

**ST. PETER'S: A HISTORICAL STUDY**  
with  
**ANTHROPOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS**  
on the  
**CHRISTIAN ABORIGINES OF RED RIVER**  
(1811 - 1876)

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A Thesis Presented to  
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by  
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## ABSTRACT OF M.A. THESIS

ST. PETER'S: A HISTORICAL STUDY WITH ANTHROPOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS  
ON THE CHRISTIAN ABORIGINES OF RED RIVER (1811 - 1876)

In 1811, under the auspices of Thomas Douglas, the Fifth Earl of Selkirk, the Red River Colony was started in the heart of the North American continent. For the first decade after their arrival the pioneers of this Colony were exposed to the long-standing rivalry of the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies. In 1816 fur trading hostilities reached a bloody climax in the "Skirmish at Seven Oaks". Open conflict between the two corporations was precipitated by the introduction of the Colony, which the "Nor'Westers" believed had been planted by the Hudson's Bay Company, as a means of eliminating Canadian trading competition. Finally, in 1821, the two corporations amalgamated, and the new Hudson's Bay Company took over undisputed control of "Rupert's Land".

Also living on the banks of the Red River at this time was a band of Salteaux Indians under the chieftainship of "Peguis", an impressive and intelligent man, with a colourful personality. During the troubles of 1816 Peguis showed himself to be highly friendly to the white settlers. In 1817, partly because of Peguis' prestige, Selkirk concluded a treaty with him (together with other Indian "Chiefs") by which he hoped to extinguish the Indian land title. The validity of this agreement, however, was later questioned.

In 1820, after a period of preliminary interest, the Anglican "Church Missionary Society", in conjunction with the Hudson's Bay Company, despatched the Reverend John West to Red River to begin missionary activity among the Indians and Europeans. In his three years at the Colony West

built the first Anglican church and school, and started preliminary work among the Indians. In 1823 he returned home and was replaced by the Reverend David Jones, who continued alone until 1825, when the Reverend William Cockran arrived to assist him.

In 1829 Cockran began work among a group of Half-breeds at "Grand Rapids". His interest, however, soon turned to Peguis' Salteaux Indians, who since 1817 had been living north of the Colony, on a Reserve that Selkirk had set aside for them. Cockran believed that only permanent residence, induced by agriculture, could convert the Indians to Christianity. Accordingly, in 1832, he established a small group of Indian farmers at "Netley Creek". Encouraged by partial success, in 1833 he began a similar settlement at "Cook's Creek". It was this establishment that became St. Peter's, the topic of this thesis, and the first Christian Indian Settlement of Western Canada.

By this time a number of Cree Indians had moved in from the north, and they began to take advantage of the offers made by Cockran to the Salteaux. In fact, before long the largest part of the Indian Settlement were members of this tribe. Throughout the century, moreover, they retained a settled majority and became superior to the Salteaux in Christianity and farming. Consequently, although related peoples, the Salteaux and Crees developed a feeling of mutual animosity. Outward cooperation under the leadership of Peguis, however, helped to stem bitter feelings until after his death in 1864.

It soon became obvious to Cockran and the other missionaries that the Hudson's Bay Company was very much opposed to Indian settlement. Soon after his first attempt to civilize the Indians, Cockran was ordered by Governor George Simpson to discontinue. But he refused to do so, in spite

of the fact that David Jones, his fellow clergy man, sided with the Company. This repressive policy of the Company continued until the end of its rule, and was a large factor in the failure of St. Peter's.

In 1839 the Reverend John Smithurst assumed Cockran's duties at the Indian Settlement. Although filled with enthusiasm at first, he soon became embroiled in a controversy with the Company, which appeared to sap his initial zeal. Difficulties with the Indians and incompatibility with Cockran also discouraged him, and by 1851, his last year at St. Peter's, his original ideas had greatly changed. In the meantime, moreover, the Indian Settlement, which had progressed under him earlier, now suffered a considerable deterioration.

From 1851 and until his final departure in 1857, William Cockran re-assumed the work at St. Peter's, and gave the Indians a new lease on settled life. In 1853 he completed the permanent stone, "St. Peter's", church. More Indians settled, Christian membership increased, and it appeared as though civilization had finally been grasped by the aboriginal mind.

But after 1857, when Cockran left for Portage La Prairie, the Indians once again began a gradual decline. This was through no fault of the Reverend Abraham Cowley, Cockran's successor, but rather the result of an increased Canadian and American interest in the potentially productive lands of Western Canada. In spite of Cowley's gallant defence throughout this period, dissipation among the Indians, caused by white infiltration, continued to increase.

During the 1860's this new feeling of restlessness and anticipation was largely manifested through the "land question", which still remained because of Selkirk's failure to reach a conclusive settlement with the

Indians in 1817. With the increased arrival of white settlers, both Indians and Half-breeds became uneasy over their rights to the land. Riel's Half-breed rebellion of 1869-70 was largely caused by this uncertainty.

Following the rebellion, during which the Indians remained loyal to the Crown, a Treaty was concluded, in 1871, with the Indians of St. Peter's and the surrounding territory. By this agreement the Indians were given annuities, reserves, gifts, and several special privileges in return for their lands. Once again, it appeared as though St. Peter's Indian Settlement might be saved.

But before the first post-treaty half-decade was over it became apparent that St. Peter's, as a permanent Christian Indian Settlement, was doomed to failure. The old animosity between the Salteaux and Crees helped to split the Reserve into two halves. Half-breed and white influx, which had been going on for a number of years, now overtook and passed the total settled Indian population. The government's Indian policy was hampered by internal administrative dissention, which added to the destruction of the Settlement. Drunkenness, extravagance, restlessness, improvidence and all the other traditional Indian weaknesses now increased at an alarming rate. As a result, by 1876, the fate of St. Peter's was settled. For a number of years it continued, experiencing fluctuations both upward and downward. In 1909, however, the federal government arranged to buy the Reserve, and in the years that followed most of the Indians moved to a new reserve further north. St. Peter's today is no longer a Christian Indian Settlement, and only one resident family descended from the original Indian inhabitants holds any appreciable amount of agricultural land.

## PREFACE

Artificially discriminate self-love, and collective human arrogance and ignorance, which are characteristics of what is commonly known as "racial prejudice", are parts of a curious and almost universal phenomenon. Most national groups of people, at some period in their history, have believed themselves to be superior to all others. Thus, Aristotle, writing at a time when the ancient Mediterranean civilizations were revelling in their glory, stated that:

"Those who live in a cold climate and in (northern) Europe are full of spirit, but wanting in intelligence and skill; and therefore they keep their freedom, but have no political organization, and are incapable of ruling over others. Whereas the natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive, but they are wanting in spirit, and therefore they are always in a state of subjection and slavery. But the Hellenic race (sic: with Aristotle included), which is situated between them, is likewise intermediate in character, being high-spirited and also intelligent."<sup>1</sup>

Since Aristotle's day, however, the tables have turned and the northern Europeans, of whom Aristotle had such a low opinion, now sometimes think of the Mediterraneans with equal contempt, and in an almost inverse manner.

This thesis, although not pretending to grapple with the late and formidable Aristotle, or to explain the highly complex social phenomenon of racial prejudice, is nevertheless partly a humble attempt to show that the American aborigines, and in fact all races, are members of a common

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Jowett (trans.) and H.W.C. Davis (intro.), Aristotle's Politics (Oxford, 1905), 270-271.

and highly similar humanity. In the author's opinion, "racial discrimination" is largely the result of an unfortunate human characteristic that blinds us to the faults of our own group and to the virtues of others. That is, the member of any currently ascendant nationality tends to select the best specimens of his "race" as being typical. Any favourable variations in other nationalities are considered exceptional and are therefore ignored. The converse, in the case of aboriginal or "backward" peoples, is also true.<sup>2</sup>

One of the greatest difficulties in writing on aboriginal peoples is to keep observations on the narrative from wandering beyond objective standards, and to avoid value-judgements, which are generally acknowledged as the greatest pitfalls in a scholar's work. Commenting on the contents of this thesis has therefore been doubly difficult, for it involves not only a pre-literate society and an inexperienced author, but also religion and other respected institutions.

Among these institutions is the Hudson's Bay Company, a corporation that has been established in Western Canada for nearly three centuries. Throughout this narrative various observations are made, many of which may be construed as being highly critical of this institution. Criticism of the Company is, in fact, one of the author's intentions.

From all available evidence it can only be concluded that the Company contributed a great deal to the failure of St. Peter's, and possibly to the failure of a strong civilizing influence on the entire Western

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<sup>2/</sup> This statement should be qualified somewhat. Many aboriginal peoples, including several tribes of the North American Indians, initially believed themselves to be superior to the Europeans and to others. But as the years passed, and as their primitive economies became more dependant on European products, they gradually assumed a feeling of inferiority;

Canadian aboriginal population. This criticism, however, must be based on the assumption that "civilization", or "enlightenment", or "material prosperity" are in themselves worthwhile objectives, or at least those which are most commonly desired in our society.

But before proceeding further, it should be pointed out that similar criticism can be directed against the governments of the period, against the missionary sponsoring "Church Missionary Society", and even against the missionaries themselves. For no organization, regardless of how "moral" or carefully planned its policies may be, is completely capable of carrying them out. Deviations, or even entirely contrary behavior is always possible, especially in such a loose and widely flung corporation as was the Hudson's Bay Company in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, while criticism in this thesis is directed toward "the Company", or toward "the Government", it must be remembered that these were vast, impersonal structures, often lacking in the advantages of rapid modern communications, with their actions subject to personal whims and the traditional shortcomings of administrators and bureaucrats.

In this regard, also, some explanation is necessary as to the depth and types of sources used. Any investigation is, of course, always limited by the material available, and by the range of the subject involved. In tracing the history of St. Peter's, it was found that a lengthy period (1811 - 76) had to be covered if any meaningful conclusions were to be achieved. Consequently, for the sake of a relatively complete narrative, some detail was sacrificed, although none, it is believed, of any great significance.

The greatest source of original documents pertaining to Anglican missionary work in Western Canada is the Church Missionary House of London,

England, whose archives contain some 60,000 pages of original and recorded incoming and outgoing correspondence. In 1955 the Public Archives of Canada microfilmed these records, which are now contained on 52 reels of microfilm in Ottawa (A-75 to A-126). This extensive set of documents cover a century (1820 - 1920) of Anglican missionary endeavour in Western Canada, and the subject of this thesis is but one small aspect of their scope. It is to be hoped, therefore, that scholars interested in Western Canadian history will in future take these records into consideration, for they undoubtedly contain much that has been either unknown or forgotten, not only in Anglican missionary work, but in every field of Western Canadian historical knowledge.

In a large part of this thesis reference is made to original documents rather than secondary material. In places, however, and especially in the first two chapters, secondary sources are cited somewhat more frequently, as the author did not believe that he could contribute anything to already existing narratives. But many of the books listed in the bibliography are in fact primary sources in a sense, because very often they contain personally observed descriptions and accounts.

Relative to the original documents of the Church Missionary Society is a set of contemporary publications, based on the letters and reports of the missionaries. These volumes, which were generally issued on a yearly basis by the Church Missionary Society, were filled with summaries and statistics concerning the various stations. Being printed, edited, and shorn of inconsequential narrative detail, they proved to be of great assistance to the author. Their greatest shortcoming is a reluctance to discuss internal difficulties, a characteristic, perhaps, of every type of similar publication. Published as "Proceedings of the Church Missionary

Society", "Church Missionary Records", or "Church Missionary Intelligencers," a fairly complete set of these volumes is now contained in the Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land.

On a smaller scale, but whenever available, use was also made of contemporary lay and governmental accounts. One of the greatest dangers, it was felt, on writing a history based largely on missionary work, was to fall into a missionary type of thinking. While this in itself might not be inimical to historical writing, it obviously would leave the writer open to criticism. For although the missionaries were unquestionably honest men, they often fell into that unfortunate human habit of assuming that the world revolved around them, and that they alone possessed a monopoly on the truth. Not only the Anglicans, but clergymen of all religions, and in fact members of all professions, are subject to this fault. Quite frankly, however, the author (although not an Anglican), has developed a very deep admiration for some of the missionaries whom he encountered in the process of his research.

Some explanation with regard to footnoting in this thesis is also necessary. Often, as the readers will observe, the writer's footnotes resemble theatrical "asides". But while one school may criticize his approach — saying in effect that what cannot be placed in the main text should not appear at all — the author nevertheless feels justified in his method. "Anthropological observations", for instance, cannot be inserted into a historical narrative without at least some disruption of continuity, regardless of how skillful the scholar may be. Therefore, because the author does not profess to have this skill, and since the combining of even closely related subjects is always a delicate task, he

has contented himself with the method described. However, should this explanation still not satisfy the critic, the author can only plead personal admiration for a system that has been used, although differently and more effectively, by many others before him.

This method of footnoting is, therefore, not an attempt to combine history and anthropology, but merely a device used to broaden certain aspects of the thesis by including anthropological comments and other points of interest. The author did not conduct field surveys. Consequently, kinship, marriage, and other vital aspects of social anthropology receive only cursory treatment. But even though this is primarily a historical thesis, the author, while writing it, has constantly tried to expand his narrative with those details which might interest an anthropologist as well as a historian.

For guiding him on numerous occasions into more appropriate channels, for reading and correcting the manuscript, and for generous, time-consuming assistance and advice, the author is particularly grateful to Professor W.L. Morton, the Chairman of Manitoba's History Department. In social anthropology, the author received invaluable instruction from Doctor R.W. Dunning, of the University of Manitoba, whose interest helped him, he trusts, from straying (historically) too far from a correct (anthropological) perspective. The Reverend T.C.B. Boon, a former incumbent of St. Peter's and the present Archivist to the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, allowed the author access to much important material, and gave useful information through his intimate knowledge of the topic. The author is also indebted to Mr. H. Shave for permission to use the original manuscript of John West's diary. The financial assistance of the Committee

of Award of the J.S. Ewart Memorial Fund, which enabled the writer to do research work at the Canadian Archives in Ottawa, is also gratefully acknowledged. Invaluable, too, by way of research guidance, was the help of Mr. H.W. Bowsfield, the Provincial Archivist, and the staffs of the Provincial Archives and Library; the University of Manitoba library; and of the Canadian Archives in Ottawa. And finally, although by no means lastly, the author benefited from the patience of his typists — Misses Joan Alsaker and Tina Andriessen — whose intelligence reconstructed a badly organized and disjointed manuscript into a comprehensible and readable whole.

Winnipeg, Manitoba,

April, 1960.

M.P. Czaboka

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTES ON SOURCES

ARL: Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land.

CMI: Church Missionary Intelligencer.<sup>1</sup>

CMR: Church Missionary Record.

CMS: Church Missionary Society.

PAC: Public Archives of Canada (microfilm).<sup>2</sup>

PAM: Public Archives of Manitoba.

PCMS: Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society.

SP: Sessional Papers of Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> References in this thesis to the publications of the Church Missionary Society — "Church Missionary Intelligencers", "Church Missionary Records", and "Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society" — are always followed by the years for which they were issued (i.e. PCMS for 1819-20). Published in London, England, on an annual basis, these volumes often give information not only for the years indicated, but also summaries for previous periods.

<sup>2</sup> Because no other specific method of reference is available, all footnotes in this thesis pertaining to the Public Archives of Canada refer to a microfilm number (i.e. A100, etc.).

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## INTRODUCTION

### Origin And Early History of the North American Aborigines

The origin of the American aborigines, or "Indians", has, within the last century, been established beyond all reasonable doubt.<sup>1</sup> Before the admixtures of the European conquest took place, the Indians belonged primarily to the "Mongolian" race,<sup>2</sup> and in all probability spread into Alaska by way of Bering Strait. From this peninsula they flowed southward, in ever-extending migrations, until finally, after what must have taken many centuries, they inhabited the entire length and breadth of the Americas. It appears that at no time, however, was their density of population very great. With a few exceptions — notably the sophisticated civilizations of the Central American Aztecs, the quasi-agriculturalists of eastern North America, and the class-conscious village dwellers of the Northern Pacific coast — the Americas came to be inhabited by widely scattered nomadic tribes, living in a condition of pre-literate simplicity, seldom in mutual contact, and largely ignorant of the world and its forces around them.

Estimates as to how long men have inhabited America vary from as much as 40,000 years to as little as 10,000 years. In the Indian pre-literate societies there was, of course, no knowledge of the keeping of history, or any conception whatever of recording the past beyond vague,

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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent general discussion on the origin and culture of the pre-Columbian Indians, see: P.S. Martin, G.I. Quimby and D. Collier, Indians before Columbus: Twenty Thousand Years of North American History Revealed by Archeology (Chicago, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> See: Griffith Taylor, Environment, Race and Migration: Fundamentals of Human Distribution, and Settlement in Canada and Australia (Toronto, 1949), 252-263.

verbal and mythological tradition. The memories of the first trans-continental migrations were therefore soon lost, and the Indians, with their primitive methods of nomadic existence, devoted their energy to the harsh struggle for daily survival. Any knowledge of pre-Columbian America must therefore be based on archeological evidence, and to date this is still relatively incomplete. Difficulty in dating the arrival of the aborigines is also increased by the probability that their migrations did not all occur at one time. It is generally believed that the trans-Bering movements were a steady and gradual process, taking place over a period of many centuries. Even in modern times there have been some crossings, both to and from Siberia and Alaska, indicating that the migrations have been long and continual.

Because of the long-range distribution of the aboriginal movements, both in point of time and locality, the ethnological and linguistic characteristics of the various tribes differed considerably. Although all clearly of Mongolian racial type -- with partly slanted eyes, yellowish skin, black hair, and high cheek bones -- a considerable diversity developed, and long isolation further accentuated, whatever differences of race, culture and language had existed in the beginning.

When the first Europeans arrived on the shores of North America, most of the Indians of present-day Canada (numbering some 220,000) were living a nomadic type of life, largely dependant on hunting and fishing for subsistence.<sup>3</sup> In general, however, livelihood corresponded to the

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<sup>3</sup> Diamond Jenness is generally acknowledged as the foremost authority on Canada's Indians. See: Diamond Jenness, The Indians of Canada (Ottawa, n.d.).

geographic location of each Indian tribe, with a different type of culture and economy in each Canadian geographic area.

Stretching across the great northern boreal forest region, from Newfoundland and the Maritime provinces to northern Manitoba, was a group of linguistically related tribes called the "Algonkians". Here subsistence was largely based on the meat of the moose, the beaver, the muskrat, other smaller animals, and fish. As in all Indian tribes, animal skins provided clothing, and in some instances, shelter. This was also the region of wigwams and in particular of the birch bark canoe — an invaluable Indian invention that was later to become the basis of transportation in the great northwest fur trade.

East of the Great Lakes, along the Niagara peninsula, and northward down the valley of the St. Lawrence, a more complex society had evolved. Although agriculture in this region was still in a primitive stage of development, considerable quantities of maize, tobacco, beans, squashes, pumpkins and sunflowers were grown. These products enabled the growers to live in semi-permanent "longhouses"; and surpluses were traded to some extent with the northern tribes. This whole area was mostly populated by "Iroquians", a people with ferocious tendencies who frequently engaged in warfare with neighbouring tribes and amongst themselves. With the coming of the Europeans, five of these tribes — the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas — armed in a politically well-organized league and rapidly destroyed or dispersed their kindred, the "Huron", "Tobacco" and "Neutral" nations. From that time on a great displacement of tribes began that continued, with some intervals, until the last half of the nineteenth century. While aboriginal movements had been frequent

even in pre-historic times, the coming of the Europeans greatly increased this tendency. The eastern Indians, once armed with vastly superior European weapons, pushed westward against militarily weaker tribes. Precipitated by white settlement of the eastern seaboard and St. Lawrence Valley, this displacement produced a chain reaction that affected even Western tribes that had as yet not come into direct European contact.

Probably of equal if not greater importance in effecting a revolutionary change in the aboriginal culture and economy was the coming of the horse.<sup>4</sup> Previous to the arrival of the Europeans horses were unknown in America, dog being the only animal under domestication. During the sixteenth century, however, the introduction of horses by the Spaniards led to a prolific phenomenon. Within a few decades, by means of trading, theft, capture, and natural increase of wild herds, horses spread throughout a large part of the North American continent. Although all tribes were eventually thereby affected, it was the "Plains Indians" in particular on whom horses had the greatest effect.

The Plains Indians belonged to a number of different tribes, and although in many ways culturally similar, spoke a number of different languages. The hunting of the bison, or "buffalo", on which their economy was largely based, became relatively easy with the introduction of firearms, and especially so in combination with the fleet-footed horse. As a consequence, however, the great buffalo herds of the prairies were rapidly decimated, and the newly-found comparatively leisurely existence enjoyed by a few generations posed their successors with the threat of extinction

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<sup>4</sup> See: Frank Gilbert Roe, The Indian and the Horse (Norman, 1955).

by starvation.

Along the Pacific coast, and in the interior of what is now British Columbia, lived a number of tribes of a somewhat more complex culture that was common to all, even though languages differed. The most important staple food of these tribes was the salmon, a fish that teemed in the coastal waters and rivers in seemingly endless numbers. Because of this plentiful supply, famine seldom if ever came, and life, as compared with that of easterly Indians, was relatively easy. And, as in most societies where leisure time is available, a more elaborate culture developed. A class system evolved, consisting of nobles, commoners and slaves. The nobles lived in large plank houses, often subjected their slaves to cruel punishment, and gave magnificent celebrations and feasts called "potlaches" for their colleagues. Art of many forms and wooden sculpturing in particular reached a high stage of development, as is still witnessed today by the remaining "totem poles" of the culture.

North of the Algonkians, stretching from James Bay in a northwesterly direction to the mouth of the MacKenzie River, lived the "Athapascans", a thinly scattered tribe of nomadic Indians existing chiefly on hunting and fishing. These people lived in crudely constructed lodges, made sprucebark canoes, and migrated frequently, following herds of caribou across their semi-barren, sparsely forested, sub-Arctic territories.

Above the Athapascans, in the great Arctic wilderness north and northwest of Hudson's Bay, small numbers of "Eskimos" roamed the barrens by sled, and the rivers and coasts by skin boats called "kayaks", hunting principally the seal and caribou. These remarkable people lived in tents during the short Arctic summer, and in snow "igloos" during the winters.

Although of the same general racial stock as the Indians, the Eskimos' culture and language differed markedly.

One of the main causes for the western movement of the eastern Indians, and for the resultant violent displacement of the western tribes, stemmed from the pressure of the fur trade. This giant continental and trans-Atlantic enterprise sustained both New France and New England by providing ready cash to bolster their still dependent economies. The Indians, once accustomed to European products, soon found them to be matters of necessity, only to be acquired by a continual and relentless exploitation of the animal kingdom. As a result, a great western movement began, initially by the Indians, and then followed by the coureurs de bois, the explorers, and the "pedlars", all moving away from the depleted, rapidly colonizing lands of the east, and into the rich, virgin fur fields of the west.

From these early beginnings the fur trade expanded and increased in complexity. At first trading was conducted largely by individual entrepreneurs, but as expenses and the necessity of capital outlay became greater, partnerships and other combinations were formed. In 1670, spurred by knowledge of the huge profits to be gained in the trade, the "Hudson's Bay Company" came into being. This "Company of Adventurers of England" thereby gained a legal monopoly (over a large part of what is now western Canada) that they were to hold, though with considerable competition, until the incorporation of these territories into the Dominion.

In the meantime, however, New France was not idle. During the last part of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century, small but aggressive French forces from Canada clashed with the English on the shores of Hudson's Bay, and often with considerable success. British

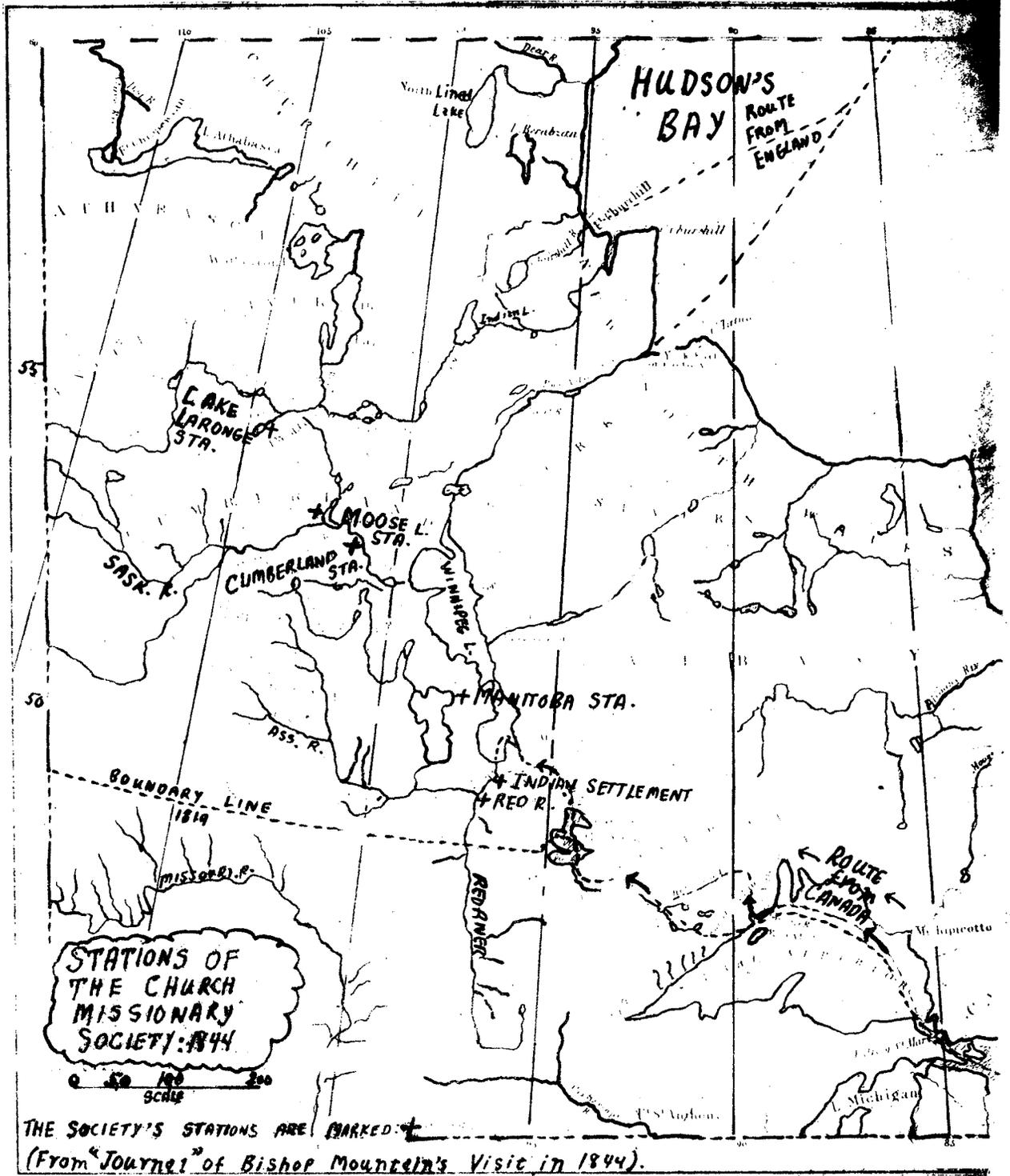
victories in Europe, however, annulled whatever advantages the French gained. Then followed a period of western exploration. The French, pushing through the Great Lakes system, cut across the rivers flowing into Hudson's Bay, intercepted the Indian fur brigades, and deflected part of the trade to New France. By establishing a series of trading forts in the northwest, the French succeeded in greatly reducing the profits of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Following the defeat of France in the Seven Year's War (1756-63), Britain gained control over almost all French possessions in North America, thereby adding security to the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly. But in Canada the old northwest route was gradually taken over by a new group of traders. These men, largely Scottish in origin, renewed the old rivalry with even greater fervour. As the years passed, their competition — both amongst themselves and with the Hudson's Bay Company — increased in intensity. Faced with a complete strangulation of trade, the English Company began establishing posts of their own in the interior. The "Nor'Westers", no longer able to compete effectively, finally amalgamated in 1787 into a loose and sprawling corporation that came to be known as the "North West Company".

Competitive jealousy was precipitated by the introduction in 1811, at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, of the "Selkirk Settlers", whose proposed agricultural establishment under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company appeared to threaten the Nor'westers' trade. A period of violence followed, climaxed by the famous "Skirmish at Seven Oaks" in 1816, in which several settlers were killed by the "Bois-brûlés". The latter, also known as "Métis", or "Half-breeds," acted on behalf of the North West Company.

They considered themselves to be members of a "New Nation" by virtue of their mixed Indian and white blood — welded together by a military-type organization used in the buffalo-hunt.

In 1821, realizing that further struggle was useless, both competitors united into the Hudson's Bay Company, and the new colony at Red River settled into an era of relative peace. It is at this point, along the banks of the Red River, and at the beginning of the second decade of the nineteenth century, that our main thesis begins.



## CHAPTER I

THE EARLY ABORIGINES, SETTLERS AND ANGLICAN  
MISSIONARIES OF RED RIVER (1811 - 1829)

"Going therefore teach ye all nations;  
baptizing them in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,

Teaching them to observe all things  
whatsoever I have commanded you; and  
behold I am with you all days, even to  
the consummation of the world."

