

Imperialism, Colonialism and Structural Violence:
An Example of the Resistance of Piapot and Big Bear to Reserve Settlement

by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to Piapot and Big Bear, their people of that time period and their descendants. It is also dedicated to my extended family of Ka-mino-takot and all her children, Kimiwinokwē, and my siblings, Isabelle Hanson, and Bernice, Sylvia, and Corey Perkins; my children, Tyson Perkins who always made sure I was alright, Jesse, Heather Perkins, and Jeremiah Sobala, whose spirits motivated me to get a life as a student; my grandchildren Wade, Justice and Faith, and A.J., who encouraged me to be spiritual, do something, and remain interested; and to my Cree relations, the Dieter people from Peepeekisis First Nation and the Kennedy and Cuthand people from Little Pine First Nation.

Abstract

During the 19th century, British imperialism and Canadian colonialism aspired to subdue, subjugate and assimilate the Plains Cree (cf. Tobias 1992:148). This particular brand of colonialism employed Indian policy – a form of structural violence—rather than military force. I argue that structural violence was both legitimized and supported by cultural violence. The distortion of history is a prime example of cultural violence. That Canada followed an honorable and just policy in its dealings with Plains Indians (cf. Tobias 1983:519) is the contemporary residue of a myth created during colonial times in political circles to justify the dispossession of Aboriginal lands and resources.

In the 19th Century, Cree leaders, Piapot and Big Bear, who were perceived as threats to Canadian “progress,” were routinely publicly maligned. The “official” historical literature often uncritically reflected these prevalent ethnocentric views of the day. Critical historical theorists, however, have offered a number of opposing views. This thesis focuses attention on the literature which takes a more critical and culturally informed approach to Canadian nation-building. It places a discussion of structural constraints at the centre of an exploration of the strategies Plains leaders used to resist a variety of Indian policies including reserve settlement.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Scope, Aims and Method

This thesis will examine British and Canadian colonial attempts to subjugate and assimilate Plains First Nations using Indian policy throughout the 19th century. This particular brand of colonialism employed Indian policy – a form of structural violence rather than military force. I argue that structural violence was both legitimized and supported by cultural violence. The distortion of history is a prime example of cultural violence. That Canada followed an honorable and just policy in its dealings with Plains Indians (cf. Tobias 1983:519) is the contemporary residue of a myth created during colonial times in political circles to justify the dispossession of Aboriginal lands and resources.

In the 19th Century, Cree leaders, Piapot and Big Bear, who were perceived as threats to Canadian “progress,” were routinely publicly maligned. The “official” historical literature often uncritically reflected these prevalent ethnocentric views of the day. In order to convey a sense of the ethnocentric attitudes typifying the era of the newcomers, I will examine the literature that represents the prevalent views of the Cree leaders, Piapot and Big Bear. I will use the example of the Plains Cree under Piapot's and Big Bear's leadership, to argue that structural violence had profound implications for the Plains Cree and their reserve settlement. In short, such generally accepted views of the time characterize cultural violence and these were employed to legitimize structural violence.

Critical historical theorists, however, have offered a number of opposing views. This thesis focuses attention on the literature which takes a more critical and culturally

informed approach to Canadian nation-building. It places a discussion of structural constraints at the centre of an exploration of the strategies Plains leaders used to resist a variety of Indian policies including reserve settlement.

Theoretical Approaches

This chapter will lay out the major theories used to study structural violence and its historical background of which was of an imperial base and was practiced through colonialism (cf. Young 2004). I will critically examine some well-known secondary and tertiary-source historical literature in order to identify some of the dominant ideologies that impelled Indian Policy at a particular historical moment in the developing relations between Native and non-Native peoples. I will summarize the arguments made by Tobias (1991) and Ponting (1980) about the shaping of Indian policy to provide a context for understanding specifically what it was that Big Bear and Piapot were resisting and why they chose the strategies they did. This will shed light on how Canadian governance strategies created conditions that precluded a battle among equals on even terrain.

Galtung defines imperialism, as "the creation of unequal territorial relationships, usually between states and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination." (1971: 81). Galtung's model of violence shows how this power is maintained through economic and political activities (1990:294) which I will discuss later. Robert Young argues that imperialism is the concept while colonialism is the practice (1995:159). Johnson, Gregory and Smith argue that colonialism is the creation and maintenance of colonies in a territory by people from another territory (1986: 59). Colonialism as the practice of British Imperialism sets up sovereignty in the colony by establishing a metropole. The social structure, government, and economics within the

territory of the colony are changed by the colonists. This practice of colonization shows the theoretical premise of Galtung's Imperial model that posits the establishment of a bridgehead in the periphery that acts as the outpost for the Centre nation (1971:81). The relationship between Galtung's model of imperialism, the practice of colonialism and the ensuing violence will be discussed more in the next section.

Paul Farmer examines structural violence and shows how it is useful in anthropology and in other disciplines that study modern social life (2004). The concept of structural violence serves anthropologists as a tool for studying slavery, racism, and other forms of institutionalized violence (2004: 307). The social structures characterized by poverty; social inequality, racism, and gender inequality are examined by means of this concept. Simply put, structural violence is exerted systematically and indirectly by those who support an oppressive social order. Because social cohesion is often premised on othering – on the creation of an us and a them – and because social power is often consolidated by denying the possibility of alternative values and social formations, it is quite common for social groups to consider themselves “the real people” and to deny others a fundamental humanity. All cultures have historically engaged this form of ethnic marking. However, when one group has greater power to assert it’s own renditions of peoplehood at the expense of an others,’ the others are often blamed for the misfortune they must endure in an unequal system. Consequently, the “official” history fostered by the dominant culture will sustain the mechanism that supports structural violence. The concept of structural violence is intended to inform the study of the social machinery of oppression (Farmer 2004: 308). Galtung refers to the concerted action of these forces as cultural violence (1990:291).

Farmer insists that the examination of the suffering endured by the oppressed is indeed essential to the study of structural violence (2004:308). Economic structures of the oppressive system are socially and culturally constructed, and the reserve system under the direct and aggressive approach for civilization as instituted by the *Indian Act* is a striking example. By 1879, Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney promoted coercive measures of Indian policy with the distribution and withholding of rations, thereby inducing the Cree to take treaty as part of the implementation of Indian policy to relocate the Cree on reserves where they were expected to learn agriculture (Tobias 1983:526). The evolution and continuity of colonial Indian policy from its imperial inception and throughout the 19th century show its detrimental effects on Cree society.

Adverse outcomes associated with structural violence include death, injury, illness, subjugation, stigmatization, and even psychological terror (Framer 2004:308). For the Plains Cree, the eradication of the bison offers an important case in point. When the bison disappeared, many Cree died from malnutrition and secondary illness as a result of the scant food. The Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs Lawrence Vankoughnet, ordered Dewdney to keep Fort Walsh at starvation rations. Dewdney commented that the sudden change from unlimited meat to the meager rations issued by the government dramatically affected the mortality of the Indians (Lux 2001: 37-38). Dewdney received his orders from Lawrence Vankoughnet who in turn received orders from the Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald (Lux 2001:38). Lux argues that Vankoughnet's administration was inhumane: "The starvation of the Cree at Fort Walsh was a cynical and deliberate plan to press the government's advantage and force the Cree from the area to allow the government a free hand in developing the prairies" (Lux 2001: 38).

In order to understand pestilence, death, and destruction, we must look at the erasure of history – as well as the eradication of biological life and social life (Farmer 2004: 308). Accordingly, the anthropology of structural violence draws upon extracts from history, biology, and political economy. Erasing history or the distortion of history supports structural violence by presenting only the views of the power holders within the dominant society and by denying that there are equally valid alternative viewpoints. Colonial forces holding a monopoly on the written records thus produced historical accounts that were ethnocentric and narrowly interested. John L. Tobias exemplifies this point with G.F.G. Stanley's historical work: *The Birth of Western Canada*, which depicts the Canadian government as paternal and fair minded in its dealing with the Plains Cree (1983:519). More recently, Ray argued that the pretreaty period of Indian occupancy came to an end in a relatively peaceful manner (1998:228). Ultimately, Stanley and Ray assert that Canada's settlement of the west was benign.

Elizabeth Furniss argues that the standard historical text by Bowers and Garrod presents in a general fashion and overall, the Canadian Indigenous people were willing to sign the treaties, while they acknowledged and benefited from the benevolent paternalism of government officials (1999:58). Furniss argues that these authors deny the diversity of the Indigenous groups conceptions of what the treaty signing entailed. Similarly Furniss shows the prevalent myth that presents the government as benevolent and the Indigenous people as passive in their interactions over treaty matters is one that is shared by Tobias. Farmer argues that the erasure of history is part of the desocialization process necessary for the emergence of hegemonic accounts of events and reasons (2004:308), a position verified by accounts of historical myths in Furniss (1999) and Tobias (1983).

John L. Tobias contends that the Plains Cree under the leadership of Piapot and Big Bear were forced to take treaty and settle on reserves through the aggressive approach of Indian policy on the western plains (1983). For example, in 1879 Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney implemented the policy of rations for treaty. This proved an incentive too strong to resist by leaders such as Little Pine, who was unable to relocate and whose people were starving. Big Bear, on the other hand, held out and refused to relent, using other strategies such as leaving the treaty area and entering the United States. Without buffalo, and unwilling to leave their territory, many Cree bands felt they had no other options but to take treaty in order to avail themselves of one of the most basic necessities of survival – food. To make matters worse, Deputy Superintendent Lawrence Vankoughnet ordered Dewdney to keep Fort Walsh on starvation rations (Lux 2001: 38). It is clear that the colonial powers exploited hunger to obtain signatures and to expropriate lands.

Despite that there was a diversity of opinion with regard to the treatment of Aboriginal peoples and that this existed both within the Indian administration and settler society, the bureaucratic hierarchy ensured that the official statement would reflect the supposedly unified voice of the administration. In 1882, for example, Dewdney dismissed North West Mounted Police [NWMP] surgeon Augustus Jukes' distress with the destitute condition of the Cree, saying that Jukes was "unfamiliar with the Native people and their indolence" (Lux 2001: 39). Dewdney's statement exemplifies that regardless of the diversity of contending voices within the administration, one view would prevail.

Significantly, an essential dimension of structural violence is the absence of an *actor* who acts out violence. Structural violence manifests itself instead as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances (Galtung 1969: 170-171). The individual actor in the early Canadian political system however, did have great flexibility and power to make decisions and create and develop Indian policy as did the Indian Affairs administrators Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs: Lawrence Vankoughnet, and Indian Commissioner: Edgar Dewdney. For Galtung, structural violence is part of the triangle conflict model that includes direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence (1990:294). While direct violence involves direct attack, structural violence entails the systematic ways in which a regime prevents individuals from achieving their full potential. Institutionalized racism in Canadian Indian policy is a convincing example of this potential-stifling form of violence. To clarify, Galtung defines "cultural violence" as "... the symbolic sphere exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art...that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (1990: 291). Colonialism sets the dynamics for Galtung's conflict model.

According to Galtung's model, basic human rights include: survival, physical well-being, liberty, and identity. Human rights can be violated either directly or structurally. Cultural violence is the rationale for the use of violence (Galtung 1990: 291). Indian policy began with the British government and was taken up and continued by the colonial powers of Canada. Initially, the primary concern was to ensure the maintenance of peaceful alliances with the Indigenous peoples in the midst of the French and British rivalry. The issues of Indian lands and property became the responsibility of

the Imperial government (Tobias 1991), but were administered by colonial powers which operated with considerable independence during the settlement era.

Historical Background

Galtung's theory of imperialism incorporates structural elements to examine inequality among nations in the world (1971:81). His theory addresses power and resistance between the "center and periphery" nations. Galtung views imperialism as the dominant force that regulates relations, allowing the more powerful force to establish itself as the center within a periphery nation (1971:81). In order to function, imperialism established a bridgehead within the foreign territory similar to a satellite or center in the periphery nation for the joint benefit of both centers. By first establishing a boundary line, British authorities were able to set up a bridgehead that would act as a center in the periphery. The British-dominated settler government established the administrative outpost of Upper Canada in 1791, following the Treaty of Paris of 1763 through which the French ceded lands to the British (Tobias 1991:128).

The expansion of the imperialist state necessitated legislation to regulate the acquisition of lands from indigenous peoples. Thus, King George III issued the Royal Proclamation in 1763 that reserved western lands of "several nations or tribes of Indians" that were under his "protection" as their exclusive "hunting ground" (Slattery 1985:120). The king proclaimed dominion over the entire region, prohibiting any person from buying the lands of the Indian group, and he made purchase his exclusive right. The Royal Proclamation set out the procedure for Indian people to sell their lands to authorized agents of the sovereign Crown. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 set the foundation for British Indian policy. The first systematic attempts to enforce consistently

the treaty-making provisions of the Royal Proclamation took place in the regions north of the Great Lakes, designated as Upper Canada in 1791(Tobias 1991:128).

Indian policy from its very beginning was determined to set out special status for indigenous inhabitants. The Indian Act created the legal category of “Indian” and determined the criterion for accessing the rights that were reserved for individuals meeting the standards. This offered certain protections – mainly having to do with the inalienability of land, but also provided certain limitations. Eastern Canadian colonialism in Indian policy is evinced in the principal of protection. The paternalism that marked earlier treaties of peace alliances ensured peaceful relations and this attitude persisted in the first Indian policies. The Canadian state required peace in order to extend its administrative reach across the continent.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was the foundation for British Indian policy and remained so until the British lost lands after 1781. Later the British bought lands for those of their Indian allies who had lost lands. Protection was offered to Indian allies who moved north and the British continued to buy lands needed for settlement and for economic expansion. The practice continued through later treaties with Indians living on lands purchased from the HBC. Apparently, the goal was the protection of the Indians from unscrupulous European encroachment onto their lands and into their trade practices (Tobias 1991:128). Superintendants were responsible for these matters and gift giving was part of the alliance building. Gift giving would later become part of treaty making practice. Protection was the significant feature of early Indian policy. In essence, the Royal Proclamation established an Indian territory. Boundary lines were established between Indian lands and European settlement (Tobias 1991:128). The crown was the

sole authority for land surrender, and it set the procedure for land sales. In 1745-61, trade regulations were applied and made law when they were incorporated into the Royal Proclamation of 1763 (Tobias 1991: 128).

As Ponting explains, other historical events intervened: “The War of 1812 ended the prospects for continued military conflict between British and American forces and the stage was set for the emergence of new policy directions” (1980: 4). The British no longer needed the Indians as allies, but Indian affairs remained a Colonial concern until 1860. During this time, civilization and assimilation became the goals of Indian policy (Tobias 1991: 131). In 1840, the merger of Upper and Lower Canada occurred, and in 1850 the first Canadian Acts were passed to protect Indian land from trespass (Ponting 1980:5). In 1857, legislation was established as the *Act for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in the Canadas*. Enfranchisement was the goal of this legislation; money and property were required to enfranchise, however enfranchisement necessitated the relinquishing of tribal ties and the division of collectively held lands into individually owned plots (Ponting 1980: 6).

In addition, British Indian policy was influenced by Catholic and Protestant missionaries who aspired to Christianize the indigenous population. Missions were established to accomplish Christianization and to encourage the adoption of European values. The reserves, as instruments of isolation, provided another step toward assimilation. They were meant to serve as places where Indian peoples could acquire skills for farming, religion, and education. The reserve system as part of Canada’s Indian policy was conceived as a social laboratory where Indian people could be prepared for coping with Europeans (Tobias 1991: 129).

Legislation was passed in the colonial assemblies to facilitate this purpose. In Upper Canada [1791-1841], Indian lands were given special status and given protection from trespass by non-Indians. They were freed from seizure for non-payment of debt and taxes and liquor bans became law. The Catholic Church engaged in civilization efforts in Lower Canada [1763-1791] (Tobias 1991: 128). Legislation in Lower Canada defined for the first time, who was an Indian: "it included all persons of Indian ancestry and all persons married to such persons, belonging to or recognized as belonging to an Indian band, and living with that band" (Tobias 1991:129). This step would prepare the Indian for eventual enfranchisement into Canadian society by inculcating the cultural values of the Euro-Canadian society.

