders to a trading post, actually declined during this period. Expenditures on gratuities reached £72 in 1882, but fell sharply thereafter. For the final decade at Rampart House, the Company dispensed an average of £9 worth of gratuities annually (see Table 15).

An additional benefit which accrued to the natives from their trade at Rampart House was the re-established debt system. During the first phase, the average annual debt at Fort Youcon was 919 Made Beaver. As mentioned previously, the debt system was abolished in 1865 and was, therefore, not a factor in the second period. Between 1878, the first recorded figure for debt in the final phase, and 1892, the average annual debt incurred at Rampart House was 1029MB. The figures varied widely in the
last period, ranging from a low of 442MB in 1880 to a high of 1587MB in 1878. The debt system, re-established by the H.B.C. in an attempt to tie the natives to Rampart House, was successful in achieving that goal. For the natives, however, the system had the added benefit of removing some of the insecurity from their lives. If their hunts were unsuccessful, they could and did rely on the H.B.C. for the items necessary to sustain themselves and their families.

It should be noted that the Americans also offered debt to the Indians in this period (see Table 15).

Table 15
Payments to Indians, Gratuities and Indian Debt - 1875-1893

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PAYMENTS TO INDIANS (£)</th>
<th>GRATUITIES (£)</th>
<th>INDIAN DEBT (MB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The concluding phase of the Company's Yukon trade revealed several important characteristics of the native's place in that trade. As shown by the supply of deerskins and fox and the demand for tobacco, the Yukon trade had not become entirely localized. Inter-tribal trade still continued, and hence there was an opportunity, which the Company was never able to capitalize on, to re-establish its trade with distant tribes.

For the most part, however, the Rampart House Indians constituted the trading hinterland of the Hudson's Bay Company's post. As was shown earlier, this arrangement was not at all profitable for the Company. The Indians, however, benefitted in a number of ways from the relationship, and they always had the option of resorting to the Americans either at Herschel Island or along the Yukon River whenever they wished. The debt system and the possibility of Company employment reduced the natives' absolute dependence on their fur trapping. In addition, the H.B.C. trade provided them with at least one item, tobacco, and possibly several others which were in demand by other bands not trading at Rampart House, and also provided an outlet for at least one type of skin, deerskin, which was virtually untradeable elsewhere in the Yukon River basin.

The years 1875 to 1893 did, indeed, mark the last period of native predominance in the Yukon. In less than
five years, thousands of eager miners would descend on the area from all directions as part of the Klondike Gold Rush. The Indians' role in the emerging economy was very small, and consisted primarily of manual labour. Yet before 1893, in contrast, the natives had been the 'raison d'être' of the Yukon River basin economy. They not only realized their position, but were able to use it to their own advantage. As the example of the Rampart House Indians between 1875 and 1893 has shown, the natives were able, by altering their supply of furs or re-orienting their demands for European goods, to control the Yukon fur trade.
NOTES - DECLINING TRADE 1875-1893

1 Hardisty to Council, November 30, 1870, Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), B.200/b/37 fol. 277.

2 Hardisty to McDonald, March 20, 1877, HBCA, B.200/b/42 fol. 35. Despite the situation, Company officers did attempt on occasion to get permission for a change in the tariff. Hardisty to Governor, Northern Department, August 5, 1871, HBCA, B.200/b/38 fol. 100.


7 Camsell to Wrigley, March 25, 1891, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol. 698; Camsell to Chipman, September 12, 1891, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol. 719.

8 Camsell to Chipman, March 30 1892, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol. 755.

9 Hardisty to Wilson, March 30, 1875, HBCA, B.200/b/40 fol. 120. The "Gens du Large" Indians inhabited the Chandaleer River basin, an area well within American territory.

10 The Company's traders were at a severe disadvantage vis-a-vis the Herschel Island trade. Due to high transportation costs, they had to charge more for their goods, they lacked the range of goods offered by the whalers.
and they were not selling alcohol. The H.B.C. was able to attract the trade of Northern Kutchin groups on several occasions, but was not able to recapture the Inuit furs.

11 On the American's adjustment of the tariff, see Hardisty to Grahame, December 1, 1874, HBCA, B.200/b/40 fol. 102; Camsell to Grahame, March 26, 1879, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol. 30; Hardisty to McDonald, March 20, 1877, HBCA, B.200/b/42 fol. 35. Regarding the use of Indians to extend credit, see Camsell to Grahame, March 24, 1883, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol. 165.