— St. Matthew, XXVIII: 19,20.

(i) The Early Aborigines and Settlers of Red River -

When the advance party of Selkirk Settlers arrived at Red River in 1811, they found, besides the rival establishments of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies, a semi-permanent encampment of Indians on the banks of the Red, north of the site of the present City of Winnipeg.<sup>1</sup> These aborigines, although living in close proximity, were in fact two separate bands from different tribes.

The first and most aggressive were the "Salteaux", or "Salteurs", also know at various times as "Achipoes", "Chippewa", "Bungees", and other corrupted versions of the original Indian name.<sup>2</sup> The meaning of the correct term, "Ojibwa", is not precisely known.<sup>3</sup> "Salteaux", however, has considerable historic significance. This appellation, in the form of "Saulteurs", was initially conceived by the French to refer to a group of Ojibwa Indians

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<sup>1</sup> Their location changed from time to time, but was normally along the banks of the Red, from the southern shore of Lake Winnipeg to the edge of the Colony itself. These movements will be traced in the course of the narrative.

<sup>2</sup> R.W. Dunning, Social and Economic Change among the Northern Ojibwa (Toronto, 1959), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

living near the "Sault", or rapids, at Sault Ste. Marie.<sup>4</sup> "Saulteurs" was subsequently anglicized into "Salteaux", which became the term most frequently used in the annals of the Red River Colony. "Achipoes" was the first French spelling of Ojibwa, and "Chippewa" the term most commonly defended by American authorities.<sup>5</sup> "Bungees", a word of contempt, originated at Red River in the early nineteenth century. Derived from punki, or bungi, meaning "a little", this term was applied to those Indians who used it while begging.<sup>6</sup>

The second band of Indians living at Red River in 1811 were the "Crees", a comparatively docile<sup>7</sup> people, with an equally confusing history of names. Originally they called themselves the "Kenistenoag", but with the arrival of the French this became "Kristinaux", and eventually "Crees".<sup>8</sup> Their close linguistic affinities with the Saulteaux is readily discernable by comparing the Cree term for themselves, Kenistenoag, with the equivalent Saulteaux term, "Kenisteno".<sup>9</sup> Alexander Henry referred to them as "O'pimittish Ininiwac", or "Men of the Woods", as distinguished from their

<sup>4</sup> A. Irving Hallowell, Culture and Experience (Philadelphia, 1955), 115.

<sup>5</sup> M. Carolissa Levi, Chippewa Indians (New York, 1956), 11.

<sup>6</sup> A.C. Garrioch, an Anglican minister, tells of the use of "bungee" during his incumbency at Portage La Prairie: A.C. Garrioch, First Furrows (Winnipeg, 1923), 82. A native pastor of St. Peter's, James Settee, also mentions this word. In his Journal on one occasion he wrote: "My neighbours are beginning to give the old song. Pungey, i.e., little, asking for food...": Journal of James Settee, Dec. 1, 1874, PAC: A99

<sup>7</sup> The early Anglican missionaries at Red River, who perhaps left the most extensive accounts of the aboriginal people, described the Crees as being more docile than the Salteaux, even though the former were reputed to have a better command of "magic," or sorcery. See: Sarah Tucker, The Rainbow in the North: A Short Account of the First Establishment of Christianity in Rupert's Land by the Church Missionary Society (London, 1858), 94.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71 (Toronto, 1939), 13.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Jones, History of the Ojibway Indians: With Especial Reference to Their Conversion to Christianity (London, 1861), 178.

kinsmen of the prairies.<sup>10</sup> The northern Crees were also known as "Muscaigoes" — men of the muskeg, or "Swampies", terms that were frequently used at Red River.<sup>11</sup> David Thompson knew them as "Nahathaways",<sup>12</sup> as did Henry Kelsey.<sup>13</sup> Often, their intimacy with the Salteaux confused even their closest observers, who could not tell them apart; and at least one prominent historian, A.S. Morton, calls them "Bungees", rather than the Salteaux.<sup>14</sup>

Under these circumstances, confusion in naming these two bands is understandable. Both were members of the great Algonkian peoples, and were very similar in language and culture. Moreover, the vast territories that the tribe occupied rendered some differentiation inevitable, and perhaps desirable, for it enabled historians to distinguish the segments of the tribe according to approximate geographic regions. By reason of historical tradition therefore, the two bands in question will henceforth be referred to as the "Salteaux" and "Crees", even though these names are not, strictly speaking, etymologically correct.

Although the place of origin of the Red River Salteaux-Cree band is

<sup>10</sup> James Bain, (ed.), Alexander Henry: Travel and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the Years 1760 and 1776 (Toronto, 1901), 208. The Crees were also known by Henry as "Gens de Terres", "Têtes de Boule," "Cristinaux", "Kinistinaux", and "Criqs": 207-208.

<sup>11</sup>/ Henry R. Schoolcraft, an American authority, knew them as "Mushkeags", and also as "Kelistenos": Henry R. Schoolcraft, Archives of Aboriginal Knowledge (Philadelphia, 1860), vol. VI, 33.

<sup>12</sup>/ Arthur S. Morton, op. cit., 13.

<sup>13</sup>/ Arthur G. Doughty and Chester Martin, (eds.), The Kelsey Papers (Ottawa, 1929), 9, 18. Kelsey, who apparently did not come into actual contact with the Crees, spelled their name "Nayhathaway", according to the pronunciation of his informants, the Athapascan Indians. It should be pointed out, in this regard, that the Indians usually had different names for themselves and for other tribes, which added greatly to the confusion of terminology.

<sup>14</sup>/ Arthur S. Morton; op. cit. 156.

not precisely known, their most common names, used from the earliest recorded times, indicate two general geographic areas. In referring to themselves as "Mascaigoes", the Crees acknowledged primarily a northern point of departure.<sup>15</sup> This is further substantiated by the records of the Church Missionary Society, which state that the first Cree farmers were visited by relatives from the forests of northern Manitoba, and especially from Norway House, Cumberland House, and York Factory.<sup>16</sup> The Salteaux, as already mentioned, probably came from the southeastern shores of Lake Superior.<sup>17</sup> Several bands pushed their way westward during the eighteenth century, some continuing until they reached the Mandans of the Dakotas.<sup>18</sup> Others moved northwestward until they came to the region of the Lake of the Woods and beyond, and one at least, to Red River.<sup>19</sup> During the lifetime of the greatest Salteaux Chief, Peguis, it was estimated that the Salteaux had arrived at Red River sometime in the interval between 1790 and 1795 —

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<sup>15</sup> That is, they were "Swampy", or Crees of the muskeg, as distinguished from their kinsmen, the Crees of the prairies.

<sup>16</sup> Wm. Bertal Heeney states that the Crees came from the vicinity of Norway House, and as far north as York Factory: Wm. Bertal Heeney, Leaders of the Canadian Church (Toronto, 1920), 54. A large number of the Crees at Red River also had Half-breed relatives, with whom they maintained considerable contact. Many of these Half-breeds derived their origin from Cree-European alliances at the fur trading posts on Hudson's Bay, which is also one possible explanation for their comparatively rapid & easy transition from Indian to white culture. In this respect, the records of the Church Missionary Society state that for "several years, many Cree-Indian families, from between Hudson's Bay and Cumberland House, have been drifting to the Settlement, having connections there among the half-castes and others": PCMS for 1832-33, 64.

<sup>17</sup> A. Irving Hallowell, op. cit., 115.

<sup>18</sup> Arthur S. Merton, Op. cit., 19.

<sup>19</sup> Once north of Lake Superior, the Saulteaux were hard to distinguish from the Crees. Alexander Henry, for instance, wrote that at "Lake Nipissingue" the Indians' language "is a dialect of the Algonquin; and, by nation, they are a mixture of Chipeways and Maskegons": James Bain, op. cit., 30-31.

and Peguis, who also came at that time, appeared to accept this chronology.<sup>20</sup>

Although no accurate estimate can be given, the Crees had lived at Red River for a considerable period before the coming of the Salteaux.<sup>21</sup> Because of their cultural and linguistic affinities, the newcomers were welcomed by the Crees, who needed allies against the aggressive Sioux.<sup>22</sup> But in spite of apparent similarities, the Crees, from an early date, appeared to be a superior people. Radisson, the great French explorer, considered them to be "the best huntsmen of all America."<sup>23</sup> They treated their women with less severity than most Indians, and though "capable of deeds of violence they were a mild, affable, and hospitable people, and scrupulously honest."<sup>24</sup> In their early dealings with the Hudson's Bay Company they proved themselves to be good traders.<sup>25</sup> Intelligence will also be discerned in their dealings with Lord Selkirk, when they objected to the sale of their lands for what they considered a ridiculous pittance. This superiority, through European eyes and by European standards, was manifested throughout the nineteenth century at the Red River Colony. It is a fascinating, though largely unemphasized phenomenon, evident in all phases of activity, and displayed in equal proportions by men, women and children. For it was the Cree men who became the best farmers, the Cree children who became the best scholars, and the Cree women who "were superior to those of other tribes, alike in mental and moral qualities."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The Nor'Wester, April 28, 1860.

<sup>21/</sup> This will be made evident in a later discussion of Lord Selkirk's Treaty of 1817.

<sup>22/</sup> Arthur S. Morton, op. cit., 591.

<sup>23/</sup> Ibid., 45

<sup>24/</sup> Ibid., 13

<sup>25/</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26/</sup> Alfred O. Legge, Sunny Manitoba: Its Peoples and Its Industries (London, 1893), 115.

Why, then, it should now be asked, did the Salteaux achieve and maintain an evident position of dominance, even to the extent of convincing Selkirk that it was they, and not the Crees, who held the greatest right to the Red River territory? To a certain extent, Salteaux influence was probably dependent on their relatively more aggressive nature. The Crees were a comparatively peaceful people, and welcomed the Salteaux as kinsmen and allies. Furthermore, it must not be assumed that the Salteaux were unintelligent, simply because they did not conform to European civilization. According to Peter Jones, a highly-educated Canadian-Indian of the nineteenth century, who knew the Salteaux well, there was a good reason for their lack of "progress". When God gave the Salteaux their religion, he wrote, "He told them how they were to act; and with this knowledge they think it would be wrong, and give great offence to their Creator, to forsake the old ways of their forefathers".<sup>27</sup>

The greatest single reason, however, for the dominance of the Salteaux over the Crees, was the presence of the famous Salteaux chief, "Peguis", whose name has already been mentioned. Arriving sometime during the last decade of the eighteenth century, Peguis rose from relative obscurity to a vague but generally recognized leadership over elements of both groups of Indians. His name first appears in historical records during the beginnings of the Selkirk Settlement. Although a man of proud and stubborn nature, his sympathetic assistance soon won the hearts of the Colonists. During the hostilities of 1816, moreover, he not only kept the Indians neutral, but gave the whites material aid, in direct opposition to

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Jones, op. cit., 31

the rampaging Bois-brûlés. "Had it not been for the zealous attachment of Peguis and his kinsmen", writes John Pritchett, "the colonists would have suffered great want. The Indians not only hunted for the colony; they hauled the meat on sleds for great distances, a thing they usually despised doing".<sup>28</sup>

Because of Peguis' undisguised sympathy toward Selkirk's Settlers, the Bois-brûlés became extremely annoyed with him. They rode up to the Indian camp, reproached him for not assisting them, and called his people "dirty dogs".<sup>29</sup> But Peguis, although proud, was also a "master diplomat", and he "looked on with attention and held his peace".<sup>30</sup> Following the violent dispersal of the Settlers and the burning of their homes, Peguis stood in the ashes and wept.<sup>31</sup> Upon their return, he was among the first to welcome them back.

After the re-establishment of the Colony, Peguis' prestige among the Settlers helped him to assert even greater authority over both bands. Although naturally reluctant to admit the power of the white man's "magic" too freely, the Indians were unquestionably impressed by the documents that Peguis received. One of these, presented by the Hudson's Bay Company, declared him to be "friendly toward the whites, well-disposed toward the settlement of Red River, and altogether a steady, intelligent, well-conducted Indian".<sup>32</sup> A second testimonial, written by Lord Selkirk, called

<sup>28</sup> John Perry Pritchett, The Red River Valley: 1811-1849 (New Haven, 1942), 195.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur S. Morton, op. cit., 572.

<sup>32</sup> "What's in a Name?", The Beaver, Mar., 1935.

him "one of the principal chiefs of the Salteaux at Red River ... and a steady friend of the Settlement since its first establishment."<sup>33</sup> In later years the Hudson's Bay Company also awarded him a small pension.<sup>34</sup>

In 1817, after the re-establishment of the Colony, Selkirk began conferences with the Indians in preparation for the purchase of their lands for the settlers.<sup>35</sup> The most pertinent problem, which he unfortunately partly ignored, concerned the ownership of the territory in question.<sup>36</sup> By right of original, or longest residence, only two tribes — the Assiniboines and Crees — were entitled to primary consideration.<sup>37</sup> But because of Peguis' influence the Salteaux gained dominance in the negotiations. The Crees were extremely reluctant to part with their lands under any circumstances, and in spite of Peguis' cajoling, for a long time remained adamant.<sup>38</sup> Then, as a compromise, they suggested that the lands be leased for twenty years.<sup>39</sup> But Peguis, undoubtedly flattered by Selkirk's admiration, continued to press the latter's interests. Finally, though with a great deal of misgiving, the Crees yielded.

Accordingly, on July 18, 1817, Selkirk concluded a treaty with the Indians by which, in consideration of 200 pounds of tobacco payable annually,

33 Ibid.

34/ "Peguis", The Beaver, Aug. 1924.

35/ See: Archer Martin, The Hudson's Bay Company's Land Tenures and the Occupation of Assiniboia by Lord Selkirk's Settlers with a List of Grantees under the Earl and the Company (London, 1898), 12-14.

36/ John Perry Pritchett, op. cit., 199.

37/ "It may be here said that the Salteaux Indians ... had no real claim, while the Crees, who had been here since the memory of man, had": Alexander Begg, History of the North West (Toronto, 1894), 191.

38/ John Perry Pritchett, op. cit., 198.

39/ PAM, Archibald Papers, no. 15: Report of Molyneux St. John, Jan. 17, 1871.

they conceded a large tract of land to the white settlers.<sup>40</sup> In determining the amount of land thus given up, the negotiators stood on each river bank and looked "under the belly of a horse out upon the prairie. This was about two miles. Hence the river lots were generally about two miles long."<sup>41</sup> Following Manitoba's entry into Confederation in 1870, this area was deemed to consist of "a strip four miles wide extending from the northern boundary of the Province at Lake Winnipeg to the United States Frontier, and traversed lengthwise by the River, that is to say, a strip of two miles on each side of the Red River, and secondly of another strip of four miles width extending from Fort Garry at the mouth of the Assiniboine to the western boundary of the Province<sup>42</sup> traversed in the same by the Assiniboine, being a strip of two miles on each side of that River ....."<sup>43</sup>

This settlement proved to be only a temporary expedient, for in any event, it only purported to extinguish the title to a small segment of Assiniboia's arable land. In the 1860's, as will be noted later, the land question expanded into much more serious proportions.

The legality of Selkirk's treaty, even though later established, is open to serious doubt. It can be strongly argued, for instance, on ethical grounds at least, that 200 pounds of tobacco was hardly sufficient remuneration for the area received, even according to the land values of that day. Indeed, humanitarian principles were basic to all Euro-Indian terr-

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., no. 155: Report of Archibald to the Secretary of State, Dec. 20, 1870.

<sup>41</sup> George Bryce, The Romantic Settlement of Lord Selkirk's Colonists, (Toronto, 1909), 147.

<sup>42</sup> The "western boundary of the Province" in this instance meant a point near "Rat Creek a few miles west of Portage La Prairie": W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto, 1957), 105.

<sup>43</sup> PAM, Archibald Papers, no. 155: Report of Archibald to the Secretary of State, Dec. 20, 1870.

itorial concessions in America. The Indians, who held only a vague suzerainty over their lands, had no concept of legal possession in the European sense. In this respect, therefore, they could only acquire a new sense of value by contacts with the white men -- who, while revealing their desires, also generally acknowledged the right of the Indians to some compensation.

Selkirk's treaty was faulty in three ways. First of all, it failed to give due emphasis to the claims of the rightful owners, the Assiniboines and Crees; secondly, the payment made was insufficient; and thirdly, it did not provide for those Indians living on the lands conceded. Three days after the treaty was signed, however, the Crees demanded that Selkirk set aside a reserve for their use. Selkirk then granted them a block of land on the Assiniboine, near present day Portage La Prairie; and the Salteaux the land from "Sugar Point," some twenty-one miles below the Colony, northward to Lake Winnipeg.<sup>44</sup> Although this was only a verbal concession, it eventually came to be recognized as having a legal basis, and the "Salteaux" Reserve thus acquired, largely through the initiative of the Crees, eventually became "St. Peter's Indian Settlement", the subject of this thesis.

(ii) The Early Anglican Missionaries of Red River-

The presence of a large aboriginal population, in close proximity to an isolated and small European colony, was a fact that made the history

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<sup>44</sup> PAM, Archibald Papers, no. 15: Report of Molyneux St. John, Jan. 17, 1871.

of Red River unique in the annals of North American settlement. Separated by long distances from civilization, the white community, for the greatest part of the nineteenth century, could ill-afford actions that would antagonize the overwhelmingly numerous Indians and Half-breeds. Unlike the Americans -- who moved westward en masse, often extirpating the natives by fire and sword -- the Selkirk Settlers found it necessary to cooperate with Indians and Half-breeds on a basis of relative equality. Cooperation also involved, to a certain extent at least, racial assimilation. But this posed an even greater question, that is, what was to become of the aboriginal population as a whole? Although extensive white expansion was as yet not clearly foreseen, it seemed apparent, even in the early nineteenth century, that the Indian could not exist forever in his "savage condition".

To many European religious organizations of the day, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, the answer seemed obvious.<sup>45</sup> The Indians, they declared, must become as "whitemen" in everything but race. From both spiritual and temporal points of view, it was argued, their deplorable condition could only be redeemed by the benefits of European civilization. Thus, in the increasingly humanitarian spirit of the era, the churchmen took up their Bibles and ploughs, and marched hopefully into the wilderness of "North-West America".

In attempting the conversion of the Indians two methods of procedure were possible. First of all, missionaries could travel with the wandering tribes, teaching and converting at appropriate intervals, or, secondly, they

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<sup>45</sup> Three of the most successful of these organizations were the Roman Catholic "Society of Jesus" and the Anglican "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" in Eastern Canada; and the Anglican "Church Missionary Society" in Western Canada, which will be discussed later.

could attempt to establish agricultural and pastoral communities with permanent churches and schools. That the first method was extremely unsatisfactory had first been proven by the Jesuit missionaries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>46</sup> The second method, although also attempted by the Catholics, was the one first applied by the Anglicans of Red River — and it is the success or failure of this effort that will be considered in the recorded events that follow.

It was because of the efforts of the "Church Missionary Society" of London, England, that the establishment of a permanent, Christianized Indian community at Red River became possible. Formed in 1799, this Christian and humanitarian organization was an intricate network of directing clergymen and contributing laymen, spreading throughout England in administrative and economic organization, and eventually throughout many parts of the world in missionary activity. In this respect, "North-West America" was only one area of its extensive territory, although it soon came to be one of the most important.<sup>47</sup>

The first missionary despatched by the Society to Red River was the Reverend John West, who arrived on October 15, 1820. "In my appointment as Chaplain to the Company," he wrote, "my instructions were, to reside at

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<sup>46</sup> "It was soon realized by the missionaries that but meagre results could be obtained until the Indians were induced to lead a sedentary life. Their wandering habit nullified all attempts at permanent instruction to the young; it engendered improvidence and laziness, bred famine and disease; and the constant struggle to kill fur-bearing animals for their pelts rapidly depleted the game, while the fur trade wrought contamination in many forms": R.B. Thwaites, (ed.), Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France: 1610-1791: The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents (Cleveland, 1896), vol. I, 18. See also: PCMS for 1819-20, 372ff., for an account of Anglican plans for the proposed mission to "North-West America".

<sup>47</sup> See: E.S., One Hundred Years: Being the Short History of the Church Missionary Society (London, 1898).

the Red River Settlement, and under the encouragement and aid of the Church Missionary Society, I was to...endeavour to meliorate the condition of the native Indians."<sup>48</sup> In the same year the Society publicly reported that the Company was "much disposed to promote these benevolent purposes..."<sup>49</sup> After his arrival, however, West noted in his diary that: "it was hinted to me that the interest I was taking in the education of the native children, had already excited the fears of some of the Chief Factors and Traders..."<sup>50</sup> Although restrained during West's incumbency, this opposition became a formidable obstacle to future missionaries, as will be pointed out throughout this thesis.

From religious, moral and educational points of view, West considered that conditions at the settlement were deplorable. The Roman Catholic mission, commenced by Fathers J.N. Provencher and S.J. Dumoulin, had only been established since 1818. Although a large number of Presbyterians lived in the community, no qualified minister was available for them. Much of the population remained in a condition of immorality and apathy.

These were conditions as West saw them. It should be emphasized, however, that the Anglican missionaries, with whom we are almost exclusively concerned, naturally viewed the other churches as competitors. Consequently, in their reports, they largely ignored advances made by other denominations, except when specific clashes occurred. This, of course, is perhaps equally applicable to missionaries of all churches, and is not intended as a ref-

<sup>48</sup> John West, The Substance of a Journal during a Residence at the Red River Colony: British North America: And Frequent Excursions among the North West America Indians in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823 (London, 1827), 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> PCMS for 1819-20, 372.

<sup>50</sup> The original diary of John West (from which the above "Journal" was published), entitled: "The British North West America Indians with Free Thoughts on the Red River Settlement," 41. For a published account of contemporary Catholic activities, see: A.G. Morice, Histoire de l'Eglise catholique dans l'Ouest canadien du Lac Supérieur au Pacifique, 1659-1915, 2 vols. (St. Boniface, 1921).

lection on any denomination. But, before passing, it should be pointed out, that while the Anglican Church advanced in some directions, other Protestant sects and the Catholics advanced in others. The Catholics were primarily concerned with the French Métis, and with an element of Scottish-Catholic settlers, but also devoted themselves to the aborigines with some success. Other Protestant sects, of which the Presbyterians were the most important, started their activities much later. The first fully qualified Presbyterian minister, John Black, did not arrive until 1851, but in that year, some 300 people left the Anglican Church and joined his congregation.<sup>51</sup> These Presbyterians, who had attended Anglican Churches in the absence of their own, did so only on the condition that the services be sufficiently altered to fit their requirements.

In 1820 the Red River Colony consisted of some 600 or 700 European settlers, and a larger but undetermined number of French-Canadians, Half-breeds and Indians.<sup>52</sup> Almost all of the last three groups were migrants, living in the vicinity of the settlement only from time to time, and frequently disappearing across the prairie to hunt buffalo or conduct the business of the fur trade.

Only the Europeans made any attempt to cultivate the soil with any permanency or seriousness. The Indians, although possessing several European articles that rendered their lives somewhat more leisurely than in former times, looked upon husbandry and farming with haughty contempt. Contact with the white man had as yet made little effect on their culture or thinking. Many of them were unquestionably impressed by the white man's

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<sup>51</sup> For an account of Presbyterian activities at Red River, see: George Bryce, John Black: The Apostle of Red River (Toronto, 1898).  
<sup>52</sup> PCMS for 1821-22, 212.

religion, or "magic", and by his God, or "Great Spirit", but they had no way of comprehending the sophisticated doctrines of the Christian faith or of the intricacies of European civilization. They were still a pre-literate people, clinging tenaciously to their "medicine bags", conjurers, and exotic religious ceremonies; they were devoted to a precarious subsistence on hunting and fishing, unconcerned for the future, subject to famine in time of scarcity, to torture in time of war, to "fire-water", reckless abandon, and unlimited hospitality and feasting in times of abundance.

The most characteristic economic institution of the Indians, Half-breeds, and French-Canadians at this time was the buffalo hunt, a bi-annual event that has been well-documented by several observers. Although small groups of men went out frequently, two large expeditions, normally consisting of some 700 or 800 hunters, left for the prairies at least twice a year.<sup>53</sup> The buffalo not only provided fresh meat for the moment, but also served as the basic ingredient of "pemmican", the staple of the fur trade -- a mixture of fat, berries and dry, powdered flesh, that kept remarkably fresh in leather bags for several months at a time. Buffalo skins also provided clothing and shelter, and profitable articles of trade. For the Métis, the institution of the buffalo hunt, which required a great deal of cooperation and sharing, had developed into that quasi-military organization by which the "New Nation" had attempted to assert itself in 1816.

One of the most vivid and interesting accounts of the Indians' and their economy at Red River at this time, was recorded in 1821 by Nicholas Garry, who later became a Deputy-Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. On

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<sup>53</sup> M.E.J., Dayspring in the Far West (London, 1875), 12.

arriving at Peguis' encampment, his first observation was that the aborigines had cultivated fields of "Corn Indian". Unfortunately, he gave no indication as to where this semblance of agriculture originated. It can be assumed, however, that the practice developed either from contact with the Iroquois Indians of eastern Canada, or with the Mandans of the Dakotas. "Their Chief", he continued (Peguis):

"is called the Cut Nose from having lost a part of his Nose in an Affray. He is a good looking man of 50, has always been a great Friend of the Colony and once actually defended it from the Attacks of their blood thirsty Enemies. Having no Rum I promised to make him a formal Visit on my Return. There were a great many Women; the Chief's daughter very pretty ..... These Indians are Santeux, so called by the French; they are of the Chipeway Tribe".<sup>54</sup>

It was also at about this time that John West first came into contact with the aborigines. During his first winter in the Colony (1820-21), he toured a large part of the surrounding area, travelling by "cariole", a sled-like winter conveyance frequently used in the territory during the nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup> His journey took him a total distance of about 500 or 600 miles.<sup>56</sup> Most of the Indians, he found, lived in small groups widely scattered across the prairies.<sup>57</sup> About 200, however, under the

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<sup>54</sup> Nicholas Garry, "Diary of Nicholas Garry, Deputy-Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1822-35: A Detailed Narrative of His Travels in the North-West Territories of British North America in 1821," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Section II, 1900, p. 135.

<sup>55/</sup> A "cariole" was a sledge drawn by dogs, and as prosperity increased, by horses. Three dogs were normally used on each carirole, and under good track and weather conditions these "faithfull, docile creatures" carried a man "eighty miles in twenty-four hours": Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 24.

<sup>56/</sup> John West, op. cit., 31.

<sup>57/</sup> Ibid.

leadership of Peguis, were encamped only a few miles north of the European Settlement.<sup>58</sup> Although no conclusive evidence can be given, it is highly probable that most of Peguis' followers in 1820 were Salteaux Indians. Some Crees were undoubtedly camped in the immediate vicinity, but the majority lived in the area of present-day Portage La Prairie. It appears that the Crees did not arrive at the Colony in any great numbers until after the Anglican missionary work had started in earnest.<sup>59</sup>

West's first meeting with Peguis took place on October 5, 1822. In traditional fashion, the two at first sat silently together in the Chief's tent, smoking a calumet pipe. Then West took advantage of the occasion to express his desire of preaching the word of the "Master of Life", and of teaching the Indian children. After pausing for a time, Peguis asked West what he would do with the children once they were taught. West replied that they could return home, and make clothes by knitting some like white people wore. In conclusion, alluding to the Chief's two wives, West made an effort to point out the error of polygamy. Peguis "smiled at this information, and said that he 'thought that there was no harm in Indians having two wives than one of the settlers', whom he named".<sup>60</sup>

West became even further disillusioned with Peguis and his Indians that winter, as the following notation of January 4, 1823, in his Journal

<sup>58</sup> Their favourite camping site was at the mouth of Netley Creek: Map (n.d.), received by the C.M.S. on Feb. 10, 1829, PAC: A84.

<sup>59</sup> William Cockran stated in 1832 that there were only 35 Indian families living on the Salteaux Reserve. It appears likely that very few of these, if any, were Crees: Letter from Cockran dated Oct. 20, 1832, PAC: A84.

<sup>60</sup> John West, op. cit., 104.

indicates:

"Pigewis and a few others ... called on me today, saying they were starving .... This was their report, though they often deceive in their lounging habits of begging at your residence. I assisted them with a little Indian rice and some potatoes .. When they visit under these destitute circumstances, they are often exceedingly troublesome, acknowledging no right of restraint in being shut out from your presence; they enter your building without ceremony, and covet almost everything that they can see ....."<sup>61</sup>

(iii) Beginnings of Missionary Activity -

During the summer of 1821, John West began the first Anglican establishment at Red River, a small schoolhouse, 60 feet by 20 feet, which also served as a temporary church.<sup>62</sup> Two years later, on June 10, 1823, the first proper Anglican church was opened and consecrated.<sup>63</sup> This building, which came to be known as the "Upper Church", was on the original center of the first St. John's parish.

In July of 1821 West travelled to York Factory, where he obtained several Indian boys for his school.<sup>64</sup> Although none of his students came from Peguis' band, they were all Crees, four of whom were destined to see missionary service at St. Peter's and other Indian churches. Henry Budd, the most outstanding, later served as an ordained minister in northern

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>62</sup> PGMS for 1822-23, 193.

<sup>63</sup> PGMS for 1823-24, 199-200.

<sup>64</sup> John West, op. cit., 97ff.