After 1857, assimilation became the goal of British Indian policy as the Act set out to encourage the gradual civilization of Indians in this province [United provinces of Upper and Lower Canada's] (Tobias 1991:130). Assimilation involved obtaining the franchise by meeting the criteria of literacy in French or English. To be eligible for enfranchisement, one had to be debt free and of good moral character. Once these requirements were met, the Indian individual was eligible for 20 hectares of reserve land and one year probation to prove his advancement in civilization. He then could receive the franchise and receive full Euro-Canadian rights and privileges. Tobias states, "the legislation to remove all legal distinctions between Indians and Euro-Canadians actually established them (1991:130).

A central objective of Indian policy in the pre-confederation era was the disposition of Indian lands, and the allotment of reserve lands was part of the assimilation scheme. Ponting notes that protection was geared towards Indians in the lands

conveyance process and the *Management of Indian Lands and Property Act* was passed to deal with the procedure of Indian land surrenders (1980:6).

In 1860, the imperial government transferred responsibility to Canada. Canada would continue with its colonial policies, extending outward as Canada expanded its boundaries and acquired land surrenders. In 1867, the British North American Act transferred legislative responsibility of Indian Affairs to Canada (Ponting 1980: 6). The government placed the regulation of Indians and the lands reserved for them under the authority of the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs. After confederation itself, the emphasis of the principles shifted toward gradual civilization for assimilation as the long range goal. In 1868, earlier colonial legislation was incorporated into existing legislation regarding Indian lands and by 1869; the *Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians* was added to the existing legislation. Whether to impose an elected local government within the Indian band was determined by the governor in council. Anyone he considered unqualified could be removed by the governor. The piece of legislation was designed with the Six Nations and other suitably “advanced” bands in mind, who had received basic training under previous legislation and the missionaries (Tobias 1991: 131).

Following such groundwork, Canada as a dominion developed its Indian policy in the 1870s and exerted authority over Plains Indians through the treaty system. The Dominion of Canada acquired Indian title to land through treaties, but it also set forth the reserve system to facilitate cultural change. The consolidation of previous legislation became The *Indian Act* of 1876 and was the foundation for all future Indian legislation (Tobias 1991:131-132). The legislation had all the protective features of earlier colonial

acts and set out more strict requirements for non-Indian use of Indian land and for its dispossession.

Most notably, the *Indian Act* of 1880 created the Department of Indian Affairs, which empowered the Superintendent to impose an elective system. This regulation deprived traditional leaders of recognition by ensuring that the spokesmen of the band were those elected by means of the *Indian Act*. The elective system aimed to destroy any remaining traditional leadership. Other parts of the Indian Act relating to traditional cultural aspects were to be handled by the missionaries. As well, legislators assumed that the only impediment to assimilation was the lack of training in the political system, so the Advancement Act of 1884 set out conditions by which the more advanced bands could train in municipal affairs (Tobias 1991: 134).

The 1884 amendment reduced the amount of financial aid provided by the government to bands where the location ticket was established. The location ticket idea was meant to undermine collective rights. Individual lots of reserve lands, surveyed by the superintendent, would be allotted to an Indian individual utilizing the European concept of private property (Tobias 1991: 132). The location ticket involved a three year probationary period, in which the individual proved his eligibility by “developing” the land in a manner consistent with Euro-Canadian ideals -- namely, by farming it. After achieving the criteria set out by the Act, he would be enfranchised and receive title to the land. Furthermore, the Superintendent could regulate and expend those funds not utilized by the band for policing and health affairs. These funds could be procured to pay for any expenditures related to carrying out the regulations. Such allotment of lands would benefit Indian people, it was thought, by providing the land as property. This would

serve to demonstrate the adoption of the Euro-Canadian concept of private property by Indians. It would also serve to do away with the reserve and relieve the government of responsibility to Indian and reserve lands. Legislation was necessary for the civilization of western Indians as they followed their traditional cultural values and religious practices (Tobias 1991: 135). Conversion attempts by the missionaries had some success, but many of the western Indians maintained their cultural practices despite outward conversions. Prohibitions of the Sun Dance, Potlatch, and Give Away ceremonies were enforced to promote the concept of private property.

Although the Indian Act aimed to teach Indian peoples animal husbandry and agriculture, the sale of produce and livestock was prohibited on the prairies (Tobias 1991: 135). Indians in Manitoba and old North West Territories could continue their hunting and fishing practices. Still, the hunting lifestyle was viewed as an obstacle to education, and game laws were introduced to thwart traditional economic pursuits. Direct and aggressive civilization characterized Indian policy and legislation after 1870 (Tobias 1991: 136).

From the legislative history, researchers can see the operation of the systems identified by Galtung. He argues that imperialism is characterized by a harmony of interest between the center and the center in the periphery nation. There is more mutual interest between the center nations and less interest for the periphery nation. Finally, there is disharmony of interest between the center nation and the periphery nation (1971:83). The notion of the center and bridgehead and its connection to the center depends on harmony of interest. This quality was evident in the establishment of Upper Canada, the union with Lower Canada and the enduring tie of Indian policy to Britain.

Consolidating the Indian Acts of Upper and Lower Canada enhanced the ongoing legitimacy of previous colonial Indian policy. Finally, with the Dominion of Canada creating the *Indian Act* of 1870, treaties were to be the procedure to acquire Indian title and to set aside lands for reserves. Indian land conveyance was the primary concern of the *Indian Act* of 1870 and assimilation was supposed to provide the way for the Canadian government to be rid of its responsibility over Indians and Indian lands.

According to Galtung's theory, relations between the center and periphery nations involve principles of both vertical and feudal interaction structures. Vertical interaction involves unequal exchange. A feudal interaction structure ensures the maintenance and reinforcement of inequality by taking measures to protect colonial dominance with legislative policies. The period of pre-confederation Canada is clearly marked with legislation, first by imperial Britain and then by the colonial Canadian state to regulate land and Indigenous peoples. Through the *Royal Proclamation* of 1763, the colonial powers recognized Aboriginal title to the lands and determined the process for land transference. The *British North American [BNA] Act* of 1867 established colonial rule -- the Canadian government's exclusive jurisdiction over "Indians and their lands" (Tobias 1991: 127).

In the economic system, inequality occurs because the people within each nation have different values and are differentially empowered to enforce them when they engage in exchange. The potential for dependency occurs through trade because the dominant nation has control of the commodities for exchange. For example, among Cree, land was not owned individually but all individuals had equal use rights to the territory. Under colonial rule the lands became the property of the Crown through the *Royal Proclamation*

of 1763. The set out the process for selling Indian lands, and then the *BNA Act* of 1867 transferred legislative responsibility for Indians and their lands to Canada. Land conveyance, therefore, became the central means for consolidating the power of the centre in the periphery. Clearly, the *Indian Act* was designed to regulate Indians and Indian lands. Tobias argues that "the Canadian government demonstrated its acceptance of the principles established by the old colonial government, for not only did the Canadian government purchase Indian title to the land, but it also imposed the reserve system as a laboratory for cultural change on Plains Indians by means of the treaty" (1991:131).

Power is influenced through diplomatic and political means. As the Imperial state expanded across North American soil, colonial powers created legislation to safeguard and enhance their hold on Indigenous lands and peoples. Canada sought to acquire title to Indian lands, and by imposing cultural changes in Indian communities, created a gap in the living conditions. The Indigenous peoples became marginalized to tracts of lands called reserves; consequently, no longer could they continue their cultural lifestyles in their traditional territory. Galtung argues that when two nations interact who have no previous history of interaction, the gap in the living conditions changes (1971:85). The dominant nation will benefit more from the interaction because it has the power to create laws which are predicated on its own values that are different from the oppressed group.

Galtung's conceptualization of the feudal interaction structure is typified by a divide and rule strategy. Geographical distance impedes any alliances between or within periphery nations and strengthens the ties of periphery nations to the centre (1971: 90). Ostensibly, reserves are lands set aside for the use of Indian peoples and were meant to

provide protection from exploitation by European people. As well, the reserve system acts to assimilate Indian people into Euro-Canadian culture. The goal of assimilation policy was to terminate the legal status of the Indian and any obligations of federal responsibility. The process of assimilation involved the loss of the traditional land base, then allotment of reserve land, and finally, eventual enfranchisement. The eradication of Indian traditional sociopolitical structures was to be achieved through the imposition of the elective system. The 1884 *Indian Act* was amended to allow for the deposition of chiefs and leaders in areas where the elective system was not applicable. In the east, the *Indian Act* served to direct civilization and assimilation by direct involvement in band affairs. In the west, legislation strove to further the initial process of the civilization program and was geared much more to the individual (Tobias 1991:135). Reserves, originally viewed as devices for the civilization of the eastern Indians were extended to western Canada during the treaty process (Tobias 1992: 148). The reserve system set up boundaries between the reserve and the lands owned by Canadians. Contiguous reserves were not encouraged.

The form of foreign centralized power denoted by Crown decision-making deeply affected the economic, military, communication, and cultural patterns of Indigenous people (cf. Galtung 1971:92). The British crown, however, unwittingly provided the foundation for Aboriginal rights in the *Royal Proclamation* of 1763. Indian policy encapsulates this notion with regard to the wardship of Indians and their lands. Wards, it was thought, were in need both of protection and of “development.” Notions of development were equivalent to civilization. This process meant moving from nomadic hunting and gathering practices to sedentary agricultural lifestyles – i.e., progress was

measured against a Western European historical trajectory. Bands that "achieved" development were meant to serve as models for other periphery peoples to imitate.

Plains peoples, were, moreover, in no position to counter the military strength of colonial forces. While plains peoples had guns, they did not have the means for manufacturing the arms typical of the colonial state or a social structure that was compatible with a modern army. Unlike the marching army, the plains people utilized a type of guerilla warfare and their military structure was comprised by men with rank in the warrior society (Mandelbaum 1979:110-111).

Focusing on communications sheds some light on the unevenness of the field of interactions between Indian peoples and settlers. Publications of events at the time of the treaties focus on the objectives of Canadian officials and settlers. Most Cree of the periphery were not alphabetically literate, which resulted in a monopoly of communication by Canada. The writers of the 19th century depicted events from the perspective of the center. Alexander Morris provides his account of the numbered treaty negotiations (1991). His accounts presented the context for the government's goals and show how the Indians conducted themselves from his perspective.

In the realm of education Canada selected the teachers and the knowledge to be taught to the learners of the periphery. Training or education was regulated by Indian policy and Canadian authorities specified the training necessary for civilization and assimilation. Missionaries were relied upon for instruction in Christianity and academic schooling. Farm instructors were employed to instruct the reserve Indians in agriculture and animal husbandry. The training of reserve Indians involved learning the cultural ways of the Euro-Canadian with the aim of eventual enfranchisement (Tobias 1992:148).

This would in turn decrease government expenditures for the provision of relief to reserve Indians (cf. Shewell 2004).

The Canadian state sought its own interests while considering to a lesser degree the interests of the Cree. Enacting the Canadian state system set into motion a cycle of conflicting interests as Canada and the Plains Cree sought to achieve incommensurate goals. Canada worked towards its goals for economic development through the acquisition of indigenous lands. The Plains Cree sought to attain a higher quality of social well-being that incorporated only selective elements of the Canadian state's economic development equation.

Because these nations were differentially empowered discord and inequality resulted. Inequality manifested itself in deep deficits in Aboriginal peoples' living conditions. Aboriginal peoples were persuaded to set some of their interests aside through a gradual process of socialization and education. According to Galtung, "in a two nation world, imperialism can be defined as one way in which the Center nation has power over the Periphery nation, so as to bring about a condition of disharmony of interest between them" (1971: 83). Colonialism typifies the dominant relationship of the Canadian government and the Plains Cree in the 1800s: "Canada's principal concern in its relationship with the plains Cree was to establish control over them, and the Canadian authorities were willing to and did engage in war upon the Cree in order to achieve this control" (Tobias 1983:520). Nonetheless, the Plains Cree, under the leadership of Piapot and Big Bear resisted domination and control and fought for better living conditions.

Resistance

James C. Scott's ethnography, *Weapons of the Weak* looks at resistance in the daily lives of peasants in Sedaka (1985). The practice of everyday forms of resistance by peasants is not totally congruent with Cree resistance to reserves. Piapot and Big Bear had political structures of the plains Cree. The Plains Cree were band societies with a distinct socio-political organization differing from the peasantry class. Scott's notions of dissimulation and false compliance are analogous to the resistance practiced by Piapot and Big Bear. Other than these forms of resistance though, Scott's framework of resistance does not apply until after reserve settlement when the Cree were reduced to a subordinate position characteristic of a peasantry. Until 1885 Piapot and Big Bear maintained their political autonomy as leaders.

Scott mentions public and hidden transcripts as terms referring to interactions between dominant and subordinate groups (1990). He argues that public transcript describes open, public interactions between dominators and oppressed in which the transcript does not tell the whole story about power relations: "The public transcript, where it is not positively misleading, is unlikely to tell the whole story about power relationships (1990:2). An example of this would be of the Christian influenced Cree who took treaty but continued to attend Sun Dance. Scott uses the term hidden transcript for the critique of power that the power holders do not see or hear of the subordinates: "Hidden transcripts serve to contradict what appears in the public transcript" (1990: 5). For instance, the government officials feared religious gatherings because it could be used for political rather than spiritual purposes. The Indian agents tried to prevent these religious gatherings but the Cree continued to attend those events sponsored by Piapot and Big Bear. This is clear when Dewdney's recommended a larger NWMP force and

the closure of Fort Walsh to remove it as source for ration distribution (Tobias 1983: 530). Thus the Sun Dance ceremony can be viewed from this perspective of the hidden transcript as the Cree who took Treaty but attended Sun Dance to discuss treaty issues with Piapot and Big Bear. The Sun Dance traditionally provided opportunity for where conferencing on tribal and band political matters.

Ronald Niezen contends that, "the spiritual history of a community is often overlooked or misread by those trying to understand the causes of 'social pathology'" (2000:3). In the period of the subjugation of the Cree, there came to be more emphasis on Cree political interests in the face of Canadian dominance during the Sun Dance ceremonies than on traditional bison hunting interests. This shift resulted from the destruction of the bison hunting economy where traditional pursuits were discussed. The Sun Dance ceremonial would provide an arena for discussions for dealing with the Canadian government.

Studies of Plains Cree and spirited resistance are few in comparison to studies conducted of Indigenous peoples of the east. Gregory Evans Dowd offers an account of the spirited resistance of Indigenous groups of the eastern lands during Seven Years War and the aftermath of the American Revolution (1992: xiii). He describes a prophetic movement that involved a type of multi-ethnic confederacy that acted in a world beyond the local and had knowledge of the larger geographic landscape. His work deals with the nativistic movement of spirited resistance that was a religiously charged struggle for Indian unity amidst opposition from Euro-Americans. Pontiac and Tecumseh had leadership roles as warriors with a spiritual and political position against the Americans.

He argues that spirited resistance adjusted for the mutual interests of land and political autonomy (Dowd 1992: 91).

Similarly, Big Bear and Piapot resisted reserves spiritually as they continued to gather for their religious practices despite restrictions imposed by Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney's Policy of Compulsion (Pettipas 1994:70). Piapot and Big Bear were spiritually powerful, which was reflected by their large followings during the arduous time of hunger prior to reserves. Piapot and Big Bear were both gifted with spiritual knowledge, and they continued their religious practices despite the prohibitions of the Indian Act. Ultimately, it was at religious gatherings where they discussed political matters.