13 K. McDonald, January 1, 1881, PAC, MacFarlane Papers, MG29 All, Vol.1 fol. 817-818.

14 Camsell to Grahame, March 23, 1881, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol. 30.

15 Camsell to Chipman, March 6, 1892, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol. 740; Camsell to Wrigley, March 29, 1890, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol. 597.

16 Camsell to Chipman, September 10, 1891, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol 713; Camsell to Chipman, March 6, 1892, HBCA, B.200/b/43 fol 740.

17 Inspection Report by James McDougall, March 1, 1893, HBCA, D.25/6 fol 162; Chipman to Council, January 7, 1893, HBCA, A.74/1 fol. 38.

18 A. Balikci, Vunta Kutchin Social Change (Ottawa: Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, 1963), p. 35.

19 It must be remembered that the expenditure figures do not include the cost of transporting supplies across the Stony Creek Pass, and of maintaining Lapierres House. Profit figures are considerably higher and recorded losses less substantial than they were in reality.

20 A. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza (Sidney, B.C.: Grey's Publishing, 1976), pp. 280-4. The North West Mounted Police moved into the Yukon River basin only after repeated remonstrations from Bishop Bompas concerning the expansion of American influence onto Canadian soil. Realistically, the Canadian government had little reason for expanding into the area prior to the Klondike Gold Rush. There were very few Europeans in the area and Canadian sovereignty
did not appear to be directly threatened. The government could hardly have justified the expense of sending a police detachment to this remote area solely to protect the interests of the monopoly-oriented Hudson's Bay Company. Such an action would have been politically very unwise. Importantly, Bompas' complaints were based partly on the fact that the American traders had begun to sell liquor to the natives and that the latter had learned how to brew their own alcohol. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza, p. 255.

21 See Ibid., pp. 118-290 for a discussion of the various enterprises being conducted in the area at this time. To provide one example of the economic impact of the non-fur traders in the region, R.G. McConnell hired five Indians to assist his party in crossing the Richardson Mountains. The natives were paid 15MB, or $7.50, for their efforts. R.G. McConnell, "Report of an exploration in the Yukon and Mackenzie Basin, N.W.T.," Canada Geological Survey Annual Report 1888-9 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1890), p. 116.

22 Hardisty to Smith, November 30, 1870, HBCA, B.200/b/37 fol. 272. It is important to note the very conservative nature of the Indians regarding the adoption of European goods. In the early years, the bulk of the trade centred around guns, beads and tobacco, items which fit easily into native culture and which the Indians had had access to for a considerable period through inter-tribal trade. Only gradually did the trade move towards the exchange of blankets and European clothing. The natives, it seems, tested the various manufactures offered by the H.B.C. and then adopted those which suited their culture. The acceptance of European clothing did not represent an "aping" of the H.B.C. traders, but rather a calculated assessment of the relative utility of European over native dress. It should also be noted that the change over was not complete and that certain items of dress, most noticeably footwear, continued to follow traditional patterns.
CONCLUSION

The half-century of Hudson's Bay Company activity in the Yukon River basin was a period of constant change and adaptation for both the trading firm and for the aboriginal population. Throughout the period, however, the natives were able to exert constant pressure on the H.B.C., forcing it to adapt the composition of its outfit to suit local demands, requiring the firm to remove an employee who had earned the animosity of the natives, and convincing the Company to continue its operations along the Porcupine River when returns from the Rampart House trade had fallen ominously low.

The natives adopted a number of methods to effect the changes they desired or to prevent the Company from taking an action which they saw as detrimental to their interests. When the H.B.C. was attempting to explore westward from Peel River, the eastern Kutchin bands fearful of losing their valuable middleman position, slowed expansion plans simply by refusing to assist the firm in its endeavours. Once Fort Youcon had been established, the Indians resorted largely to economic measures, such as withholding all skins, trading only certain species of furs, or refusing to purchase trade goods which did not adhere to their strict specifications, in order to achieve the desired objective. At the same time, the natives were not averse to
resorting to the threat of physical violence, particularly in the first phase of trading, taking advantage of their superior numerical position and the trader's latent fear of an Indian uprising.