Manitoba. James Settee, although less brilliant, also became a clergyman, and served at St. Peter's for a number of years. The other two, John Hope and Charles Pratt, became teachers and catechists.<sup>65</sup>

But before West's plans were realized to any extent, he departed for England, hoping to come back within a year with his family.<sup>66</sup> Circumstances did not permit his return, and immediately following his departure in the fall of 1823, he was replaced by a new missionary, the Reverend David Jones.<sup>67</sup>

But in spite of West's comparatively brief stay in the Settlement, Jones found that the foundations of the Anglican mission had been well-laid. In his annual report of 1824, he stated that the "Church has been crowded all the winter by Europeans, Half-breed Natives, and Native Indians .."<sup>68</sup> He was particularly impressed by the Half-breeds, who, he noted, "are the uniting medium between us and the Indians: they speak their language, and are accustomed to their modes and habits of life; and I trust I may add, that they are, taken collectively, a very promising part of our community ..."<sup>69</sup>

Soon after Jones' arrival, the Upper Church became overcrowded, and on January 30, 1825, a second building was consecrated at "Image Plain", some five miles down the Red River from the Upper Church. This establishment, which came to be known as the "Middle Church", was also soon filled to

<sup>65</sup> See Wm. Bertal Heeney, *op. cit.*, 65ff.

<sup>66</sup> *PCMS for 1822-23*, 191.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *PCMS for 1824-25*, 192.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

capacity, and being much closer to the Indian Settlement, had a greater influence on it.<sup>70</sup>

In the meantime, attendance at the school continued to increase, and by 1825 twelve Indian youths were being instructed in English and the rudiments of religion.<sup>71</sup> Although difficulties in discipline were frequent, the children seemed attentive and clearly intelligent. On one occasion, for instance, when Jones attempted to explain certain cruelties practised in the East as alluded to in a hymn, they all broke down and wept. "Sir!" said one, "Is no schoolmaster there to tell them not?"<sup>72</sup>

From a temporal point of view, progress during the 1820's at the infant Colony was often interrupted by natural misfortunes that rendered life extremely severe. The years 1825 to 1827 were especially difficult, for in this interval both agriculture and hunting failed to produce sufficient food for comfortable subsistence.

During the winter of 1825-26, when the hunters ventured onto the prairies after the buffalo, they found themselves in dire straits. Because of the unusually deep snow of that winter, the great herds had left their grazing areas and had disappeared beyond the reach of the Colony. As a result, a large number of the hunters were reduced to starvation. Writing in the early part of 1826, Jones reported that:

"News of the most deplorable kind arises from the plains: The Canadian Free-men have, for some time, been subsisting on their leather tents, parchment windows,

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<sup>70</sup> PCMS for 1825-26, 136. After the arrival of the first "Bishop of Rupert's Land", David Anderson, in 1849, the Middle Church was called "St. Paul's". The other Anglican churches were also re-named at that time. See: Map of Red River Colony.

<sup>71</sup>/ Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 26.

<sup>72</sup>/ PCMS for 1824-25, 195.

buffaloe robes, old shoes &c. They have devoured all the carcasses of the horses, dogs &c. that have died since the commencement of winter: it is further stated that the dead bodies of those that have perished have been eaten by their surviving companions".<sup>73</sup>

As the spring of 1826 advanced conditions became increasingly worse. A large part of the grain that the Colonists had reserved for seed had to be either eaten, or given to the cattle because of the scarcity of hay.<sup>74</sup> Early in May a great flood began that soon inundated the low parts of the entire Red River Valley. The settlers were driven out of their homes, cattle were stranded on high ground without fodder, and much painfully accumulated property was swept away and ruined.<sup>75</sup> But although the flood lasted until the middle of June, some crops were grown in the last part of the summer.<sup>76</sup> The winter of 1826-27, however, was also severe, and further hardship ensued. Then, following a reasonably good crop in the summer of 1827, conditions gradually improved.<sup>77</sup>

Agriculture at Red River, as will be demonstrated from time to time, was by no means an overly attractive occupation. Its frequent disasters, and minimal level of subsistence, made it especially repugnant to the Indians and Half-breeds, who, in most years at least, were able to maintain themselves with much less effort on the buffalo hunt.<sup>78</sup> This obstacle

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<sup>73</sup> PCMS for 1826-27, 168.

<sup>74/</sup> Ibid., 168-169.

<sup>75/</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>76/</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77/</sup> Ibid., 169

<sup>78/</sup> In this regard, Professor W.L. Morton has shown that in "the Red River Colony ... agriculture did not thrust aside the nomadic economy. Its initial difficulties, the adversities of climate and season, the opposition, ending in violence, of the North West Company, and the shortcomings and mistakes of the colonists themselves, resulted in a hybrid economy, at once nomadic and sedentary": See: W.L. Morton, "Agriculture in the Red River Colony", Canadian Historical Review, XXX (Dec., 1949), 306.

proved to be one of the greatest that the Anglican missionaries had to overcome in their attempts to establish a permanent Indian agricultural community.

On October 7, 1825, shortly before the advent of the disasters, the Reverend William Cockran arrived at Red River as an assistant to David Jones.<sup>79</sup> The accomplishments of previous missionaries, although of importance insofar as preliminary preparations were concerned, had in fact been oriented more toward the European settlers. Henceforth, however, the dynamic and powerful personality of William Cockran was to steal the missionary scene and focus it more specifically on the aboriginal population.

Born in 1798, in Chillingham, Northumberland, England, Cockran was ordained a deacon in December, 1824, and the following year, before his departure for Red River, was "priested" by the Bishop of London.<sup>80</sup> On his arrival, he took charge of the Upper Church, where he remained until 1829.

In the summer of 1829, after experiencing the misfortunes of 1825-27, Cockran moved with his family to "Grand Rapids", a turbulent point on the Red, about twelve miles below the site of the Upper Church. Here, on the western bank of the River, he began work among a new group of people.<sup>81</sup>

Unlike the upper Colony, the area of Grand Rapids was largely populated by Half-breeds, a group that, for the most part, had been uninfluenced by the agricultural way of life.<sup>82</sup> Most of these people, in fact, differed from the Indians only in that their dwellings were of a more permanent nature. Consequently, in keeping with the general strategy of the Church Missionary

<sup>79</sup> Sarah Tucker, *op. cit.*, 39.

<sup>80</sup> Wm. Bertal Heeney, *op. cit.*, 42.

<sup>81</sup> *PCMS for 1829-30*, 74. This location was also known simply as "the Rapids".

<sup>82</sup> Sarah Tucker, *op. cit.*, 51.

Society,<sup>83</sup> but also with a great deal of personal conviction, Cockran began to teach the Half-breeds the arts of agriculture.<sup>84</sup> As an initial step, he started a small model farm, hoping that the people would learn by example.<sup>85</sup>

In the beginning, however, he faced many difficulties. Some of the prospective farmers, although enthusiastic at first, soon became restless. Often, while in the middle of some task, they would throw down their hoes and spades, condemning them because "they made their backs and arms so stiff".<sup>86</sup> Only in ploughing — where their sharp hunting eyes apparently stood them in good stead — were they immediately successful.<sup>87</sup>

Cockran's task was obviously not an easy one, but he steadily progressed. "I am obliged", he said, "to be minister, clerk, schoolmaster, arbitrator, agricultural director, and many other things, to this mixed and barbarous people; and it is no sinecure ..."<sup>88</sup> But with a great deal of patience and hard work the habits of his Half-breeds slowly changed, and before long many were employed fairly steadily on the land.

To a considerable extent, however, material prosperity was delayed by the traditional visits of numerous voracious Indian relatives, who often consumed what little the farmers had saved. This was particularly true of the Crees. They had heard rumours of the "Master of Life" and now came

<sup>83</sup> PCMS for 1819-20, 372ff.

<sup>84/</sup> A year earlier, in 1828, Cockran had written: "I hope the time is not too far distant, when we shall be able to raise part of the clothing requisite for the Indian school ...". He planned to do this by having the Indians and Half-breeds raise sheep and flax: PCMS for 1828-29, 133.

<sup>85/</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 53.

<sup>86/</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87/</sup> Ibid., 55

<sup>88/</sup> William Cockran to C.M.S. (n.d.), cited by Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 53.

to hear it at first hand.<sup>89</sup> But the Crees seemed the most likely candidates for Christianity and agricultural life, and in some instances began applying themselves with remarkable success. "Instead", Cockran wrote:

"of seeing some poor Indian woman, in the depth of winter, hauling her half-naked children on a sledge over the frozen ground to some lonely creek, there to cut a hole in the thick ice, let down her hook, and shivering wait for hours till some fish lay hold of it to serve for their scanty meal, — we now see her and her children nicely and warmly clothed, with a buffalo cloak folded neatly round them, in their own cariole, drawn by their own horse or ox, bring them to the house of God to thank Him, as well she may, for all His temporal and spiritual mercies".<sup>90</sup>

In the spring of 1829 Cockran began a small school in a room adjacent to his log house. Here a number of boys were initiated into the mysteries of religion, husbandry, carpentry and other technical skills; and a few girls primarily in spinning.<sup>91</sup> His first school teacher, Mr. W.R. Smith, noted at the time that discipline was the main problem in teaching Indian children.<sup>92</sup> "It is an unusual thing", he stated, "for a Native to correct a child for any offence whatever. He will beat his wife without mercy, on the slightest provocation; but it is viewed as cruel and tyrannical to chastise children".<sup>93</sup>

On May 1, 1832, a separate building, the "Lower Church", was completed to replace the schoolroom that had been used for religious services previously. Although a small structure, 50 feet by 22 feet, it offered more room for

<sup>89</sup> Sarah Tucker, *op. cit.*, 55-56.

<sup>90</sup>/ William Cockran to C.M.S. (n.d.), cited in Sarah Tucker, *op. cit.*, 56

<sup>91</sup>/ Sarah Tucker, *op. cit.*, 57

<sup>92</sup>/ Cockran also encountered this problem, as will be noted later.

<sup>93</sup>/ PCMS for 1832-33, 65.

the growing congregation, that now numbered about 300.<sup>94</sup> Those who attended were extremely loyal, and came regardless of how severe the weather happened to be. Often, during the services, many of the Half-breeds and Indians became so engrossed that they burst into tears.<sup>95</sup> Interest in both religion and education, in fact, increased so steadily that by 1837 about 300 people attended the church, and 60 children the day school.<sup>96</sup>

During Cockran's first decade at Grand Rapids (1829-1839), considerable progress was also achieved in permanent settlement. Numerous neat, comfortable, and whitewashed log houses were built along the banks of the Red River, with gardens, farmyards, pastures and grainfields adjacent to most dwellings.

But as in the previous decade, agriculture in general at the Colony was not without its difficulties. In 1836, the worst year, a severe frost in late August destroyed most of the settlers' garden seeds and seriously injured large quantities of grain and potatoes.<sup>97</sup> In June, according to the usual procedure, boats arrived from the Hudson's Bay posts to pick up the year's accumulation of furs. Later that fall they were to return with the annual shipment of supplies from England. But after considerable delay the boats arrived empty and word was given that the supplies were not coming. Because of severe storms on Hudson's Bay the ships had been unable to unload anything except the mail, and had been forced to return to England.<sup>98</sup> Because of this misfortune, together with the crop failures of the summer, the following winter was extremely uncomfortable, especially since the

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 64. The "Lower Church" later became "St. Andrew's".

<sup>95</sup> PCMS for 1836-37, 65.

<sup>96</sup> PCMS for 1837-38, 82.

<sup>97</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 78.

<sup>98</sup> PCMS for 1836-37, 65.

settlers were still largely dependent on English sources for clothing, tools, hardware, furniture, books, and most luxuries. But with a system of rationing, along with meat procured from buffalo hunting, the Colony eluded famine and began fresh crops in the spring.

As already mentioned, in the early years of the Colony, and indeed throughout the greatest part of the nineteenth century, periods of agricultural disaster such as 1836 were all too frequent. Agriculture was by no means a desirable occupation, except perhaps for those Europeans of peasant ancestry who had been "dedicated" and "born on the soil". Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the aboriginal and mixed-blooded people did not settle immediately and with enthusiasm as many had hoped. Peguis and his Saulteaux band looked on, mostly with indifference. A few Crees applied themselves successfully, but these did so mostly in imitation of their Half-breed relatives. In these early years, however, William Cockran began his first hopeful beginnings of aboriginal settlement and conversion. That his success was not brilliant is easily understandable. He was, after all, only one of a small number of dedicated men, with limited resources, attempting to impose his will on a pre-literate people, whose centuries of nomadic customs precluded any large measure of immediate success.



*The Indian Settlement: 1837  
(From: "The Rainbow": Tucker)*



*The Indian Mission and Church: 1844  
(From "Journal of Bishop Mountain's Visit: 1844")*

## CHAPTER II

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INDIAN  
SETTLEMENT (1829 - 1839)

"Here, then, is a great principle,  
fully and plainly established;  
namely, that the Indian may be  
civilized, has been civilized, and  
is willing to be civilized ..."<sup>1</sup>

— David Jones.<sup>1</sup>

(1) The Settlement at Netley Creek -

Soon after his arrival at Grand Rapids in 1829, William Cockran began to look hopefully northward toward the tract of land called, since Selkirk's time, the "Indian Reserve" on which lived Chief Peguis and the Salteaux-Cree band of Indians. At this time the area was a desolate wilderness of bush, swamp, open fields, and heavily wooded river banks, with the ephemeral tents of the aborigines the only signs of human habitation.<sup>2</sup> Although the Salteaux still appeared to be in a majority, several families of Crees now resided in the area. "The Swampies", Cockran wrote, "from all parts of the north have been drifting in from year to year till the Settlement is really full of them ..."<sup>3</sup>

This gradual increase in population, both native and white, increased the value of land and threatened to disperse the Indians from any contact with civilization. In 1832 choice lots at Red River were selling at ten

<sup>1</sup> CMR for 1838-39, 123.

<sup>2/</sup> An excellent description of the features of the countryside was written by Professor H.Y. Hind in 1857. Although these observations were made several years later, they are equally applicable to this period. See: Henry Youle Hind, Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858. 2 vols. (London, 1860), Vol. 1, 177ff.

<sup>3/</sup> PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S. (n.d.), received Oct. 20, 1832.

shillings an acre.<sup>4</sup> Cockran believed, and with good reason, that Peguis' Indians would therefore soon lose their Reserve unless some action was taken. Only by permanently settling them, he felt, could dispossession be avoided.<sup>5</sup>

Even at this early date (1832) white speculators were beginning to bargain with the Indians. "At present", Cockran reported:

"they are negotiating with the old Chief (Peguis), for a large piece of land called the Sugar Point, because of the large quantity of Maple that grow upon it. They offer him 1 keg of rum and 3 blankets for it. I have dissuaded the Chief from it hitherto; but I fear they will get round him some unfortunate moment. The point is about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles across it. This will shew how easily an Indian reserve can be made their own to sell at 10S per acre. This  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles will give many a chain lot."<sup>6</sup>

The Salteaux Reserve at Sugar Point was more attractive than the Cree Reserve at Portage La Prairie. The former, with its good soil, was especially valuable at this time because of its location along the main supply route from Hudson's Bay. The latter, although also containing potentially highly productive soil, was still largely an outpost of the fur trading traffic.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately no statistics are available to indicate the relative numbers of the Salteaux and Cree groups on these Reserves.<sup>8</sup> Most of the Crees, however, were living on the Assiniboine River west of the Colony. Those on the Red were stragglers or individuals who had parted, for various reasons, from the vicinity of their closest kinsmen. The greatest single attraction

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to note that no reference whatever, concerning this potential dispossession, appears in any publication of the C.M.S.

<sup>6</sup> PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S. (n.d.), received Oct. 20, 1832.

<sup>7</sup> The first two white settlers did not arrive at Portage La Prairie until 1851. See: A.C. Garrioch, The Correction Line (Winnipeg, 1923), 235.

<sup>8</sup> PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S. (n.d.), received Oct. 20, 1832. Cockran reported, however, that 35 families were residing on the Salteaux Reserve.

for the Crees at the Colony was the presence of a large number of Half-breed relatives, who were sources of traditional hospitality to the visitors. After a time many of the Crees simply settled down and stayed. Being related peoples they were accepted by the Salteaux on their Reserve. In this way, therefore, the Crees of Red River, who were largely of a northern origin, came to have more in common with the Salteaux than with the Crees of the prairies at Portage La Prairie.<sup>9</sup>

From their obvious individuality and apparent minority it must be concluded that the Red River Crees were consequently more prone to suggestion and conversion than were the Salteaux or the Crees of the west. From their Half-breed connections it also seems likely that a strain of "white blood" flowed in their veins.<sup>10</sup>

The degree of affinity between the Salteaux and Crees must not, however, be exaggerated, and thereby used to underestimate the unusual nature of the Salteaux-Cree relationship. Although "linguistically cognate and sociologically identical",<sup>11</sup> the Salteaux and Crees were bands that believed themselves to be different, a fact that was clearly demonstrated during Lord Selkirk's treaty negotiations of 1817.

In speaking of the Crees as a "band", however, it should be pointed out that those at Red River were not organized in any way among themselves. Unlike the Salteaux at Sugar Point and the Crees at Portage La Prairie, they were simply a group of scattered families, with no political organization.

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<sup>9</sup> That is, with the Cree band that Selkirk had negotiated with in 1817. They appear to have contributed few, if any, members to St. Peter's Indian Settlement.

<sup>10</sup> Admixture became more pronounced in later years. Not only "white blood", but also Salteaux and Cree strains were fused on the Reserve.

<sup>11</sup> R.W. Dunning, *op. cit.*, 202.

Eventually, many of these people were taken in by the Anglican missionaries and permanently placed at the Indian Settlement. There, after becoming farmers and Christians, they affiliated themselves under the loose leadership of Peguis, and cooperated closely with the smaller number of Salteaux who were converted by Anglican influence.

From time to time Indians from both bands had attended the Anglican churches but more from social curiosity than religious interest.<sup>12</sup> Their distance from the white settlement and frequent hunting and fishing excursions had, in any event, precluded regular attendance. This convinced Cockran more than ever that only a permanent mission in their midst would achieve the desired results.<sup>13</sup>

To this project he received the reluctant consent of Governor George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company and of the Church Missionary Society in London.<sup>14</sup> From the very beginning, however, he believed that the Company was against his project. Simpson's permission, he said, had been given through the "goodness of his heart",<sup>15</sup> and not by official instructions. "It would be inimical to the cause", he reported, "to publish any extracts, which would lead the Directors of the Company to conclude that I am attempting to make a pure Indian Settlement".<sup>16</sup> Somewhat bitterly, but apparently with a great deal of truth, he explained that:

<sup>12</sup> In the early years of the Colony church attendance was one of the most important social events. The Indians also often took it as such, and many attended even though they were not Christians.

<sup>13</sup> "The slow growth of this mission is to be attributed to the very scattered state of the tribes to whom our missionaries are sent": PGMS for 1832-33, 63.

<sup>14</sup> The Society, as will be seen, was anxious to preserve good relations with the Company, and, probably, in the beginning, consented to Cockran's scheme without knowledge of the Company's disapproval.

<sup>15</sup> PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S. (n.d.), received Oct. 20, 1832.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

"the evangelizing of the heathen will militate against their trade, and prevent them gathering filthy lucre by handfuls, as they considered their principal safety to arise from delays and failures. Benevolent schemes have always been received with coolness, delayed as long as possible; and when set on foot, treated with such indifference, scorn, malevolence, as to ensure failure".<sup>17</sup>

On October 8, 1834, Simpson, apparently regretting his original decision, or perhaps ordered to do so, informed Cockran that he could not continue with the Indian mission. "He told me", Cockran stated, "that the land on which I had commenced the Indian Settlement was Colony property, and under the direction of the Executors of Lord Selkirk, and that he as an agent for the said Executors would not tolerate the location of the Indians upon it". But Simpson, when asked by Cockran to state his orders in writing, refused to do so. Cockran, showing the qualities of a true diplomat, then simply ignored the order, thus giving Simpson room to retreat. Simpson retreated, and the Indian Settlement continued, although still with the apparent disapproval of the "Executors".<sup>18</sup>

The main difficulty in establishing an Indian Settlement, however, lay in the nature of the Indians themselves. Their frequent migrations, carelessness of the future, and distain of agriculture were formidable obstacles that had to be overcome if any agricultural and religious success

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. Professor R. Glover has pointed out, in this respect, that the Hudson's Bay Company was seriously lacking in suitable personnel to operate its complex inland transportation system. See: R. Glover, "The Difficulties of the Hudson's Bay Company's Penetration of the West", Canadian Historical Review, XXIX (Sept., 1948), 240-254. This is unquestionably the main explanation for the Company's reluctance to permit the establishment of Indian settlements. If too many of the Indians, Half-breeds and French-Canadians had been settled, the personnel problem would obviously have become even more critical.

<sup>18</sup> / PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S., Oct. 23, 1834.

was to be achieved. Furthermore, before Cockran could move onto the Reserve he had to obtain the consent of Peguis, which proved to be no easy matter. The Indians were extremely suspicious of encroachment upon their lands and one of Cockran's major initial tasks was to convince them that he wanted to build for their benefit and not his own. "The Indian", he observed, "has never met with a disinterested white man. He does not believe that such a being exists. All his dealings and knowledge of the whites have only deepened the conviction that they will cheat and take advantage in every imaginable way".<sup>19</sup>

A great deal of discussion between Peguis and Cockran ensued, with the latter pointing out the advantages of a white man's mode of life. Cockran promised to build houses for the "head men", to supply the Indians with farm implements, and to help and supervise them in person. By settling as farmers, he argued, they would be provided with warm houses in the winter and adequate food the year around. For several months, however, his arguments were of no avail.<sup>20</sup>

Peguis' temporal existence certainly left much to be desired, as Cockran's frequent persuasive visits revealed. "The lower part of his miserable tent", Cockran wrote on one occasion:

"was formed of birchrind, and the upper part of long grass. Five young children — dirty, and almost naked — sat round a small fire in the middle, the smoke of which filled the tent. His eldest daughter was boiling a kettle of soup made of haws and water, having failed in procuring anything more substantial".<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Aug. 3, 1831.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 86.

<sup>21</sup> Cockran to C.M.S. (n.d.), cited by Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 87.

Because of the severity of the winter of 1830-31, Peguis listened more sympathetically to Cockran's pleas, and the following spring seemed inclined to allow a settlement. But the head men, supported by the conjurers, objected strongly. Agriculture might be a good way of life for white men, they declared, but if the Indians attempted it, they would surely incur the wrath of the Great Spirit.<sup>22</sup>

The following winter, however, proved to be even more severe, and for a time it appeared to the half-starved Indians that perhaps the Great Spirit agreed with Cockran after all. With this hopeful turn of events Cockran examined and chose a tentative site in the spring of 1832. Here, he believed, at the mouth of a stream called "Netley Creek", some sixteen miles below Grand Rapids on the Red, the Indians could start agriculture with some advantage.<sup>23</sup>

But before Cockran could conclude his plans a new development took place that stopped him once again. With the coming of spring the River suddenly teemed with fish, and the happy Indians began a feast that soon erased memories of the past winter months. Cockran was not allowed to take any further steps, at least not until the medicine men had completed their annual incantations.<sup>24</sup>

It was of some significance, however, that Cockran was invited to attend the ceremony.<sup>25</sup> This took place in a large tent on the Reserve, in the interior of which sat Peguis fanning himself with a muskrat skin. The

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<sup>22</sup> Sarah Tucker, *op. cit.*, 87.

<sup>23/</sup> The immediate area, although not very suitable for farming, was the traditional camping place of the Salteaux band. It was also relatively close to Lake Winnipeg, where the Indians did a great deal of fishing.

<sup>24/</sup> Sarah Tucker, *op. cit.*, 89.

<sup>25/</sup> A somewhat similar conjuror's ceremony, as still practised by the kindred modern Ojibwa, is described by Doctor R. W. Dunning in his recent study. See: R.W. Dunning, *op. cit.*, 177-180.

sides of the tent were decorated with pieces of cloth which were expensive European products that the people had given as offerings to the influential conjurors. Thus, Cockran explained, "they were giving what they could ill spare in order to be told a lie; while to the truth, which they might have had without money and without price, they would not listen."<sup>26</sup>

Besides Cockran, Peguis, and the conjurors, there were about 150 men, women, and children present. After a time these people began shaking rattles, drumming, shouting, dancing, and running around the tent. Previous to the ceremony they had rubbed their skins with a strong concentration of fish oil, and as the tempo of the ceremony increased, Cockran found the odour unbearable. As a result, he was forced to leave before the proceedings were complete.<sup>27</sup>

Although by no means confident that the Indians would conform to his proposals, Cockran decided to take advantage of what appeared to be a momentary hesitation. Soon after the conjuror's ceremony he left home, took two servants with him, and pitched a tent at Netley Creek.<sup>28</sup> Here, throughout the summer of 1831, he worked among the Indians, persuading and instructing them in the ways of European civilization. On Saturdays he returned to his home at Grand Rapids and to the Upper Church, attended to his congregations and family, and then returned the sixteen miles to Netley Creek on Mondays.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 90.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>29</sup> At this time Jones was on leave in England, and the strain on Cockran must have been extremely severe. A.C. Garrioch, who in later years knew Cockran personally, states that: "The work Mr. Cockrane did in connection with the establishing of St. Peter's Church was in itself sufficient for one man; but when it is considered that he undertook this in addition to his work at the Upper Church where he took two services every Sunday; remembering, too, that the two places are ten miles apart (that is, the Upper Church and

At first Cockran felt greatly discouraged. Although there were about 200 Indians living on the Reserve at the time, he could only persuade Peguis and six others to attempt agriculture.<sup>30</sup> Even these proved to be undependable, apathetic, and so proud that Cockran had to bring the first seed down from the Colony with his own labour. On some days they were enthusiastic, but on others morose and uninterested. During periods of bad weather they stayed in their tents — sometimes dozing in a peculiar stupor for days at a time — and in good weather often went fishing or hunting. The Indian women, he stated, were not much better, and were "dreadfully given to gossiping, whoring, and lying ..." Industry alone, he concluded, "can recover them from their evil ways, and establish their minds in virtue."<sup>31</sup>

But before this first summer was over Cockran managed to construct three crude buildings. The first of these was for Peguis, the second for an Indian called "Red Deer", and the third for Cockran and his assistants. Cockran was horrified to learn that one of the builders engaged was called "Cannibal", from having eaten nine of his relatives during periods of scarcity, but in spite of this opprobrium the buildings gave his establishment an air of desirable permanency.<sup>32</sup>

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the Lower Church — actually a distance of twelve miles), and the road between, an Indian trail passing through bushes, it might be said that the man who undertook such a two-man job and carried it to a successful issue must have been gigantic, not only as to physical strength but in enthusiasm, willpower and energy; and anyone who knew Rev. William Cockrane could say all that about him and feel that he was not exaggerating even a little": A.C. Garrioch, The Correction Line (Winnipeg, 1923), 89.

30/ PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S. (n.d.), received Apr. 8, 1835. It should be remembered that the Indians already practised some agriculture. This included the raising of maize — as already described in the observations of Nicholas Garry — and the making of maple-sugar from the sap of the "Manitoba Maple", or acer negundo, at Sugar Point.

31/ Ibid., Cockran to C.M.S., Jul. 30, 1833.

32/ Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 93.

In the spring of 1832 Cockran's small group of Indian farmers began their first serious attempts at agriculture. It was an inauspicious beginning for throughout the summer the weather continued to be unusually moist and stormy. Then, in August, a frost damaged most of the Indians' potatoes. Following this misfortune Peguis became anxious. The Master of Life, he believed, was punishing the Indians for attempting to live like white men. The medicine men now felt that their warnings had been justified and warned the Indians against reaping the white man's food.<sup>33</sup>

But in spite of these setbacks, the reluctant farmers began harvesting fair barley crops on the 3rd of September.<sup>34</sup> This was the period of Cockran's greatest anxiety, as he could only persuade them to work for brief intervals, usually for no more than an hour at a time. The danger of another frost was of no apparent concern to them; they often stopped to smoke or talk, or to consider the significance of their actions. Nevertheless, in a few days, a small crop was harvested. Four of the seven then commenced great feasts that did not end until all was gone. Only Peguis and two others managed to save a portion for the winter, their colleagues being reverted to the same material status they had held the previous spring.<sup>35</sup>

The success of these first farmers nevertheless encouraged the Indians, and in the summer of 1833 the little agricultural colony increased from

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>34/</sup> The Indians had to overcome an extreme reluctance to undertake permanent agriculture. This appears to be a characteristic of nomads in all parts of the world. "Nomads in general", writes Kroeber, "feel free, are proud, and look down on the sedentary groups, though they are fewer, poorer, and envious of the latter's luxury and wealth": A.L. Kroeber, Anthropology (New York, 1948), 277.