While in the west, some Cree leaders submitted to government pressures to settle their people, Piapot actively resisted reserve settlement. Meanwhile, Big Bear refused treaty terms and withheld his signature for more than six years. In 1885, he was incarcerated for his involvement in the so called Frog Lake massacre. Notably, the first strategy of resistance identified in the literature involves Piapot and Big Bear's attempts to establish a territory near the Cypress Hills (Tobias 1991:214). Resistance is clear in the reluctance to sign treaty even while facing the extreme pressure of starvation. Piapot and Big Bear resisted by seeking a territory where they could sustain their people. Finally they resorted to resisting by noncompliance with regulations of the officials. It was this resistance that would lead both Piapot and Big Bear to imprisonment. Piapot continued his religious practices despite the ban on ceremonial activity by reserve officials. Big Bear continued a traditional leadership role despite the growing tension among the warriors, the reserve agents, and the settlers. They practiced noncompliance

after not reaching their goals for better treaty terms and for fulfillment of the terms they had been able to achieve.

Piapot and Big Bear persisted in their practice of Sun Dance practice despite restrictions by the government officials. Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney invented policy to subjugate the Cree. The persistence of the Sun Dance after the signing of the treaty provides evidence of the continuity of their values, religion, and band politics. Even though factionalism occurred with the conversion of certain Cree chiefs to Catholicism, the traditional bison hunters kept their religious practices. The Sun Dance ceremony continued as the traditional place for the discussion of political matters of treaty concerns. The Cree way of life was dramatically altered by the loss of the traditional hunting lifestyle and their territory was reduced to parcels of land called reserves.

Piapot and Big Bear resisted reserves by first refusing the initial land allotment and attempting to set up their version of contiguous reserves with the aim of creating an Indian territory. Finally, Big Bear resisted by maintaining a peaceful position as a traditional Cree chief at the Frog Lake incident.

The next chapter will examine the literature specific to Piapot and Big Bear in the treaty era. The third chapter will explore the instruments of structural violence employed by the colonial state of Canada. The fourth chapter will consider the resistance of Piapot and Big Bear. Finally, the last chapter will synthesize the argument that Canadian-styled oppression employs structural violence as its driving mechanism.

Chapter II: Literature

Introduction

This chapter will survey the literature on the history of the Plains Cree bands of Piapot and Big Bear beginning with the Euro-Canadian chronicles of the time, the reconstructions of the past by more recent scholars, and a section on the captivity narratives. There are four Cree narratives: two are written in the early 20th century, while the other two are written by educated Cree writers. Hugh Dempsey (1984) and Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser (1997) are contemporary writers and I have included them with the Cree narratives because these authors draw on Cree oral tradition to support their perspectives. The accounts by R. S. Allen (1972) and William Fraser (1970) portray Big Bear opposing reserve settlement in contexts that are driven by Euro-Canadian perspectives that perpetuate ethnocentric views of Cree land as lawless and devoid of agricultural civilization. The cultures of the Cree were overlooked and their initiatives for better conditions were seen as acts of rebellion. Hunting and ceremonial gatherings were viewed as opportunities to plan uprisings against the Canadian government. The reconstructions show the prevalent interests in government policy with Cree positions in the pre - treaty, treaty, and post - treaty period.

This section interprets the perspectives of the writers regarding Piapot, and Big Bear, and other significant Cree figures. Three streams of historical thought exist, the Cree history, that of Canadian society at the time, and the contemporary interpretations. The published literature of the Cree is very small, and it relies heavily on the memories of the writers or their narration to another writer. These accounts include Abel Watetch (2007), and Fine Day (1926). Edward Ahenakew (1973), Joseph F. Dion (1979), Hugh

A. Dempsey (1984), and Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser (1997). These accounts utilize Cree oral history, government reports, and published materials. There are also other historical accounts of Canadian society of the period. The reconstructions by Pettipas (1994), Lee (1992), and Tobias (1983) show another picture of the Cree as resistant to government policy. These works offer insight into Piapot and Big Bear's efforts of resistance to government policy by asserting Cree treaty guarantees for assistance, reserves, and aid during the period of transition to agriculture. Each of these authors presents the stories in ways that demonstrate the continuity of political autonomy by Piapot and Big Bear. These works are policy-centered and show the Cree reacting to Indian policy through persistence (Pettipas 1994). These leaders endeavored to maintain the Cree interests in a time of extreme oppression. Finally the narratives of the captives of the Frog Lake incident elucidate versions of the Cree as portrayed by the early settlers. Sarah Carter, a contemporary scholar shows the racism and ethnocentric attitudes conveyed in literature of the captives of the Frog Lake massacre (Delaney and Gowanlock 1999). These views of "warring" "primitive" Cree people were communicated and disseminated to the general public by the writers and captives. Carter argues that the false portrayals of Gowanlock and Delaney being subjected to torture and indignity served to galvanize the troops in the field who felt they needed to subdue the Cree and rescue the women (1997: 76). These inaccurate and embellished portrayals about the treatment of the women served to stir more aggression against the Cree. Euro-Canadian women were cast as paragons of virtue, weak, helpless, and vulnerable during the 19th century (Carter 1997: 19). These perceptions would fuel the troops who were anxious and fearful of the Cree. Their anxiety was already imbedded in their

preconceived notions of the Cree as warring, savage, and primitive. Carter writes that the accounts of Gowanlock and Delaney portrayed their captivity as a tale of helpless women tormented by barbaric savages (1997:86).

Carter does point out that Delaney comments on Dewdney's lack of administering aid to the Cree as causing the tragic event. Carter argues that the mistakes of the government were obscured in the account by Delaney (1997: 86) thus demonstrating how the literature distorted the Frog Lake event.

Cree Narratives

The narratives offer a Cree view of Big Bear and Piapot during the pre-treaty era and treaty era. While the narratives contain the Cree voices, they are filtered through the various writers and thus affect a biased view of these leaders. These sources aided in the distortion of Cree history. The Cree were shown as a people who were not civilized according to the writers' culture, dwelling on the hunger of the Cree people, which aided in maintaining a paternal picture of the government by way of treaty. Such literature indicated the hunger of the Cree as a sign that the Cree made little effort to acculturate or advance in the agricultural training offered by the Indian agents. Literature written by Indigenous writers that addresses the resistance Piapot and Big Bear is relatively sparse. These works by Watetch (2007) and Fine Day (1926) are primarily stories narrated to writers who manipulated and distorted the stories of Piapot and Big Bear. These two foremost works were narrated to non-Aboriginal writers of western-European Canadian backgrounds. They rely on both oral and written sources.

Abel Watetch recited *Payepot and His People* to Blowdin Davies in 1957 (2007). Watetch recalls the story of his uncle, Piapot. Davies, a white Canadian woman, was

a member of the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society. Davies recorded Watetch's words yet filtered what she wrote through her own cultural pre-conceptions. The text is thus not a verbatim quoting of his words, but a paraphrasing. David R. Miller notes this in the 2007 edition of Davies's work. He argues that the project that culminated in Watetch's publication was certainly cast in the rhetoric of salvage ethnography of the day, an effort intentionally meant to document authentic "Cree" ideas and behavior (2007: xiv). The depiction of Watetch's narrative resulted in a romantic view of Piapot's last days as leader of a bison hunting group to the reserves.

Davies begins Watetch's story of Piapot's childhood life with a brief description of the bison hunting lifestyle of the Cree in the early 1800s (2007: 2). Watetch explains that both men and women were involved in the bison hunt and describes the roles of the men as the hunters and women as processors of the slain bison. He remarks on the men, appointed by the Chief to act as guards, to keep peace within the camp. Davies portrays Watetch's statements on the organization of the Cree hunting camp during the hunt in a simple manner by limiting the account to a brief description (2002).

The history of the Cree is distorted because of its focus and emphasis on the famine experienced by the Cree that motivated them to enter into the treaties with Canadian officials. Watetch states that the final crippling blow to their morale came when weakness and malnutrition had so reduced the resistance of the band that Piapot had no alternative other than accepting the Canadian government's offer of a reserve for his band (2007: 8). Hunger is portrayed as the motivation to take treaty and the desire for an alternative way of subsistence is not emphasized in this account. The famine is emphasized and presents the government as benevolent to the starving Cree.

Despite Watetch's account of Piapot seeking bison in the Cypress Hills; he does not know or tell of Piapot's relationship with Little Pine and Big Bear and their political orientations. Nor does Watetch speak of Piapot's desire for a reserve in the area of Cypress Hills, but instead refers to the departure from Cypress Hills to reserve land near the Sintaluta area after experiencing hunger and illness. The collective history is not included in this account and therefore is only relevant as Watetch's narrative as conveyed by Davies. As Venne, states, no single Elder has all the information about a particular event; each has a personal memory of the details and circumstances that took place (1997: 177).

Ruth Matheson Buck is the daughter of missionaries, Reverend John and Elizabeth Matheson, who lived on the Onion Lake Reserve (Ahenakew 1973: 8). Matheson Buck, is the white woman who introduces the book *Voices of the Plains Cree* written by Edward Ahenakew. Ahenakew lived and worked on the Thunderchild reserve. Ahenakew was a Cree minister originally from Ahtahkakoop Reserve, who chronicled the life of Chief Thunderchild. Ahenakew creates a fictional character named Keyam, in order to represent the loss of freedom and sense of spiritual exile experienced on reserves (McLeod 2007: 56). Keyam was created to act as an observer to narrate the story and to thereby present the perspective of one in spiritual exile. Thunderchild, a signatory of Treaty Six in 1876, narrates his experience as a follower of Big Bear and the events that led to Thunderchild's signing the treaty. Ahenakew depicts Big Bear's resistance to accepting a reserve despite having signed a treaty adhesion in 1882 (1973:158). Ahenakew attributes the starvation amongst the Cree to the decline of the bison and the use of coercion by the Canadian government to ensure Cree settlement on reserves

(Ahenakew 1973:11). Matheson Buck notes that after the hard winter of 1879, Thunderchild left the band of Big Bear and signed the adhesion to the treaty (Ahenakew 1973: 11-12). The Indians, resolute in their independence, tried to continue the bison hunting way of life but were destitute and starving, ready to be induced by the Canadian government to settle on reserves. Ahenakew focuses on Thunderchild's part in the Treaty Six events, documenting the changing way of life (Ahenakew 1973:10). There are few references to Big Bear.

Fine Day related the events of the Cree Rebellion of 1885 to Innes, a white member of the North West Historical Society [NWHS] as an interview (1926:12-17). Fine Day states that he was a member of Strike Him On The Back's band at the time of treaty signing and thought that the treaty sounded acceptable. In his account, reserve life included agricultural activities and requests for food from the reserve instructor were part of daily life. He mentions that most Indians occupied reserves as a strategy for surviving starvation after the bison disappeared (Fine Day 1926:13).

Fine Day speaks of the winter of 1882 when Big Bear was taken to the reserve at Onion Lake (1926:13). Big Bear did not like this reserve that was distant from the reserves on Battle River, so he sent a request to Poundmaker, Little Pine, Lucky Man, Strike Him On The Back, Red Pheasant, Bear's Head, Skinny Man, and Mosquito to attend a conference. These chiefs wanted one large reserve or one part of the west (Fine Day 1926:14). These Cree saw themselves as slaves of the government, working for bad food. They were disgusted with the treaty. They wanted better conditions and Big Bear thought that the Thirst Dance was the place to discuss a plan of action. Despite the threat of arrest, the Cree defied authority.

In his narrative, Fine Day relates events from the summer of 1884 when the Cree held off police for ten days. Crozier was intent on arresting the Indians. However, the values of the warrior society Cree men strongly held that they make no attack unless they were attacked first. The old men advised the young men: "Do not fire first" (Fine Day 1926:16). Fine Day claims that the Cree could have defeated the police and Battleford volunteers and ultimately it was Poundmaker who did not want to attack as he sought better terms than what they had received from the government. The younger Cree men were anxious to make war and pillaging and committing murder to force their leaders to side with Riel. The Chief remained loyal, but the uncontrollable young men rebelled against reserve life resulting in tragic events (Fine Day 1926:17).

The work of the North-West Historical Society utilized Fine Day's remarks to achieve their goal of describing the conditions of Indians making the transition from life on the plains to settlement on the reserve. The hoped for outcome was the transition from hunter to farmer and ultimately from independence to dependence with opportunities for self-sufficiency. The book shows that hunger drove the Indians to accept reserves despite their dissatisfaction with reserve life. Poundmaker is portrayed as the prime agitator as it was his reserve where Big Bear held the conference to coincide with a Thirst Dance. The government knew that ceremonial events were gatherings where leaders met and discussed concerns affecting their interests. Thus, the reserve officials tried to interfere with the Thirst Dance ceremony.

The officials and Indian agents were concerned with an impending rebellion. The legislative system in place by 1884, by which Canada dealt with reserve Indians, provided the institutional backdrop for Indian policy. At the same time, the Cree had

their own system of laws and enforcers contained within the structure of the warrior society. It was a practical protective system that policed the Cree people especially during the bison hunts, ensuring compliance to the rules of the hunt and the safety of the band from outside threat. Nevertheless, the definition of rebellion suggests that the Cree were collectively rebelling against Canadian authority. In fact, it was the young men who were active in the uprising. The conflict resulted from a collision among different systems, the new administration of Canada, and the traditional Cree sociopolitical system.

My Tribe the Crees offers a Cree perspective on the treaty situation (Dion 1979). Hugh Dempsey introduces Joseph Dion as a Cree Indian from the Kehiwin Reserve, who was a teacher, political activist, and long time leader of the Indian and Métis people. Dion insists that the treaty was the prime catalyst for culture change because of the profound implications it held for Cree mobility (1979:79). The treaties segregated the Cree on reserves, and they "could no longer roam at will" on lands they had sold (Dion 1979: 79). Big Bear could not abide the new regime so his people tried unsuccessfully to continue their hunting life. Eventually, with hunger as the impetus, Big Bear signed an adhesion to Treaty Six and was assigned to a reserve in the Frog Lake region. Dion chronicles the conflicts at Frog Lake into which Big Bear was subsequently drawn by the younger militant members of his band (1979: 96-97). He does not detail the entire series of events that led to Big Bear's placement on the reserve.

Typically, the Cree storytellers as historians were expected to have a great memory, and recall vivid details. It only makes sense that they would have remarkable memories, and each person shared his or her stories of events to capture a larger view. Although there are some written accounts on birch bark and stone, Indigenous people had

an oral tradition that was congruent with their social structure and culture. The narratives mentioned outline parts of these stories to show the individual perspectives of the authors and writers regarding the leadership experiences of Piapot and Big Bear. These narratives are in some cases filtered through the distorting cultural lens that downplays the significant materials relevant to the Cree socio-political organization. As well, there is an overemphasis on the portrayals of starvation. While starvation was a historical fact, it is important to remember that many early portrayals of Aboriginal peoples as passive victims were strategic characterizations by early western Canadian historians, that functioned more to solidify characterizations of active Canadian victors, than to accurately describe Native people's realities (Carter 1999:9).

The Cree were not portrayed as politically involved, unified or as spiritually influenced. The stories sound like the voice of individuals who are recalling the shift from an affluent hunting lifestyle to a life of deprivation on the reserves. The Cree wish to remember this time in history today, and these accounts present only pieces of the community story and therefore are "partial truths" that provide only a small piece of the picture. In examining early accounts, readers should also remember that memory skills were not a unique ability but were essential to each individual of the band. That only older reserve-dwelling men, some who had acquired a western-style education, are represented in these accounts should indicate the partial nature of their historiography.

Neal Macleod argues:

Cree narrative memory starts with the living memory of our elders and story tellers, and their stories of connections to various places and events in the landscape. In this manner, the Cree treaty narratives become the basis from which the nehiyawak can argue for their rights and place in Canada. They are also a way of understanding our collective worldview, epistemology, and our place in the world (2007: 33).