Throughout the period of H.B.C. trade, however, the device most frequently used by the natives to assert their demands was the exploitation of competition. That the natives realized the potential benefit of competitive trade was demonstrated very early, for when Alexander Murray arrived at the confluence of the Yukon and Porcupine Rivers, one of the first things he was told by the local Indians was that Russian traders were only a short distance downstream and that they were expected to arrive at the post that year. From the very beginning, therefore, the natives ensured that the threat, if not the reality, of competitive trade hung over the Company's traders. After 1863, first Russian and then American traders moved into the trading hinterland of the H.B.C.'s posts and the natives moved quickly to exploit the situation. The Indians reported the tariff levels and gratuities being offered by rival traders to the Company on a regular basis and, although the proximity of the Peel River Indians prevented any direct pricing competition, the H.B.C. adopted a number of measures including employment of native labourers and increased debt to encourage the Yukon River basin natives to remain loyal. Despite the Company's stated belief that the long associa-
tion between the firm and the Indians would ensure a continuation of trade, the natives largely disregarded such bonds and resorted to trade wherever they felt they could get the most favourable deal.

This is not to suggest that the Hudson's Bay Company was little more than a naive pawn in the Yukon trade; rather it is to point out that the trade was mutually beneficial. Equally, the fur trade was based on mutual dependence for as much as the natives relied on the H.B.C. for European goods, the Company relied on the natives for furs. Importantly, however, while the latter dependence remained in force throughout the period, the Indians were increasingly able to resort to other sources of European manufactures, including Russian and American traders along the Yukon River and, in the final phase, American whalers at Herschel Island. As their dependence on the H.B.C. lessened, the natives were more vociferous in their demands on the firm although, as the Company remained the only supplier of certain valued items, these demands were not pressed too firmly.

The fur trade of the Yukon River basin shows, as A. Ray and D. Freeman have suggested with regard to the H.B.C. trade before 1763, that concepts of market exchange provide the best means of understanding native exchange. Although such non-market principles as status enhancement played a minor role in determining the Indians' response
to the Company's trade, the major determinants of native trading patterns revolved around the questions of supply and demand. The supply of furs offered to the H.B.C. in any one year was determined, within obvious environmental limits, by the natives' demand for European goods and by the Company's ability to fill that demand. As alternative sources of supply became available, meaning that native demand for H.B.C. merchandise declined, the number of furs traded annually dropped sharply. Importantly, the reaction of the natives to the Company's ability to supply them with the desired goods was not just general, with a reduction in all furs brought to the post, but was also species-specific, with the Indians bringing in fewer of a certain type of fur if the goods they usually purchased with these skins were unavailable. In contrast to earlier suggestions that natives traded primarily to satisfy immediate needs and to solidify political alliances, the case of the Yukon River basin trade suggests that the Indians were motivated primarily by economic factors.

The native societies of the region did not remain static throughout this period. The influx of Europeans and European goods placed pressure for change on the native cultures, pressures that the Indians largely resisted in the pre-gold rush era. The reason for the maintenance of native culture lies in the nature of European contact in this period. Following a model defined by Berkhofer and
which has been applied elsewhere in the native-European contact history of Canada, cultural change resulting from European contact is divided into two categories, directed and non-directed cultural change. The first, carried out by such agents as missionaries, government officials and teachers, refers to the efforts of those individuals who come to the natives with the sole or primary purpose of re-shaping the Indians' lives, usually to fit a European mold. Non-directed cultural change occurs when Europeans who have other interests than restructuring Indian culture in mind come in contact with native societies. It is the latter category which is of relevance to the present study.

The fur traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, recognizing that their economy rested on the maintenance of native culture, did not consciously attempt to re-shape Indian society. They did, however, both by their presence and by their introduction of increased volumes of European merchandise, cause a number of changes. Importantly, the natives were able to determine both the pace and the extent of cultural change in this period.

Cultural change does not refer to an inexorable process toward "European civilization" and, indeed, the Yukon River basin trade provides examples of how the fur trade served to embellish, rather than replace, some native cultural forms. For the first two decades of H.B.C. trade,
the dentalium shell was one of the principle items of exchange. In the pre-contact period, the natives had received these shells through inter-tribal trade, and the shells assumed the role of currency among the Kutchin. The greatly increased supply which accompanied the opening of Fort Youcon allowed for further accumulation of the valued items, enhancing the function of the shells in native culture. Other change, which included the adoption of European blankets and clothing, neither of which occurred in a substantive way until the final phase, occurred among the Indians trading with the H.B.C. The important point here is that, since the natives largely controlled the rate and impact of change, their culture survived.