<sup>35/</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 94.

seven to fourteen.<sup>36</sup> Apart from Peguis most, if not all, of the other farmers were Crees.<sup>37</sup> The Salteaux, although more aggressive than the Crees, feared them because they were reputed to have a greater control of "magic".<sup>38</sup> The turn of the Crees to agriculture therefore tended to increase an element of friction that had already long existed. "The Salteaux", Cockran reported, "have been so inimical to the Gospel, that they have no claim upon our assistance, except on account of their wretchedness. This spring (1834) when they ought to have been sowing their farms, they were conjuring, and before they concluded they un-animously agreed that they would never forsake the customs of their ancestors".<sup>39</sup>

Realizing that open hostility was possible, Cockran decided that two settlements were necessary, one for each band, or for whatever natural alignment of interests that might result. Consequently, in the spring of 1833, after obtaining Peguis' consent, he began a new colony near the mouth of "Cook's Creek".<sup>40</sup> This location was slightly north of Sugar Point, and eventually became the main settlement of the Crees, to whom Cockran henceforth devoted most of his attention.<sup>41</sup>

(ii) Progress With the Crees At Cook's Creek -

Progress at Cook's Creek was slow but steady. The first seeds,

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>/PAC: A101, Settee's Journal, Nov. 20, 1874: Another Indian, called "Red Deer", was also probably a Salteaux. Unlike Peguis, however, he remained a heathen, according to a statement made many years later to James Settee, the native minister.

<sup>38</sup>/PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S., Jul. 11, 1834.

<sup>39</sup>/Ibid., Jul. 24, 1834.

<sup>40</sup>/See: "Map of Red River Colony".

<sup>41</sup>/Some of the Salteaux band who did become permanent farmers eventually moved in among the Crees at the new location. The settlement at Netley Creek was not continuous.

planted in the spring of 1833, produced a substantial crop and encouraged more Indians, most of whom were Crees, to join the original cultivators.<sup>42</sup> With few exceptions the volunteer farmers began to work earnestly and with surprising application.

But, even in later years, unless kept under strict supervision, the Indians still drifted back into their old habits. "Some of them", Cockran observed, "reap as well as Europeans; but they do nothing unless I go with them. As soon as I leave the field, they drop their sickles and begin to play".<sup>43</sup>

After teaching the Indians the basic farming skills and assisting them with their sowing, Cockran turned their attention to carpentry. During the autumn of 1833 nine small but well-erected log houses were completed.<sup>44</sup> These buildings, constructed in traditional pioneer fashion, consisted of logs of maple or pine plastered with mud.<sup>45</sup> Each house, white-washed both inside and out, was 24 feet by 16 feet,<sup>46</sup> and featured a cellar for potatoes, a roof of thatched reeds, and windows stopped with fish skins.<sup>47</sup> By 1834, Cockran reported, these houses were occupied by "29 cultivators of the soil: 15 at the Indian Settlement (Cook's Creek), and 14 at the Indian farm (Netley Creek) where we first commenced". Crops at the former, he stated, were "good", and at the latter "neglected."<sup>48</sup>

In 1833 Cockran constructed a school and after a great deal of

<sup>42</sup> PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S., Jul. 24, 1834: By the following year (1834) there were 15 "cultivators of the soil" at Cook's Creek.

<sup>43</sup> PCMS for 1837-38, 83.

<sup>44</sup> Bishop Mountain, The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal during a Visit to the Church Missionary Society's North-West America Mission (London, 1845), 209.

<sup>45</sup> PCMS for 1838-39, 123.

<sup>46</sup> Bishop Mountain, Op. cit., 209.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S., Jul. 24, 1834.

pleading persuaded some of the Indians to have their children attend. It was a small log building, 40 feet by 20 feet, with a residence for the school teacher, and a loft that served as a granary.<sup>49</sup> On November 25, 1833, when this school first opened, 32 children were enrolled.<sup>50</sup> In 1834 a similar school was built for the Salteaux at Netley Creek, but as only five boys were permitted to attend, it proved to be relatively unsuccessful.<sup>51</sup> In education, as in religion and agriculture, the Crees from the very beginning proved themselves to be far more capable of adaptation than the Salteaux.

Cockran soon found that enrolling Indian children in school was one thing, and attempting to control them another. According to European observers, and in the light of European standards, the aborigines seemed to exercise little discipline over their offspring, nor could they very readily appreciate the desire of others to do so. As a result, when his school first opened, Cockran discovered that he could only expect sporadic attendance, and even that only by giving the children one free meal a day and warm clothing in the wintertime.<sup>52</sup> His graphic descriptions of the early days of the school show how utterly incomprehensible the concept of European education was to these preliterate people:

"If we had the same number of the wildest birds of the forest let loose in a room, we should not find it more difficult to move among them. They run in and out, learn or play, according to their pleasure, quarrel with one another, and always seek to settle their quarrels by the knife or the bow and arrow. To assume anything like

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<sup>49</sup> Bishop Mountain, op. cit., 210.

<sup>50/</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51/</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52/</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 99.

authority would be to drive them away".<sup>53</sup>

By 1837 Cockran's diagnosis of these characteristics was elaborated into a much clearer and more serious focus:

"It is certain, from the erratic habits of the people, and the delicacy of their constitutions, that they cannot endure the same confinement, and close application, as Europeans; they are frequently seized with a peculiar malady, which they call 'thinking long'. When under the influence of this, if you cannot amuse them, and make them take exercise, they soon sicken and die. At the Indian settlement our discipline is very loose: we allow the children to hunt and fish whenever they are disposed; and I think we have greatly diminished the fatal cases by it".<sup>54</sup>

Maintaining the school was also an expensive proposition, for Cockran not only had to feed the children, but was forced to pay tribute to their fathers. Each night the students were given a quart of flour to take home. Apparently not satisfied, the Indians, on a number of occasions, broke into the school. On one of these raids 50 fish were stolen, and on another a large part of a slaughtered ox".<sup>55</sup> "We know", Cockran lamented, that "they are a den of thieves."<sup>56</sup>

Fortunately for Cockran, he had an efficient school teacher called Joseph Cook, the son of a Cree woman<sup>57</sup> and William Hemmings Cook, a former

<sup>53</sup> PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S., Dec. 16, 1833.

<sup>54</sup>/ Cockran's Journal, Nov. 26, 1837, cited in CMR for 1839, 30.

<sup>55</sup>/ Although these thefts may be construed as being highly ungrateful acts on the part of the Indians, they were nevertheless characteristic of the aboriginal culture. The "law of hospitality", as Clark Wissler calls it, is a custom frequently found among "hunting peoples" in general. It "requires that the individual who possesses food must divide it with the other members of the community who have none": Clark Wissler, An Introduction to Social Anthropology (New York, 1929). In these instances the Indians obviously took "the law" into their own hands.

<sup>56</sup>/ PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S., Dec. 16, 1833.

<sup>57</sup>/ Holly S. Seaman, Manitoba: Landmarks and Red Letter Days (Winnipeg, 1920), 40.

Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company.<sup>58</sup> By patient degrees Cook brought a semblance of order to the institution, and after a time many of the children began to take evident interest and pleasure in learning.

Agriculture, although increasingly successful with each passing year, was also beset by problems that were caused by inherent characteristics of the Indian culture. In particular, the custom of unrestricted hospitality threatened to preclude the establishment of any fund of material security in the new Indian community. This dilemma, as also demonstrated in the sharing customs of the buffalo hunt, was expressed with vivid simplicity to Cockran by Red Deer, one of the first and most faithful of the Indian cultivators. "My relations from the woods", he said:

"come to me and say, 'My brother, you are rich, you have a house, you are warm, you eat, but we are cold and hungry; so I let them come and warm themselves at my fire, and sleep in my room. I cook for them, they eat; and when they go away, they say 'Give us a little more to take away'. I give, I give, but they are scarcely gone when others come. I cook, I give, I give, they soon will have the whole".<sup>59</sup>

Under these perplexing circumstances the Indian farmers usually found it easier "to give", and then simply depend on Cockran for support.<sup>60</sup>

Red Deer's problem occurred a second time during the winter of 1833-34, when the Indians' crops were all consumed, leaving them with no seed grain and potatoes for spring sowing.<sup>61</sup> On this occasion only the

<sup>58</sup> T.C.B. Boon, "St. Peter's Dynevor: The Original Indian Settlement of Western Canada", Papers read before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series III, No. 9 (1954), 18.

<sup>59</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 100-101.

<sup>60</sup> One of the greatest tasks of the missionaries, as has already been noted, was to keep a supply of provisions available for the schools and for destitute Indians. This phase of their work will be described more fully in the next chapter.

<sup>61</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 101.

generosity of the Half-breed people of Grand Rapids, who donated some of their produce, perpetuated the life of the little agricultural community.<sup>62</sup>

The sentiments of the Europeans toward the Indians at this time were also still ones of considerable sympathy, for many of them remembered the humanitarian attitude of Peguis and his people in earlier years. Certainly, the Indian custom of accepting charity from others was by no means a selfish or one-sided affair — they gave as freely as they took.<sup>63</sup>

In 1835, under Cockran's supervision, a flour-mill was erected by the Indians at Cook's Creek. Previously grain had been crushed in pans with stones, a method that resulted only in inferior meal and that required a great deal of manual labour.<sup>64</sup> But with the new mill, which was wind-driven, reasonably good flour was easily produced. Once accustomed to its use, moreover, the Indians took great pride in ownership and in the fact that it had been constructed with their own labour.<sup>65</sup>

Enthused by his progress, Cockran began to take new hope. An Indian civilization, he wrote, "will bring the Honourable H.B. Company to their senses, or rather the fur traders who have often misled them, and shew them that instead of sapping and thwarting civilization, it is their interest, now since it has begun, to encourage it".<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63/</sup> In this regard, Kroeber states that: "Most primitives look upon Western white men as both greedy and stingy". They cannot comprehend the European concept of property. Of all the Indian tribes, only those of the Northwestern coast of America had a culture "largely dominated by wealth": A.L. Kroeber, Anthropology (New York, 1948), 608.

<sup>64/</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 101.

<sup>65/</sup> Bishop Mountain, op. cit., 217.

<sup>66/</sup> PAC: A84, Cockran to C.M.S., Jul. 24, 1834.

(iii) The Problems of Religious, Moral, and Social Conversion -

The opposition of the Hudson's Bay Company was but one obstacle that Cockran had to overcome. "Do not give any publicity to my plan", he pleaded to the Society. "We have natural difficulties to contend with, sufficiently great, to break the spirits of the most determined. Do not increase them by pointing out my march to the enemy."<sup>67</sup>

Unfortunately, however, Cockran's colleague, the Reverend David Jones, was a member of the "enemy" camp. Jones, Cockran complained, "never recommended the Society to help me ... but he could recommend them to cast in ... with the Great, i.e., with Lord Selkirk, with the Hudson's Bay Company ..."<sup>68</sup> The Society, under Jones' misleading direction, Cockran asserted, was spending too much money on the Europeans, and not enough on the Indians.

Cockran became especially angry in 1833, when a large number of Jones' Indian scholars were transferred to the Grand Rapids school. Cockran believed that Jones had done this, on the Company's behalf, to prevent him from having sufficient time to devote to the Indian Settlement. There was also some indication of snobbery and outright prejudice on Jones' part. "It was said," Cockran wrote, that "these boys are so immoral that Mr. Jones cannot support the character and respectability of the new established schools unless they are removed to the Rapids".

When Jones' action became known to the people of Grand Rapids, they objected strongly. In Cockran's words, they felt that if "these Indian boys are so bad, as to corrupt and seduce the bastards of the Chief Factors,

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., Jul. 30, 1833.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., (n.d.), received Feb. 1, 1834.

surely Mr. Cockran will never allow them to enter the school where our children and daughters are educated..." It seemed evident to them that "the bastards of the Chief Factors are more esteemed by our ministers".<sup>69</sup>

Cockran was also disillusioned with Jones because of his evident worldly habits. "Our unfortunate brother Jones", he reported, "seems so captivated by the world, as to have lost all the sacred halo that ought to adorn the missionary character. Religion is never touched upon by him except in the pulpit. His leisure time is spent in giving dinners, and attending 'Pick Nick Parties', so that he has no time to pay me a visit".<sup>70</sup>

But in spite of these difficulties, by sheer energy and perseverance, Cockran gradually changed the Indians' economic habits, and also, to a certain extent, their religious, moral and social beliefs.

On December 11, 1833, he began his first serious proselytizing by instituting a weekly religious meeting.<sup>71</sup> Initially, his progress was discouraging, as very few attended.<sup>72</sup> Like all human beings, the Indians did not like having their sins pointed out to them. Some, who were polygamists with two or three wives, had more to lose by accepting Christianity than others.<sup>73</sup> The greatest counter influence, however, came from the conjurers, who, by virtue of their supposed magical powers, were still feared by many of the Indians.<sup>74</sup>

The first convert at the Indian mission was a Cree woman who applied

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Jul. 28, 1834.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., Aug. 4, 1836.

<sup>71</sup> PCMS for 1834-35, 74.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., By January, 1834, however, more than 40 Indians were coming regularly.

<sup>73</sup> Polygamy among the Indians depended partly on economic status. Those who were good hunters, for example, could afford and might obtain more wives than others. See: R.W. Dunning, op.cit., 182, for a modern example.

<sup>74</sup> Sarah Tucker, op.cit., 102.

for baptism in the spring of 1834.<sup>75</sup> This started a slow but ever-increasing "Christian membership" which included, by 1836, a church attendance of more than 100 people.<sup>76</sup> Also in 1836, on December the 24th, five more women were baptized. The Indian woman seemed more inclined to accept Christianity than the men, and often appeared to take the initiative in this regard.<sup>77</sup>

Although the congregations were largely non-Christian for the first few years, the Indians proved themselves to be faithful attenders. "It is not to hear some new thing", Cockran reported, on "a fine morning, when the weather is tempting, that they assemble; but, at every season of the year, they wade their way, through mire and rain, snow and cold, to the House of God".<sup>78</sup>

Encouraged by regular attendance, Cockran began the construction of what was the first exclusively Indian church. Commenced in the summer of 1836, this building was situated at Cook's Creek, in the vicinity of the Cree settlement.<sup>79</sup>

At first, because of apathy, or fear of the conjurers, the Indians refused to help dig the foundation. But in June, when Cockran began alone in apparent despair, they joined him with enthusiasm, worked hard, and completed the building by the end of the year.<sup>80</sup> In this undertaking, as in others, the people of Grand Rapids assisted considerably, many of

75 Ibid.

76/ Ibid., 104.

77/ This was particularly true of those women who were married to white men, or who had contacts with Half-breed relatives.

78/ PCMS for 1837-38, 83.

79/ See: Map of Red River Colony.

80/ Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 104.

them sometimes walking 26 miles to donate their labour.<sup>81</sup> A total of £95 and 15 Shillings was also donated by the other Colonists.<sup>82</sup>

The new church, which accomodated about 300 people,<sup>83</sup> was 54 feet in length and 24 feet in width.<sup>84</sup> It was "a wooden building, painted white ... with a cupola over the entrance",<sup>85</sup> a "white spire",<sup>86</sup> and "square-topped windows" that gave it "an uneclesiastical appearance."<sup>87</sup>

Its official opening, held on January 4, 1837, was a colourful event. The weather on that day was cold and stormy, but many people from all parts of the Colony attended. Strangely enough, several officials of the Hudson's Bay Company came, as did a large delegation of European settlers.<sup>88</sup> The building contained some 200 Indians, now "clothed and in their right minds".<sup>89</sup> The service, an impressive ceremony, showed the Indians to be attentive listeners, good singers, and outwardly, at least, much like European Christians.

Perhaps the most conspicuous Indian convert to Christianity at this time was one of Peguis' sons, a young man who later came to be called "George William Prince". George learned Christianity in Cockran's Indian school, where he proved himself exceptionally clever and willing to learn. Because of this apparent talent, Cockran took him into his home, and gave him personal tutership and more advanced instruction in English and the

81 Ibid.

82/ Bishop Mountain, op. cit., 225.

83/ PCMS for 1837-38, 82.

84/ Bishop Mountain, op. cit., 225.

85/ Ibid., 79.

86/ PCMS for 1837-38, 82.

87/ Bishop Mountain, op. cit., 79.

88/ PCMS for 1837-38, 82.

89/ Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 105.

Scriptures.<sup>90</sup>

George soon developed a strong desire to teach his people, and he consequently applied himself even more diligently to his studies. Often, however, he was ridiculed by his people, the Salteaux Indians, who called him "slave" because he helped Cockran; but he appeared to ignore their comments, and devoted his life to his new faith.<sup>91</sup>

Then, in the fall of 1837 he suddenly became ill. Since no definite disease was diagnosed it can only be assumed that he had been "thinking too long".<sup>92</sup> Cockran, gravely disturbed at his pending loss, and afraid to arouse Indian suspicions, decided to send the boy home. There, for the last three weeks of his life, the young convert pleaded with his family to join him in Christianity. He told them of the happiness he had gained, of the error of their ways, and of the new and fuller life that he was about to enter.<sup>93</sup> This reconciled and serene manner, by which he went to his death, was unquestionably a powerful influence on Peguis.

In any event, the conversion of the old Chief followed a few months later. Peguis, who had by this time discarded many of his non-Christian shortcomings, now decided to give up one of his worst — that of drunkenness — and in February, 1838, was baptized into the Christian Church.<sup>94</sup> But, surprisingly enough, his marriage is not recorded until two years later.<sup>95</sup> Whether or not he continued to live polygamously in the meantime

<sup>90</sup> CMR for 1839, 35-36.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> "His disease", Cockran reported, "has all the symptoms of inflammation of the brain:" Ibid., 36. Also, see note 54.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 110.

<sup>95</sup> Reverend T.C.B. Boon, who once had access to a "Private Register of Births, Marriages and Burials", states that "William King (Pegowys)" and "Victoria" were married on October 7, 1840: T.C.B. Boon, op. cit., 23.

is not known, but his acceptance as a Christian would seem to indicate that he did not. His delayed marriage, however, remains an unsolved mystery.

During the baptismal ceremony, according to tradition, Cockran informed Peguis that since he was no longer to be a pagan, he must take up a new Christian name.

"What name do you choose, Peguis?" Cockran asked.

"How do you call the great white father across the sea?" Peguis countered.

"We call him 'King'," replied Cockran.

"So! Then, as I too am ruler over my own people, that will I take also. Call me 'King'."

Shortly afterward, and in a similar manner, Peguis presented his sons to Cockran for baptism.

"What are their names, King?" Cockran asked.

"How call you the sons of the white King, my father?" the Chief asked.

"They are called 'Prince'," Cockran replied.

And so, from that time on, although "William King" was still usually called by his Indian name, his sons came to be known as "Edward Prince", "Albert Prince" et cetera, and his future wife "Victoria", according to the traditional names of the Royal Family.<sup>96</sup>

Apparently all of Peguis' family, except one rebellious son, were baptized in this manner. Although details of the incident are unfortunately lacking, this rebel refused to become a Christian and was set up in opposition to his father by an element of the Salteaux band. The attempt miscarried, Peguis resumed his authority, and his pagan son, whom he still

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<sup>96</sup> "Peguis", Beaver, March, 1935.

nevertheless loved, left his home to live in a distant part of the Salteaux tribe.<sup>97</sup>

This episode, though insufficiently documented, is another instance of the evident animosity that existed between the two Indian bands. The Salteaux, resentful of Cree attempts to mimic the white man, and in particular with their Chief, had clearly attempted to assert their independence. That they were unable to do so can only be attributed to Peguis' prestige.

In August, 1838, David Jones, who had served at Red River since 1823, prepared to leave for England. Possibly partly because of Cockran's criticism, he had, in his last years at the Colony, developed an interest in the Indian Settlement. His parting address was given to more than 200 Indians in their little church.<sup>98</sup> Upon its conclusion, Peguis stepped into the aisle of the church, and expressed his gratitude.

"You have spoken as you always do", Peguis said, "as a father would to his children, and I wish all would listen to you. I send by you a letter to the Missionary men in England: tell them not to forget me: I want the Word of Life to be always spoken in my land."<sup>99</sup>

Jones' departure increased the already heavy load on Cockran, and began to deteriorate his health.<sup>100</sup> This situation was made evident by Peguis' letter to the Church Missionary Society, dated August 1, 1838, in

<sup>97</sup> Sarah Tucker, *op. cit.*, 110.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>99</sup> *PCMS for 1838-39*, 125.

<sup>100</sup> *PAC*: A84, Cockran to G.M.S. (n.d.), sent sometime in 1833: Cockran, although an exceptionally strong man physically, suffered a rupture while doing manual labour among the Indians. This caused him much pain and undoubtedly retarded his work.

which he pleaded that more assistance be given. "My friends", he said:

"my heart is sore, to see our praying Master so drove about like a slave, to teach all the people in the Settlement. You certainly are not aware of the distance he has to go: I cannot but think you are killing our friend ... You should ... send us another to teach us ... My friends, what are you about? It is true, there is not a summer but some of the French Praying-Masters arrive; but I do not wish to go and seek them ... I wish you alone to teach me the Word of God ... I do not look so much to my body as to my soul, and ... I therefore intend to hold fast to your instructions ...

"William King  
Chief of the Red  
River Indians."<sup>101</sup>

Largely as a result of this letter, in the following year, a new missionary, the Reverend John Smithurst was despatched.

Smithurst's arrival at Red River in 1839 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of the Indian Settlement, for from that time on, and until 1851, Cockran's direct work with it came to an end.

In general, it had been a period of remarkable progress toward the original goals set by the Church Missionary Society, aided in no small measure by John West, to a lesser extent by David Jones, and in the largest part by the powerful and energetic personality of William Cockran. Only time would tell whether or not this progress would come to a fruitful conclusion.

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<sup>101</sup> GMR for 1839, 34.



*William Cockran (1798-1865)  
The Founder of St. Peter's  
(Public Archives of Manitoba)*

## CHAPTER III

SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN THE MIDDLE DECADES  
(1839 - 1857)

"The work of evangelizing and civilizing the erratic tribes of this country will be tedious and discouraging, however prudent, pious, and energetic the superintendent may be ..."

— William Cockran<sup>1</sup>

(i) Indian Attitudes and the New Missionary -

The first two years of the 1840's saw the work of the Church Missionary Society at the Indian Settlement expand into an energetic campaign of activity. For the first time, under the direction of a new missionary, the Settlement received a degree of exclusive attention that it had hitherto unknown. Initially, this was due to the enthusiastic endeavour of the missionary himself, but his efforts were, to some extent, encouraged and aided by the Society. How prolonged and successful this activity was is therefore of major interest in the section that follows.

In the interval before the arrival of John Smithurst the life of the Indian Village carried on much as before, even though Cockran could now devote less time to it. Joseph Cook, his competent Half-breed schoolteacher, guided the people in their services and continued his excellent work in the school.<sup>2</sup>

Communications between Grand Rapids and the Indian Settlement were especially difficult for Cockran, since no road existed for half the distance. In the summer this trip by canoe took only a few hours,

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<sup>1</sup> GMI for 1850, 179.

<sup>2</sup>/Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 116-117.

as it did in winter by cariole over the smooth River ice. The intervening seasons, however, were hazardous because of the treacherous condition of both land and water.

With the arrival of John Smithurst these trips no longer became necessary and Cockran, now released to the attention of the European Settlement, disappeared temporarily from the Indian scene.<sup>3</sup> Taking his place was a man of equally energetic constitution, and very similar in personality and ideas.

John Smithurst was born on September 9, 1807, at Lea Hurst, Derbyshire, England. During his early years he worked at "mercantile pursuits" for the firm of the famous Sir Richard Arkwright.<sup>4</sup> Then, following a period at the Church Missionary Society's Islington College, he was ordained as a deacon.<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1839, after being priested, he sailed for Red River, where he arrived, after the usual hazardous journey, on September 20, 1839.<sup>6</sup>

Smithurst's name, which stands out so prominently in the history of the Red River Anglican Missions, has also, over the years, been connected romantically to that of the internationally famous Florence Nightengale. Information as to what extent this connection is justified

<sup>3</sup> Cockran's attitude toward the Indian Settlement at this time is difficult to determine. In any event, the fact that he permitted Smithurst to take his place would seem to indicate that by 1839, he had lost some of his original zeal.

<sup>4</sup> John R. Connor, Elora (Elora, 1930), 145.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps of interest to the politically-minded reader is the fact that Smithurst was also an ardent Tory. Writing to an English friend in 1840, he stated that he "was disappointed that the Queen (Victoria) had not married George of Cambridge, and equally disappointed to hear of the Whigs (Lord Melbourne's second ministry) being in office . . .": ARL, Letter from Smithurst to an unknown correspondent (n.d.), Letter Book of 1840.

<sup>6</sup> CMR for 1839-40, 110.

is unfortunately rather limited. The Anglican historians have largely neglected his life, and few details are known. It is certain, however, that at least some liaison between the two did exist.

Miss Nightengale, who was Smithurst's cousin, first seriously appeared in his life during his twenty-ninth birthday, when she was mysteriously despatched to the Continent, allegedly to prevent a frowned on inter-family marriage. Following this unhappy episode, romanticists claim that Miss Nightengale advised her lover to go to North America as a missionary, while she herself entered the nursing career that was later to make her so famous. Several fragments of evidence have been presented to prove the romanticists' case. Intriguing<sup>7</sup> is the fact that neither ever married, and that Miss Nightengale was extremely distressed during Smithurst's visit to England in 1852. Smithurst often confided to friends that a close relationship existed between them, and that he had a strong affection for her seems fairly evident.<sup>7</sup> But whether or not this feeling was mutual, or to what extent it influenced his work at the Indian Settlement, is a matter of pure speculation.

Soon after his arrival at Red River, Smithurst moved to the Indian Village, in what appears to have been a contradiction of his original orders. "The Indians had applied for a missionary," he explained, "and had been told in letters that I was coming to them. I could therefore see no justice in disappointing their expectations . . . I proposed

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<sup>7</sup> See: John R. Connor, Op. Cit., 145 - 147; and M. A. Macleod, "The Lamp Shines in Red River," Beaver, September, 1936.

living myself at the Indian Settlement . . . and to devote my undivided attention to the Indians . . . The consequence is, I am no longer Chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company, but simply a missionary."<sup>8</sup>

At the settlement Smithurst found that the people were "for the most part Muscaigoes with a few Saulteaux. They each speak a different language though on the whole understand each other tolerably well."<sup>9</sup> "Those who were Christians", he observed, "have a great reverence for the Scriptures and the ordinances of the Church. Indeed I never saw a more orderly and devout congregation."<sup>10</sup> "The settled families", he stated, "numbered 50, and lived "in tolerably comfortable log houses, surrounded by patches of cultivated land", on which were "growing very promising crops of wheat, barley and potatoes".<sup>11</sup>

There were, on Smithurst's arrival, two schools, "one for the Crees containing 80 day scholars and one for the Chipaways containing 16 . . ."<sup>12</sup> The church congregation numbered about 300; and of this total there were 52 Cree communicants, 5 Saulteaux communicants, and 3 Half-breed communicants.<sup>13</sup>

Both school and church attendance suffered greatly, however, during the frequent periods that the Indians disappeared on hunting and fishing excursions. This appeared to apply even to those families who were supposedly "settled". On June 24, 1840, for example, Smithurst reported that the "service at the Church was very thinly attended . . . the Settlement seems almost deserted there being scarce any left except

<sup>8</sup> ARL, Smithurst's Letter Book for 1840 (n.d.).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> ARL, Smithurst's Journal, June 1840 (n.d.)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

a few old people and the school children."<sup>14</sup>

The first dramatic event in the Settlement after Smithurst's arrival came in January, 1840, when he became a witness to the burial of Peguis' rebel son, who, since leaving his father, had committed suicide over the death of one of his children.<sup>15</sup> Peguis sent for the body and asked Smithurst for permission to bury it in the churchyard. But because the son had died a pagan Smithurst had to refuse, since according to Church law only a Christian can be buried in consecrated ground. This came as a severe blow to the old Chief, but true to the strength of his character and faith, he gave way, accepting the blow to his pride with a moving display of Christian humility. He stripped the corpse of its heathen regalia, employed Christian Indians as pallbearers, and buried his son just beyond the boundary of the Churchyard. There, in the wintry blasts, at the grave of his son, he implored his unconverted Saulteaux followers to become Christians.

This was but one of numerous incidents that could be used to illustrate the vague, conflicting authorities and loyalties that influenced this peculiar band of Saulteaux-Crees throughout their early history. Although for the most part inclined to accept European culture, the Crees remained relatively docile and more or less accepted the dominant prestige of Peguis as implying a type of suzerainty over them. On the other hand, the Saulteaux, who appeared to resent Peguis, specifically acknowledged him as their Chief, though by no means without complaint. The tenacity.

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<sup>14</sup> ARI, Smithurst's Journal, June 24, 1840.

<sup>15</sup> Sarah Tucker, op. cit., 121 - 122. Suicide is a comparatively rare occurrence in pre-literate societies, and this particular incident is therefore difficult to explain, or at least for the reason given. It seems more likely that the suicide occurred because of "loss of face", or social ostracism.

of the Salteaux in maintaining their own culture, however, is perhaps partly explicable by this unusual relationship: for in their failure to set up Peguis' son, they may possibly have found some satisfaction in resisting the Chief's attempts to make them accept the white man's religion.