Hugh Dempsey's biography of Big Bear is derived from oral stories of Cree individuals who were related to, or descended from, Big Bear (1984). Dempsey, a non-Native who married into a Kainai community, cross-references the Cree oral stories with written historical accounts. His account provides a biography of Big Bear including a depiction of the Cree lifestyle of Big Bear's childhood up to the period before the treaty, the actual treaty, and the events leading to Big Bear signing the adhesion to Treaty Six. In the preface of his book, (Dempsey 1984: 6), he also notes a few published works on Big Bear. These included a fictional account by Rudy Weibe (1973) and two articles by William B. Frazer (1970) and R.S. Allen (1972). Dempsey elected to utilize ethnographic materials and primary sources such as government documents relating to Indian policy. Dempsey portrays Big Bear as a political leader who opted to overtly resist the oppression of government officials.

Dempsey writes that Big Bear did not arrive at Fort Pitt until after Treaty Six was signed, the reserves selected and gifts distributed (1984:73). Big Bear was out on the plains holding meetings with other chiefs and was angry that the chiefs did not wait for him. He tried to convince the Cree leaders at the Treaty Six event that they should consider the wider implications of the treaty. By the time of his arrival, the treaty negotiation was over, and Big Bear could not represent the absent chiefs' views. Sweet Grass tried to persuade Big Bear to sign but Big Bear would not be swayed. Big Bear wanted to speak of protecting the bison and was not prepared to take terms without discussion. He stated to the commissioners, "I find it difficult to express myself, because some of the bands are not represented" (Dempsey 1984: 74).

In August of 1878, while at a the treaty payments meeting at Sounding Lake, Big Bear had a vision that inspired him to wait four years before signing the treaty (Dempsey 1984:85). This was Big Bear's second refusal to take treaty. After receiving the vision, he traveled west of the Cypress Hills country to pursue bison south of the Red Deer River. In 1879, there was an intrusion of surveyors setting aside reserve lands for another band in the vicinity. Big Bear viewed this area as his hunting territory where he gained his war medicine, but the land was being taken without his permission. There was a confrontation and the NWMP arrived. Irvine then threatened Big Bear with imprisonment if he interfered with the survey. Following the encounter, Winnipeg newspapers falsely reported that Irvine was pulled from his horse during a scuffle. Big Bear thus became infamous across Canada as a rebellious, dangerous man not as a defender of his people's rights (Dempsey 1984:89).

The Indian Commissioner became an important figure within the new order that Big Bear faced. In 1879, Edgar Dewdney replaced David Laird as Indian Commissioner of the North West Territories. His role was to establish Indian agents, farm instructors, government supply farms, and contractors (Dempsey 1984:89). Dewdney wanted to see the Indians become self-supporting farmers. Indians on reserves who planted crops received support while those who hunted received none. Dewdney reasoned that starvation would drive the Indians back to the reserve. The revision of treaty agreements was not on his agenda when Dewdney met with Big Bear. He admonished Big Bear, indicating that as long as he hunted bison, he would receive no support from the government (Dempsey 1984: 90).

In 1882, Big Bear signed the adhesion to Treaty Six at Fort Walsh. During this time, Piapot was camped at Cypress Hills. The officials were trying to pressure him to relocate to the Qu' Appelle area and to persuade Big Bear, Lucky Man and Little Pine to occupy reserves in the Battleford region (Dempsey 1984:110). In a show of force, the NWMP attempted to coerce Piapot and Big Bear to leave the area and when this failed, criminal charges were brought against several members of Piapot's entourage for horse theft in Montana. Arrests took place and they received sentences of two to five years in Stony Mountain prison (Dempsey 1984:112). Fort Walsh was abandoned and rations were not available to anyone who remained in that area.

Piapot, Big Bear, Lucky Man, and Little Pine decided to hold a ceremony to discuss reserve matters instead of discussing traditional enemies or planning for the bison hunt. Big Bear and these leaders wanted to establish contiguous reserve in the Cypress Hills area. They visited Indian Commissioner Dewdney to get rations for their Sun Dance. The Commissioner intended to have the chiefs moved to reserves, but the chiefs decided to wait until after the ceremony to discuss the reserve matters. Piapot left the meeting angrily and the next day Big Bear met with Dewdney for certain dispensations. Their attempts for a Sun dance ceremony in the Cypress Hills area failed. However, in June of 1883, Big Bear received necessities for his band's departure to Fort Pitt to await the selection of a reserve site. This journey was arduous for the Big Bear's band and death took the lives of some of the travelers, including Big Bear's daughter-in-law and granddaughter (Dempsey 1984:114).

The Sun Dance at Poundmaker's reserve was highly attended and the councils agreed that Big Bear would be the spokesperson since their issues were identical

(Dempsey 1984:126). Big Bear was to travel to Regina to visit the Commissioner. However, at the ration house an incident occurred involving the sons of Lucky Man which resulted in NWMP surveillance of the ceremony. Disorder ensued and a potentially volatile situation was diffused by Crozier, who decided to issue food in exchange for promises of no further trouble (Dempsey 1984: 129). The incident was detrimental to Big Bear's hopes of a meeting with the Commissioner, and his reserve site was rejected by the government for a second time.

Another example of Big Bear's attempts to rally political unity occurred when he traveled to Duck Lake to meet with the Carlton chiefs. These chiefs included Big Child, Star Blanket, James Smith, Okemasis, One Arrow, Petequaquay, John Smith, Joseph Badger, and Lucky Man (Dempsey 1984: 136). The discussion regarded the issue of reserves, and the non-fulfillment of treaty promises, as well as requests for clothing. The grievances were submitted to subagent J. A. Macrae, who concluded that all the treaty promises should be fulfilled. Big Bear was viewed as the ringleader of the meeting, in league with Riel who had met with the chiefs to enlist them in his cause of establishing his republic. Riel had tried to enlist Big Bear for political support but Big Bear withheld his assent (Dempsey 1984: 141).

Dempsey views Big Bear's resistance to reserves within the context of maintaining a strong political stance for Cree unity in striving for more equitable treaty terms. Big Bear desired to be near Poundmaker, but was sent to Frog Lake, and then he chose a site near Vermillion Creek, but accepted his band's choice of a reserve at Dog Rump. His resistance on the reserve issues lasted from 1876 until 1885. In 1885, Big Bear experienced a total loss of freedom because he was implicated in the Frog Lake

Massacre. Overall, Dempsey's work is presented in vividly descriptive, dramatic language that presents Big Bear as a political and spiritual leader. However, the work does not provide enough information on the policy makers. The lack of insight into policy suggests that Big Bear was militant, when in fact, Big Bear was an elder traditional chief trying to maintain nonviolence. He was imprisoned simply by virtue of his presence at the Frog Lake massacre. It was the young warriors who committed the murders and took the community hostage: "The killing was over in a matter of minute. Big Bear had cried aloud again and again for the men to stop, but they listened to Wandering Spirit instead" (Dempsey 1984:259). Wandering Spirit was the chief of the warrior society and as Venne argues that in times of conflict, the leader of the soldier's lodge immediately became the war chief and ruled with complete authority (1997:180). Further, Venne maintains Big Bear was imprisoned for crimes he did not commit at Frog Lake (1997:183). Like the other accounts mentioned earlier, Dempsey's account provides a partial view of the story of Big Bear's life.

In contrast to the earlier literature, Stonechild and Waiser utilize the voices of Cree Elders to argue that many of the Treaty Cree were loyal during this time of the uprising (1997). The Cree Elders assert that their ancestors were inaccurately portrayed as rebels. The treaty that was signed was honored by the Cree and they resolutely refused to be involved in the rebellion. The Cree had their own strategies for dealing with the situation of the 1880s, and their way did not involve open rebellion. Cree resistance was not uniform and there were those who chose not to be involved. Stonechild and Waiser strive to provide a Cree account of the rebellion (1997: 4).

Stonechild and Waiser critique the myth of the Indian-Métis uprising of 1885 (1997). These authors examine the written accounts by mounted police historian A. L. Haydon and the book by George Stanley that supported the idea of Indian involvement in the Métis rebellion. Haydon asserts that "there had been a war - red war" and that "both half breeds and Indians [had been] taught a severe lesson in 1885" (Stonechild and Waiser 1997: 1). Stanley expresses the Indian- Métis conspiracy theory and concludes that a clash of cultures occurred between primitive and more advanced peoples (Stonechild and Waiser 1997: 2). Examining the evidence, Stonechild and Waiser report that the prevalent views of Indian involvement in the 1885 uprising are false (1997:3).

In addition, Stonechild and Waiser depict the removal strategies that occurred while Piapot and Big Bear were at the Cypress Hills area. The Deputy Minister Lawrence Vankoughnet and Indian Commissioner Dewdney endeavored to have the Cree settled on reserves and Dewdney implemented his rations for treaty to induce the Cree to sign treaty. Dewdney violated the treaty and forced Piapot to leave the Cypress Hills by refusing rations. Big Bear was refused rations because he did not sign the treaty adhesion. The removal of the Cree from the area was met with resistance as those who took treaty, such as Piapot, understood that he could choose reserve land. Despite the hunger and the destitute condition of the Cree, Dewdney chose to deny aid to any band, treaty or non-treaty, who refused to relocate north (Stonechild 1997: 48). After 1882 and the imposed dispersal of the Cree from the Cypress Hills area, Big Bear traveled north and over a three year period he was able to confer on treaty issues with other Cree leaders. The situation with the Métis was heightening at the same time as the Duck Lake Council of 1885 and as mentioned earlier, reserve agents implicated Big Bear in a false

alliance with Riel. Dewdney reacted to this news and resolved to crush the Cree by gaining the consent of the Prime Minister to arrest Indian leaders who incited insurrection (Stonechild and Waiser 1997: 63). The officials disregarded the treaty matters that were brought forward by the Duck Lake Council and used the Métis situation to incriminate Big Bear along with other unsatisfied Cree leaders, as rebellious. Dewdney effectually sidestepped any opportunities to assist the Cree by focusing his efforts on subjugating the Cree.

Another important point was that the Battleford siege occurred when Poundmaker traveled to meet with Indian agent Rae to affirm the treaty (Stonechild and Waiser 1997: 98). Stonechild and Waiser argue that Rae left Battleford under the impression of an impending conflict and joined other residents who sought refuge at the fort. The disappointed Cree grew tired, and the women began to help themselves to food that was left behind in the abandoned buildings. A fracas erupted but it was not premeditated. The isolated murders of farm instructor, Payne and rancher, Tremont were viewed as acts of insurrection, but actually had resulted from personal grudges. Payne's death came about as revenge for his part in the death of Itka's daughter. Tremont was killed by Waywahnitch when he refused requests for food and ammunition. The Battleford residents, Indian Agent Rae, and NWMP assumed that the siege was initiated when the Cree joined the Métis cause (Stonechild and Waiser 1997: 105).

Stonechild and Waiser argue that the Frog Lake carnage was initiated by Indian Agent Quinn, who refused requests by warriors to return to the main camp where the captives were held (1997:116). The Frog Lake event was to be a hostage taking under the direction of Imasees and Wandering Spirit. They wanted to exchange the prisoners

for food and supplies and the incident escalated after an alcohol induced rampage of pillaging the HBC store. Wandering Spirit decided to take Fort Pitt two weeks after the Frog Lake incident (Stonechild and Waiser 1997:119).

Following such disruptions, the implication of Big Bear involvement in the Frog Lake event and the ensuing capture of Fort Pitt resulted in the Middleton's plan of attack on the Métis. It was assumed that the Cree were in league with Riel, which was not the case. To further explain the situation, Stonechild and Waiser argue that the Métis had encouraged the young Cree men's attack on Fort Pitt (1997: 119). The Cree were not involved and the anxiety of the settlers, Indian agents and officials aroused the military concerns of General Middleton of the Canadian militia. Major General Strange and Inspector Steel traveled to Frenchmen's Butte, but were afraid of defeat by the Cree. Big Bear was able to escape (Stonechild and Waiser 1997:184), but he finally surrendered near Fort Carlton.

The militia wanted to quell Métis troubles once and for all, and the Cree were viewed as part of the Métis insurrection. There were two separate situations that involved the Métis and the Cree. The Cree were not involved in the Métis rebellion, but because of false reports and the anxiety that was fueled by the Frog Lake event as well as the attack on Fort Pitt, the Cree were dealt with by the same militia at Cutknife Hill. Big Bear's history as a recalcitrant leader was forged; he was made an example by the Canadian government (Stonechild and Waiser 197: 208). Big Bear made a final plea for "pity" for his people before he was sentenced to three years at Stony Mountain penitentiary.

The situation of the Métis and the actions of the warriors to acquire assistance spiraled into a situation that was viewed by the Canadian government as the allied strategic venture of both groups. The Métis uprising of 1885 appeared as an act of insurgency against Canada and military action was enacted. The Cree activity was a direct result of a lack of assistance of the Indian department, and Dewdney's goals to subjugate the Cree became more aggressive. Stonechild and Waiser argue that Dewdney did nothing to protect the Cree from Middleton's troops, let alone refute the idea that they were acting in concert with the Métis (1997:169). Dewdney believed that the Indians would be anxious to return to their reserves after battle with the military.

The account by Stonechild and Waiser offers a more comprehensive view into the Cree perspectives the years leading up to 1885 rebellion (1997). These authors critically examine Stanley's argument of the Cree involvement in the Métis Rebellion. The Cree elders claim the incidents of 1880s involved only certain Cree bands; and that there was not a general overall Cree resistance as many Cree maintained their loyalty to the Treaty. The events of Cree resistance occurred during the same year and evolved because of unfulfilled and broken treaty promises of assistance and reserves. Additionally, the isolated incidents of violence are shown as acts of violence that were individual were not allied acts of war with the Métis. These acts of violence by Itka and Waywahnitch occurred as a result of the Indian agent's refusal to give food and ammunition that were promised in the treaty to the Indians. Loyalty to the treaty meant to those Cree who made treaty agreements that they would be able to survive in a changing world where their land and resources were diminished.

Captives Narratives

Theresa Delaney and Theresa Gowanlock wrote of their experiences as captives in Big Bear's camp after the Frog Lake conflict in *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* (1999). Dempsey notes that he does not use this work in his reconstruction of the Frog Lake event because the work was conducted in collaboration with a journalist (1984: 212). Sarah Carter introduces the book with an analysis of the women's stories as captives and finds that these stories provide insight into how women of different ancestry were categorized in dominant Canadian society (Delaney and Gowanlock 1999:vii). Carter notes that little concern was voiced regarding the many Cree women who died during this time. Their histories offer another example of the disregard for Indigenous people who suffered under the invasion of the Euro-Canadians. The Canadian perspectives placed a low value on Cree lives as no accounts were made of the numbers of Cree women and children who lost their lives through starvation, disease and, the lack of aid as they struggled to survive (Delaney and Gowanlock 1984: vii).

William Bleasdell Cameron's work on Big Bear derives from his own experience as a captive in the conflict at Frog Lake (1926:xiii). The work was cast in the genre of the "wild west" literature. Wister's introduction to this work lauds this fact, indicating the writing is "thrilling" and "wild." (Cameron 1926:vii). The focus is squarely on Big Bear as a militant, and not on his role as a political leader. Big Bear at the Frog Lake incident admonished the young warriors for not obeying him (Cameron 1926:85). The chronicle is highly biased, as Cameron regards councils as war councils as in the case of the Fort Pitt incident. Cameron describes Big Bear as amiable while smoking his pipe in ceremony prior to the discussion of the taking of Fort Pitt. His perspective on the pipe ceremony is tainted by the violence that Cameron claims the ceremony preceded so that the use of the

pipe was placed in the context of war and serves to depict the Cree as warring people:

"As for the Plains Crees, they meant to fight" (Cameron 1926:89). Cameron views Big Bear in a sympathetic light, but depicts him as unruly and as having instigated the Frog Lake conflicts.