It would be an error to end with the suggestion that everything in the post-1869 period worked to the advantage of the native population in the Yukon River basin. Strictly in economic terms, the situation was favourable and the natives were, for the most part, able to take advantage of the circumstances offered them. Socially, however, the period was one of great change and re-orientation. The new employment opportunities, while offering a respite from dependence on the fur trade, were only for short periods, and held out few prospects of evolving into permanent positions. At the same time, the Yukon River fur trade was declining in importance. With the appearance of numerous travellers and, especially, the beginnings of mining opera-
tions, the American traders were starting, by 1893, to turn away from the fur trade in favour of the new opportunities. The introduction of new articles of trade and new technology rendered many of the natives' skills obsolete. The steamboats, soon to ply the waters of the Yukon River as far upstream as the Whitehorse Rapids, ended the traveller's dependence on native transportation. European clothing was rapidly replacing the traditional Indian dress, repeating rifles were altering the nature of hunting and the introduction of alcohol added yet another disruptive force to the lives of the Indians. In their attempts to ameliorate the effects of the various social changes, the missionaries were themselves, not unwittingly, aiding in the destruction of the native way of life. Prior to 1893, the forces of change had not yet become overly evident, yet it was clear that the seeds of disruption had already been sown. The very circumstances which heightened the economic position of the natives of the Yukon River basin, primarily competition in all its varied manifestations, were soon to be responsible for substantial social upheaval and transformation in the natives' culture.
NOTES - CONCLUSION


7. The Church Missionary Society missionaries who were largely unsuccessful in their proselytizing efforts in this period, provide an example of agents of directed cultural change. Their "raison d'être" was to free the natives from the bonds of their "savage" religion and, simultaneously, to lead them towards European civilization. For a discussion of the ideology behind the C.M.S., see Jean Usher, "Apostles and Aborigines: The Social Theory of the Church Missionary Society," Social History, Vol. 7 (1971), 28-52.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

 Ecclesiastical Province of Rupertsland, Archives.

 Best, C.T. "Biography of Robert McDonald" (Unpublished manuscript), #4001, Box J.

 McDonald Collection, Box M.

 Hudson's Bay Company Archives

 Anderson, James Papers, E. 37.
 Commissioner's Outward Correspondence, D.13/1-21.
 Commissioner's Inward Correspondence, D.19/1-27.
 Port Simpson Account, B.200/d.
 Port Simpson Correspondence, B.200/b/5-44.
 Port Youcon Correspondence, B.240/b/1.
 Port Youcon Journals, B.240/2/1-8.
 LaPieres House Accounts, B.114/d/1-9.
 McDougal, James Papers. E. 38.
 Simpson, Governor Outward Correspondence and Official Reports to the London Committee, D.4/17-119.
 Simpson, Governor Inward Correspondence, D.5/3-52.
 Smith, Donald A. Inward Correspondence, D.13/1-21.
 Smith, Donald A. Outward Correspondence, D.11/1-8.

 Public Archives of Canada

 Burpee Papers, MG30 D39.
 Church Missionary Society Papers, MG17 B2. microfilm.
 MacFarlane Papers, MG29 All.
 Peel's River House Journals, MG19 P12.

 Smithsonian Institution Archives

 Collected Notes, Lists and Catalogs on Birds, 1839, 1849-1851, 1855-1965, Box 13, Kennicott #8, Record Unit 7215.
 Copies in possession of Greg Thomas, Parks Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

 184
B. PRIMARY SOURCES

Published


Campbell, Robert. Two Journals of Robert Campbell, 1808 to 1853. Seattle: John W. Todd, Jr., 1951.


and A.M. Johnson, eds. John Rae's Correspondence with the Hudson's Bay Company on Arctic Exploration 1844-1855. London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1953.


C. SECONDARY SOURCES

Published


Stefansson, V. Northwest to Fortune: The Search of Western Man for a Commercially Practical Route to the Far East. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1936.


D. PERIODICALS


Parnell, C. "Campbell of the Yukon, pt. 1," Beaver, Outfit 273 (June 1942), 4-6.

_______. "Campbell of the Yukon, pt. 2," Beaver, Outfit 273 (September 1942), 16-18.


Watson, R. "Chief Trader Alexander Hunter Murray and Fort Youcon," Beaver, Outfit 260 (June 1929), 211-213.