Smithurst also encountered great difficulties in attempting the conversion of the Salteaux. The following argument, presented by an ailing brave who had continually refused to accept Christianity, was characteristic of the Salteaux intelligence and attitude:

"God is so great and holy . . . that he would never allow Indians to live with Him (i.e., in Heaven), for when they went to the houses of European chiefs who had fine rooms they were never allowed to go further than the kitchen because they were not clean enough. If, then, they were not fit to live with men, how could they be fit to live with God . . .?"<sup>16</sup>

In September, 1840, with Smithurst's assistance, Peguis once again attempted a mass conversion. On this occasion the Salteaux had assembled for one of their conjuring feasts, but after being offered gifts of tobacco, they consented to listen. Both Smithurst and Peguis then spoke at length, the latter for nearly an hour with "great energy, emphasis and eloquence."<sup>17</sup> But such was their indifference, Smithurst reported, that:

"though the assembly consisted of nearly the whole tribe not one expressed a desire for instruction nor did we get a promise of more than three children for the school. As however God has disposed the

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<sup>16</sup> ARL, Smithurst's Journal, August 2, 1840.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., September 22, 1840.

hearts of the Muscaigoes we trust he will in time work for his own glory among the Salteaux."<sup>18</sup>

Besides their "indifference", Smithurst noticed a number of other Indian characteristics that were distressing to him. On one occasion, for instance, he was "a great deal struck to see an old woman . . . bring a large bundle of wood upon her back and lay it down for the purpose of making a fire to cook . . ." In the meantime, "a number of young men and women were "sitting idle".<sup>19</sup>

This apparent inferior status of women was demonstrated once again in December, 1840, when one of Peguis' sons literally demanded a Cree girl in marriage. Smithurst had a great deal of difficulty in convincing Peguis and his son that Christians required the consent of both parties, but as the girl soon agreed to the marriage, no trouble occurred. Peguis, however, staunchly maintained that "women are not masters of their own bodies", and appeared puzzled by Smithurst's reasoning.<sup>20</sup> His own marriage with "Victoria", which took place on October 7, 1840,<sup>21</sup> was apparently a formality that he did not entirely understand.

<sup>18</sup> ARL, Smithurst's Journal, August 2, 1840. Smithurst's relative success among the Crees and Salteaux can be roughly determined by the number of Indians converted from each band. By July, 1851, when Smithurst left the Settlement for the last time, he had baptized: 192 Crees, 90 Salteaux, 37 Half-breeds, and 2 Europeans, for a total of 321 people. Unfortunately, Smithurst's successors did not continue his practice of distinguishing between the two bands: Statistics compiled from ARL, Register of Baptisms, Oct., 1839 to Aug., 1877.

<sup>19</sup> ARL, Smithurst's Journal, May 22, 1840.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., December 11, 1840.

<sup>21</sup> T.C.B. Boon, op. cit., 23.

(ii) The Peak of Missionary Activity -

Dramatic events were not infrequent during Smithurst's incumbency, but most of his time was devoted to the drudgery and toil of a multi-functional existence. The following entry of April 30, 1840, in his Journal is characteristic:

"Plouging in the forenoon, in the afternoon sowed with wheat all we ploughed today and yesterday. I am so tired tonight I can scarce move and I have found it no easy task to get through my usual evening service at the school room, but as the Indians are never absent I always feel a pleasure in meeting them after the labours of the day."<sup>22</sup>

His other duties included the preparation and storage of buffalo meat, the production of candles from buffalo tallow, and the sowing and harvesting of crops. Demands on his hospitality by destitute or transient Indians were frequent. Besides attending to his own model farm, he was at all times required to supervise the work of his parishioners on theirs. And yet, in spite of all these tasks, he still managed to find time to study the Cree and Salteaux language, to start a singing school, to erect a new schoolhouse, and to introduce and experiment with new crops such as cucumbers, melons, and kidney beans.<sup>23</sup>

By 1842 Smithurst's activities had expanded so greatly that a catechist, Mr. John Roberts, arrived to assist him. Roberts also worked at Grand Rapids, but serving permanently with Smithurst was a farm superintendent, Samuel Tate, and three school-teachers: Joseph Cook, J. J. Smith, and George Spence.<sup>24</sup> Except for Cook, however, the school-teachers do not appear to have remained long.

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<sup>22</sup> ARL, Smithurst's Journal, Apr. 30, 1840.

<sup>23</sup> M.A. Macleod, op. cit.

<sup>24</sup> GMR for 1842, 286.

During 1842 some difficulty was experienced by the Church Missionary Society in England due to a lack of funds, but by 1843 the supply of necessary money was replenished and its work continued uninterrupted. It was at this time also that both Cockran and Smithurst began requesting a bishop for the region as an assisting bulwark against the spread of Catholic influence.<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, although Smithurst's ideas on the Indians were similar to Cockran's, the two men do not appear to have been very compatible. While there is no evidence to indicate outright hostility, the correspondence of the period clearly shows that their mutually stubborn characteristics precluded any degree of cooperation. Smithurst was particularly resentful of Cockran because of the older missionary's extravagant generosity. Cockran, on several occasions, donated balances from his annual salary to the Society's fund.<sup>26</sup> Smithurst considered this to be the height of foolishness. "I cannot imagine", he wrote, "what fancy (leads) him to refuse his salary when he must know his family would suffer from it . . ." <sup>27</sup>

Smithurst also believed that Cockran was getting far too friendly with the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company. "I have not asked him", Smithurst reported, "what his determination respecting the future is, but I hope it is to have no more to do with the Hudson Bay Company . . ." <sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> CMR for 1842, 299 - 300.

<sup>26</sup> PAC:A76, C.M.S. to Cockran and Smithurst, May 30, 1844. In this instance, which is cited as an example, the "Committee received with feelings of deep respect Mr. Cockran's instructions to transfer the balance of his last year's account, £ 179.11.11, to the credit of the Society."

<sup>27</sup> PAC:A96, Smithurst to C.M.S., Aug. 1, 1842.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

This was the first real indication of his suspicions concerning the Company's motives, but whatever doubts he may previously have had were soon confirmed.

The Company, probably irked by Smithurst's decision to forgo its chaplaincy and become an Indian missionary, found an unofficial spokesman in Adam Thom, the "Recorder of Assiniboia", who in 1842 engaged Smithurst in what came to be known as the "Colonial Ordination Controversy".<sup>29</sup> This incident, over a relatively unimportant issue, clearly demonstrated the Company's resentment of Smithurst's enthusiasm.

The controversy arose over the ordination of two Anglican catechists: Abraham Cowley, who had arrived at Red River in 1839, and John Roberts, who had been appointed as Smithurst's assistant.<sup>30</sup> Thom argued that these men could not be ordained except in England, and Smithurst contradicted him, saying that with special permission they could.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> PAC:A81. This film includes a series of 18 numbered letters regarding the "Colonial Ordination Act", 59 Geo. III, Ch. 60. The principal correspondent is Adam Thom, the "Recorder of Assiniboia", and "Resident Counsel" for the Hudson's Bay Company at that time.

30/ PAC:A76, C.M.S. to Cockran and Smithurst, June 3, 1841. The "Colonial Ordination Controversy", however, only appeared to be the cause of the dispute. Although he presented no direct evidence, Smithurst implied in several of his letters that the Company was putting pressure on the Indian Settlement. One of these letters asked for legal advice concerning the Company's power. The questions asked included the following: "Does the Charter empower the Company to prevent Indians from erecting cottages and enclosing lands for the purpose of cultivating for their own benefit?": PAC:A96, Smithurst to C.M.S. (n.d.) received Oct. 25, 1842. Unfortunately, this evidence is hardly sufficient to reach concrete conclusions. The author, however, is inclined to believe that Smithurst had good reason to be apprehensive.

31/ PAC:A96, Smithurst to C.M.S., Aug. 8, 1842.

Smithurst also pointed out, and quite rightly, that there "was not the slightest occasion for Mr. Thom to have entered in the business either on public or private grounds. It was a conviction of this which led me (perhaps too unceremoniously) to resist what I deemed to be either officiousness or a desire to assume authority where the law had given none."<sup>32</sup>

The Society, which had always been anxious to maintain good relations with the Company, was greatly dismayed by Smithurst's vociferous attack. Consequently, he was instructed to give way. There "are one or two expressions", the Society observed, "in your letters to the Hudson's Bay Company which on reconsideration you would wish you had omitted. Everything bordering upon harshness of expression or imputation of motives should be most carefully avoided."<sup>33</sup>

Following these instructions Smithurst withdrew from the debate, and in June, 1843, the two main contestants exchanged apologies.<sup>34</sup> From that time on, moreover, a noticeable change took place in Smithurst's attitude. He still resented the Company's policy, but his original energy had been badly sapped. Writing in 1845, he stated that although "as an individual I do not think I have been well treated by the Hudson Bay Company in times past, and I am far from being satisfied with their policy as regards the Church Missionary Society, yet I hope such considerations will never prevent me from faithfully discharging my public duty."<sup>35</sup>

Smithurst was also badly discouraged early in his incumbency by a characteristic of the Indians that was becoming increasingly pronounced

<sup>32</sup> PAC:A96, Smithurst to C.M.S., Aug. 8, 1842.

<sup>33</sup> PAC:A76, C.M.S. to Smithurst (n.d.)

<sup>34</sup> PAC:A96, Smithurst to Thom, June 5, 1843; and Thom to Smithurst June 5, 1843.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., Smithurst to C.M.S., Dec. 29, 1845.

as the years passed. The Indians, once exposed to glimpses of comfortable civilization, began to demand the same luxuries that they had noticed, at various times, in the homes of the white settlers and missionaries.

One of the most interesting instances of this new tendency occurred on July 7, 1842, when three Indians approached Roberts and requested a quantity of nails. "Upon my asking," reported Roberts, "for what purpose they wanted nails, they said that they were going to make bedsteads, like those of the "White People". The Indian custom is, to lie on the ground."<sup>36</sup> Smithurst had noticed the same thing two years earlier. "The natural resources of the country", he said, "suffice while the inhabitants live in barbarism, but when converted into civilized and rational beings their new condition brings with it a number of wants which they have no means of supplying."<sup>37</sup>

Other more serious weaknesses — notably alcoholism, gambling, and thievery — although present previously, also became especially evident at this time. As a result, by the middle of the decade, Smithurst began to betray disillusionment with the policy of aboriginal agricultural settlement. "I by no means think", he wrote in 1846, "that hunting has a demoralizing effect upon the Indians, if they are not supplied with rum to take out with them. I would much rather that they should be away hunting, than employed among the European and Half-breed settlers, where they would be exposed to the temptations of beer, rum &c."<sup>38</sup>

In many respects, however, the little Indian community appeared to improve. This was most clearly demonstrated in 1844 during a visit to

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<sup>36</sup> CMR for 1842, 288.

<sup>37</sup> ARI, Smithurst's Journal, Jul. 9, 1840.

<sup>38</sup> Smithurst to C.M.S. (n.d.), 1846, cited by R. M. Martin, The Hudson's Bay Territories and Vancouver Island (London, 1849), 109.

Red River by the Anglican Bishop of Montreal. Travelling northwestward across the traditional Great Lakes system, the Bishop and his party took 38 days en route and, after various adventures, arrived at the Indian Settlement on June 23rd.<sup>39</sup>

The impression made on the visitors was overwhelming. "After travelling for upward of a month", the Bishop reported:

through an inhospitable wilderness, and casually encountering, at intervals . . . specimens of the Heathen savage . . . we came at once, and without any immediate gradation in the aspect of things, upon the establishment . . . (of the) . . . same race of people in their Christian state . . . we saw them gathering already around their pastor . . . their books in their hands . . . Around were their humble dwellings with the commencement of farms, and cattle grazing in the meadow . . . my servant, an Englishman, to whom everything in this journey was new, told me afterwards that he could hardly command his tears . . ."40

"There are your Christian Indians", said one of the Bishop's French-Canadian voyageurs, "it would be very well if all the whites were as good as they are."<sup>41</sup>

On visiting the Indian church for the first time the Bishop found that:

"There were perhaps 250 Indians present . . . Nothing can be more reverential and solemn than the demeanor and bearing of these people in public worship. Their costume has a hybrid kind of character, partly European partly Indian . . . The women, for the most part, still wear the blanket, or else a piece of dark cloth, thrown over the head, with the hair parted smoothly in front . . . They all wear mocassins; which indeed are worn by the Missionaries, and almost all the European population of the colony . . ."42

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<sup>39</sup> Bishop Mountain, op. cit., 47.

<sup>40/</sup> Ibid., 48-49

<sup>41/</sup> Ibid., 49-50

<sup>42/</sup> Ibid., 50

Several other interesting observations were made by the Bishop, showing to what extent the Indians had been transformed during their comparatively short period of time under missionary influence.

The Bishop considered the number of children registered in the school, 153, to be an optimistic figure, but many of these apparently attended from time to time, and those who did so regularly knew at least the fundamentals of reading and writing.<sup>43</sup> Some had progressed much further. Although church services were translated into the Indian languages, about two-thirds of the people understood English reasonably well.<sup>44</sup> The Crees in particular impressed the Bishop as being a "thinking and intelligent Tribe".<sup>45</sup>

He found that the largest part of the population at Grand Rapids consisted of "Half-breeds, a term comprehending every shade of mixed blood among the natives", and at the Middle and Upper churches, "a greater infusion of Europeans." At all three churches a proportion of "pure Indians" attended, while the Indian church itself was, "with some exceptions, a pure Indian Body."<sup>46</sup>

The Bishop's departure from the Indian Village was as stirring as his arrival. Several of the Indian women, said the Bishop, "were busy, up to the last moment, in finishing for us some little token of remembrance, and we received some beautiful specimens of their work either in beads, or in dried hair of the moose deer, or in porcupine quills . . ." Presented also was a document by Peguis, in which "the Cree and Ojibwa Indians, Members of the Church of England," thanked

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<sup>43</sup> Bishop Mountain, op. cit. 53

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 51

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 54-55

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 63

the "Chief Praying Father" and "the English people in English country, across the great water", for sending them a "Praying Father", and for paying a Teacher to teach their children the "Word of God."<sup>47</sup>

In the five years following the Bishop of Montreal's visit, while Smithurst conducted affairs at the Indian Settlement, the Anglican missions in other parts of the territory continued to expand. The Colony, now more populous and demanding, obviously required better organization and control. Accordingly, in May, 1849, the Reverend David Anderson of Exeter College, Oxford, was consecrated at Canterbury as the first "Bishop of Rupertsland".<sup>48</sup> In August, 1849, he arrived in the new diocese and preached his first sermon to the delighted Anglican settlers, who were now fully aware of their growing strength.

During Anderson's incumbency the entire territory was divided into parishes in the normal Anglican manner. Besides Smithurst's Indian mission— which stretched for some six miles along the Red River and received the name of St. Peter's — the other parishes, by 1870, came to include: St. John's (Upper Church), St. Paul's (Middle Church), St. Andrew's (Lower Church), St. Clement's, St. James', Holy Trinity, St. Ann's, St. Margaret's, and St. Mary's.<sup>49</sup> Outlying mission stations were also established at Cumberland House, Manitoba, Lac LaLonge, Moose Lake, Ile de la Crosse, and Moose Fort.<sup>50</sup>

In 1853, at a place called Scanterbury, on the Brokenhead River, another mission was commenced among an element of the Salteaux band.

<sup>47</sup> Bishop Mountain, *op. cit.*, 47.

<sup>48</sup> J. J. Halcombe, *Mission Life* (London, 1876), 3.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph James Hargrave, *Red River* (Montreal, 1871), 103.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

Scanterbury, from the time of its origin, came to be regarded as a branch of St. Peter's parish. But because of its late beginning, smallness and separation by some 20 miles of wilderness, it played a very insignificant role in the history of the main settlement.<sup>51</sup>

In 1851, after more than a decade of service in the Indian Village, John Smithurst relinquished his position to William Cockran and moved to the European Settlement. His final report to the Church Missionary Society, although including elements of both success and failure, was in fact an excellent summary of the aboriginal characteristics that had obstructed his progress during the period. "The failings and foibles of the Indians", he wrote:

". . . more frequently lead them wrong  
in temporal than in spiritual matters  
. . . Their fickleness and love of  
change keep them constantly on the move,  
so that one half of their time is wasted  
in journies from one place to another  
. . . Their extravagance and mismanagement  
in domestic matters is another fertile  
source of difficulty, and is the true  
cause of much of the starvation that is  
occasionally felt . . . Another great  
failing in the Indians . . . is, a love  
for such luxuries as pertain to the  
middle and higher ranks in civilized  
life, and as are consequently far above  
their means. In order to imitate the  
higher class of Settlers . . . many of  
the Indians have sold their oxen and  
cows to enable them to purchase horses  
. . . 52

But "the majority", he concluded, "are not idle, being always on the move after something, if not always moving wisely . . ." <sup>53</sup>

By 1849 Smithurst's disillusionment with these characteristics had changed his opinions so greatly, and so obviously, that he was

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<sup>51</sup> Further reference will be made to Scanterbury in Chapter V. It should be pointed out at this time, however, that Scanterbury, from

appointed by the Company to the "Council of Assiniboia". His meek acceptance of this appointment, which he held from 1849 to 1852, is undeniable proof, that he had been almost completely seduced from his original position. His influence on the Indian Settlement, however, came to an end in 1852 when he left for England. The following year, he was despatched to Upper Canada, and took over St. John's church at Elora (Ontario) where he died in 1867.<sup>54</sup>

(iii) Indian Attitudes and the Old Missionary -

William Cockran's greatest material contribution during his last years at the Indian Settlement (1851 - 1857) was the construction of a permanent stone church, a building that, with some alterations, still stands today, and which may be rightfully regarded as a monument to Anglican missionary endeavour at Red River.

Built almost entirely with Indian labour, the church was commenced in October, 1852.<sup>55</sup> Besides other materials, about 80 cords of stone, 1686 bushels of lime and an equal amount of sand were hauled to the site, the stone a distance of about eight miles.<sup>56</sup> Its final overall dimensions

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the very beginning, was largely unsuccessful. Its extremely slow rate of progress continued, year after year, in spite of its relatively isolated location and lack of contact with the traditional European corrupting influences.

52/ CMR for 1851, 19.

53/ Ibid.

54/ John R. Connon, op. cit., 145. Reverend T.C.B. Boon believes that Smithurst (because of attempts to suppress the illegal fur trade with the Americans) became unpopular at St. Peter's during the last part of his incumbency: Conversation with T.C.B. Boon, Jan. 25, 1960. This may, therefore partly account for his relative lack of success.

55/ CMR for 1854, 11.

56/ Ibid.

were 40 feet by 75 feet,<sup>57</sup> to which a chancel was later added, 25 feet by 15 feet.<sup>58</sup> The project was financed by the Church Missionary Society, which contributed £200, by Bishop Anderson, who donated £100,<sup>59</sup> and by the Indians themselves, who contributed both labour and money.<sup>60</sup> On May 23, 1853, its foundation stone was laid by the Bishop, who named it "St. Peter's" and the following year it was completed and opened for continuous use.<sup>61</sup>

This new structure gave an added air of permanency to the community, and served to perpetuate its unique history. Thus, in 1871, a contemporary historian wrote of the locale:

"The church of St. Peter has attached to it a burying ground, surrounded by a substantial stone wall. Within this enclosure the rudely carved wooden grave stones mark inscribed on them the strangely sounding names of many savage converts interred under the shadow of this outpost of the Anglican Church."<sup>62</sup>

Many "savages" had indeed been converted, but how many, and to what extent, was a contraversial question. Alexander Ross, for one, was not impressed. A nineteenth century historian of the Red River Settlement, and a Presbyterian who had married an Okanogan Indian woman,<sup>63</sup> Ross believed that the efforts of the Anglican missionaries had been largely in vain. To Cockran he gave full credit for his early work, and conceded

<sup>57</sup> Bishop Anderson, The Net in the Bay; or, Journal of a Visit to Moose and Albany (London, 1854), 60.

<sup>58</sup> T.C.B. Boon, op. cit., 30.

<sup>59</sup> CMR for 1854, 11.

<sup>60</sup> CMR for 1853, 19.

<sup>61</sup> T.C.B. Boon, Op. cit., 30.

<sup>62</sup> Joseph James Hargrave, op. cit., 108.

<sup>63</sup> W.L. Merton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto, 1957), 92.

that when he left in 1839, the Indian community "sadly missed" him.<sup>64</sup> But it was not true, Ross wrote "that the period of ten years (1839-49) which has since elapsed has much improved the Indian converts' condition, either temporarily or spiritually."<sup>65</sup>

Ross' opinion of the Indian converts was highly critical, although a blunt version of Smithurst's own words in reminiscent:

"When they had become, as they were, naturalized, and got accustomed to our people and their ways — especially when they were taken by the hand, baptized, confirmed, and told they were Christians — they quietly threw off the cloak of hypocrisy, began at once to compare themselves with the whites, and to have a great itching for dress and finery . . . they became saucy, tricky, and dishonest, and in place of their former docility, they now showed themselves as proud and selfish as they were ignorant and superstitious. There was withal a dulness of comprehension, a positive stubbornness and contumacy of disposition in their character, which resisted the kindest treatment, and left but little hope of either moral or religious improvement during the present generation. Perhaps, if no other cause can be assigned for such a change, their being dragged through so many new phases in so short a time might well suffice to turn the head and distract the heart of the simple savage. Vice is soon learned. To crown all, they soon became notorious beer-drinkers."<sup>66</sup>

The consumption of alcohol by the Indians was indeed the cause of a perpetual problem of extreme difficulty. Under this influence, the aborigine seemed to lose complete control of his normal senses, regardless

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<sup>64</sup> Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State: With Some Account of the Native Races and Its General History to the Present Day (London, 1856), 283.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 283-284.

of previous instruction, and once in a drunken condition he became a menace both to himself and to those around him.<sup>67</sup> Thus, in the first twenty years of Cockran's residence at Red River, at least six murders were committed by Indians, all probably under alcoholic influence.<sup>68</sup> More surprising, however, is the fact that five of these six murderers had attended either Anglican or Catholic schools.<sup>69</sup> To obtain liquor an Indian would commit almost any act, and the expression: "as great a cheat as a Swampy", became commonplace among the white settlers.<sup>70</sup>

But in spite of this and similar criticism, and in the face of much discouragement, Cockran continued faithfully in his duties at the Indian parish. "Disease, cold, and hunger," he wrote, "destroy the greater number" of the aborigines "in infancy, or before they have reached the prime of life. The few who remain are so weakened from the above causes, that they appear old men at forty years of age, without energy and enterprise, and incapable of effecting much good, either for themselves or families". Under these circumstances, he predicted the eventual extinction of the Indian race.<sup>71</sup>

On his assumption of missionary duties at the Indian Settlement in

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<sup>67</sup> Henry E. Sigerist, an eminent medical doctor at Cornell University, believes that "drinking" has: "two main causes. One is social and economic. Misery, poor living conditions, lack of educational and recreational facilities drive a man into drinking . . . Whenever people are hard pressed by a sense of misery and oppression, the more they will be inclined to seek oblivion in drink . . . The white man's conquests owe as much to fire-water as to firearms. The effect of alcohol on the American Indian is well known. The stimulant he used was tobacco, which is not intoxicating. Whisky broke his resistance and made him an easy prey for exploitation. The same methods of conquest were applied in other parts of the world." The second cause, says Doctor Sigerist, is applicable only to the upper classes where "social drinking" is used to break down inhibitions: Henry E. Sigerist, Civilization and Disease (Cornell, 1944), 17.

<sup>68</sup>/ Alexander Ross, op. cit., 285.

<sup>69</sup>/ Alexander Ross, op. cit., 285.

<sup>70</sup>/ Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>/ GMI for 1849, 179.

1851, Cockran nevertheless reported to the Church Missionary Society that the population was steadily increasing, and that a new, more substantial and larger church was necessary. This building, as already described, was completed in 1854 with the combined resources of the Society, the Bishop, and the Indian community. Perhaps significantly, no mention is made of any contribution by the white colonists, as had been their practice in the past. Needless to say, the Hudson's Bay Company also gave no assistance. In fact, Cockran's animosity against the Company continued throughout this period, and stirred up the old ill-feelings of the Company toward him. Writing in 1856, in his usual blunt manner, he stated that "how to improve the condition of the human family (i.e., the Indians) increase their numbers, and find their ways and means, of supplying their wants are subjects untouched by the Governor and Council of Rupert's Land (i.e., the Council of Assiniboia) . . ."<sup>72</sup>

According to Cockran, in 1852 there were 87 families that could be considered as Christian, permanent settlers. The number of children registered at the schools was 80,<sup>73</sup> a considerable drop from the 153 reported during the Bishop of Montreal's visit of 1844,<sup>74</sup> and certainly somewhat short of what might be expected from 87 families.

Concerning the Indian students themselves, Cockran felt that weighing "everything in an impartial balance, we have no cause to complain of the progress of the children. Their opportunities and circumstances are such as to lead us to expect little . . . our schools produce none but hardy men, who can wage war with the bush, pull an oar", but he concluded, "at the book, the slate, or the pen our boys are heavy and listless."<sup>75</sup> Writing a year

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<sup>72</sup> PAC:A84, Cockran to C.M.S., July 25, 1856.

<sup>73</sup> CMR for 1853, 19.

<sup>74</sup> Bishop Mountain, *op. cit.*, 53.

<sup>75</sup> CMR for 1853, 20.

later, however, somewhat in self-contradiction and obviously discouraged, he was not even convinced that the schools produced "hearty men." The Indians, he complained "seem to carry with them the thoughtlessness of children to extreme old age. This is what forms the principle part of the burden of a Missionary's life amongst them."<sup>76</sup>

Cockran was, in many ways, one of the most outstanding and colourful men in Red River during his time. Physically -- as described by a historian who knew him -- he was impressive, "standing six foot two, possessed of great physical strength, in fact reputed to be, in his day, the strongest man in the North-West . . ."<sup>77</sup> Nor was he, according to several anecdotes, reluctant to use his temporal strength to promote spiritual causes.

On one occasion, it is reported, there was an Indian among Cockran's parishioners at St. Peter's called "Quewe Dan", a man who had highly displeased the old missionary because he had deserted his own spouse and moved in with someone else's. In spite of Cockran's constant pleading, Quewe Dan refused to forsake his lover, although he still continued to attend church.

Following services on Sundays, the Indian parishioners of St. Peter's had formed the habit of gathering outside the church, where they smoked their pipes and discussed the public and private affairs of the day. One Sunday, shortly after the service, Cockran came out of the church and approached Quewe Dan who sat in one of these groups.

"I have told you time and again," Cockran said, "to return to your legal wife and allow this woman to return to her own husband. Now, I shall beat you until you promise to do so."

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<sup>76</sup> CMR for 1854, 10.

<sup>77</sup> / Robert B. Hill, Manitoba: History of Its Early Development and Resources (Toronto, 1890) 173.

A struggle began, in which the young and very powerful Indian resisted Cockran strenuously. But Cockran, although now in the neighbourhood of fifty years, easily prevailed. Or, as an informant later wrote, "to put it in common phrase, he (Quewe Dan) had not the ghost of a show, and the Archdeacon belaboured him there and then until he agreed to return to his legitimate wife."<sup>78</sup>

By way of confirmation, one other incident is told, of a similar nature, concerning one of his Indian assistants at St. Peter's called "John". One day, while observing John ploughing in a field, Cockran noticed that he was making frequent excursions to a nearby bush, ostensibly to quench his thirst from a jug of water. Becoming suspicious, Cockran approached the bush and examined the contents of the vessel in question. Finding alcohol, and no water, Cockran then proceeded to administer a sound beating to the inebriated John, who by this time had collapsed in a furrow.<sup>79</sup>

Whether or not this beating effected a cure, or what consequences resulted, we are not told. It seems, however, that Cockran often treated his Indians, in his own words, as "children", and that they in turn, as children to a father, held no grudge against him for any length of time.

William Cockran unquestionably contributed more to Anglican missionary work in the Red River Settlement than any other single individual in its history. During his forty years of residence in the territory the progress made was due in no small part to his personal effort and influence. In the Colony he was regarded without question as the founder of the

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<sup>78</sup> Robert B. Hill, Manitoba: History of Its Early Development and Resources (Toronto, 1890), 177.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 178.

Anglican church. For large periods of time he had worked with little or no assistance, largely isolated from European contact. Besides giving selflessly of his time, effort, and eventually his health, he had even, in some instances, contributed his own funds.

Cockran, who became "Archdeacon of Assiniboia", in 1853, continued at St. Peter's from 1850 to 1857, when he left to establish a similar though less successful Indian mission at Portage La Prairie.<sup>80</sup> Because of failing health, in the spring of 1865 he left for Canada, fully intending to retire. But on hearing of the grasshopper scourge of that summer, or perhaps sensing that death was near, he suddenly decided to return.<sup>81</sup>

Born in 1798, a year before the Church Missionary Society was founded, Cockran died on October 7, 1865, on exactly the same day, week, and month on which he had arrived, 40 years earlier, and was buried at St. Andrew's, Grand Rapids, the scene of his original missionary endeavours.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> For accounts of Cockran's work at Portage La Prairie, together with numerous incidents concerning his life, see: A. C. Garrioch, First Furrows (Winnipeg, 1923); and: The Correction Line (Winnipeg, 1933).

<sup>81</sup> Robert B. Hill, op. cit., 173.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.