Early Historical Accounts

William Frazer's essay titled *Big Bear, Indian Patriot* (1970) examines the identity of Big Bear at the time of Treaty Six. In the introduction, Frazer argues that the government viewed Big Bear as "the most troublesome Indian leader on the Canadian prairies" (Frazer 1970: 71). However, in the interpretation, Frazer depicts Big Bear as a patriot who endeavored to prevent the subjugation of his people. He pursues themes of Big Bear's life relating to the historical events of bison hunting days, relations with the HBC, Treaty Six, and the Frog Lake massacre. Frazer explains that by 1870, the Cree leaders knew their days of unrestricted freedom were at an end and the bison would not be around forever, so they petitioned the Canadian government for help. At the same time pleaded for the recognition of Indian rights (1970: 74).

Reverend George McDougall viewed Big Bear as a troublesome figure who tried to take the lead in treaty negotiation (1970:74). This view was held by the HBC officials who viewed the Saulteaux as trouble-makers -- an attitude that stretches back to the 1840s. Frazer states that it was not until 1876 that colonial representatives came to the North Saskatchewan with a treaty prepared for Indian approval (1970:75). Frazer derives his information from accounts such as Alexander Morris [a primary treaty official], Henry T. Thompson (who wrote about the life of Peter Erasmus acting as translator at the Treaty Six negotiations), John Kerr of the Métis (who spent time with Gabriel Dumont),

and Fine Day's narrative on the events of the Cree Rebellion. Big Bear is portrayed as having resisted tyranny and injustice because he tried to prevent his warriors from action in the violent outbreaks at Frog Lake. Frazer's account however, leaves the impression that the Cree supported foreign rule. He does not account for the fact that this was merely a survival strategy and that it hid other sorts of resistance against the notion of foreign rule.

R. S. Allen's article on "Big Bear" offers another view of Big Bear's life during the time of the treaties and amidst the factors of the declining bison herds, hunger, disease, and the whiskey trade (1972). Allen derives his information he uses to construct a sense for Cree culture prior to the treaties from the published accounts of anthropologists: Farb claims "the Cree became parasitic on the white trader for clothing, tools, metal implements, guns and later horses"(1972:1). Hornaday writes that "the Cree also impounded the buffalo, and "slaughtered hundreds with the most fiendish glee, and leaving the all but very choicest meat to putrify" (1972:1). Allen caricatured the Cree as the "evil" in the facile good-evil equation which typifies the wild west genre. His work can be located in the "wild west" genre in which Indigenous activity is viewed as wild and lawless. For example:

The bands began to gather in the Cypress Hills in the summer of 1882 and this concentration of wild and fearless independent Indians with no desire to abandon the old adventuresome and nomadic existence yet reduced to poverty and starvation, presented a surly and troublesome crowd for the meager forces of the North West Mounted Police to control and ration. (Allen 1972: 10)

This statement portrays the Indians with no desire to give up their hunting and gathering lifestyle, who had to be controlled by the NWMP because they were surly and troublesome in requesting assistance and aid, resisting the destitution of their living

conditions so they might continue to live. There is the overriding theme of the Cree as rebellious and oppositional to the authority of the Canadian officials. The view fails to provide enough information on the government's part for not fulfilling the terms stipulated in the treaties.

Reconstructions

The historical reconstructions offer a wider view of the complexity of the situation in which Piapot and Big Bear found themselves. Katherine Pettipas (1994), David Lee (1992), and John L. Tobias (1983) offer a more comprehensive view of the newcomer and Cree relations. Pettipas' focus is on the persistence of ceremonialism among the Cree, with Piapot as the prime example. Lee (1992) examines the myth perpetuated by historians that Piapot "submitted" to Canadian authorities. Moreover, Lee utilizes publications to illustrate how Piapot was misrepresented in the earlier literature which derived its information from media. Tobias wrote of the subjugation of the Cree. He illustrates Cree political unity, outlining their strategies for securing better conditions, despite the oppressive tactics of Canadian officials.

Katherine Pettipas, an ethnologist (i.e., an anthropologist), wrote *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (1994) to examine the history of the repression of Plains Cree ceremonialism on reserves. As part of the analysis, Pettipas considers cultural responses to the repression or persistence of ceremonialism. She relies on published ethnographies, published oral accounts, and archival materials from Indian Affairs. She does not however, explore resistance to reserves in her ethnography.

Pettipas begins with the story of Piapot, reconstructed in part from the narrative of Watetch (1994). While Pettipas acknowledges Cree narratives in the published literature, she goes beyond them in order to provide a clearer picture of ceremonialism in that era. She describes events demonstrating the perseverance of Cree autonomy as they faced the loss of their traditional land, and the imposition of Indian policy. She also includes an account of Piapot's attempt to restrict bison hunting by American and Métis commercial hunters in his homeland area (1994:11). She examines the political endeavors of the Cree during a time of radical change and under conditions of hunger. She discusses what they knew of the treaties that had occurred in Manitoba in the 1870s. Building on the work of other, she re-asserts that the Plains Cree were not isolated from other Indigenous peoples and each knew of the other's issues. Moreover, the Plains Cree were active in their interests to maintain or improve their quality of life as the fur trade reduced the people to poverty. Piapot, Big Bear, and Little Pine were deeply concerned with the threat of starvation and with Canada's interests in their lands for settlement. This, she asserts, was "prompted when some headmen considered negotiating access to resources on their lands" (Pettipas 1994: 11).

Pettipas chronicles Piapot's negotiations of land cessions for adhesion to Treaty Four in 1885 (1994:11). Piapot, dissatisfied when the content was explained to him, requested the addition of more farming provisions be included in the treaty. The bison was in decline and Pettipas describes Piapot's attempts to adapt with his band by planting gardens and raising wheat. Piapot selected a reserve ten miles north of the "home" farm by Maple Creek in the Cypress Hills area (1994: 12). Pettipas notes that the government rejected Piapot's choice of reserve for fear of potential military developments of a large

concentration of Cree in the area. A directive informed Piapot "that all rationing [would] be cut off unless they relocated to their former hunting territory" (Pettipas 1994: 12). This condition shows the coercive measures taken by the government to allay their fears of military outbreaks; there was a need to place Piapot on a reserve of their choosing to ensure ongoing control.

Sarah Carter documents Piapot's travel to Qu'Appelle to meet with Major J. Walsh and other headmen to discuss a reserve location (Pettipas 1994: 12). The discussion involved Piapot's choice for reserve land selection. His next choice for reserve land was near Qu'Appelle flats. Pettipas argues that Piapot became aware that the government was not prepared to honor his request, so a reserve was chosen for him near Indian Head (1994:12). Again Piapot traveled to the Cypress Hills area, and the Department of Indian Affairs refused to distribute rations until Piapot conceded to move to Indian Head. Piapot traveled by boxcar and after an accident involving a derailment, he and his people continued the journey on foot with their horses and property. After a dreadful winter when his people suffered hunger and several of his extended family members died, Piapot left the reserve (Pettipas 1994:13). In 1884, Piapot asserted his people's interests and insisted upon the reserve of his choice in the Qu'Appelle area near Pasquah's reserve so that his people might subsist on the local resources.

Pettipas describes Piapot's political determination as he persisted in voicing his dissatisfaction with the terms of Treaty Four (1994:13). She displays the spirited resistance of Piapot, Big Bear, Lucky Man, and Little Pine as they sought rations for their annual Thirst Dance. Of course, Commissioner Edgar Dewdney refused because he wanted the Cree placed on reserves. Piapot left the Dewdney meeting, angrily removing

his treaty medal and pulling down the flag (Pettipas 1994: 13). Throughout her account, Pettipas portrays Piapot as a notable leader during a time of oppression. What's striking about her work is the descriptive language that conjures up images which are more in line with the ways Cree people wish to remember Piapot.

David Lee examines the myth perpetuated by historians that Piapot "submitted" to Canadian authorities to accept reserve land (1992:251). Lee utilizes publications to illustrate how Piapot was misrepresented in the earlier literature that derived its information from newspapers and magazines. A number of authors are discussed including William A. Fraser in the July 1899 issues of *McClure's Magazine* which was reprinted in the *Canadian Magazine* in 1900. In 1906 Ernest J. Chambers reprinted this presentation in a written work regarding the NWMP. Cecil Denny writes the same story in 1978 but changes the number of police men from one police man in Walter Ligget's 1930 account. A.L. Haydon quotes the actual orders of the police in 1910 but not the actual numbers of involved policemen (Lee 1992: 252). Lee contends that the literature about the NWMP and settlement in the first eighty years of the twentieth century uses Piapot's humiliation to enliven their writings (1992:252).

Lee argues that Piapot stood up to the authorities by rejecting the reserves which the government had picked for him (1992:257). Piapot obtained the promise for a reserve in the Cypress Hills area which the government reneged on because of their fear about high Cree concentrations near the border. Piapot wanted to continue hunting, but by 1882 they were in a situation of hunger, depending on what relief they could get at Fort Walsh. Lee explains "After signing Treaty No. 4 in 1875, seven years were to pass before Piapot even considered settling on a reserve, and nine when he actually did; he

was one of the last chiefs to do so" (1992: 255). Hunger and disease which resulted in deaths among his people motivated Piapot to bend to government demands as he sought reserve land where his band might adequately subsist on the available resources.

Lee is concerned with the depiction of Piapot by writers who directed their attention to officials of the Canadian Pacific railway and the NWMP. He examines the writers who portrayed Piapot as an obstacle to the progress of the railway construction and as a threat to the NWMP. He portrays the railway construction as a metaphor that the Cree saw as threatening to their traditional way of life. He notes that on April 26th of 1883, the newspaper portrayed Piapot and Big Bear as threatening the tracklayers west of Swift Current. At this time, both leaders were not settled on reserves and were subsisting on rations supplied by agents of Indian Affairs (Lee 1992:253). The media portrayed Piapot and Big Bear as obstructing the progression of the Canadian expansion.

Lee writes that after two moves from Cypress Hills and after acquiring the promise of a reserve in the Cypress Hills area, Piapot eventually succeeded in receiving a reserve of his choosing in the Qu'Appelle area. Lee also discusses the situation around Piapot's settlement on a reserve and explains that, despite the intervention of NWMP Commissioner Irvine to stop Piapot's efforts to organize a Sun Dance, he eventually relented and let Piapot travel to Fort Qu 'Appelle to discuss his grievances with the assistant commissioner of Indian Affairs, Haytor Reed (Lee 1992: 257). Piapot was able to convince Reed to let him have the reserve site of his choice.

John L. Tobias writes of the subjugation of the plains Cree (1983). Tobias uses government records and Dempsey's work to reconstruct the events around the Cree political efforts. His purpose is to dispel the myth that "the Canadian government was

paternalistic and farsighted in offering the Indians a means to become civilized and assimilated into white society by the reserve system, and honest and fair minded in honoring legal commitments in the treaties" (1983: 519). His account provides a more revealing story of Piapot and Big Bear's efforts for political autonomy amidst the counter efforts of Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney. Tobias demonstrates that Dewdney was authorized by Canadian officials to implement a farming policy for the western reserves (1983: 526). Dewdney's goals were to place the Cree on reserves in order to promote agricultural pursuits. Similarly to the statement of Dempsey's (1984), Tobias maintains that Dewdney was aware of the Cree political power and intention, and he decided to assign the Cree to small isolated reserves. Dewdney was instrumental in the policy of compulsion (Tobias 1983: 534).

Tobias portrays the Cree as acting in a unified manner to create a contiguous reserve system for the maintenance of political autonomy (1983: 527). Such a strategy would result in a base for more Cree unity. A concentration of Cree would better equip Piapot, Big Bear, and Little Pine Cree as leaders to address treaty matters. The ceremonial event of the Sundance is depicted as a council where these leaders addressed political issues and would strategize their next moves. Tobias echoes Dempsey's (1984:90) assertion that Dewdney reduced the distribution of rations to starve the Cree into submission (1983:533). Tobias's work shows the Cree as resistant to reserves from the perspective of their desire for a contiguous reserve system.

Remarks on Literature

Distortions occur in historical literature when certain facts of the dominant group are presented to create a rich accounting of an event (Farmer 2001:309). Rationalizations

of a people's illiteracy are used as an excuse to leave them out of the account or distort indigenous involvement in the account. As Canada became a political entity, the people who became its officials operated with erroneous and self-serving views of Indigenous peoples.

Paul DePasquale's study of colonial literature examines portrayals of Indigenous people and demonstrates that many of the colonial documents express ambivalence and anxiety (2003: 9). His study shows how documents written in the 16th and 17th Centuries reflected that the actual people the European's first encountered were different from what they expected. Referring to Umberto Eco's work, he writes:

[W]e travel with preconceived notions of the world, derived from our cultural tradition. In a very curious sense we travel knowing in advance what we are on the verge of discovering, because past reading has told us what we are supposed to discover (2003: 9)

DePasquale argues that to understand the impact of colonialism, it is necessary to study the literature of the early period of the 1500s and 1600s when the European powers were actively exploring territories and developing bodies of colonial theory and ideology relating to America and its Indigenous peoples (2003:7). He contends that European attitudes towards the Indigenous peoples were formed at this time and continue today. He comments that the 1622 "massacre" of Jamestown by the Powhatan Algonquians provoked an array of contemporary writings that portrayed Aboriginal peoples in explicitly negative terms in order to justify imperial intrusions into America (DePasquale 2003: 5). The Indigenous peoples held the needs of their families and communities as well as their rights to resources and their independence. Therefore, the newcomers justified the creation of myth to compensate for their lack of specific cultural knowledge of the people they encountered.

Maurice Careless and Carl Berger argue that English-Canadian historians wrote of Canada as part of the triumphant imperial story (Miller 2004:14). The involvement of the Indigenous warriors was diminished and overshadowed by European interests during the period of military alliances with the European Imperial states. According to Miller, there was no investigation or explanation for the motives of the Indigenous warriors (2004: 14).

Nearly two centuries later, settler's views of Indigenous people had changed little and because they rarely came into contact with actual Native peoples, the myths substituted for actual lived experience until the Jamestown massacre. The Jamestown massacre and the massacre at Frog Lake did affect the relations between Indigenous peoples and the newcomers who now had real reason to fear the Cree, but who had little understanding of their own complicity in the conditions which caused this violence. Another striking similarity between the Jamestown event and Frog Lake incident is that both events colored and perpetuated the views of the Powhatan Algonquian and Cree as hostile and rebellious. Stonechild offers an account of how the Uprising of 1885 affected relations between the Cree and officials (1987). The Frog Lake massacre occurred simultaneously with the Riel Rebellion and the "government officials anxious to gain control over the Indians, and desirous of maintaining public confidence, were able to portray Indian involvements in the rebellion as supportive of the Métis" (1987: 88). He suggests that the settlers viewed the Indian people as hunters and warriors with no ethics or political convictions. Big Bear was explicit in his opposition to government policies and was singled out for punishment for what was viewed as his involvement in the

rebellion which was based upon earlier views of Big Bear as a trouble maker. Stonechild recognizes that Big Bear's band had not yet settled on a reserve at this time (1987: 87). From the perspective of the Canadian government, the Cree became subject to the laws of Canada when they signed Treaty. The Cree were not recognized as a distinct cultural group with their own social and political organization because of Eurocentric notions of civilization. Any acts were viewed as acts of rebellion even if it was government officials who did not uphold their part in fulfilling treaty obligations. The emphasis of the treaty promises of aid and assistance set in the context of famine and disease supported the myth of the government as benevolent, paternalistic and farsighted in dealings with the Cree people. This myth is portrayed by G. F. G. Stanley (Tobias 1983: 519). Elizabeth Furniss points out to the represent of national myths that:

The myth of conquest through benevolence – the definition of the Canadian spirit and the Canadian national identity through the continual assertion of history as a narrative of paternal domination of Aboriginal peoples – weaves in and out of Canadian literature and popular history. (1999: 63)

Stonechild and Waiser insist that G. F. G. Stanley's contribution to the story of the Indian-Métis rebellion is erroneous. The view Stanley advocates, in fact, served as the prime justification for coercing the Cree onto reserves (1997: 239). The situation of the Métis and the Cree reflected a great variety of issues, but because they were perceived as impeding Canadian advancement, they were lumped together as forces against opposing the nation. Thus, the myth of the Indian- Métis Uprising was built and supported by general history.