E. THESES


APPENDIX A

Three recent studies by A.J. Ray (A.J. Ray, "The Early H.B.C. Account Books as Sources for Historical Research." Archivaria 1 (1976):3-38; A.J. Ray, "The H.B.C. Account Books as Sources of Comparative Economic Analysis of the Fur Trade." Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology VI (1976):30-51; and A.J. Ray and Donald Freeman, Give Us Good Measure, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978) have provided excellent guidelines for the use of the pre-1763 Hudson's Bay Company financial records for historical, economic and anthropological research. For the purposes of the present study, however, Ray's analysis is useful only in a comparative sense. The account books of the early period followed a standard form, one which was adhered to at all the Company's posts. During the years under investigation here (1847-1983), there was no such consistency in the record keeping at the numerous trading posts operated by the H.B.C. It is important, therefore, to offer a few comments on the structure and content of the account books used at Fort Youcon (1847-1869) and Ramparts House (1870-1893). It is important to realize that the following analysis is based on, and relates to, only the financial records of the Yukon trade and, to a lesser extent, the Mackenzie River District.

The first point that must be made concerning the
structure of the Yukon account books is that they followed no set pattern. No standard amount of documentation was requested of the various traders (at least until 1890), and as a result, the content of the various records varied widely. The individual traders in charge of the posts determined what records were kept. Consequently, when certain traders, like W. Hardisty and J. McDougall, were in command, the account books contained a great deal of information including indent, invoice, inventory, stores currently in use, men's debts, salaries, balance sheet, recapitulation of fur returns, pacing account, Indian debts, payments and gratuities to Indians, and an account of provision consumption. At other times, such as the first two years of A.H. Murray's tenure at Fort Youcon (1847-1848), the records consisted solely of a recapitulation of fur returns and an account of debts incurred by the Company's employees. In fact, these two items, regardless of the remaining content, were included in all the account books.

Account books, therefore, varied widely in content, and the inclusion of information was left entirely to the discretion of the commanding officer. It follows, therefore, that the quality of the officer was an important determinant of the content. Before 1869, when the trade was still of major importance to "R" District, an officer of considerable competence was kept at the post. After that year, the responsibility for the Yukon trade fell on the
shoulders of lesser servants, although James McDougall, probably the best officer to serve in the area, remained active in the trade, off and on, for the next six years. Wilson, McDonald and Firth who between the three of them were in charge of Ramparts House for the final fifteen years, were all competent traders, but were not of particularly high quality in the area of record management. It must be remembered that Ramparts House was, by this time, a minor post, and therefore not deserving of one of the Company's better officers, who were in short supply at the time. At one point, the officer in charge of "R" District sent a letter to the clerk in charge of Ramparts House which directed him to provide specific information in his account books (see Table 1).

Table 1
List of Accounts - 1892*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Servants Book Debts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Transfers Dr and Cr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Packing Account of Returns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comparative Statement of Indian Debts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Statement of Gratuities to Indians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mess Expenses for Officers and Servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mess Expenses for Temporary Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Amount Paid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Stores Expended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Amount Paid for Furs (taken from Prompt Trade Book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Amount Paid for Country Produce (taken from Prompt Trade Book)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* List of accounts requested from each Post Out. 1892 in order to complete the District accounts for transmission to the Northern Department Office (B.173/d/11).
When Rupert's Land was sold to Canada in 1869, the Hudson's Bay Company abandoned the use of the pound in favour of the Canadian dollar in their accounting. The first year this change affected the Yukon trade was 1870, and at this time the system was not complete as men's wages were still expressed in pounds. For the remainder of the period, the dollar was the predominant unit of monetary measurement, although there were instances as late as the 1890's when values were listed in pounds (or pounds and dollars). Under the Uniform Currency Act of 1870, the Canadian government set the Canadian dollar at a value of 15/73 of a British gold sovereign. Reduced to pounds, this meant that one pound sterling equaled $4.866. There were only minor variations in this exchange rate up to 1914. All values after 1870 expressed in dollars were, using the above formula, converted into pounds in order to facilitate comparisons with the pre-1870 period (exchange rate information was found in Statistics Canada, Canada Year Book 1976-77, Ottawa, Statistics Canada, 1977, p. 1007).