*St. Peter's Stone Church: 1853  
(Public Archives of Manitoba)*

## CHAPTER IV

THE LAND QUESTION AND UNREST IN  
THE ERA BEFORE CONFEDERATION  
(1857 - 1869)

"There is ... an additional check in the Indian work. It is a transition period; change is anticipated. An excitement has seized the Indian mind, and he is little inclined to give a calm and patient attention to the claims of the Gospel. A wider competition is afloat; and baits are held out by the unscrupulous which the poor Indian is too weak to resist..."  
— David Anderson<sup>1</sup>

(i) The Progress of Conversion -

In the interval before Confederation progress among the Indians at St. Peter's was continuous but not outstanding. The initial advances made by the missionaries subsided somewhat, which was perhaps inevitable, once the basic impression had been made on the aboriginal mind. Since no miracles were wrought, and because white lay behavior was not always exemplary, the unconverted Indian often remained unconvinced of the necessity for his salvation. Indeed, even clerical reputations received a severe reverse when the Reverend G. O. Corbett, the Anglican incumbent of Headingly, was convicted of seducing and attempting abortion on a young girl.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From: "A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Rupert's Land in St. John's Church, Red River, Jan. 6, 1860": Nor'Wester (Supplement), Jan. 14, 1860. David Anderson was replaced by Robert Machray in 1865.

<sup>2</sup> PAC: A87, Letter from Cowley (n.d.) to C.M.S. "I cannot tell you", he wrote, "what anguish it (Corbett's trial) has caused me." On Feb. 28, 1863, he entered in his Journal: "It was agonizing ... how can I minister again to the people?" He had no doubts, however, as to Corbett's guilt: PAC: A87, Cowley's Journal, Feb. 28, 1863.

The difficulty in spreading Christianity of both Protestant and Catholic faiths among the Indians was also partly due to an element of confusion in the aboriginal mind. To what religion should they turn? Reverend Abraham Cowley, who took over at St. Peter's from Cockran in 1857, had one answer, and the Catholics another. On one occasion, during an interview with a heathen chief, a Catholic priest called Derveau was confronted with the following dilemma. "You tell us," said the chief:

"that there is but one religion that can save us, and that you have got it: now which of you white men am I to believe? . . . I will tell you the resolution I and my people have come to; it is this — when you both agree, and travel the same road, we will travel with you; till then, however, we will adhere to our own religion; we think it is the best."<sup>3</sup>

In some instances, moreover, an outward conversion and baptism in both faiths were mere superficial ceremonies, having little effect on the Indians in question. On March 19, 1862, for example, the Nor' Wester described a type of incident that occurred all too frequently. On this

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<sup>3</sup> An interview between Father Derveau and an Indian chief, cited by Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement (London, 1856), 292. Reverend Abraham Cowley "was born at Fairford in Gloucestershire, on April 8th, 1816. He was the son of a local mason and received his education at Fairford Free School, where he was a pupil from 1821 to 1828." He was apparently "quite young when he entered the C.M.S. College at Islington . . ." Nothing is known of his marriage, but early in 1841, Mr. and Mrs. Cowley sailed to Canada and on March 7th, he was ordained Deacon by Bishop Mountain . . . Apparently, it was the intention of the Cowleys to come west by canoe, but this could not be arranged and so they returned to England and then came to the Hudson's Bay on "The Prince Albert", and had for company a young lay-worker of the Society, Mr. J. Roberts, who for a year assisted Mr. Smithurst." Before coming to St. Peter's Cowley served at "Manitoba Station" (which became "Fairford" in 1851). In 1844 he was ordained as a priest by Bishop Mountain: T.C.B. Boon, op. cit., 28.

occasion an apparently converted Indian was to have been baptized, "but some liquor went to the tent beforehand, and so dosed the natives with bad whiskey that when the hour for baptism arrived, they were stupidly drunk . . ." Adding injury to insult, one of the drunken Indians then proceeded to the baptizer's house, where he demanded meat at the point of a knife.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, at least one generation of young Indian men and women had passed through the Anglican and Roman Catholic schools, and some had not only grasped the more complex meanings of the Christian faith, but had learned to read and write, and to speak the white man's languages. But, except for the convenience of having interpreters capable of written and oral English and French, what value had this training in the minds of the overwhelmingly illiterate native population? The answer, of course, was: very little. The "Christianized" Indians of St. Peter's continued to send their boys and girls to school, and some new additions were made to the community. But, at the same time, others moved away, and some never returned.<sup>5</sup>

By this time, in fact, the largest additions to St. Peter's Settlement were being made by birth rather than proselytizing.<sup>6</sup> In general,

<sup>4</sup> Nor' Wester, Mar. 19, 1862.

<sup>5</sup> PAC:AB4, Cockran to C.M.S., Jul. 25, 1856: Cockran reported that several "families have gone on hunting excursions, and are now settled elsewhere. Many of our young men have entered the H. B. Company's service; some have migrated to the United States; and others to Oregon."

<sup>6</sup> PAC:AB7, Cowley to C.M.S., Feb. 25, 1860: New settlers occasionally came in from a distance, and there was also a small increase "from among the heathen." By the end of our period (1876), however, this increase had almost stopped, and those who were "professed Christians" had become so largely "by birth, descent and education . . .": PCMS for 1879-80, 144.

the Crees retained their numerical strength, but intermarriage and Half-breed infiltration now distorted the original divisions. Unfortunately, no missionary except Smithurst paid much attention to band differences. Abraham Gowley, however, reported in 1864 that it "has lately been my privilege to receive" seven Salteaux into the church, and added hopefully, that the move "on their part" might be "the dawn of a brighter day among the Salteaux race."<sup>7</sup>

In the few instances where native clergymen became available conversion was thought to be an easier process, for the Indians sometimes seemed to place greater faith in those of their own race. "The truths of the gospel", it was stated, "are rendered more acceptable to the Indian when the messenger is of his own blood and speaks his own tongue."<sup>8</sup> This, however, appears to have been largely wishful thinking. After 1857 a number of educated Indians did serve faithfully at St. Peter's and other Indian missions, but their success can only be described as mediocre.

Basically, with the possible exception of Henry Budd, the native missionaries had many shortcomings. Their weaknesses and frequent lapses are so evident throughout this period that they cannot be simply dismissed as isolated incidents. Heeney and other Anglican historians have either overlooked or ignored these failures. But as the following examples will

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<sup>7</sup> His hopes proved to be largely in vain. Even as late as 1884 the Saulteaux still remained indifferent, and did "not fall in so readily with English ways as . . . the Crees . . .": CMI for 1884, 303. This, of course, was by no means a new phenomenon. Alexander Henry, writing in the late eighteenth century, stated that "intercourse (of the Salteaux) with Europeans (appears) to have occasioned less deviation (as compared to other Indians) from their primitive manners . . .": James Bain, op. cit., 248. And, as has been pointed out throughout this thesis, the Saulteaux generally retained this attitude in the nineteenth century with little change.

<sup>8</sup> Ruperf's Land Synod Report for 1873, 19.

show, native clergymen, catechists and teachers did not perform their duties too successfully.

The first recorded sign of this weakness appears in 1844, when Smithurst was ordered to investigate charges that Henry Budd had been guilty of "immoral conduct" with women at Cumberland House.<sup>9</sup> But while this charge was never proven, another against James Settee was apparently based on direct evidence.<sup>10</sup> Settee, at that time still an Indian catechist, had supplied his people with liquor. This also appeared to be a recurring personal weakness, and plagued him throughout his career. Even as late as 1874, Cowley found that he had fallen into a "fearful state of destitution," and consequently had to post him from his station on the Nelson River.<sup>11</sup> Later that year, when Settee tried to pump some life into the old Salteaux mission at Netley Creek, he was "altogether unsuccessful."<sup>12</sup>

The mission at Scanterbury, which was begun in 1853, was also served by Indian clergymen and teachers. In 1856 a similar station was established at Fort Alexander, on the southeastern shore of Lake Winnipeg.<sup>13</sup> Both of these places proved to be relative failures. Reporting on Fort Alexander in 1861, Cowley stated that: "Mr. Thomas Spence, the (Indian) catechist has not sustained the confidence reposed in him, but, on the contrary, has given me no small amount of pain and trouble . . . I should have dismissed Spence long since . . ."<sup>14</sup> That same year, after relieving

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<sup>9</sup> PAC:A76, C.M.S. to Smithurst, Apr. 2, 1844.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., Cowley to C.M.S., Apr. 7, 1874.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., A notation added by the C.M.S. on a letter from James Settee, Nov. 20, 1874.

<sup>13</sup> PAC:A87, Cowley to C.M.S., Jan. 31, 1861.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Spence of his post, Cowley explained that "as a rule the natives don't do well alone . . ." <sup>15</sup> The following year, in 1862, the Indian schoolteacher at Scanterbury, Timothy Bear, asked to be replaced because he could not control the Indians effectively. <sup>16</sup>

Even Henry Cockrane, the Indian clergyman generally ranked next to Henry Budd, was subject to the temptations of alcohol. In July, 1872, for instance, Cowley, with a great deal of disappointment, reported to the Society that: "On the 11th instant the Rev. Henry Cockran (Cockrane) went to the Settlement . . . and fell into temptation, and a snare, which overcame him. He drank and was drunken! and this was known to many". <sup>17</sup>

Moreover, native clergymen, Catachists and schoolteachers were, in a sense, men apart from their people. Few could attain a well-educated status under existing conditions, and indeed it seems unlikely that many wished to. Positions at Red River at this time were not numerous, and even the educated Europeans and Half-breeds, of whom Louis Riel is perhaps the best example, often found that their talents were not wanted. The Indian, furthermore, being a man of an often despised race, was not likely to be accepted into the white society, where the only lucrative positions existed.

Nor can it be supposed that a civilized, stationary way of life unduly impressed the Salteaux Indians, most of whom still wandered frequently on hunting and fishing expeditions. Agriculture at Red River during the nineteenth century was at best a hazardous and precarious

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<sup>15</sup> PAC:A87, Cowley to C.M.S., Oct. 5, 1861.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., Aug. 23, 1862.

<sup>17</sup> PAC:A100, Cowley to C.M.S., July 26, 1872.

existence. In 1818, 1857, and again in 1864, grasshoppers descended on the Colony in such numbers that the crops were almost entirely devoured. Floods in 1826, 1852, and 1861 were no less destructive. Other similar though less serious mishaps were frequent. Furthermore, while the great herds of buffalo and other smaller animals still lasted, a relatively simple means of subsistence was obtained, certainly no more precarious than that of agriculture; indeed, during times of crop failure the early Colonists depended on the buffalo hunt for survival. But even during the 1850's the buffalo were quickly moving west and diminishing in numbers;<sup>18</sup> and another ominous sign — that of white influx and expansion at the expense of the Indian, loomed not far above the horizon.

(ii) The Coming of the Canadians -

As the fever of expansion and progress gripped the European Settlement along the Red and Assiniboine, its early sympathies with the Indians rapidly diminished. It was becoming increasingly evident, even to the most dedicated missionary, that a pre-literate and nomadic people could not be induced to absorb civilization in the course of a few short years.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> By 1870 the buffalo were 300 miles west of Fort Garry, and were rapidly retreating still further. This, of course, put them beyond the reasonable reach of the Red River hunters: G. L. Huyshe, The Red River Expedition (London, 1871), 230.

<sup>19</sup> All nomadic peoples find it difficult to make this transition. "It is possible", says Emile Durkheim, the great French sociologist, "that sedentary life offers more chances for happiness than nomadic life, but when this latter life has been led for centuries, it cannot easily be cast aside": Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labour in Society (New York, 1933; translated from the original French edition of 1893 by George Simpson), 241.

And yet, to the outsider at least, the Indian community's outward appearance was a pleasing one. Professor Henry Hind, for example, a traveller from Canada who visited the territory in 1857, wrote in his "Narrative of the Canadian Exploring Expedition" that:

"Fourteen miles from the mouths of the (Red) river, the Indian missionary village occupies a terrace thirty feet above the summer level of the stream. Above the village the banks are fringed with oak, elm, and maple, which soon give way to aspen, and then to open prairie land, the trees of larger growth appearing at intervals on the points and on the insides of the bends."<sup>20</sup>

"The farm attached to the Indian mission", Professor Hind reported, "is cultivated with more than ordinary care, not only being intended to serve as a model for the Christian Indians settled in the vicinity, but also to provide them with seed and potatoes in the event of their own stock failing, a contingency by no means improbable, since habits of forethought or economy are rarely acquired by these people until the second generation."<sup>21</sup>

In the garden he noticed "asparagus growing luxuriantly, beet, cabbages, brocoli, shallots, and indeed most culinary vegetables. In the farmyard were ducks, fowls, turkeys, pigs, sheep, with some excellent milking cows . . . ."<sup>22</sup>

He also saw "about fifty Ojibway (Sic) Indian young men, young women, and children receiving instructions from the Rev. A. Cowley,

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<sup>20</sup> Henry Youle Hind, Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858, 2 vols. (London, 1860), vol. 1, 127.

<sup>21/</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>22/</sup> Ibid., 203-204.

Mrs. Cowley, and a native schoolmaster. The young Indian women read the Testament in soft, low voices, but with ease and intelligence . . ."

The church congregation, he reported, "appeared to be exclusively Indian; in their behavior they were most decorous and attentive. The singing was very sweet, and all the forms of the service appeared to be understood, and practised quietly and in order by the dusky worshippers."<sup>23</sup>

Professor Hind found that Cowley, like his predecessors before him, was "not only missionary, but the doctor, magistrate, and arbitrator of the settlement . . ." When the Indians required Cowley's services "during the night, they come into the parsonage, the door of which is never locked, and tap gently on the stove-pipe, which passes from the sitting-room into his bed-room above, to arouse him . . ."<sup>24</sup>

During his visit Professor Hind was also "introduced to Peguis, the great Ojibway (Salteaux) chief, who at one time commanded three hundred warriors . . . He is now a quiet old man," Hind wrote, "a good Christian and happy, as he states, in his belief."<sup>25</sup>

But although the work of the missionaries at St. Peter's had not grown any less burdensome since Smithurst's time, their overall influence had considerably lessened. Following Cockran's departure the original Indian Settlement faded into relative obscurity, and in the years that followed new and greater forces directed events. This, of course, was not necessarily due to a slackening of effort on the part of those who succeeded "the charge", but simply an overshadowing of their effort by

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<sup>23</sup> Henry Youle Hind, Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858, 2 vols. (London, 1860), vol. 1, 200-201

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 201

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 204

the drama of spectacular episodes that gradually developed. In any event, for Abraham Cowley and his assistant Indian pastor, the Reverend Henry Cockrane,<sup>26</sup> and for those that came after them, the stage had already been set and the era of pioneer missionary work was over.

The decade following the departure of Cockran from St. Peter's was a critical one in the life of the Red River Colony — one that W. L. Morton has described as a period in which a change occurred from "The Old Order and the Transfer" to the new.<sup>27</sup> "The Old Order" was that of the Hudson's Bay Company, which since 1834, after extinguishing the Earl of Selkirk's "proprietary government", had ruled the Colony through the "Council of Assiniboia".<sup>28</sup> "The New Order", a more complex and as yet largely unknown quantity, was represented by various individuals from Canada, who at this time began drifting into Red River.

In Canada, where a movement for the union of all British North American territories grew stronger as each year passed, the eventual incorporation of the Northwest was deemed to be inevitable. In the meantime, however, settlement in the United States was flowing westward at an alarming rate, and in consequence many American eyes were looking northward along the fertile valley of the Red River. The incorporation of Minnesota in 1849 into the American union was of particular significance. From St. Paul, in 1844, the "Red River carts" began a lucrative trade that soon aroused many American sympathies in the British Colony.

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<sup>26</sup> Cowley became an archdeacon in 1866. Reverend Henry Cockrane, unlike William Cockran, signed his name in the modern way, and of course was not related to the old white missionary.

<sup>27</sup>/ See: W. L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto, 1957), chapter 5: "The Old Order and the Transfer (1857-1869)", 94-120.

<sup>28</sup>/ Ibid., 68.

The restless Métis, in particular, coming into contact with the Yankee traders, began to betray signs of doubt as to the wisdom of British connections.<sup>29</sup> As a result, an atmosphere of tense anticipation settled over the heads of the Anglo-Saxon Colonists.

It appeared that only decisive action would prevent American annexation. The Globe of Toronto began raising its voice in warning, as did other Canadian papers. The first concrete sign of interest, however, came in 1857, when the "Canadian Exploring Expedition" visited the Northwest territories, headed jointly by an engineer, S. J. Dawson, and a professor from Toronto, Henry Hind, some of whose writings have already been observed.<sup>30</sup> The discovery of gold on the Saskatchewan River in 1861 added further to the numbers of Canadians in the territory. In 1860 the arrival of Doctor John Schultz provided a clever, if somewhat unscrupulous, leader for what came to be known as the "Canadian Party". Symbolic also was the beginning of steamship service on the Red, and of the first newspaper in the previous year: the Nor' Wester, an organ that immediately began to challenge the Hudson's Bay Company's long-standing authority with reckless abandon. These new elements added a radical and dynamic element to the traditionally conservative main core of the Colony, and rendered an open clash between the two almost inevitable.

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<sup>29</sup> PAC:A96, Smithurst to C.M.S., Dec. 29, 1845. Smithurst reported that the Half-breeds were carrying on an illegal fur trade with the Americans, in opposition to the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly.

<sup>30</sup>/ A similar publication, based on a contemporary British expedition, was published by the Imperial government in 1859. See: John Palliser, Exploration: British North America: Papers Relative to the Exploration by Captain Palliser of that Portion of British North America which lies between the Northern Branch of the River Saskatchewan and the Frontier of the United States; and between the Red River and Rocky Mountains. (London, 1859).

With the gathering of these forces, which obviously implied an influx of settlement, the Colonists became understandably concerned for the security of their land titles. Stirred up by Schultz and his Canadians, the Métis began a period of anxious brooding that was eventually to lead to open conflict. The Indians of St. Peter's, although more restrained by Anglican missionary influence, also shared in this anxiety. Not only the settled Cree farmers, but also the wandering Salteaux now wondered if their claim to the land was being overlooked.

Accordingly, in February, 1860, Chief Peguis appealed to the "Aborigines Protection Society", contending that the Indian title had never been properly extinguished by Lord Selkirk.<sup>31</sup> Following this contention a violent controversy ensued in the Colony. In March a large meeting of Métis gathered at "McKenney's Royal Hall", where it was decided that since the Indians had long since abandoned their lands, only the Métis could claim any ownership.<sup>32</sup>

Then a long series of letters were published in the Nor' Wester.<sup>33</sup> Andrew McDermott, a former Hudson's Bay Company employee, accused the Canadian Party of prodding Peguis into making a complaint by telling him that he could recover his lands. That this accusation was at least partly true, is witnessed by Peguis' own statement. "We have had enough of all fur companies," he said. "Please send us out rather mechanics and implements to help our families in forming settlements . . ." <sup>34</sup>

Then Donald Gunn, a historian, argued for the Canadians. Selkirk's treaty, he contended, had been only a temporary settlement, and the

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<sup>31</sup> Nor' Wester, Feb. 14, 1860.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., Mar. 14, 1860.

<sup>33</sup> See: Nor' Wester, Feb. 28, 1860, ff.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., Mar. 14, 1860.

Company was therefore not justified in concluding that it had been a conclusive "bona-fide" arrangement.<sup>35</sup>

Others, including the Métis under M. Pascal Brèland, declared that Peguis had no right to dispose of these lands, since the Crees, and not the Salteaux, had been the chief proprietors. The Cree chief in Selkirk's time, they asserted, was a man called "Senna", whose signature did not appear on Selkirk's treaty. "Paltry presents", moreover, were insufficient payment for the territory in question. During his lifetime Senna had often approached Peguis to reach a mutual agreement, but Peguis, it was claimed, had purposely avoided the Cree chief.<sup>36</sup>

In October, 1863, Peguis again issued a formal statement. This time he addressed the Imperial government. "The things we got" from Selkirk, Peguis maintained:

"were not in payment for our lands. We never sold them. We only proposed to do so; but the proposal was never carried out, as Lord Selkirk never came back. At the time we held council with him, there was no mention of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were not spoken of, or taken into account at all. All of a sudden some years afterwards it turned out that they were claiming to be masters here." 37

The land question, in widely varying degrees of emotional temperature, was debated throughout the 1860's. As a result, security of tenure became more uncertain than ever. This uncertainty, together with

<sup>35</sup> See: Nor' Wester, Apr. 28, 1860, ff.

<sup>36/</sup> Ibid., May 14, 1860.

<sup>37/</sup> Ibid., Oct. 14, 1863.

the failure of the Imperial government in assuming an immediate and clearly-defined course of action, became the cause célèbre of the Rebellion of 1869-70.

(iii) The Political And Economic Environment -

Although the incumbents of St. Peter's after 1857 gradually lost much of the previous direct missionary influence, their presence among the Indians was still an important political factor for a number of years. These dedicated men, and Abraham Cowley in particular, became the champions of the Indians in their desperate struggle against white influx; and in some instances, it appears, the only ones. For in the wake of the white flood that was now beginning the Indian proved to be unprepared. Time and again, the indirect assisting hands of Anglican clergymen can be discerned in the written and oral protests of the hapless natives; and in many instances, direct criticism by the clergy themselves.

Furthermore, throughout this period, and in fact until the end of its rule in 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company remained stubbornly opposed to Indian settlement. Every possible tactic short of open force was used to delay the work of the missionaries, including, in some instances, perjury and dishonesty.

To what extent the Company was willing to go was clearly demonstrated in 1857, when a "Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company" opened proceedings in London to inquire into the condition of Rupert's

Land.<sup>38</sup>

One of the outstanding witnesses against the Company at the proceedings was the Reverend G. O. Corbett, whose later trial and conviction has already been mentioned. Corbett testified that the Company had always opposed Indian settlements, and gave Headingly and Portage LaPrairie as two specific examples.<sup>39</sup>

But George Simpson, the Company's indomitable Governor, refuted Corbett's testimony:

Questioner: "Did you ever encourage them (the Indians) to resort to agriculture under any circumstances, when it can be done?"

Simpson: "Always; we have encouraged them by every means in our power."

Questioner: "Where?"

Simpson: "At the Rainy Lake, Cumberland, Swan River, Norway House, and the seats of all the missions. We are exceedingly anxious that they should give their attention to agriculture."

Questioner: "Have they to any extent adopted agriculture?"

Simpson: "Not to any material extent; they have a distaste for field labours."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Officially, it was a Select Committee "to consider the State of those British Possessions in North America which are under the Administration of the Hudson's Bay Company, or over which they possess a License to Trade": Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence (Ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, 31 July and 11 August, 1857).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 137-50. Many members of the "Canadian Party" later asserted that Corbett had been the victim of prepared circumstances, and that the Hudson's Bay Company had purposely prepared a false case against him because of his opposition to the Company's cause. According to existing evidence, however, it appears very likely that Corbett was guilty, even though he claimed to be innocent.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 58.

Simpson, although a gentleman in many respects, was unfortunately also an excellent liar. His philosophy seems to have been, "my (Company), right or wrong":

Questioner: "Is the Indian settlement at Red River approved of and encouraged by the Company?"

Simpson: "Decidedly".

Questioner: "In every way?"

Simpson: "In every way."<sup>41</sup>

. . .

In the meantime, while these greater events developed, life at St. Peter's, though now more nervous and uncertain, carried on much as before. The Grees, together with a smaller number of Salteaux, still formed the bulk of the settled Christian community, and continued to attend church faithfully, to till the soil, and to send their children to school. Hovering also in the vicinity was the greatest part of the Salteaux band, which still lived mostly in tents and continued to subsist on hunting and fishing.

But under the new pressures a greater strain than ever was being felt. Thus, in his annual report of 1864 to the Church Missionary Society, Cowley stated that excitement, "arising from expectation of great changes in the country, and also from competition in the fur trade, tends to demoralize the people, and militates against the spread and consolidation of Christ's kingdom."<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41/</sup> Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Co., Together with

By this time, moreover, direct land pressure was being felt along the southern borders of the parish. Some of the Indians sold lots to European and Half-breed settlers, and often, apparently, for prices that were hardly sufficient.<sup>43</sup> Other Colonists, eyeing the virgin grasslands beyond the river lots, began cutting hay and sowing crops on the Indian Reserve. In January, 1861, Peguis, his son Henry Prince, and four other Indians issued a "Manifesto" in the Nor' Wester. Henceforth, they declared, whenever the whites planted crops on Indian soil, they would be required to pay rent at the rate of one bushel for every five bushels sown.<sup>44</sup>

By 1861, however, European and Half-breed settlement had advanced so far north that a new parish, "St. Clement's", or "Mapleton", was formed on the southern boundary of the reserve.<sup>45</sup>

In 1864 the greatest loss to St. Peter's came by the death of Peguis, who by then was over 90 years of age. From his earliest years a sympathizer with the white settlement, and later a devout Christian, the

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the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence (Ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, 31 July and 11 August, 1857), 63. In all fairness to the Company, it should be stated that a number of monetary contributions were made to various missions. But since these contributions were not consistent with overall Company policy, they can only be disregarded, or attributed to a clever public propaganda campaign.

42/ PCMS for 1864-65, 207-208.

43/ PAC:AS4, Cockran to C.M.S., Oct. 20, 1832: In 1832, for instance, white speculators were offering Peguis 1 keg of rum and 3 blankets for a 1½ mile stretch of highly fertile river lots at Sugar Point. Unfortunately, the author has been unable to discover prices paid to Indians in later years (undoubtedly they were well-hidden); but it is perhaps safe to say that they were inadequate. The fertility of the land in St. Peter's Parish, however, can be judged from the following comparative yields per acre in bushels (the Red River average is shown in brackets): Wheat 35 (32); barley 50 (42); oats 55 (44½); peas 40 (27¾); potatoes 360 (182): Manitoba Free Press, Sept. 16, 1876.

44/ Nor' Wester, Apr. 15, 1861.

45/ PAC:AS7, Cowley to C.M.S., Jan. 29, 1863: Cowley pointed out that in future many of the St. Peter's Indians would attend St. Clement's rather than St. Peter's, because some were closer to the new parish, and others newly included in it. Essentially, however, it became a Half-breed and European church district.

old Chief's imposing personality had unquestionably been a strong stabilizing force on both the Salteaux and Crees. Although his authority was rather limited, he exercised a great deal of personal influence.<sup>46</sup> Following his baptism in 1838 he lost the traditional status of an Indian chief, and as he grew older, began to delegate some of his authority to his son, Henry Prince.

Henry Prince, as will be seen later, appeared to have little connection with the settled Indian community. Although a nominal Christian, he remained illiterate, and could speak little or no English.<sup>47</sup> Strangely enough, moreover, he not only received the loyalty of the semi-nomadic Salteaux band, but also the approval of Peguis, whose affiliations since 1838 had been closer to the Christian Crees. The acceptance of this illiterate leader by the Salteaux is only one more piece of evidence that confirms the absence of any marked alteration in their habits. The Salteaux remained, for the most part, hunters and fishers.

Some of Peguis' sons, of whom the late William George Prince appeared the most brilliant, did in fact receive an Anglican education.<sup>48</sup> But those who did were closely associated with the Cree majority, and evidently were not held in very high estimation by their Salteaux brethren.

In general, the political situation on the Indian Reserve immediately

<sup>46</sup> PAC:A87, Cowley to C.M.S., Jan. 18, 1865: Cowley stated that Peguis "had but little power or I think he would have done good with it. Still I believe he was ever ready with advice and he was quite eloquent."

<sup>47</sup> All of Henry Prince's communications were signed with an "X". Furthermore, all his formal meetings with government officials had to be interpreted. See, for example: PAM, Archibald Papers, No. 22, "Notes of Interview between the Lieut. Governor of Manitobah and Henry Prince (Miskookenu) Chief of the Salteaux and Swampies at St. Peter's Parish School on the Morning of Tuesday the 13th Sept., 1870."

<sup>48</sup> PAC:A87, Cowley to C.M.S., Jan. 18, 1865: Henry Prince, on the other hand, although a professed Anglican, sent one of his sons to a Catholic school. The Catholics offered him free tuition, board and room.

prior to Confederation was as follows. The whole territory remained under the direct control of the Hudson's Bay Company's "Council of Assiniboia". The Indian Reserve, which had been set aside by Selkirk, was only partly occupied by permanent native settlers, and the majority of these were Crees. Associated with the Crees until his death in 1864 was Peguis, who also maintained some influence over a smaller number of Salteaux. For a number of years Peguis had been delegating authority to one of his sons, Henry Prince, who in 1864 assumed the titular leadership of the Salteaux band. The greatest part of the Salteaux still carried on a wandering type of existence, and although some were probably nominal Christians, with a semblance of Anglican education, most were not. The Crees, as will be noted later, resented Salteaux dominance, and after the death of Peguis began to reassert their individuality. They argued, with considerable justification, that their people, and not the Salteaux, were "Christian Indians".<sup>49</sup> The Anglican clergymen, who still performed a multi-functional existence, were nevertheless rapidly losing control of the Indian Settlement. On the southern boundaries of the parish European and Half-breed settlement was deplored by the missionaries as one hand, and sanctioned on the other -- as in 1861; when St. Clement's, the new parish, was formed from former Indian territory.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> This internal revolt will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.  
<sup>50</sup> PAC:A87, Cowley to C.M.S., June 31, 1862: Cowley, however, did not think that St. Clement's should be established. The "division of the Settlement by the erection of Mapleton (St. Clement's)", he wrote, ". . . I have always opposed . . ." Like all his predecessors before him (except David Jones), Cowley also showed impatience with the Hudson's Bay Company. "The results . . . of civilization", he said, "would I feel confident have been far greater but for the continuance of their (the Indians) migratory habits in prosecuting the business of hunting and trapping for the H.H.B. Company": PAC:A102, Cowley to Lieutenant-Governor A. Morris, Mar. 6, 1877.