Another consideration was Dewdney's adherence to the idea of coercing Indian people to take up reserve agricultural life as a way of advancing his personal goals. His

accomplishments could be viewed along the lines of paternalism, despite that he clearly lacked compassion for the starving destitute Cree. In closing, representation affects, illuminates, or obscures history according to the perspective of the writer. History, however, is subject to rewriting.

Chapter III: Indian Policy: Treaties and Reserves

Introduction

This chapter will examine colonial policy, trade and compacts, land title in the northwest, Indian land policy, adaptations to the decline of the bison herds, and the treaty events. First a brief look at traditional Cree territory and land use reveals that the Cree occupied territories and utilized the resources of the area seasonally. The Cree held territories in common, sharing with other Cree and envisioning land use along the lines of territorial stewardship. The territory of a band was marked by distinctive features such as rivers for the River people, who occupied the land between the North Saskatchewan and Battle rivers (Mandelbaum 1979:10-11). The Prairie people who included Piapot's people, the Nehiowwat, lived mostly on the plains southwest of the Qu'Appelle River, in the area of Wood Mountain (Mandelbaum 1979:10-11).

Usually entrance or passage through Cree territory entailed permission. Interactions of the Indigenous groups regarding land - access for travel or to its resources - were regulated through diplomacy or alliances between groups. Intrusions into another's territory resulted in conflict between groups, as in cases when the Cree entered the area which was formerly occupied by Assiniboine and Gros Ventre (Mandelbaum 1979:7). The Cree were allied with the Assiniboine, and the Gros Ventre gradually shifted southward. Such alliances were built between groups to manage land use and relations with each other. Mandelbaum states that Cree tribal lands extended across the present provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta from the region where the Qu'Appelle River crosses the Manitoba line to the vicinity of Edmonton (1979:7).

Imperial Policy

Imperialism characterizes the development of Indian policy beginning with the legislative matters regarding land as established by British colonial governments in 1763. The *Royal Proclamation* of that year acknowledged Aboriginal land rights and was premised on the idea of protection during the expansion of American colonies, as it referred to the Indigenous peoples living "under our protection," as well as those with whom we are connected (Clark 1987:18). Indian ownership of unceded lands was acknowledged in the Royal Proclamation.

The policy aspired to ameliorate fears of potential Indian revolts over land. The *Royal Proclamation* established Indian title in a manner that corresponded with British purposes for domination: "...the central idea of its Indian provisions is simply: to ensure that no Indian lands in America are taken by British subjects without native consent" (Slattery 1985:118). It set three main procedures: Colonial governments are forbidden to grant any unceded Indian lands, British subjects are forbidden to settle on them, and private individuals are forbidden to purchase them (Slattery 1985:120). The Royal Proclamation recognized Indian title to lands and only the highest level of government could receive land surrenders.

Ultimately, any land conveyance was directed by the *Royal Proclamation* under the authority of the Crown. Therefore the empire established its own laws in accordance with its agenda. Any interests of lands were to be addressed to the imperial powers as they held the authority as set in the Royal Proclamation.

In 1860, the imperial government transferred responsibility for domestic affairs to the Canadian government. The *British North American Act* section (91) subsection (24) of 1867 authorized the Canadian government's legislative powers over Indians and their

lands. Future treaties made by the Canadian government were premised on the *Royal Proclamation* and the *BNA Act*, which enforced federal responsibility over Indians and lands (Ponting 1980:6). The *BNA Act* was the original constitution of Canada that established powers for the federal, provincial and municipal governments. Galtung's descriptions are fitting; the imperial powers of the center nation operate from the bridgehead in the center of the periphery with a tie of best possible interest (1971:83). In Canada, legislative measures regulated Indians and their lands, with the power of policy makers resulting in the systematic regulation of Indigenous peoples, thus directing structural violence. Structural violence at this time demonstrates a diminishment of freedom (Galtung 1990:293). Imposing a policy for legislative powers over Indigenous people and their lands allowed harmful laws and regulations to be established and enacted.

Trade Compacts – Selkirk Compact

The fur trade industry had economic interests and a different relationship arose in the west regarding lands, and relations with the Indigenous peoples. The *Royal Charter* of May 2, 1670 incorporated the Hudson's Bay Company [HBC]. Through the *Royal Charter*, the HBC received title, benefits, and exclusive trading rights to large areas (Oliver 1914:137). King Charles II granted the HBC freehold tenure of all lands draining into the Hudson's Strait, which established all of Rupert's Land for trade operations (Ray, Millar, and Tough 2000:3). Despite the permission dispensed by the King, the HBC directors recognized that they would have to deal with the Indigenous peoples in order to construct their buildings for trade business on the land. The imperial aspect of vertical interaction began with the king's granting of 'freehold tenure' to the lands.

The HBC establishment on the bay was a pseudo-bridgehead that was not an authentic nation but introduced and instituted values of the colonial country for the local Indigenous peoples who interacted with them. The unequal exchange pertaining to the land is based on the assumption of the colonial state's right to the land when the King did not recognize Aboriginal title to the land [as the *Royal Proclamation* had not yet been decreed] and laws regarding land were based on the “doctrine of discovery” (Ray Miller, and Tough 2000:5). Ray, Miller, and Tough observe that despite the royal decree made by King Charles II, the traders on the bay realized that they, themselves would have to deal with the Indigenous peoples (2000:5).

The compact resulted after directors realized that they would have to obtain consent from local Indigenous groups to occupy a portion of their lands. The HBC understood that they needed to gain permission to construct the buildings for the purposes of trade business. In 1680, the HBC was instructed to research the local customs of the Indigenous peoples and to incorporate the most sacred elements into the trade ceremony to confirm agreements related to land sales for trade purposes and for trade business (Ray, Miller, and Tough 2000:4). The compact agreements and accompanying ceremonialism were accepted by the local Indigenous groups. Thus, the compact acted to maintain diplomatic relations, which involved aspects of ceremonialism such as: smoking the pipe, the exchange of gifts, and alliance-building by arranging marriages between traders and Indigenous women (Ray, Miller, and Tough 2000:5).

By 1811, Lord Selkirk acquired an agreement with the HBC for a land grant in order to institute plans for settlement (Ray, Miller, and Tough 2000:46). The Selkirk treaty under the authority of the Crown:

shall annually pay to the Chiefs and warriors of the Chippeway or Saulteaux Nation, the present or quit rent consisting of a hundred pounds of good and merchantable tobacco...and to the chiefs and warriors of the Killistine or Cree Nation, a like present or quit rent consisting of a hundred pounds of good and merchantable tobacco. (Morris 1991:13)

According to Ray, Miller, and Tough, Lord Selkirk obtained land surrender in 1817 from the Cree and Ojibwa in exchange for an annual present of tobacco (1991:27). The transfer of land did not occur without issue. Conflict arose, for instance, between the Métis and Selkirk settlers in the Seven Oaks incident of 1816. By 1836, the HBC bought back the title from the heirs of Lord Selkirk (Morris 1991:14). In the 1860s, conflict over land title continued for the Selkirk settlers, and Chief Peguis of the Cree argued that Indian title was not extinguished properly in the original treaty (Ray, Miller, and Tough 2000: 28). The Selkirk Treaty was necessary for Lord Selkirk to establish the Red River Settlement. It was renegotiated in 1871, because the treaty was deemed invalid.

The question of title to land remained foremost for Euro-Canadians as they sought to institutionalize their cultural values and to settle the land. Indigenous people, familiar with trade processes, accepted payments of tobacco as presents for allowing settlers access to land, seeing it as the gifting which was already common practice in the trade alliance: "The Selkirk Treaty was a compact in keeping with the understanding the HBC had reached much earlier with the First Nations whereby it had gained peaceful entry to their territories" (Ray, Miller, and Tough 2000: 31). John E. Foster echoes this understanding of political alliances being validated by the exchange of gifts (1987:185).

By 1857, Henry Youle Hind, a Canadian government-employed geologist-explorer, advocated that the concerns of the Indigenous peoples be dealt with in order to avoid revolts and incursions upon settlers. It was his contention that Aboriginal title had

never been extinguished. Hind drew attention to a communication written by Edward Ellice, M.P., to Mr. Christie, an HBC employee in charge of the Saskatchewan District.

The letter concerned Indian title in Rupert's Land. It read:

The English government never extinguished the Indian title in Canada when they took possession; the Americans, while they have been extending their possessions, have extinguished the Indian title, but in Canada there has never been a treaty with the Indians to extinguish title, the Crown, retaining certain reserves for the Indians, has always insisted upon the right to occupy the lands and to grant the lands. (Hind 1971, Vol. 2: 170)

In 1870, the HBC transferred the remaining Rupert's Land--the territory between British Columbia and Ontario--to Canada, creating what became known as the Northwest Territory. This transfer, entitled "The Deed of Surrender" specifies in Term 14 that:

any claims of Indians and compensation for the lands for purposes of settlement shall be disposed of by the Canadian government in communicating with the imperial government; and the Company shall be relieved of all responsibility in respect of them. (Miller, Ray and Tough 2000: 50)

The transfer of Rupert's Land marked the shift from fur trade to treaty relations.

Indian Land Policy

Until 1860, the imperial government had laws that governed the areas of membership, liquor prohibition, taxation, education, and land use. 1867 marked the confederation of Canada and the administration of Indian affairs came under its control (MacInnis 1968: 388). By 1873, the Department of the Interior was created and Indian Affairs was attached as the Indian Branch (MacInnis 1968: 389). Throughout this period the *Indian Act* oriented matters of Indian administration. The Indian Act was consolidated in 1876 to administer policy in Upper and Lower Canada, Indian Affairs falling under the legislative authority of the *Indian Act*. This legislation deals with the lives of Indian

people by providing a definition of an Indian, Indian lands, and Indian treaty obligations. The *Indian Act* is a "dominion statute which contains nearly all Canadian law dealing expressly with Indians" (MacInnis 1968: 388). The *Indian Act* as a colonial piece of legislation retained the ideological link with its imperial legislative progenitors.

As the nation of Canada extended west, so did domestic Indian policy. The Indian Affairs administration focused on reserves, bands, and lands. It defined reserves in 1876 as "any tract or tracts of land set apart by treaty or otherwise for the use or benefit of or granted to a particular band of Indians of which the legal title is in the Crown..." (Bartlett 1980: 5). Bartlett distinguishes reserves as the "setting apart" of a tract of land for a particular purpose; the *Indian Act* is the appropriation of land for the benefit of a particular band of Indians (1980:6). Bartlett explains that according to the definition of reserves, lands never used by a band of Indians may still constitute a reserve under the *Indian Act* (1980:6).

The process of setting apart lands as reserves was initially authorized by the *Department of Secretary of State Act*:

5. The Secretary of State shall be the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and shall as such have control and management of the lands and property of the Indians of Canada.

36. The Secretary of State shall also have control and management of Crown Lands being the property of the Dominion. (Bartlett 1980:9)

This was amended in 1837 to the *Department of the Interior Act* which read:

2. The Minister of the Interior shall have the control and management of the Affairs of the North West Territories.

3. The Minister of the Interior shall be the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and shall as such, have control and management of the lands and property of the Indians in Canada.

4. The Minister of the Interior shall have the control and management of all Crown Lands being the property of the Dominion. (Bartlett 1980:9)

Therefore, all reserve lands were under the control of the colonial state.

Reserve policy began in eastern Canada owing to the assumption of the colonizers that Indigenous peoples needed protection and were incapable of adapting to changes forced on them through the arrival, en masse, of European settlers. Reserves were seen as the most direct method of removing the Indians from the land. Government officials were socialized with the colonial notions of British subjects and worked towards getting the Cree legitimized as 'subjects' through treaty. Consequently, the concept of wardship was institutionalized in the Indian Act which was naturally predicated on a Euro-Canadian understanding (Barron 1984: 29). The Cree became subject to the laws of the dominion by agreeing to treaty, and were designated as wards under the administration of the *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* was the legislative mechanism through which treaties were implemented.

Cree Situation Before Treaty

The Cree, as a cultural group, was indeed capable of adapting to changes. The Indigenous peoples of the plains endured hardship, especially those Cree groups that relied on the bison. An essential point is that throughout the trade period, the Cree adapted to environmental changes by expansion onto the prairie plains. Previous to the treaty, Piapot and Big Bear sought to expand their territory into Blackfoot country; such expansion was an adaptive response to the decline of the bison (Tobias 1983: 522). They were forced to compete with other Indigenous groups. As such, the Cree formed an armed migration which was unsuccessful for they were defeated at the battle of the Belly River by the Blackfoot confederacy (Milloy 1988:116-117).

Another adaptive response was to turn to agriculture. Edwin Denig observed that prior to 1858, in the vicinity of Touchwood Hills a Cree group, the Pis cha kaw a kis or Magpies were growing maize and potatoes and bison hunting in the winter (1961:105,109-110). Dr. Hector of the Palliser expedition documented the agricultural activities of catechist Charles Pratt of the Anglican Church Missionary Society growing corn, barley, potatoes, and hops in 1857 (Spry 1963:61). Evidently, the missionaries influenced Christianized Cree to undertake agriculture and the Cree, themselves were resilient despite the incredible challenges that they endured up to the 1870s. As early as 1871, Shee-sheep said to the commissioners at the treaty negotiations "grant me the where with all to make my living" which Spry submits was a political statement by one who understood the significance of land loss and the power involved in the treaty signing (1991:142). The Cree were able to maintain their cultural practices whether they sought to maintain their bison hunting tradition or, when the situation warranted, took up agricultural practices.

Migration and agriculture in the midst of the bison decline were choices necessary for survival. By these choices the Cree show themselves as a highly adaptive people. During the fur trade era, they were able to interact in trade and to expand west as the ecological and economic conditions required it. Movement to the parklands and plains resulted partly from a lack of animal resources in the interior and the economic roles in the fur trade motivated expansion (Milloy 1988). During the decade prior to the treaty, bison decreased on the northern plains and the Cree accordingly traveled farther south to hunt in the area of the Cypress Hills. As the bison herds became increasingly scarce, the Cree began to hunt in American territory. This strategy was thwarted by the American

military policy of wide scale slaughter of bison, which was designed to eradicate the American Indians (Tobias 1983). The decline of the bison was a serious matter for the survival of the Cree, and they sought to adapt by searching for more bison in foreign territory or by exploring agriculture.

During the period of 1790 - 1870, the annual cycle of the Cree was centered on the bison hunt (Milloy 1990). The Plains Cree established an annual round based on bison migrations (Moodie and Ray 1976:51), while Cree groups in the borderland areas of the parklands remained transitional peoples (Dempsey 1084: 12). According to Stonechild, the bison declined as early as 1833 (1986:13), and Dempsey writes of the great famine experienced by Big Bear's band from 1832 to 1833 (1984: 15). Isenberg argues that "the eighteenth century [Euro-Canadian] invasion levered the mounted bison hunters to dominance on the plains; the renewed incursion of the nineteenth century devastated both the nomads and the bison" (2000:93).

The American market was a prime factor in the reduction of bison herds, which prompted the Cree to search for bison in the western Blackfoot and southern Sioux territories. In addition to the American fur industry, Smits argues

...the Indians' determination to protect the buffalo pastures of the plains compelled them to oppose the rail-road. Hence, according to the [AFC] Journal, "to campaign against the buffalo would be, if successful, not only to destroy the enemy's supplies, but to put the whole casus belli out of existence by annihilation." (Smits 1994: 317)

Basic survival needs of the Cree were violated when their principal food source of bison was diminished. Particularly drastic consequences followed when the bison herds were eradicated in the American territory. These herds naturally migrated into the Cree traditional territory in the northwest and were rapidly in decline. Galtung refers to this

type of violence as violence against nature; in order to build the railway in the U.S. the bison herds were eradicated (1990:294). The slaughter of whole bison herds obviously indicates violence through depleting the main resource upon which the Cree and other plains Indigenous groups relied for their survival needs (Galtung 1990:294).