Although there were difficulties caused by the inconsistency of record-keeping, there is sufficient information in the account books of the Yukon posts to undertake an analysis of the Company's and the native's trade. The investigation rests on the use of certain records which appeared with some regularity through the period. Included in this list are the recapitulation of fur returns, the
indent/invoice, list of Indians credit and debt, records of payment and gratuities to natives, employees' salaries, balance sheet and records of the Mackenzie River District.

Table 2

Ramparts House
Packing Account of Returns Outfit, 1880*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pack #1:</th>
<th>Pack #2:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 prime lge grey Bears</td>
<td>4 prime lge grey Bears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 prime lge Beaver</td>
<td>14 prime lge Beavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 prime sml do</td>
<td>4 prime cross Foxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 prime cross Foxes</td>
<td>5 prime red do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 prime red do</td>
<td>1 prime silver do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 prime silver do</td>
<td>3 prime white do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 prime blue do</td>
<td>1 prime blue do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ramparts House Account Book (B.173/d/5)

The recapitulation of fur returns, which listed the number of each species of fur traded at the post, was listed in every account book. The fur returns were actually listed in three different ways, with all three appearing in one account book on occasion: 1) Packing account - listed the contents, type and quantity of fur, included in each pack (Table 2), 2) Recapitulation of fur returns - total number of each type of fur traded, usually including the total value of the receipts (Table 3), and 3) Combination of 1
and 2 - lists total number of each fur species, and also the contents of the individual packs (Table 4). Regardless of the manner of listing, the content of each of these methods is the same. All furs were unpacked at Fort Simpson, recounted and then repacked, a process made necessary by the fact that the Yukon posts used smaller bundles than did the rest of the "R" District establishments in order to facilitate transportation over the Richardson Mountains.

Table 3
Ramparts House
Valuation of Fur Returns Outfit, 1877*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fur</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Value (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Bears</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>7.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Beaver</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Foxes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Foxes</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Foxes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Foxes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynxes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martens</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otters</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolves</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ramparts House Account Books (B.173/d/2).

The second major source of information was the indent. Each year, the trader was required to send out a requisition for the following outfit (trading year). The indent, therefore, provides an excellent indication of the natives' demands for goods, as perceived by the trader. After 1885, the procedure for ordering supplies was altered
Table 4

Ramparts House
Recapitulation of Fur Returns*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PACK 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>PACK 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>PACK 3</th>
<th></th>
<th>PACK 4</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEARS:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEAVER:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOXES:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LYNX:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARTEN:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINK:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTTER:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOLF:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOLVERINE:</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Ramparts House Account Books (B.173/d/5).
P = prime; C = common

somewhat. The officer in charge of "R" District sent supplies to the Yukon post based on what they had received the previous year, what returns had been received from the post, and the requests of the trader for an increase (or decrease) in the supply of particular items. As a result, the invoice, or list of supplies received, was used instead of an indent for the final eight years. The indent
(or invoice) was listed only by the more conscientious traders. The usual means of listing the indent for specific supplies was to include the year's indent, the previous year's indent, the latest invoice, and the current inventory (Table 5). At other times, however, the indent was listed separately from other records. An important consideration to note is the difference between the outfit year and the indent year. The difficulties of transportation and the

Table 5

Fort Youcon
Expenditure of Outfit, 1867
and Indent on Y.F. Outfits, 1871 and 1872*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inventory - June 1, 1868</th>
<th>District Transfers</th>
<th>Total Outfit 1867</th>
<th>Inventory - May 31, 1869</th>
<th>District Transfers</th>
<th>Expenditures - Outfit 1867</th>
<th>Indians - Indent on Y.F. 1871</th>
<th>Servants - Indent on Y.F. 1871</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Pieces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot-Ball Bag</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shot-B.B. Bag</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco - Rolls</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco - Bales</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guns-Indian-case</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guns-Mounted-case</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guns-Mixed-case</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Fort Youcon Account Book (B.240/d/2)
distances involved made it necessary for the trader to order his supplies three years in advance. For example, during the outfit year 1851, the indent for that year would be labelled "indent 1854."