For St. Peter's the death of Peguis may be regarded as the end of an era, even though it did not exactly coincide with greater events. The name "Peguis" meant "destroyer"<sup>51</sup> in the Salteaux language, and yet, paradoxically, he had done more than any other Indian in helping to build the Settlement.<sup>52</sup> In 1913 a monument was erected in Kildonan Park, Winnipeg, as a testament to the high esteem in which he was held by both Europeans and Indians alike:

"In memory of Peguis, chief of the Saulteaux Indians, and in grateful recognition of his good offices to the early settlers. One of the first converts to Christianity of his race; he died in 1864 and his body rests in the old cemetery of St. Peter's church, near Selkirk, where he was a devout worshipper."<sup>53</sup>

From an economic point of view the 1860's at St. Peter's were also years of bitter misfortune. Drought conditions began in 1862 and continued year after year until 1868. Grasshoppers were a constant plague, and especially in 1865, when they destroyed the crops entirely. Also in 1865, to make matters much worse, a liquor store was opened not far from the Indian Village.<sup>54</sup> Cowley's protests and demands that its license be revoked were at first in vain.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "Peguis", Beaver, Aug., 1924.

<sup>52/</sup> Financially, however, Peguis had good reason to remain loyal to the Church Missionary Society, and also to the Hudson's Bay Company. He received 5£ annually from the Company: Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, 446; and also 2£ annually from the Society; PAC:A87, Cowley to C.M.S., Jan. 28, 1861. In the nineteenth century 7£ was a considerable sum. But Peguis' revolt against the Company during the 1860's shows that he was a man of principle, and not simply a temporal Christian. He was "A useful member of society, said Cowley, "and a good and peaceable chief. I thought he might have lived nearer the Savior but perhaps I judge from too high a standard for men in his circumstances": PAC:A87, Cowley's Journal, Sept. 25, 1864.

<sup>53/</sup> The monument was erected by the "Lord Selkirk Association of Rupert's Land."

<sup>54/</sup> PAC:A87, Cowley to C.M.S., Jan. 18, 1865: Drunkenness continued

In 1867 a large number of Indians died from an epidemic, and for a time the schools were closed completely.<sup>56</sup> Lack of attendance was also partly due, according to Henry Cockrane's report of 1868, to the departure of many Indians "in search of food out in the lakes and woods, as the grasshoppers destroyed all the crops of last summer, and our poor people are now in great distress."<sup>57</sup> Some relief came in 1868 with the passing of a law prohibiting the sale of liquor in the Settlement,<sup>58</sup> but this, of course, did not entirely prevent the Indians from obtaining alcohol.

During this decade it also became obvious that not much progress in education would be achieved under the existing system. Because children left "to assist their parents" at an "early age", only an "elementary education" could usually be given.<sup>59</sup> "One great difficulty in connection" with the schools, Cowley reported, was "to sustain a staff of efficient teachers, another to retain the children to an age when the development of their faculties would reward the labour bestowed on their education, and a third a great want of elementary books."<sup>60</sup>

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to plague the Indian Settlement as in former years, and in fact incidents steadily increased in number. "I fear there is more drinking than formerly", Cowley reported in 1865, "and property is less secure. The idle and the improvident, the spendthrift and the less economical are in poverty and want, but such as diligently labour and carefully husband their means of life, get on respectably . . ." Another interesting sidelight to the drinking problem appeared in Cowley's Journal on January 1st of the same year. "In this country", he noted, "the first day of the year is a day of dissipation especially among the Indians": PAC:A87, Cowley Journal, Jan. 1, 1865. Needless to say, the custom has continued, but whether or not it originated in "this country", or at what time, is not known.

55/ PCMS for 1865-65, 197.

56/ CMR for 1867, 106.

57/ CMR for 1869, 106.

58/ Ibid.

59/ PAC:A87, Cowley to C.M.S., Jan. 29, 1863.

60/ Ibid., Feb. 6, 1858. Also, at about this time, the Church Missionary Society began hinting that it would soon like to pull out of "North-West America", and leave its stations in the care of the "Canadian Church." Con-

But in spite of a slow rate of progress, by 1868 there were 683 Christians, 172 communicants, and 66 school children in the parish.<sup>61</sup> Of some significance, however, was the report that over a period of one year, from 1867 to 1868, only one adult was baptized.<sup>62</sup> St. Peter's was now no longer a missionary station, but rather a poor Anglican parish, struggling for survival, and unique only in the fact that it was the oldest Christian Indian Settlement of Rupert's Land.

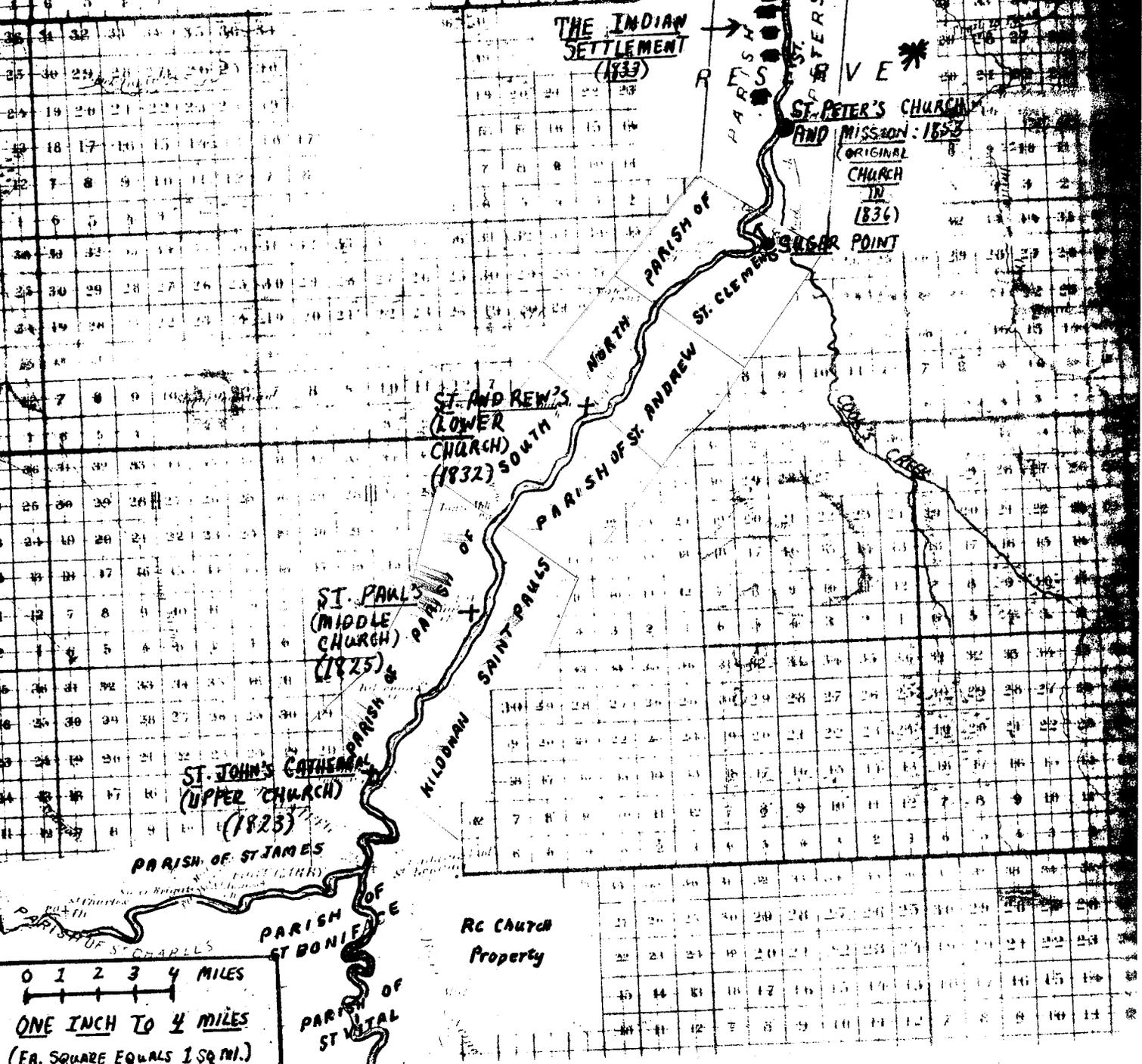
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sequently, in the years that followed monetary allotments were gradually decreased, and in 1920, after one final generous gift, the Society's activities in Western Canada came to an end.

61/ GMR for 1869, 106.

62/ GMR for 1870, 133.

**MAP OF THE RED RIVER COLONY**  
 (FROM ONE PREPARED BY J.  
 STROUGHTON DENNIS IN 1873)  
 (PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA)  
 (ANGLICAN CHURCHES MARKED: +)



THE "INDIAN RESERVE" AND CHURCH PARISHES ARE SHOWN AS OF 1873.

## CHAPTER V

THE TREATY AND INFLUX OF SETTLEMENT  
(1869 - 1876)

"Your Great Mother ... will lay aside for you 'lots' of land to be used by you and your children forever. She will not allow the white man to intrude upon these lots. She will make rules to keep them for you, so that as long as the sun shall shine, there shall be no Indian who has not a place that he can call his home, where he can go and pitch his camp, or if he chooses, build his house and till his land".

-- Alexander Morris.<sup>1</sup>

(1) The White Man's Promise -

The attempt of the Half-breeds in 1869-70 to establish a government favourable to their interests has been recorded many times, and, properly speaking, does not come within the direct scope of St. Peter's history. Throughout this troubled period the Indians of the territory remained largely neutral and played no active role for either side. Many, in fact, were attracted to the Indian Settlement at the time of the uprising, but they remained uncommitted.<sup>2</sup>

Several Indians from the Reserve, however, enlisted in the forces of Schultz and the Canadian Party. These volunteers, who were mostly Salteaux led by Henry Prince, proved to be the most resolute opponents

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories (Toronto, 1880), 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> PAC: A99, Settee to C.M.S., Nov. 28, 1871: During the rebellion, Settee stated, 569 Indians assembled on the St. Peter's Reserve. They lived in "wigwams", declared themselves "loyal", and said that they would defend their "friends" if necessary.

of Louis Riel, <sup>3</sup> even though they were not used in actual combat.<sup>4</sup> When Colonel Garnet Wolseley arrived with his expeditionary force at Red River on August 24, 1870, he was enthusiastically first greeted by Prince, "accompanied by a number of ... (these volunteer) warriors, all decked out in feathers and paint".<sup>5</sup>

The narrator, Captain G. L. Hayshe, a member of the expedition, was also "much struck with the comfortable well-to-do appearance of the people, and their neat houses and farms. The fences are made of poplar piled on each other between two uprights, not a bit like the zigzag 'snake fences' of Canada; and the houses are mostly frame houses neatly white-washed".<sup>6</sup>

"Their pastor", he observed, "is the Reverend Mr. Cockrane, one of themselves, a full-blooded Indian, but a most intelligent, well-read man. His pretty little church, and neat white parsonage-house and school adjoining, stand on the right bank, at the bend of the river, and are almost the first buildings that catch the eye when ascending the river ..."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> W. L. Morton, op. cit., 130.

<sup>4/</sup> The Salteaux, on frequent occasions during the nineteenth century, proved themselves to be a courageous and warlike people, and especially against their bitterly hostile enemies, the Sioux. This tradition of courage was carried on into the twentieth century by Sergeant Thomas George Prince, a descendent of Peguis, who served with colourful distinction in the Canadian Army during the Second World War (1940-45), and in the United Nations' "police action" in Korea (1950-54). During his two periods of service he was wounded twice — once in Europe as an engineer, and a second time in Korea while a member of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. A parachutist with the "Special Service Force" in Europe, he received the Military Medal from King George VI, and a Silver Star from the Americans; Compiled from records of the Winnipeg Free Press, and Canadian Army Records (Fort Osborne), Winnipeg.

<sup>5/</sup> G.L. Hayshe, The Red River Expedition (London, 1871), 190.

<sup>6/</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>7/</sup> Ibid., 232.

Although there were minor variations of loyalty in the Rebellion, in general the two camps were divided almost identically on the basis of religion and nationality, with the Roman Catholic Métis on one side, and the Protestant Europeans and Indians on the other. For a time it appeared as though Riel's Indian agent, James McKay, might convert St. Peter's to the side of the Métis, but his attempt failed. In passing, however, it should be pointed out that whatever limited sympathy McKay received must have come from the Cree band at Portage La Prairie, rather than the Salteaux-Crees of St. Peter's. The Métis, during the land controversy of the 1860's, had supported the claims of the prairie Crees, whose chief, in Selkirk's time, had supposedly been Senna. But both bands remained loyal, and Riel was left without any Indian support whatever. Thus, on January 9, 1871, Cowley wrote with considerable pride that "the whole of our Indians have been proved to be loyal, and thoroughly firm on the side of law and order".<sup>8</sup>

With the entry of Manitoba into Confederation on July 15, 1870, the Canadian government began the conclusion of legal settlements with the Indians. This step was long overdue, and of course contributed to the unrest leading to the Rebellion. Since 1860 the people of St. Peter's had remained apprehensive of their land titles, and now, perhaps fearing that loyalty in itself would not ensure retribution, they began petitioning for a redress.

But the newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor, Adams George Archibald, although equally anxious for a settlement, was temporarily indisposed due to the confusion in which the infant Province's matters stood. Further-

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<sup>8</sup> CMR for 1872, 355.

more, since all Indian policy had, at the time of Confederation, been placed in the hands of the federal Secretary of State, Archibald had to wait for specific instructions before proceeding.<sup>9</sup>

On September 10, 1870, Archibald received a letter from Henry Prince, asking for an early meeting. "The people here", Archibald reported, "are unwilling to have them come up to the Fort, as it is impossible to prevent them from procuring supplies of intoxicating liquors in the town of Winnipeg,<sup>10</sup> and in such cases there is always a great deal of drunkenness and quarrelling amongst them".<sup>11</sup> Consequently, Archibald proceeded to the vicinity of the Indian Settlement where, on September 13, 1870, he met Prince and about 200 of his warriors.

Prince and his people, Archibald wrote, "are very poor, and so long as they remained, levied tribute upon the settled Indians, Half-breeds and whites of the settlement ..."<sup>12</sup> Whether he realized it or not, Archibald's "settled Indians" were mostly Crees. Naturally, being of a different tribe, and having adopted white values, the Crees resented the parasitic Salteaux in their presence. Indian hospitality, although still generous, was not the same as it had been in Red Deer's day, when they simply "gave" and "gave" until they lost "the whole".

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<sup>9</sup> See: SP: V (20), 1871, pp. 1-8 for an official record of Archibald's instructions.

<sup>10</sup>/Huyse stated, perhaps with some exaggeration, that in 1870 in the "town of Winnipeg every other house seems to be a whiskey shop, and for the first two or three days after our arrival the place seemed turned into a very Pandemonium — Indians, Half-breeds, and whites, in all stages of intoxication, fighting and quarreling in the streets with drawn knives, and laying prostrate on the prairie in all directions, like the killed and wounded after a sharp skirmish:" G.L. Huyse, op. cit., 221-222.

<sup>11</sup>/SP: V (20), 1871, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup>/Ibid., p. 15.

In his opening address to Prince and his Indians, Archibald regretted that they were destitute and suggested that they return to their hunting grounds for the winter. "The Queen", he stated, "has heard of the loyalty of her children and of their chief and I am directed to convey her thanks". Departure to the hunting grounds was necessary, he said, not only to ensure a supply of food, but also to escape a plague of small pox that was rapidly approaching the Settlement.

Prince, speaking for the Indians by means of an interpreter, reiterated his trust in the Crown. "When the snows of a hundred (sic) winters had passed over my father's head", Prince explained, "he called me to himself and said: 'My son, do as I have done and always act with loyalty.' I have endeavoured to be loyal; you know whether I have done so or not ..." Prince then apologized for being "poor and weak and unlearned", and after being reassured by Archibald, continued his discourse:

"I would now speak of some of the deeds of my father. When my father died he left all the tribe of the Salteaux Indians in my care, and besides these, his own people, was another race, the Christian Swampies ... These also he looked upon as his children and he committed them, as well as the others, when he was dying, into my hands to look after and protect ... I want to keep them as one. I want to protect the one tribe as well as the other."

Prince, of course, was here alluding to the breakdown of inter-band authority that had been increasing since the death of Peguis, his father. But Archibald, although naturally desirous of unity, could nevertheless do little to preserve it. He encouraged Prince, however, by saying that they were "all children of the same blood, all children of the forest", adding that it would be "far nobler to join brethren

together in loving bonds, than to encourage bloodshed and quarreling among men".

"That is true", said Prince, suddenly plunging to the core of the matter, "and now I wish to mention that we were never paid for those lands which Lord Selkirk borrowed from us".

Archibald then promised the Indians that an agreement would be commenced the following year, offered them some gifts, impressed on them "the necessity of abstaining from strong drink", and requested once again that they depart for their hunting grounds.

Prince accepted these proposals, but warned that: "I cannot keep my Indians from strong drink. They will always drink it when they can get it. Let the white man be kept from selling it and we will be well".

"Your words", said the Governor, "are words of wisdom, and they shall be acted on".

With this the meeting broke up, and soon afterward, following a free issue of ammunition, Prince's Indians left the Settlement for their winter hunting grounds.<sup>13</sup>

As promised, on August 3, 1871, the first Indian Treaty of the Northwest was concluded with the Indians of the Red River — Assiniboine district. The area conceded, which comprised 16,700 square miles, included a block of land in the south-central portion of the Province, with the present-day cities of Winnipeg and Portage La Prairie as central

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<sup>13</sup> PAM, Archibald Papers, no. 22, "Notes of Interview between the Lieut. Governor of Manitobah and Henry Prince (Miskookemu) Chief of the Salteaux and Swampies at St. Peter's Parish School on the Morning of Tuesday the 13th Sept. 1870 ... Interpreted".

points.<sup>14</sup> Concluded by Archibald and Commissioner Wemyss Simpson, this agreement provided each Indian family with a plot of land in the proportion of 160 acres for each family of five, with all lands to be assigned in compact blocks known as "reserves". The government agreed to support a school on each reserve. Each individual was also to receive an annuity of three dollars. A revision of the Treaty, effective on the same date, granted several gifts such as special uniforms for the chiefs, their councillors and braves; all kinds of farm animals in paired sexes, and a plough and harrow for each bona fide Indian settler.<sup>15</sup> As concluded, this Treaty affected Selkirk's old St. Peter's Reserve by moving its southern boundary some two miles further north than previously.<sup>16</sup>

During the 1870's, because of the unrest caused by the Rebellion and Treaty, the old smouldering animosity between the Salteaux and Crees finally came into the open. The Crees, bitterly resentful of Salteaux dominance, asserted their independence, and, with eventual governmental approval, came to be recognized as a separate band. This, however, split St. Peter's Reserve into two segments and signalled the beginning of the end for Western Canada's oldest Indian Christian Settlement. Other factors also contributed to this breakdown, and will be considered in due course.

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<sup>14</sup> See: The Canadian Indian (A Reference Paper Prepared by the Indian Affairs Branch, Ottawa, 1957). Cited by Jean H. Lagasse, "A Study of the Population of Indian Ancestry Living in Manitoba Undertaken by the Social and Economic Research Office", 3 vols. (Winnipeg, 1959), vol. 1, 23. An excellent map showing the "approximate area ceded by the Indians" also faces this page. Lagasse's study concerns the modern Indian and Half-breed population of Manitoba.

<sup>15</sup> Alexander Morris, op. cit., 313.

<sup>16</sup> PCMS for 1871, 366-367.

Soon after the conclusion of the Treaty of 1871, the Crees began to petition the Lieutenant-Governor for a redress. For a time nothing was done, but as hostile incidents became more frequent, the Indian administrators began to consider action.

Typical of the Cree complaints was the following letter, dated August 5, 1875, to Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris:

"We the Christian Indians and recipients of the treaty beg to ask your honour that we do not wish any longer to be ruled by the heathen ... from the time when treaty was made with the Indian we the Swampy tribe of the Indians had no voice, we were not allowed to say anything ..."<sup>17</sup>

The difference between the two bands was apparently recognized by most of those who conducted Indian affairs, but often ignored. Writing in 1871, Abraham Cowley noted that the Salteaux Indians were "not likely to be brought under the power of the Gospel without much patient labour and endurance on the part of the Missionary, and very considerable expense of money and prayer by the Church".<sup>18</sup> And yet, in spite of this, he appears to have sanctioned the chieftainship of Henry Prince in the face of Cree opposition.

Molyneux St. John, the first Indian agent of St. Peter's, stated that there was a difference of sentiments and customs between the Salteaux

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<sup>17</sup> PAM, Morris Papers (Ketcheson Collection), no. 157, Crees of St. Peter's to Morris, Aug. 5, 1875. It should be emphasized that while an element of animosity between the Salteaux and Crees continued throughout the nineteenth century, it never resulted in physical violence. Their quarrel could be regarded almost as an inter-family affair, with no bloodshed involved. The Sioux, on the other hand, were the inveterate enemies of both Red River bands, and of the Salteaux in particular, with whom they fought frequent bloody skirmishes.

<sup>18</sup> CMR for 1872, 359.

and the Swampies, with the two bands living "either in houses or in canvas and birchbark wigwams."<sup>19</sup>

For all practical purposes the Indian administrators, soon after 1871, began to consider St. Peter's as consisting of two reserves, with the southern half belonging to the Crees, and the northern half to the Salteaux. J.A.N. Provencher, the Assistant Indian Commissioner in 1876, wrote that "the Reserve of St. Peter's is so large, and composed of two parties so divided from each other, that it was in this respect, considered as forming two separate bands".<sup>20</sup> Until 1876, however, when the government made this division official, the Crees continued to complain of Salteaux interference.

(ii) The Clash of Old and New Authority -

During the first half-decade following Confederation an element of discord is discernable among those to whom Indian affairs were entrusted. This existed not only between the clergymen and federal officials, but also on a personal and inter-departmental level. As a result, the political life of St. Peter's became confused and discordant. Criticism, poured forth from all directions, made life for the Indians more complex than ever before, and unquestionably contributed to the breakdown of corporate existence.

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<sup>19</sup> SP: VI (23), 1873, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup>/ PAM: Morris Papers, no. 1325, Provencher to Morris, Sept. 12, 1876. By an act of parliament in 1876 "South St. Peter's" became "Dynevor", after its newly acquired post office. The northern half was known as "Peguis", or "North St. Peter's Reserve". Also, situated to the west of the Reserve, was a "fractional township", only "partly settled", with a post office called "Clandeboye": Manitoba Directory for 1877-78, 63.

Evidence of real friction first appeared in 1872, when Archibald and Simpson disagreed over the additional benefits that had been conceded to the Indians at the time of the Treaty, as included in the revision. Simpson refused to release agricultural equipment until he was satisfied that the Indians would use it properly. Archibald objected, and felt that Simpson should not withhold the gifts.<sup>21</sup> On October 2, 1872, the appointment of a new Lieutenant-Governor, Alexander Morris, ended this controversy, but others soon followed.

Another episode of a similar nature was instigated by none other than John Schultz, the indomitable doctor. Schultz was elected to parliament for "Lisgar" in 1871, where he remained until his defeat by A.W. Ross in 1882.<sup>22</sup> Since part of his constituency consisted of St. Peter's parish, which by this time contained a number of enfranchised electors, Schultz was anxious to gain the Indians' support.

According to Simpson, Schultz, during the federal election of September, 1872, promised liquor to the Indians on the Reserve, presumably to gain votes. He also gave notice that he would demand payment of the benefits that Simpson had withheld, and, furthermore, that he would

<sup>21</sup> See: SP: VI (23), 1873, pp. 1-6, for correspondence relating to the disagreement between Simpson and Archibald. In this regard, it should be pointed out that Indian policy in this chapter has, of necessity, received only a very cursory treatment. Unfortunately, an M.A. thesis related to this subject, concerning the work of Archibald and Morris, is still incomplete at this time, and the author has consequently been unable to refer to it. When complete, however, it will unquestionably shed more light. See: D. Wellard, unpublished M.A. thesis, 1960; F.A. Milligan, "The Lieutenant-Governorship in Manitoba, 1870-1882" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, 1948); and: W.L. Morton, op. cit., chaps. 6 and 7, 121-175, for more detailed accounts.

<sup>22</sup> J.R. Robertson, A Political Manual of the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories (Winnipeg, 1877), 119.

take a delegation of Indians to Ottawa if his petition was not met. On polling day, however, Simpson despatched 25 special constables to St. Peter's, and the liquor did not appear.<sup>23</sup>

Reporting in March, 1873, to Joseph Howe,<sup>24</sup> Molyneux St. John — whose fiery eloquence often appears in the Indian records of this period — scorched Schultz for what he considered to be gross interference. Since the previous year, Schultz had been writing to Ottawa, according to his promise, and complaining of the treatment meted out to the Indians. One of his complaints was that the Indians were not receiving free medical treatment.

"I can only assume", St. John wrote, "that it may have occurred to them (the St. Peter's Indians), that having been fortunate enough to secure that gentleman (Doctor Schultz) as their representative in Parliament, they would do well to cement the alliance by obtaining his services as their medical advisor".<sup>25</sup>

At this time also a further conflict becomes evident in the political life of St. Peter's — that of bureaucrat against clergyman, and vice versa. Following Confederation, the once benevolent authority exercised by the missionaries was largely replaced by the more remote officialdom of government. In the eyes of the Indians, this might have seemed a fortunate development, as there were now two sources of assistance to choose from. If one benefactor failed to help, the other might. For although the government was now the ultimate source of power, the

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<sup>23</sup> SP: VI (23), 1873, p. 7-8. As in more recent times, Ottawa did not relish delegations, and especially one consisting of "uncivilized" Indians, who might have given the government a great deal of difficulty.

<sup>24/</sup> At this time Howe was "Secretary of State for the Provinces".

<sup>25/</sup> SP: VI(23), 1873, p.9.

missionaries still maintained an element of influence. This was evidenced in a number of Indian communications of the time, and appeared in both direct and indirect forms.

A notable example of this clerical suggesting power is seen in a letter of 1873, in which Prince complained to Morris on the introduction of a "new religion" (the Roman Catholic) into St. Peter's. "I do not think it proper", he said, "to allow another church to establish themselves where the English Protestant Church has been established these many years past".<sup>26</sup> That the illiterate Chief would be concerned over this matter seems possible, but that he would have done so without suggestion is highly unlikely. In any event, his complaint was not acted on, as the government maintained the right of any denomination to enter wherever it pleased.<sup>27</sup> This policy, however tolerant, added further to the disrupting confusion in the Indian parish.

Since 1853 the Presbyterians had also been adding to the turmoil. Although not as competitive as the Catholics on the Indian Reserve, they seldom missed an opportunity to criticize the Anglican work. For example, in 1860, Cowley observed from the Nor'Wester: "that a Rev. Mr. MacTavish

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<sup>26</sup> PAM, Morris Papers, no. 119, Prince to Morris, Feb. 28, 1873.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., no. 120, Morris to Prince, Mar. 28, 1873. In spite of competition by other denominations, however, the Anglican church continued to expand rapidly. By 1876, the end of our period, the following churches and missions had been established in Rupert's Land: St. John's Cathedral (Winnipeg), Holy Trinity Church (Winnipeg), St. Paul's Church (St. Paul's), St. Andrew's Church (St. Andrew's), St. Clement's Church (St. Clement's), St. Peter's Church (Dynevor), St. James' Church (St. James), Holy Trinity Church (Headingly), St. Ann's Church (Poplar Point), St. Margaret's Church (High Bluff), St. Mary's Church (Portage La Prairie), Westbourne Church (Westbourne), Emerson Church (Emerson), Boyne Mission, Pembina Mission, Fairford Church, Touchwood Hills, Christ Church, Cumberland, Ft. Francis, and Islington: Manitoba Directory for 1877-78, 112.

who came to the Red River to serve the Presbyterians during their minister's absence has been depreciating if not denying the extent of the success granted by the Lord of the harvest to his labourers ..."<sup>28</sup> These incidents continued over the years, much to the dismay of the Anglican clergymen.. Finally, in 1871, injury was added to insult when "three Scotchmen" prevailed upon Cowley to allow Presbyterian services in St. Clement's parish. Cowley, although obviously opposed, could do nothing to stop them.<sup>29</sup>

Besides Cowley, the government found an eloquent critic in a Half-breed, William Kennedy of St. Andrew's. The following letter to Morris, written by Kennedy in August, 1875, is an excellent and blistering example of the type of indictments which were produced by those few who defended the Indians at this time. Since the era of the Hudson's Bay Company's administration, he wrote:

"the Indians of St. Peter's had under many disadvantages, wrought their way up to that social position by which they had not only attained to full citizenship, but they fulfilled its duties on the whole well. When your predecessor, Governor Archibald was here, they underwent that same social deterioration that a similar class does in Ontario where an unscrupulous and unprincipled politician, with abundance

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PAC: A87, Cowley's Journal, Mar. 2, 1860.