In addition, disease affected the Cree groups of the plains. Peers states that epidemics are triply fatal to hunting and gathering societies because of high mortality rates, despair, and reductions in the labor force (1994:20). In 1837, when the smallpox epidemic spread north from Fort Union on the Missouri and over to the northern plains, William Todd vaccinated the groups near Fort Pelly, Shoal River, Swan Lake, Carlton House, Ile-a-la-Crosse and Fort Edmonton (Dempsey 1984:16; Ray 1976:155). Some vaccine was also sent to the plains (Lux 2000:15; Milloy 1988:71; Peers 1994:141; Ray 1998:188). The Cree located near Carlton House and the Blood situated near Edmonton House were decimated since they were either not vaccinated or had received defective vaccine (Ray 1998:188). Despite the contributions of aid to the Cree; the disease wiped out Piapot's people during his childhood years. An oral account states that only Piapot and his grandmother survived the devastation (Watetch 2007:2-3). They were eventually captured by Dakota warriors (Pettipas 1990:9). The smallpox epidemic of 1837 also struck Black Powder's band. His son, Big Bear, survived but wore the scars of the disease (Stonechild 1986:13).

In 1869, smallpox originating in the south along the Missouri spread once again to the northern plains. Vaccination efforts were made in areas surrounding Fort Qu'Appelle (Lux 2001:16; Peers 1994:201). News of the smallpox reached Isaac Cowie at Fort Qu'Appelle, who was able to utilize an outdated but effective method to vaccinate all

those in the fort (Cowie 1913:381-382). Additionally, vaccination or its method was sent to the Touchwood Hills, and there was not a case of small pox among these groups.

Along the North Saskatchewan, the Cree and other plains groups suffered losses because they lacked vaccination (Ray 1998:128).

The devastation caused by the epidemics further affected the morale of the plains groups, who responded as in past to the smallpox epidemic (Taylor 1977: 62). There was a rise in mixed groups as Cree and Ojibwa sought to make up for their diminished numbers, particularly for the bison hunts. By seeking bison in Blackfoot territories, the Cree and Ojibwa provoked the hostility of the Blackfoot. The epidemic weakened the Blackfoot military, so the Cree and Ojibwa could take advantage of this circumstance to enter Blackfoot territory. Apparently, the smallpox struck the Blackfoot harder than it did the Cree (Dempsey 1984:17; Milloy 1988:71).

The smallpox epidemics of the nineteenth century preceded secondary illnesses such as measles, influenza, and malnutrition. These made hunters sick and unable to hunt (Lux 2001:15; Ray, Miller, and Tough 2000:94). The high mortality rates were devastating plains groups, though population losses cannot be accurately assessed (Lux 2001:17). Epidemic diseases and lack of food rendered the people vulnerable and dependent on assistance from outsiders.

The consequences arising from the American buffalo slaughter, disease, NWMP interference, and inequitable legislation would be death, starvation, and dependence, for by 1870; the bison were virtually gone from the plains. The Canadian government exploited this situation as they acquired land title from the plains Cree. The plains Cree were:

determined in consequence of promises made by the white men and half breeds, and the rapid destruction of buffalo they fed on, they would not permit either white men or half breeds to hunt in their country or travel through it, except for the purposes of trading their dried meat, pemmican, skins, and robes. (Hind v. 1, 1971:334)

Agriculture was an alternative, and Piapot tried agriculture near Maple Creek (Pettipas 1994: 12). The Cree of the Battle River area also were attempting farming and were open to alternative means of making a living because they knew that their choices were limited. Their survival and physical well being were threatened as they could not live on traditional bison hunting. They sought an alternative form of subsistence in the treaty negotiations.

Treaties

Jill St. Germain describes Canada's treaty making policy with all decision-making power held by the prime minister and his cabinet while parliament controlled the purse strings of treaty development activities (2001:47). The numbered treaties were instituted by directives of the Privy Council, and handwritten orders dealt with different aspects of the proposed treaty. The directives regarded the extinguishment of land title (St. Germain 2001:47). As well, there was some communication regarding the appointment of Commissioners, a statement of the point of the treaty, and details regarding the bargaining of annuity payments. In all, the extinguishment of the land title was overshadowed by the cost of the activity (St. Germain 2001:47).

The key negotiators of the treaties were Commissioner Wymess Mackenzie Simpson, who oversaw Treaties One and Two, and who was replaced by Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris who oversaw the Treaties Three to Seven. St. Germain argues that the officials were expected to adhere to government guidelines, for Ottawa

was determined to keep annuities at a constant rate (2001: 51). The success of the treaties was judged by the ability of these officials to adhere to government guidelines. Thus, the interest in keeping costs at a minimum therefore set the stage for exploitation. Negotiators sought the best possible deal with the least cost of annuity payments as specified in the directives.

Alexander Morris, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories in 1872, was responsible for the negotiation of Treaties Three through Six with the Indigenous peoples of western Canada. Other significant figures present at the Treaty negotiations of 1884 included Honorable David Laird, who was Superintendent General of Indian Affairs and Minister of the Interior [who was appointed by Alexander Mackenzie, who served as Liberal Prime Minister during the years of 1873-1878]. Laird was present at negotiations of Treaty Four at the Qu'Appelle Lakes. William Joseph Christie was a HBC officer, and had a long career with the HBC from 1841-1872. Christie was appointed a member of the provisional Council of the North West Territories in 1872 because of his long career with the HBC and his extensive dealings with Indians. He was named a commissioner for the negotiation of Treaty Four at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1874 and for Treaty Six at Forts Carlton and Pitt. He also participated at the signing of adhesions to Treaty Six (Morris 1991: 197).

James McKay was an employee of the HBC during 1828-1859 and became a member of the Council of the North West Territories during the years of 1873-1875. He assisted in the negotiation of Treaties One, Two, Three, Five and Six. Alexander Morris said of McKay on these occasions that he "had the opportunity of meeting with them [the Indians] constantly, and learning their views which his familiarity with the Indian dialects

enabled him to do" (1991:172). McKay was both negotiator and interpreter. He was also assigned the task of emissary to the plains Cree to announce the treaty negotiation.

George McDougall was a missionary who worked among the Indians for fourteen years and acted as emissary to the Cree (Morris 1991:172).

Charles Pratt served as translator for the Treaty Four negotiations. Pratt an Assiniboine Cree was educated at St John's College and acted as a catechist of the Church of England. Pratt served as translator for the Treaty Four negotiations (Morris 1991:81).

Peter Erasmus served as interpreter for the Cree; he was sympathetic to Morris and was hired to interpret for Morris at Treaty Six (Erasmus 1999: 244-245).

With such arrangements, Treaties were vehicles for obtaining land title and in exchange, the Indians would receive small, inalienable reserves of land and annual payments of cash and clothing (McQuillan 1980:381-382). The Robinson Treaties involved title surrender of lands north of Lake Huron and Superior; " save and except for the reservations set forth in the schedule hereunto annexed; which reservations shall be held and occupied by the said chiefs and their tribes in common, for their own use and benefit" (Bartlett 1980:10). Mining was underway in the areas of the Robinson Treaty before the negotiation of treaties, and the Ojibwa people pressured for treaties. The Robinson treaties set certain features for the numbered treaties with annuity payments, and hunting and fishing rights which were subject to regulation. The Ojibwa were granted unfettered traditional rights on all ceded lands that were not developed by Euro-Canadian settlers (Miller, Ray and Tough 2000: 44). Reserves were promised in the numbered treaties, but not established in ways equivalent to the Robinson Treaties. Bartlett argues that the numbered treaties of the prairies were different from the Robinson

treaties because they entailed a surrender of Indian title to an entire territory without reservation of any portion (1980:11).

As noted earlier, the Selkirk Treaty involved a land sale deal with Lord Selkirk and no negotiation with the Indians. The Indians were poorly represented in the sale of Rupert's Land, and this was renegotiated in 1871. Treaties One and Two involved the Saulteaux and Cree Indians of southern Manitoba. An agreement was sought because the Saulteaux threatened to interfere with migration and settlement, and desired protection. These Cree and Ojibwa were concerned about social, economic changes, and their future livelihood. Chief Peguis indicated that "before the whites will be again permitted to take possession of our lands, we wish that a fair and mutually advantageous treaty be entered in to with my tribe for their lands" (Ray, Miller and Tough 2000: 72). Reserves were established as acreages along specified lakes and rivers and their exact locations were not identified (Bartlett 1980:11).

Treaty Three of 1873 involved the Ojibwa and Saulteaux of northwestern Ontario and extensive negotiations. This treaty involved land surrender in exchange for farm animals and equipment, schools, reserves, annuities, the prohibition of alcohol and the right to traditional pursuits such as hunting and fishing. Reserves were to be selected through consultation with the Indians of Treaty Three and then a survey was to take place (Bartlett 1980: 12).

Treaty Five was concluded with the Swampy Cree and the Saulteaux Indians was signed in northern Manitoba and small portion of adjacent Saskatchewan. As outlined in Treaties One, Two and Three, reserves were assigned as acres, but would later be revised [as in Treaty Four] to larger reserve allotments (Bartlett 1980:12).

Treaty Four involved the Saulteaux and Cree Indians of the Qu 'Appelle area of Southern Saskatchewan. The Treaty Commissioners were escorted by a militia to the Treaty Four negotiations. According to Bartlett, the preamble of Treaty Four announced:

And whereas, the said Indians had been notified and informed, by Her Majesty's said Commissioners, that it is the desire of Her Majesty to open up for settlement, immigration, trade and such other purposes as to Her Majesty may seem meet, a tract of country bounded and described as hereinafter mentioned; and to obtain the consent of her Indian subjects inhabiting the said tract; and to make a treaty and arrange with them and Her Majesty, and between them and Her majesty's other subjects; and that her Indian people may know and be assured of what allowance they are to count upon and receive from Her Majesty's bounty and benevolence. (1980:10)

Treaty Four provided for reserve selection as indicated by Morris, "to assign reserves for said Indians, such reserves to be selected by officers of Her Majesty's Government of the Dominion of Canada appointed for that purpose, after conference with each band of Indians" (1991:331). The size of the reserve was modified to one square mile per family of five and provides for that proportion to be allotted for larger or smaller families (Morris 1991: 331).

Treaty Commissioner Morris was accompanied by the North West Mounted Police [NWMP] at the Treaty Six negotiations and the NWMP had the task of convincing Indigenous peoples on the plains to take treaty. The Christianized Cree leaders of Fort Carlton and Pitt; such as Sweet Grass, were counseled by the priests to sign the treaty. Mistawasis and Atakakoop were concerned with the dwindling food sources and were anxious for a new way of life offered by the terms of the treaty. Poundmaker opposed the treaty and emphatically declared the reserves to be inadequate. Morris contended that the land would be flooded with settlers and that the Cree needed to select reserve lands or be crowded out (Taylor 1987:19). Taylor argues that Morris' statement regarding reserves

overrode any possible Cree contributions regarding the conditions of their future and the size of reserves (1987:19). Nevertheless, Morris revised the treaty to include cattle, farm implements, and additional financial assistance for a transition to agriculture. Significant to Treaty Six, Morris agreed to a clause of assistance in the case of pestilence or famine as well as the addition of the medicine chest clause (1991:186). Treaty Six was signed at Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt in 1876 stipulating that reserves were to be set aside for the Indians, annuities, alcohol prohibition, establishment of schools and teachers, protection of hunting and fishing plus trapping rights on surrendered lands, assistance to transition to agriculture, provision for hunting and fishing supplies, and one time payments of cash, clothing, farm animals, and tools, animals.

The goal of the treaty was to obtain title to the land in exchange for these reserves and other provisions. As part of this goal, Canada was establishing its authority over the Cree. The title to the specified land was surrendered and reserves, as parcels of land, were promised to be set aside for the use of the Cree. As part of the reserve policy, the prospect of marginalization loomed as specific groups of Indians in each treaty area become identified with a reserve and they were not to be on their traditional lands. The traditional lands became part of Canada, while the Cree were to be settled on small reserves. Galtung refers to this type of structural violence as "repression" which entails "locking people in" (1990:293). The treaty-making process was a colonial instrument for segmenting and fragmenting the Indian groups, thus separating them from other groups and outsiders.

Treaty Four of 1874 and Treaty Six of 1876 were signed without the presence of Piapot and Big Bear. Piapot and Big Bear were actively hunting while treaty negotiations

were carried out. Charles Pratt announced the Treaty Four conference to the Cree (Morris 1991:81), but there is no mention that he communicated the intended treaty event to Piapot. William McKay and Reverend George McDougall were charged with the task of bringing the Cree to the Treaty Six negotiations. McKay, the HBC trader from Fort Pitt, visited Big Bear's camp in the summer of 1875 to announce the arrival of troops of NWMP and American surveyors. The announcement of the survey of international lines was met with vehement reactions as Big Bear regarded the distribution of gifts as bribery to secure support for the treaty (Dempsey 1984:61). This announcement was a prelude to the actual announcement regarding the Treaty Six negotiations which was delivered by George McDougall to the Cree in the area of Fort Carlton (Morris 1991:173).

McDougall, the actual emissary relaying news of the treaty conference to the Cree, devalued Big Bear as a Cree leader to Morris (Morris 191:174). Big Bear responded to the news of the Queen's promise of presents in a metaphorical fashion arguing that the Cree did not want any of the Queen's gifts and that the Cree were being lured to a trap with the gifts as the bait. Big Bear further insisted that the Governor, himself should come and speak the treaty business (Dempsey 1984:63). McDougall portrayed Big Bear "as a Soto trying to take the lead in their council' and "formerly from Jackfish Lake and for years was regarded as a troublesome fellow" (Dempsey 1984: 63). McDougall viewed Big Bear as a troublemaker, which a discriminatory view created by the HBC traders who regarded the Saulteaux as mischief-makers and shrewd men. McDougall perpetuated this view. Big Bear was depicted as a noncompliant leader and as an obstacle in the way of achieving the government's goals in reaching treaty. Negatively represented by the officials, the leadership of Big Bear was undermined by

McDougall. Big Bear was a formidable obstacle to McDougall's attempts to deliver the news of the treaty event. The officials knew that Big Bear was a powerful leader and McDougall - who did not achieve Big Bear's conformity at the meeting or his acceptance of gifts - belittled Big Bear's leadership to Morris. To understand the situation fully, Scott's notion of public transcript is applicable here as evidenced by the correspondence of McDougall to Morris that's skews Big Bear's traditional role as a Cree chief (Scott 1990:2).

Prime Minister John A. MacDonald's vision for national policy was to expand and settle the west. MacDonald sought to achieve an investment frontier through the acquisition of the western lands and resources (Pettipas 1994: 87). The NWMP were dispatched to the northwest to achieve law and order and to ensure peace before the treaties (Macleod 1985:189). They arrived in 1874, thus asserting Canada's authority in the northwest. The prairie west had its political origins as a colony of eastern Canada as MacDonald decided that direct federal control could be accomplished through law enforcement (Macleod 1985:188-189). The Canadian government sought to avoid the high costs in subduing the Indians; the US spent virtually 20 billion dollars in their military budget. The NWMP were to allay high costs and to occupy the west until an increased high population of settlers established ownership (Macleod 1985:189).

The establishment of the NWMP in the northwest acted as a military presence in Treaty Six. The Treaty officials were able to utilize the NWMP presence to augment their goals and to provide support in case of interference. During the treaty negotiations, Morris assured the Cree that the NWMP would provide protection from firewater, from being shot down by men who do not know the law, to preserve peace between the

Indians, to punish all who break the law, and to prevent whites from doing wrong to Indians (Morris 1991: 234). The NWMP acted as an extension of eastern Canada's national policy by enforcing Canadian law in the northwest. The central political position of Canada was fortified by the NWMP, who acted as military agents for the nation.