The most accessible information in the account books relates to the number of employees and their salaries. Most of the account books included a table which indicated the number of employees, their positions, and their wages (Table 6). Lacking such a table, the number of employees at the post could be derived by counting the names entered in the section entitled "men's book debts." Employee

Table 6
Fort Youcon
Statement of Servants Salaries Outfit 1867*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>CAPACITY</th>
<th>CONTRACT EXPIRES</th>
<th>ADVANCES AT FORT SIMPSON</th>
<th>ADVANCES AT FORT YOUCON</th>
<th>WAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDougal J.</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinclair J.</td>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoole A.</td>
<td>Interpreter</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibbeston J.</td>
<td>Steersman</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boucher F.</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson M.</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLean D.</td>
<td>Middleman</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald J.</td>
<td>Middleman</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelly P.</td>
<td>Middleman</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith E.</td>
<td>Middleman</td>
<td>1871</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyld J.</td>
<td>Middleman</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Deceased, October 22, 1868

* Fort Youcon Account Book (B.240/d/12).
salaries were often listed in the annual balance sheets (see Table 10). For the years when no account books were available for the Yukon trade, information on employees was found in the Fort Simpson records. It should be noted that the total number of employees and their wages refers only to the permanent staff at either Fort Youcon or Ramparts House. District employees, engaged in such tasks as transporting supplies and boatbuilding, were not added to the Yukon complement unless they were involved in the Yukon for an entire outfit year.

Listings of payments to native labourers or trip-men employed by the Company were particularly explicit. Information normally included in this section covers 1) reason for which Indians were employed, 2) total expenditures for each task, 3) total expenditures on native help for the outfit year, and 4) list of all goods given to the natives to satisfy the debt. In the later years (after 1880), when the Company was employing Indians on a long-term basis, the name of the individual usually accompanied the above information (Table 7).

The greatest difficulty encountered in the coding of data from the account books occurred as a result of the inconsistency of the accounts relating to the dispersal of gratuities. Throughout the entire period, gratuities were listed for the entire outfit year, with no breakdown for individual bands or Indians. The difficulty arose out of
### Table 7

**Fort Youcon Payments to Indians**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goods</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Pair cord Trousers</td>
<td>8/4</td>
<td>£2.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Fine Blue Striped Shirts</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>.17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Fine Red Striped Shirts</td>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Plane Blankets 3pts.</td>
<td>9/4</td>
<td>2.16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/6 dox. Comm Cott. Hadsfs doz.</td>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Scarlet Worsted Belt 4 in</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Comm. Cott. Shirt</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

£6.15.9

---

* Fort Youcon Account Books (B.240/d/7).

The fact that the total value of the gratuities was not listed in the same units in all the records. For the majority of the years, the value was entered in either pounds or dollars. On several occasions, however, Made Beaver (MB) was the unit of measurement. To confuse matters further, there were other instances where no value was placed on the goods. Instead, a list of the individual items dispersed to the natives was provided. In order to compare values, it was necessary to express all values in the same units. As the majority of the cases were available in £ or $, it was decided to use £ as the standard. To convert MB into £, it was necessary to derive a formula for each year. The formula used was computed by dividing the total £ value of all furs received into the total MB value of those furs. This computation provides a rough
estimate of the relationship between MB and £ for that year. If either of the figures used in the formula was unavailable for the year in question, the listings for either the preceding or following year were consulted. The MB value of the gratuities was divided by the computed variable to provide an approximation, in £, of the goods. For those years when neither a £ or MB value was listed, a different approach was necessary. It was common practise that either the inventory or the invoice included a price list for the goods imported to the post. Each item given as a gratuity

Table 8
Fort Youcon
Gratuities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>MB Value</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Chiefs Blue garter coats</td>
<td>33/1</td>
<td>3.04.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Illinois grey capot 4 ells</td>
<td></td>
<td>- .17.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 pr. cm. grey cloth Trouser</td>
<td>1 1/4</td>
<td>1.14.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 fine B.S.cott. Shirts</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>-.10.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 cloth vests</td>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>1.01.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 lbs. gunpowder</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-.01.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 lbs. ball shot</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-.01.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 lbs. Can. twist Tobacco</td>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>-.10.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Lgr. Head Half Axe</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.03.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4 doz. Flat Bastard files</td>
<td>6/3</td>
<td>-.02.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inland Advance 25p/c 2.01.6
£10.07.8

was given a value in £ or $ based on the price list. The total for all the items, plus 25 percent for the inland advance, a premium placed on the cost of goods imported to the Yukon due to the high cost of transportation, was then
entered as the total gratuity. As before, if a listing of the cost of items in the inventory or invoice was not included in the particular account book, the closest (in terms of years) was substituted. The machinations made necessary by the inconsistency of the records lowers somewhat the reliability of the gratuity figures. The values are, however, within fairly small limits, accurate representations of the Company's gratuities.