29/ PAC: A99, Cowley to C.M.S., June 9, 1871. By 1873, moreover, Cowley reported that Presbyterian influence was also extending to St. Peter's: PAC: A100, Cowley to C.M.S., Feb. 28, 1873. In this respect, some mention should also be made of the other Protestant denominations, even though their influence on St. Peter's was not as great. The Methodists began activity in Western Canada in 1840. See: Jesse H. Armp, Methodism in the Middle West (Toronto, 1946). Also, in 1869, the Baptists reconnoitred Red River, and soon afterward added their forces to the proselytizing struggle. See: C.C. McLaurin, Pioneering in Western Canada: A Story of the Baptists (Calgary, 1939).

of means gets around them, but they nevertheless still retained those social as well as political rights to which they had proved themselves fairly entitled. In your day, and apparently without any other authority but that, that despotism dictates, this same class has been assigned to the degraded position of irresponsible, and uncared for 'minors' ...

"Since the days of Confederation, and through the criminality of Dominion officials, this land has become the 'paradise' of the perjured swindler, the 'happy hunting ground' of the black leg, the 'Eldorado' of the modern Pizzaro ..."<sup>30</sup>

On no occasion, it seemed, did the Anglican clergymen and their supporters miss an opportunity to criticize the Indian administration. In 1873, for example, a violent verbal battle occurred, in which St. Peter's, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Indian Commissioner, and Ottawa were all eventually involved, over an incident that could only be described as trivial.

Provencher, having failed to meet Prince's Indians at an appointed place, suddenly found it necessary to make lengthy explanations to the Secretary of State. After a great deal of heated correspondence among the various parties concerned, nothing concrete was accomplished, except perhaps that Prince received another opportunity to air his grievances.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> PAM, Morris Papers (Ketcheson Collection) no. 158, Kennedy to Morris, 9 Aug., 1875.

<sup>31</sup> Prince strongly believed that the government owed him a great deal because of his loyalty during the rebellion. Archibald, although sympathetic, could do very little on his own initiative. He pleaded Prince's cause whenever possible, but with not too much success. "On my way here (to Red River), " he reported, "I met a great many of the Salteaux Indians, and on the Indian Mission on the Red River a number of Swampy Indians (sic) with their Chief Prince. In the course of the journey I could not fail to be impressed with the great embarrassments which a hostile feeling on the

Prince's understandable but continuous complaints during this period of distress added considerably to the tension already existing. Provencher, in particular, appeared to be highly irritated. Writing to Morris on January 8, 1876, he maintained that Prince's requests were unreasonable. "When the chief presented you with his (latest) demand", Provencher bitterly explained, "he had already received five dollars from me, which is about as much as the government allows me for my travelling expenses".<sup>32</sup>

But every slight or breach of promise, regardless of how small or unintentional, was a source of grievous injury to the sensitive Indians. "My experience", Morris reported, "goes to show that you can do anything with an Indian if you can acquire his confidence. But any promise made must be religiously redeemed and for that reason I have always been most cautious in making promises, and insofar as I could, in keeping them".<sup>33</sup>

(iii) Moral, Economic, and Educational Depression -

In the decade following the conclusion of the Treaty agreement a rapid decay in the Indian Settlement became evident. This process of deterioration, as already mentioned, had commenced some years earlier, but now continued at a much quicker pace. Manitoba's steady increase in

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part of the Indians could have thrown in the way of the passage of the troops, and we have reason to congratulate ourselves (sic) that they have proved loyal to the Crown and resisted the attempts which were made to seduce them from their allegiance." SP: V (20), 1871, p. 9.

32/ PAM, Morris Papers, no. 1187, Provencher to Morris, Jan. 8, 1876.

33/ PAM, Morris Papers (Ketcheson Collection), no. 326, Morris to Alexander Campbell, Minister of the Interior, July 5, 1873.

white population, with its attendant land pressure and corrupting influences, seriously damaged the sensitive fabric of the Indian agricultural Settlement, and in fact threatened to destroy it completely.

One of the greatest problems remained that of "strong drink", which led the Indians of the whole Province, with St. Peter's included, down the path of spiritual, physical, mental and moral destruction. This tragedy, however, did not go unnoticed by those who had devoted their lives to aboriginal betterment.

"It pains me much", Cowley wrote:  
 "that men can be found so utterly wanting in humanity as to be willing to expose the poor aborigines to an unprotected encounter for their homesteads, with men so far superior in ability, as expected immigrants must naturally be. Why envy the poor Indian his little plot of land, upon which he is living in peace and quiet, while the country affords ample room for the most grasping land jobber!!!"<sup>34</sup>

The sale of lands by Indians, regardless of the price obtained, not only usually impoverished the selling generation, but also denied those to come of a reasonable material heritage. In many instances, even when adequate payments were received for lands conceded, the Indians squandered their money away in a few short years. Much of it of course, in the case of the Salteaux at least, went for hospitality and "firewater" in the traditional manner. Spiritual Christianity certainly provided no guarantee of temporal wisdom. A seemingly devout Christian might attend church on Sunday, become drunk on Monday, and dispose of his possessions on Tuesday. Henry Prince, who often complained of this process

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<sup>34</sup> PAM, Archibald Papers, no. 282, Cowley to Archibald, May 3, 1871.

to the government, was guilty himself, having sold a quantity of land to the whites that had been willed to him by his father.<sup>35</sup>

The gradual constraction of the original Reserve set aside by Lord Selkirk was by no means a new process. The Hudson's Bay Company, during its period of jurisdiction, had bought and resold several Indian lots of land from time to time, as had various individual Indians.<sup>36</sup> Following Confederation, alienation of the new treaty lands proceeded accordingly.

At first mostly kindred Cree Half-breeds appeared within the Reserve boundaries, but Henry Prince, regarding these as "foreigners",<sup>37</sup> objected to their presence. On January 15, 1873, he complained to Archibald, saying that their entry was contrary to Treaty agreements.<sup>38</sup> On February 28th this petition was renewed,<sup>39</sup> and on July 26th reiterated by Henry Cockrane.<sup>40</sup>

Colonel John Stroughton Dennis, the Surveyor-General, and several others in government circles, believed that only federal action could prevent complete dispossession.<sup>41</sup> Following Dennis' advice, the federal government, on March 8, 1873, instructed Governor Morris to block any further sales of Indian lands. Under the provisions of the Manitoba Act, it was asserted, Indians did not have the right to sell their lots without

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., no. 176, Report of Molyneux St. John to Archibald Concerning the Selkirk Treaty and Land Sales previous to Confederation, Jan. 17, 1871.

<sup>36/</sup> Ibid., At a profit, of course.

<sup>37/</sup> PAM, Morris Papers, no. 119, Prince to Morris, Feb. 28, 1873.

<sup>38/</sup> Ibid., no. 67, Prince to Morris, Jan. 15, 1873.

<sup>39/</sup> Ibid., no. 119, Prince to Morris, Feb. 28, 1873.

<sup>40/</sup> Ibid., no. 115, Cockrane to Morris, Jul. 26, 1873.

<sup>41/</sup> Ibid., no. 127, Dennis to Morris, Mar. 5, 1873: "I would strongly recommend that the facts should be telegraphed to Sir John (A. MacDonalé) and his instructions obtained. Should he disapprove of the Indians being allowed to sell, a letter should at once be written to the Archdeacon (Cowley) requesting him to have such decision notified to the Chief and the whole band".

express governmental consent.<sup>42</sup>

"Express governmental consent", however, was not long in coming. With the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, a proposal was made, in 1875, to purchase a part of St. Peter's Reserve for the "new City of Selkirk", which was to be located on the east side of the Red at the point where the tracks crossed the River. Lots were to be made out and sold, and the funds obtained thereby "invested for the benefit of the Band".<sup>43</sup>

Nor did individual sales cease entirely. Despite the prohibition by Ottawa in 1873, a number of transactions continued, either because the Indian administrators could not stop them or did not wish to. In 1876, for instance, some three years after the federal order, Prince was still complaining that "nothing had been done to stop the constant sales of Reserve lands by Indians".<sup>44</sup> When questioned, Provencher explained that his reason for "not interfering (was) that no order (had been) passed yet setting apart (the) Reserve".<sup>45</sup>

In the meantime cases of drunkenness and dissipation continued to mount at an alarming rate. On November 8, 1875, Prince informed Morris that "owing to the ease with which my people can obtain spirituous liquor drunkenness is fearfully on the increase among them".<sup>46</sup> A report on this condition to Ottawa resulted in a somewhat ineffective reply, stating in essence that "the duty of enforcing the liquor laws must

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., no. 134, Telegram from David Laird, Minister of the Interior, to Morris, Mar. 8, 1873.

<sup>43/</sup> Ibid., no. 1046, Instruction from Laird to Morris, Jul. 16, 1875.

<sup>44/</sup> Ibid., Telegram book no. 1; entry dated Jul. 13, 1876.

<sup>45/</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>46/</sup> PAM, Morris Papers, no. 1153, Prince to Morris, Nov. 8, 1875.

primarily rest with the local magistrates ..."<sup>47</sup>

The Salteaux Indians, some of whom were from Scanterbury, appeared to be among the worst offenders. Provencher reported that they were constantly:

"lounging in the vicinity of the town (Winnipeg) indulging generally in the most disreputable habits of drunkenness and immorality ... It is only to be regretted that their system of begging, more or less authoratively, has been allowed to reach such continuous proportions ..."<sup>48</sup>

In the main settlement of St. Peter's the people were also experiencing a considerable deterioration, and previously traditionally optimistic clergymen now informed their correspondents in London of increased immorality and possible tragedy:

"That there are many Christian Indians in this settlement, whose lives as to drunkenness and debauchery are irreproachable, I believe cannot be denied; but alas! there are others for whom we blush".<sup>49</sup>

Cowley was by no means satisfied with the Treaty agreement, and during the episode concerning Provencher's failure to meet Prince, pointed out that three dollars a year was hardly sufficient payment to be ordered around. If the Indian is called out, he asserted, "without remuneration better be without the \$3. Each day is worth to the common labourer say \$1 and his food etc. Fisherman often make many shillings a day and skilled

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., no. 1166, E.A. Meredith, Deputy Minister of the Interior, to Morris, Nov. 26, 1875.

<sup>48/</sup> Ibid., no. 1325, Provencher to Morris, Oct. 25, 1876.

<sup>49/</sup> CMR for 1878, 172-173.

workmen of whom we have many get wages varying from \$1.50 to \$2.50 ..."<sup>50</sup>

During the 1870's, however, in spite of these apparently reasonable wages, the economy of St. Peter's was badly depressed. From 1873 to 1875 plagues of grasshoppers destroyed the crops almost entirely.<sup>51</sup> As a result, by 1874 destitution was so rampant that the federal government had to authorize a special grant of one thousand dollars for the purchase of seed grain and potatoes.<sup>52</sup> Living on the Reserve at this time were 170 Indian agricultural families and 110 transient families, the former being the only ones entitled to seed.<sup>53</sup>

In 1875 Provencher reported to Ottawa that "probable starvation" was imminent.<sup>54</sup> Morris did not concur in this judgement, but acknowledged that "there was much sickness among the St. Peter's Indians". Despite some hardship, however, he did not "apprehend anything more than ordinary".<sup>55</sup>

Destitution was increased in 1875 by the sudden disappearance of fish in the Red River.<sup>56</sup> By this time, moreover, many of the Indians

<sup>50</sup> PAM, Morris Papers, no. 293, Cowley to Morris, Jan. 23, 1873.

<sup>51/</sup> A vivid description of the grasshopper plagues of Red River in these years was given by the Bishop of Rupert's Land at the "Proceedings of the First Synod of Rupert's Land" in 1869. "The whole country for a distance", he said, "was alive with them (the grasshoppers). They devoured every green thing — the young crops, weeds, grass. They filled the trees until they were covered with them, as when bees are swarming ... They crowded on each other, when any obstacle came in their way, till they formed masses feet deep ... In many places the air was filled with a noisome stench from them": Rupert's Land Synod Report for 1869, 12.

<sup>52/</sup> PAM, Morris Papers, no. 741, Minister of Interior to Morris, May 18, 1874; authorizing a "special grant for the destitute condition" of St. Peter's Reserve.

<sup>53/</sup> Ibid., Telegram Book no. 1; entry dated May 5, 1874.

<sup>54/</sup> Ibid., entry dated Apr. 2, 1875.

<sup>55/</sup> Ibid., entry dated Apr. 13, 1875.

<sup>56/</sup> Ibid., Letter Book "H"; entry dated Dec. 8, 1875.

had disposed of their farm animals, so that they could no longer travel to fish during the winter through the ice of Lake Winnipeg, as had been the practice in the past.<sup>57</sup> Indian incomes were also depressed by a government regulation that prohibited the traditionally lucrative selling of Reserve timber.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, during the winter of 1875-76, the government found it necessary to extend relief once again.<sup>59</sup>

By 1872, St. Peter's, although still considered a "Native Christian community", had already absorbed a large number of Half-breed and European settlers. The parish included from 700 to 800 Anglican Churchgoers, of whom about 170 were communicants.<sup>60</sup> Most of the Indians were Crees, with a "sprinkling of Salteaux" among them.<sup>61</sup>

In 1875 the Reverend Gilbert Cook, a Half-breed clergyman,<sup>62</sup> took over from Henry Cockrane as Abraham Cowley's native assistant.<sup>63</sup> This, of course, was in keeping with Anglican missionary policy, which stated that native clergymen should be installed wherever possible. Cockrane, who had served at St. Peter's since 1867, was of "unmixed Indian blood", and had been educated at the Red River Anglican schools.<sup>64</sup>

Gilbert Cook, Cowley reported, maintained "with much solitude his patient conflict against the evils and dangers which accrue to the Indian Christian from the altered circumstances attendant on white imm-

57 Ibid.

58/ Ibid.

59/ PAM, Morris Papers, no. 1178, Minister of Interior to Morris, Dec. 20, 1875.

60/ CMR for 1872, 353.

61/ Ibid.

62/ CMR for 1878, 172.

63/ CMR for 1879, 144.

64/ SP: V (20), 1871, p. 11.

igration".<sup>65</sup> In this respect, Cowley had hoped, in 1872, that the "isolation of the families should, under God, be a means of preservation".<sup>66</sup> Isolation, however, proved to be impossible, and "white immigration" into the heart of the Indian community produced a cankerous sore that was eventually to destroy it.

When St. Peter's Reserve was divided into two sections in 1876, Gilbert Cook remained at the southern main settlement,<sup>67</sup> while James Settee took over Henry Prince's Indians in the north.<sup>68</sup> Settee, a full-blooded Indian, had been one of the first students in John West's little school during the 1820's.

In 1876 St. Peter's Reserve had a total population of "1,943 souls", and enclosed an area of 51,200 acres. By this time, however, more than one-half of the residents were non-treaty people, largely Half-breeds, but with some whites included. There were also 130 proprietors of 15,000 acres; 2000 acres under cultivation; 120 houses valued at \$30,000; and 190 other buildings having an approximate value of \$28,500. Of the original inhabitants 55 families were settled on farms outside of the Reserve. About 160 families, most of them Salteaux, made a precarious living from "hunting, fishing and voyaging."<sup>69</sup>

By the Provincial School Act of 1871 all the old schools of the

<sup>65</sup> PCMS for 1879-80, 214.

<sup>66</sup> CMR for 1872, 353.

<sup>67</sup> Gilbert Cook served at St. Peter's from 1875 to 1880, and later was "one of the very early graduates from the re-organized St. John's College of 1886": T.C.B. Boon, op. cit., 29.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., In the interval between 1874 and 1875 the minister at St. Peter's was the Reverend John Alexander Mackay. His incumbency was so short, however, that he had little influence on the parish.

<sup>69</sup> SP: IX (9), 1876, pp. 38-39.

Province, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, came under the partial supervision of the government.<sup>70</sup> All institutions in operation were designated as to faith, and specifically classified as "Protestant" or "Roman Catholic". The Indian schools, of which St. Peter's originally had two, were to be maintained financially on an equal basis by the Indian branch and the "Board of Education" of Manitoba.

From the very beginning, however, education at St. Peter's experienced a great deal of difficulty. Besides the political division of 1876, further disruption was caused by the arrival of the Roman Catholics.<sup>71</sup> This new presence not only diverted Anglican children from the older schools, but also, in a few embarrassing instances, converted Indian adults to the Catholic faith.<sup>72</sup>

In 1871 two Protestant school divisions were opened on the Reserve — the "North St. Peter's School District" and the "South St. Peter's School District".<sup>73</sup> This separation, which was necessary because of the distance of student travel involved, coincided with the political division of 1876.

Reporting on the condition of South St. Peter's in 1871, the Protestant Inspector of Schools observed that, "considering that the children attending are nearly all pure Indians, it is in a very satisfactory condition indeed. There are 48 children present out of 66 whose

<sup>70</sup> W. L. Morton, op. cit., 186.

<sup>71</sup>/ It should be remembered that at this time religious animosity was very strong between the Protestants and Catholics.

<sup>72</sup>/ CMI for 1883, 303.

<sup>73</sup>/ Report of the Superintendent of Protestant Schools in Manitoba for 1871.

names are on the register. The present condition of the school is due unquestionably to the fostering care of the Church Missionary Society. The teacher, a very excellent and worthy man, is, if I do not mistake, a pure Indian".<sup>74</sup> Most of these children were, of course, Cree Indians, and their "excellent and worthy" teacher, a man called John Sinclair, was one of the outstanding graduates of the St. Peter's Anglican mission.<sup>75</sup>

The North St. Peter's school, attended by the Salteaux, was less satisfactory. "I visited this school on November 28th", the Inspector reported, "and found that it had only been opened on the previous Friday. The school house is a large new building, not quite finished and very poorly furnished ... There are 39 children present, 27 of whom were reading words of one syllable. The rest are working away at the English alphabet". The teacher here was also a "pure Indian" as were "almost if not quite all the children".<sup>76</sup>

By 1874 progress at the two schools was only "fair". At South St. Peter's the school house was "scarcely habitable during the winter" and needed a "ceiling and repairs generally". A new teacher, Mr. Leask, had replaced the Indian at North St. Peter's. Both schools, the Inspector stated, should have been supported by the Dominion government, "but the grant made from the Indian Office is scarcely sufficient to support one ..." Adding also to the difficulty of the schools at this time was

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> None of these native teachers, however, remained very long. It can only be concluded, therefore, that they were not very successful.

<sup>76</sup> Report of the Superintendent for Protestant Schools for 1871. This teacher's name was "Henry Prince", and he was either a cousin or nephew of the Chief.

the fact that non-treaty residents refused to contribute toward their support.<sup>77</sup>

In 1875 North St. Peter's appeared to surpass its older rival in progress. A new teacher, Mr. Wright, provided an unusual incentive that spurred the Salteaux children to greater achievement. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Wright, who was in ill health, had to leave at the end of the year. The trustees, moreover, took "little or no interest".<sup>78</sup>

In the same year South St. Peter's school was closed on October 2nd, and not opened again until December 6th because the teacher's salary was in arrears. In the new year, however, some progress was accomplished under Mr. John Kipling, a new teacher. But in the spring of 1876 the school was closed once again, apparently for no reason except that the people believed that the government should support it entirely.<sup>79</sup>

In 1876 the Salteaux children continued to advance under another new teacher, Mr. Corrigan, until he left for Headingly. Most of the students at this time were still in the first or second classes, of a possible six classes as arranged in the curriculum.<sup>80</sup>

Difficulty reached a peak in 1877 when Henry Prince revolted from the system, and hired a teacher of his own. James Settee, who was not qualified, was engaged at \$300 per annum. Many of Prince's complaints, and consequent withdrawal, were based on his objection to the non-paying, non-treaty residents of North St. Peter's, who were a formidable obstacle in the face of progress. The Board of Education wanted the parishioners,

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77 Ibid., 1874.

78/ Ibid., 1875.

79/ Ibid., 1876.

80/ Ibid.

treaty and non-treaty alike, to contribute toward two well-established schools, but both Prince and the others refused. As a result, in 1877, no statistics were made available for "Peguis", the Salteaux, North St. Peter's Reserve.<sup>81</sup>

Education, like all aspects of Indian life at St. Peter's during the 1870's, received a severe set back. These consequences, which resulted largely from a sudden and overpowering influx of white settlement, together with apparent white and governmental apathy, destroyed much of the progress that had been accomplished so painstakingly by the Anglican missionaries during the previous forty years, and led the oldest Christian Indian Settlement of Western Canada to eventual oblivion.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 1877.

## CONCLUSION

## SUMMARY OF EVENTS BEFORE AND AFTER 1876

The Red River Colony, which began in 1811 under the direction of Lord Selkirk, was a unique undertaking in the annals of North American settlement. Separated by hundreds of miles from European contact, and begun in an atmosphere of bitter fur trading rivalry, its prospects for success seemed extremely limited. Agriculture, on which the new Colony was to be based, proved to be an unreliable, and at times a disastrous, livelihood. Furthermore, the interests of the fur trade, in the eyes of the traders, seemed to conflict with the idea of permanent settlement, and consequently at no time did they give the Colony much more than cursory approval.

So long as a small group of white settlers remained at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine, farming on a small scale to supply the fur brigades, the Hudson's Bay Company raised no objections. But when missionaries began to move into the territory, with their idealistic schemes for aboriginal improvement, the Company became uneasy. For it was primarily the Indians, the Half-breeds and the French-Canadian voyageurs on whom the fur trading system was based. These aboriginal, mixed-blooded and "nativized" people, who far outnumbered the Europeans, not only trapped and provided the furs, but also maintained the intricate canoe routes by which the furs were delivered to the overseas ports, and incoming supplies to the inland posts. It seemed apparent, then, that if too many of them were converted to a settled life, the entire trading system would break down.

In the beginning, however, the Hudson's Bay Company was not opposed to settlement, even if some of the colonists were Half-breeds, Indians, or voyageurs. The Company, after its long struggle with the Nor'Westers, in fact, welcomed Selkirk's Settlers and gave them considerable assistance. This Settlement, which obstructed the Nor'Wester's trade, led to the "Skirmish of Seven Oaks" in 1816, and finally to the union of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821.

In 1817, after re-establishing his people from the attacks of the Nor'Westers in the previous year, Lord Selkirk took a further step in ensuring the permanence of the Colony. Negotiating with the Salteaux and Cree bands who lived in the district, he concluded a treaty, which, he hoped, would confirm his possession of the lands previously ceded to him by the Company. In return, he agreed to pay the Indians annually a quantity of tobacco, and also granted them two "reserves". One of these was located near the present-day City of Portage La Prairie, and was set aside for the Crees. The second, which was given to the Salteaux, extended northward from Sugar Point, and became the site of St. Peter's, the first exclusively Indian settlement of Western Canada.

The Salteaux Indians gained dominance in the treaty negotiations largely because of the powerful influence of Chief Peguis, who had been a sympathizer with white settlement since the Colony's beginning. In actual fact, the Salteaux had little or no claim on the territory ceded.

In the years that followed, and until his death in 1864, Peguis remained in a position of authority, not only over the Salteaux Indians, but also over a large number of Crees who had drifted onto the Salteaux Reserve. He became one of the first native Christians, did much to convert

others, and helped to maintain a semblance of unity in the Cree-Salteaux community.

To a large extent, however, only the Crees were willing to accept Christianity and agriculture. The Salteaux, primarily because of traditional loyalty to their customs, refused, even under the greatest Anglican missionary pressures, to change their ways. Unlike the Crees, they had few white or Half-breed relatives in the Colony, and little white blood in their veins. Consequently, Anglican success was achieved mostly among the Crees, who although closely related to the Salteaux in both tribe and language, nevertheless remained as a separate "band", united to their kinsmen only by virtue of Peguis' overall suzerainty.

The Anglican missionaries, who worked among these Salteaux and Cree Indians at Red River, came under the direction of the "Church Missionary Society" of London, England. Obviously, the Hudson's Bay Company could not openly oppose the Society, which had, since its origin in 1799, taken an increasing interest in North American affairs.

The first Anglican missionary, the Reverend John West, arrived at Red River in 1820. His brief but thorough reconnaissance of the territory included a determination of Christian prospects for both natives and whites, and received the apparent blessing of both Company and Society. During his short stay in the Colony (1820-23), West commenced work among the Indians, and attended to the long-neglected European Protestants. As a result, by the time his successor, the Reverend David Jones arrived in 1823, the Anglican church was well-established in the Colony.

The first Anglican missionary to achieve concrete results with the aborigines was the Reverend William Cockran, who arrived in 1825. The founder of St. Peter's, Cockran was a man of powerful personality. Stubborn

by nature, he soon became involved in a conflict with the Company, and in a disagreement with Jones. Both, he declared, were not interested in aboriginal betterment, and in spite of obstacles, he proceeded alone.

In 1829 Cockran moved north of the main Colony and began proselytizing and settling activities among a group of Half-breed people at Grand Rapids. It was here that he first encountered the usual difficulties that attended a missionary's task, but also some measure of success.

In 1832, after obtaining the reluctant consent of Governor George Simpson, and of Peguis, Cockran began the first permanent Indian agricultural settlement at "Netley Creek". In 1834, largely because of evident ill-feeling between the Salteaux and Crees, he moved southward to the mouth of Cook's Creek, where the main settlement was eventually established. Throughout this early period, from 1832 to 1839 (when another missionary arrived), Cockran had to divide his time between Grand Rapids and the Indian Settlement. He received little or no encouragement, and in fact at one point was ordered by Governor Simpson to discontinue.

But in spite of opposition by the Company, and frequent incidents of apathy on the part of the Indians themselves, Cockran continued stubbornly and energetically in his work. His progress was so rapid that by 1836 he completed the first Indian church, and had established a substantial colony of farms, schools, and a faithful congregation.

In 1839 the Reverend John Smithurst arrived, and largely on his own initiative, declared himself to be a missionary to the Indian Settlement, with no connection whatever with the Company. His decision received the approval of Cockran and the Society, but aroused strong disapproval from the Company.

Smithurst began his work with enthusiasm, and in the face of much

difficulty, achieved some success. The Society allocated more resources to his use, and for a time it appeared that Cockran's Christian Indians would become firmly established. But unfortunately, Smithurst also soon became embroiled in a controversy with the Company, and this, together with overpowering difficulties encountered among the Indians, seemed to sap his original fervour. In fact, by 1849 his initial opinions had changed so greatly that he was accepted as a member of the Company's select ruling body, the "Council of Assiniboia".

In 1851 William Cockran once again returned to the Indian Settlement. During his second and last incumbency (1851-57) the permanent, stone St. Peter's church was constructed, a building that still stands today. In this period the Settlement also received a new lease on life, as Cockran, with characteristic energy, did all in his power to help the Indians. But in 1857, perhaps prematurely, he left for Portage La Prairie, where he began a similar but less successful mission.

Following Cockran's departure St. Peter's was taken over by the Reverend Abraham Cowley, who, until his death in 1887, continued the mission, assisted at intervals by a number of Indian clergymen, teachers, and catechists. Cowley became a staunch defender of the Indian cause, but by the time he arrived at St. Peter's the era of dominant missionary influence was over. Unfortunately, moreover, his native assistants did not always prove to be very reliable.

After 1857 a new fever of expansion gripped the Red River Colony, and St. Peter's became involved inextricably in the process of greater events. During the 1860's the Indians and Half-breeds, spurred on by the newly arrived "Canadian Party", began to question the Company's authority,

and to fear for the security of their land titles. Canadian and American interest in the Northwest was based primarily on the cheap lands available for settlement, which included, of course, the still largely unused St. Peter's district. Half-breeds and white men, after buying out Indian owners at bargain prices, began settling on the Reserve. This broke down Indian solidarity, and exposed the still-unprepared people to all the diseases and corrupting influences attendant on white encroachment.

After the Half-breed rebellion of 1869-70, and the conclusion of a treaty agreement in 1871, the coming of an even larger white population continued to overpower the Indian Settlement. Thwarted by poor Indian administration and faced with temptations they could not withstand, the Indians proceeded to sell their lands at an even greater pace. The old rivalry between the Salteaux and Crees broke into the open, and the parish, by 1876, was divided into two segments. In spite of its promises, the federal government failed to provide adequate protection, and previous gains made by the Anglican missionaries, especially in education, were allowed to lapse.

The year 1876, therefore, although a somewhat arbitrary date, can be regarded as being the end of an era in St. Peter's history. In that year the Reserve was formally named in two sections, with the southern half (Dynevor) occupied by the Crees, and the northern half (Peguis), by the Salteaux. St. Peter's continued after 1876, but its circumstances had altered so greatly that it was no longer primarily a Christian Indian Settlement.

In the years that followed 1876 the Indian population of the Reserve steadily declined in proportion, and the land was taken over by Half-breed

and white settlers more and more. Farming, although still carried on, became a subsidiary occupation, and many of the Indians began to drift back to hunting and fishing, and into new occupations largely connected with manual labour.

In 1908 arrangements were made to surrender St. Peter's Reserve to the Canadian government. Under conditions of the agreement each family of five received a patent for 80 acres of land, and others in a similar proportion. This involved about 20,000 acres for allotment to the Indians, and except for 3,000 acres that remained as common hay ground, the balance, amounting to 25,000 acres, was sold by the government and the proceeds divided among members of the bands. Most of the Indians subsequently moved to a new reserve further north. As a result, the number of people now living in the district that are descended from the original inhabitants are few in number, and only one of them holds a farm of any appreciable size. St. Peter's, as a Christian Indian Settlement, no longer exists.

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