The final section of the Yukon account books consulted for this study was the listing of native debts and credits. This particular segment followed a standard pattern throughout the forty-six years between 1847 and 1893. The name of each native trading at the post was entered, with a listing for the total debt of that Indian on current account. Before 1855, the total credit of each native (amount the Company owed to the individual) was also entered. At the end of each, the total debt (or credit) for the outfit year was provided. For the entire period, all values for debt or credit were expressed in terms of Made Beaver (see Table 9).

Compiling data on the Mackenzie River District was considerably more difficult than coding the information from the Yukon account books. Throughout the period, the Fort Simpson record-keeping followed no standard model, thus confusing the search for the desired data. Due to the size and complexity of the "R" District trade, the officer
### Table 9

**Fort Youcon Indian Balances**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Dr</th>
<th>Cr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mbr</td>
<td>Mt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Seenazit</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Beetsha</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unseetsel</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Howitse</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108. Betsekeetlit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>161</td>
<td>749</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>749</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Chief Black River Indians.*

* Fort Youcon Account Book (B.240/d/1).

In charge found it necessary to keep a number of account books, each one dealing with a single aspect of the company's operations. The partial list appended below is indicative of the range of sources consulted to provide the necessary information. Note that these sources also made it possible to fill in many gaps left in the Yukon account books, especially in relation to fur returns and employment (see Table 11).

It is not intended to discuss the content of the Fort Simpson account books here. No one source was available for the entire period. Certain forms of listing information were dropped and others were added, depending of course on the officer in charge. Locating annual data was
a matter of going through all available account books until the desired information was found. While this technique is admittedly unscientific, it was, due to the confusing and inconsistent nature of the records, the only systematic means of finding the desired data on the Mackenzie River District.

Table 10
Fort Youcon - Balance Sheet*

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>£ 36.5.3</td>
<td>Mens Book Debts</td>
<td>£ 3.14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invoice</td>
<td>703.15.7</td>
<td>Trans. Dr. Fort Simpson</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Cr. F.S.</td>
<td>106.14.3</td>
<td>Trans. Dr. Peels River</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Cr. P.R.</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>Returns</td>
<td>5448.14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mens Wages</td>
<td>202.00.0</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
<td>30.17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£1048.15.1</td>
<td>Profit &amp; Loss</td>
<td>8.19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indian Labour</td>
<td>2.11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indian Voyageurs</td>
<td>23.12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gratuities</td>
<td>10.07.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Country Produce Exp.</td>
<td>71.02.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£5599.18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Balance apt. gain</td>
<td>£4551.03.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Fort Youcon Account Book (B.240/d/7).

One final point must be made concerning the comparison of the fur returns of the Mackenzie River District and the Yukon trade. Two years passed from the time furs were traded at Fort Youcon or Ramparts House until they were received at the Fort Simpson depot. In the "R" District records, the returns of the Yukon trade were listed the year they were deposited at Fort Simpson, and not the
Table 11
Fort Simpson - Account Books*

| Reference Book (B.200/d/94) |
| Men's Book Debts (B.200/d/95) |
| General (B.200/d/109) |
| Servants' Ledger (B.200/d/120) |
| Packing Account of Returns (B.200/d/133) |
| Distribution Book (B.200/d/149) |
| Outfits and Indents (B.200/d/149) |
| Lists and Distribution of Servants (B.200/d/157) |
| District Returns (B.200/d/180) |
| Blotter (B.200/d/182) |
| Indents and requisitions (B.200/d/188) |
| Store Invoice Book (B.239/dd/22) - York Factory and Winnipeg |

* Partial list of records consulted.

year they were traded. This procedure of recording the returns from the various posts was adopted as means of reconciling the receipts from the disparate district. Returns for the entire district were listed when the packs were being made up for shipment to York Factory or, later, Winnipeg. As comparisons at the time were made without reconciling the two-year discrepancy, it is important that this procedure be replicated for the present study. This means, for example, that the Fort Youcon returns for 1848 were compared with the total Mackenzie River District returns for the year 1850.

Despite the structural inconsistency of the Yukon account books, these materials do provide an excellent source for analysis of the fur trade. The fact that many
sections appear with some regularity throughout the period makes it possible to study trends and fluctuations in the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company and the native population.