Overall the opposition is clear: Canada and the Plains Cree were two different nations with very different sociopolitical structures. The Plains Cree, tribal people who occupied a traditional bison hunting territory, had the band political system consisting of a traditional chiefs and warriors (Mandelbaum 1979:106). Canada as a nation state sought land in order to obtain resources and to open the northwest for settlement. Canada as a colonial state set out to achieve its goals through the advancement of policy-making. Galtung argues that a Center nation establishes itself within the periphery and creates a dominant relationship with the periphery nations (1971: 81). The treaty entrenched the dominant position of Canada over the Cree.

Galtung argues that bilateral decision making is implicit to political imperialism that originates from the nation and perpetuates dominance in the power relationship (1971:81). Canada, as a colonial nation, established policy to regulate relations with the Cree in order to maintain the economic interests of Canada. The treaties as legal documents obtain title to land, and in exchange, the Cree would receive reserves. With the Cree marginalized, Canada could open the lands necessary for expansion, and the people themselves were open to treaty negotiations because they were promised better living conditions in an increasingly desperate situation. The bison hunters were acutely aware that the livelihood they relied on was rapidly diminishing. The selection of

reserves and an alternate means for subsistence was promised in the treaties. Piapot and Big Bear wanted those provisions upheld.

Once Treaty Indians were situated on reserves, they were to become involved in the process of self-sufficiency, learning to become farmers as specified in the 1878 Indian Act. The treaty Indians were adaptable and were desirous to learn new forms for subsistence because of the decline of the bison and the depletion of animal resources resulting from the times of heightened fur trade activity. Piapot and Big Bear were avid bison hunters until this resource could be found nowhere near the U.S. border. The situation during the early reserve period of the 1870s was similar to peasant farming which lasted until the latter part of the 19th century (Carter 1992:265).

The *Indian Act* was the legislative piece that regulated treaty Indians and reserve lands. It set out the procedures for farming and “codified the assimilationist agenda” (Lux 2001: 32). At the time of treaty negotiations, Piapot and Big Bear were aware of the treaty specifications regarding reserve lands and the provisioning for aid and assistance while becoming farmers. They were unaware of the Indian Act that would regulate almost every aspect of Cree life once treaty was undertaken. There is no mention by Treaty Commissioner Morris that the Cree were informed about the Indian Act. The actual treaty document specifies that the Indians would be subject to the Queen and her dominions.

Despite their lack of knowledge of the *Indian Act*, the Cree and other plains groups sought to maintain their interests through treaty. Their position was one based on the spirit and the intent of the treaty and of what treaty agreements meant to them. The implication of structural violence is evident here as unequal life chances existed during

this time. The foremost goal of the government was to obtain surrender of land title. In 1872, the *Dominion Lands Act* came into effect which changed the northwest landscape as lands were opened for settlement (Mooney 2005: 251). At the behest of the government, Hind [1857-1858] and Palliser [1857-1858] conducted large exploration missions to promote settlement and agriculture in the west (Hind 1969; Spry 1968). Pressure for land acquisition was steadfastly rising owing to the threat of an American invasion. Conflicts soon resulted with the Indigenous inhabitants in the U.S. The Canadian officials were concerned with potential conflicts between settlers and the Indigenous people, rather than motivated by the indigenous land interests. Piapot and Big Bear were resolute in maintaining Cree interests while resisting reserve settlement and after the treaty adhesion was signed.

Chapter IV: Piapot and Big Bear - Resistance

Introduction

Barber defines the word resist as “to withstand the effect of action, to repel,” while “resistance” is “the act of an instance of resistance and the refusal to comply” (1998: 1227). In addition, James C. Scott concentrates on subaltern people who resist dominance: “that most subordinate classes throughout history have rarely been afforded the luxury of open, organized political activity” (1985: xv). Piapot and Big Bear resisted the colonial force of Canada that required their consent by way of their signatures on the documents of Treaty Four and Six. These leaders were committed to their own ideals, for the Plains Cree were egalitarian societies governed by their own band politics. Aboriginal land title was recognized by the Royal Proclamation of 1767, and the treaties existed to extinguish such title to land. The treaties, therefore, carried an explicit recognition of Indian ownership rights (Ponting 1986:30). Treaties were intended to be conducted between Canada and the plains Cree on a nation to nation basis. Canada, however, increasingly enacted a more directly aggressive approach in its dealings with the western plains Indians. Piapot and Big Bear resisted in accordance with the levels of coercion meted out by Canadian officials.

Resistance

James C. Scott's study of everyday forms of resistance practised by peasants in Malaysia includes dissimulation and false compliance (1985: xvi). Despite that Piapot and Big Bear were Cree chiefs in a hunting economy, who subsisted on the bison in their resource-rich territory, there are some similarities in the forms of “everyday” resistance they pursued: for instance, Piapot and Big Bear resisted the treaties because, based on

their knowledge of the experiences of earlier treaty signatories, they doubted that the government would be faithful in honoring the treaties (Tobias 1983: 524).

Piapot and Big Bear's position on signing an adhesion to the treaties changed after they endured hunger and illness. Big Bear, under duress, signed an adhesion to Treaty Six in 1882. Piapot signed an adhesion to Treaty Four in 1885. Piapot and Big Bear's refusal to sign treaty can be viewed as “real” resistance for, at this time, their traditional political systems were still intact. “Real resistance” as characterized by Scott is “organized, systematic, and cooperative, principled or selfless, has revolutionary consequences, and/or embodies ideas or intentions that negate the basis of domination” (1985: 292). In connection to Scott’s point, the *Doctrine of Discovery* provided the basis for domination in the “New World”, and it was against this principle for alienating Aboriginal lands, that Big Bear and Piapot would rally.

The resistance efforts of Piapot and Big Bear were necessarily modified as they encountered various orientations of dominance through policy implementation that acted to coerce them into taking reserves. Scott's forms of “everyday resistance” - dissimulation and false compliance - are congruent with those types of resistance employed by Piapot and Big Bear (1985: xvi). Dissimulation and false compliance are more evident after Piapot and Big Bear signed adhesions to their treaties and entered into the next phase of choosing reserves. Piapot and Big Bear performed dissimulation activities by saying they would take a reserve and then retreating to another location. They pretended to take reserves after they agreed to choose a reserve and thus demonstrated false compliance. Scott argues that the practice of everyday forms of

resistance by subaltern groups demonstrates that they have not consented to the dominance of those who seek to exploit them (1985: xvi).

A culturally-specific form of resistance was manifest in the "spirited resistance" of Piapot and Big Bear in the practice of the Sun Dance ceremony. Spirited resistance is a united defense for land and for political and socio-spiritual autonomy (Dowd 1992:91). This ceremonial event was the appropriate place for the Cree to meet to confer about political matters affecting their people. Contrary to the institutional and formal political practices of the Canadian government, the Cree utilized a democratic practice of consensus on important matters. Scott argues that the public transcript describes open, public interactions between the dominators and the oppressed producing a transcript which does not tell the whole story about power relations (1990:2). This quality is evident in Morris' account of the Numbered Treaties, for he chronicles events from the activities surrounding the Treaty negotiations and signings solely from the officials' perspectives (1991).

Scott uses the term "hidden transcript" for the political critique that the power holders do not see or hear (1990: 5). Government officials feared the Sun Dance because of its potential to organize Cree people for political unity. Spirited resistance occurred when Cree bands from all parts of the northwest gathered for a Sun Dance sponsored by Piapot in the Treaty Four area in the late spring of 1884, despite that it was discouraged by government agents (Tobias: 1983: 532). Tobias asserts that at the same time Big Bear was also arranging an Indian Council in the Battleford district (1983: 532). While in outward appearance, Piapot and Big Bear signed treaties which effectively subjected to the Queen and her laws, this should be viewed as a survival strategy rather than as an

endorsement of the rule of a foreign power. The Sun Dance gathering offered an opportunity to discuss unfulfilled treaty promises.

The Sun Dance provided an arena for gathering to discuss and to mobilize around political matters and to strategize on treaty tactics, in a manner that was customary. Additionally the Sun Dance provided a meeting place for cooperative interaction in spiritual, social, and economic functions. There were plenty of opportunities for arranging marriages and cementing alliances. With the decline of the bison, the Sun Dance shifted from matters of the bison hunt to political matters of the treaties and reserves (Dempsey 1984: 123). Pettipas argues that at these gatherings bands reunited, military associations convened, and tribal chiefs met in formal council (1994: 60). Finally, the Sun Dance ceremonial served to integrate otherwise politically autonomous families and bands (1994:61).

There are two phases of colonial dominance that Piapot and Big Bear resisted. First they rejected the original treaty documents and resisted signing the original copies because they wanted additional items to ensure assistance while they made the transition to a sedentary agricultural lifestyle. Both Piapot and Big Bear rejected in principle, the notion of the Doctrine of Discovery. They did not accept that the colonial powers had a “natural” right to their lands, nor that the interests of settlers should ever supersede those of their own people. Piapot and Big Bear sought the interests of their people by rejecting the original treaty documents. Piapot signed an adhesion in 1875; one year after the original treaty four was signed (Pettipas 1991:12). Big Bear signed an adhesion to Treaty Six in 1882, six years after Treaty Six was negotiated (Stonechild and Waiser 1997:40).

The second phase involved the actual resistance to reserve settlement. Initially, Piapot and Big Bear resisted the dominating acts of the Canadian nation state which relegated them to reserves not of Cree choosing. Another reason they resisted was that the Canadian officials did not fulfill treaty provisions of aid and assistance while the Cree transitioned to an agricultural lifestyle. Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney knew that a concentration of Cree in the Cypress Hills area would threaten Canadian authority and that this might necessitate a Canadian military campaign to enforce its laws. Officials in Ottawa and Dewdney refused Cree reserves in the Cypress Hills area (Tobias 1983: 530).

Following the agreements, structural violence occurred through the enactment of policy which Dewdney enforced in league with Vankoughnet. The spirit of the treaty was violated when the Cree were forcibly removed from the Cypress Hills area. It was here that the people had wanted to establish a contiguous reserve system. The refusal of Cree choices of reserve land was a direct violation of the treaty (Tobias 1983:530).

To reiterate the point, the acquisition of land was indeed the prime objective of the treaties. In exchange for the surrender of land title, the Cree would receive reserves. The loss of lands through this process would put an end to Cree mobility, disabling people who traditionally utilized the natural resources of the land. With the loss of a land base and the relegation to reserves, the Cree would endure hunger caused by the very limited availability of game and vegetation. Their economic interests were in jeopardy. Their quality of life decreased dramatically. Whereas the Cree once thrived on hunting and gathering over vast areas, they now would be confined on small parcels of land. Complex and difficult circumstances surrounded the signing of the adhesion.

Treaty Adhesion - Bison Hunting Ordinance

In the 1870s, the Cree leaders Piapot, Big Bear, and Little Pine sought to maintain their autonomy by convincing the government to limit the bison hunt (Tobias, 1991:217). Commenting on this situation, Noel Dyck argues that the extermination of bison was not preventable by this time, but measures could be undertaken to delay the demise of the bison (1970:22). Also at this time, the government was concerned with providing food to the plains groups who relied upon it as a food source. In 1875, the Department of Justice prepared a report and sent it to the Select Committee of the North-West Council who reviewed it and made suggestions which involved passing an ordinance to impose restrictions on the bison hunt from July to January. To make up for those months when these prohibitions were in effect, the committee suggested that the government provide food and other aid as specified in the Treaty (Dyck 1970:24).

At such a critical juncture, the Plains Cree used their diplomatic skills to address immediate issues surrounding the declining bison. The Cree wanted the government to limit the bison hunt to Indians, a goal they had advocated since the 1850s (Tobias 1983: 523). The government responded. The report by the Select Committee read:

It cannot be expected that the Dominion government can undertake to do much more for the Indians than carry out their treaty engagements unless it can be accomplished in the direction of protecting their staple article of food from destruction until they have to some extent mastered the arts of civilized living. (Dyck 1970:24)

Dyck argues that in 1877, the federal government abdicated its responsibility to preserve the bison by referring the problem to the North-West Council, who passed a bison hunting ordinance that proved ineffective to prevent bison decline (1970: 25). In Parliament, David Mills stated:

...it had better be left to the government of the North-West rather than by Parliament...The local government ...could probably devise a cheaper and

better plan than this Parliament, it being on the spot and more familiar with the matter (Dyck 1970:25).

Government officials were concerned if the bison declined, Canadian leaders would have to provide food or aid in compliance with the treaty although these treaty provisions were originally intended to provide necessities of life until the Cree could transition to an agricultural subsistence.

Treaty Four was concluded with the Assiniboine, Cree and Ojibwa who occupied lands between Fort Ellice and Cypress Hills (Pettipas 1994:11). Piapot was not impressed with the treaty when he saw the document and requested additional items (Dempsey 1984: 60). Piapot's absence at the treaty event of 1874 was explained on September 3rd of 1875 by Indian Commissioner Christie that while meeting with Piapot:

An idea seemed prevalent among the Indians who were absent last year that no treaty had been concluded then; that all which had been done at that time was merely preliminary to the making of the treaty in reality, which they thought was to be performed this year (Morris 1991: 86).

Piapot tried to procure promises for items in the final treaty so his band could begin agriculture. These included provisions for: farm instructors, mills, forges, mechanics, more tools and machinery, and medical assistance. Government agents assured Piapot that these new demands would be forwarded to Ottawa to determine whether they would be put into the treaty. Piapot understood that these assurances would be fulfilled and therefore signed an adhesion to Treaty Four on September 9th of 1875 (Morris 1991: 60, Pettipas 1994: 69). Treaty Four was not revised, but these provisions were included in Treaty Six. Piapot was dissatisfied with the unfulfilled treaty promises and continued to hunt game in the Cypress Hills area (Pettipas 1994: 12).

Piapot's first resistance to selecting a reserve occurred because of the unfulfilled treaty promises for assistance in the transition to agriculture; he realized the bison hunting days were over. Piapot in fact, was open to a new means of subsistence. He began to garden and raise wheat despite the shortages of government supplies. Pettipas argues that government officials feared the concentration of Cree in the area and by refusing rations coerced them into leaving the area. Eventually, Piapot's people suffered from hunger, illness, and the unchecked whiskey trade. This led Piapot to request rations from the government officials (Pettipas 1994: 12).

As for Big Bear's situation, emissary MacDougall reported on Big Bear's refusal of the "Queen's promised presents" on the grounds that the gifts were bait to lure the Cree to a trap (Morris 1991:174). Big Bear insisted that the governor come to discuss treaty business, so McDougall described Big Bear as "a troublesome fellow" (Morris 1991:174). MacDougall perpetuated a view that had been common among HBC officials, that the Ojibwa were troublemakers. Big Bear was a noncompliant leader and an obstacle in the way of achieving government goals for reaching treaty. Throughout the events, the officials' perceptions of Big Bear colored their dealings with him.

Big Bear was not present at the negotiations of Treaty Six. Morris reported the arrival of Big Bear following the signing of Treaty Six (1991: 239). Big Bear stated to the commissioners that "I find it difficult to express myself, because some of the bands are not represented" (Morris 1991: 239). Dempsey points out that Big Bear did not believe he could negotiate with the commissioners until he spoke with the absent chiefs (1984:73). This statement demonstrated Big Bear's commitment to Cree political diplomacy, which involved conferring with other chiefs in important matters affecting

land and the people. Big Bear's intention was to discuss the preservation of the bison upon which he, his band, and the other Plains Cree bands relied for subsistence. Despite the conclusion of Treaty Six, Big Bear adamantly refused to take treaty without considering and involving the absent chiefs and their bands. He explained “the people who have not come stand as a barrier before what I would have had to say; my mode of living is hard” (Morris 1991:239). His noncompliance with the existing treaty terms was necessary as he sought to maintain his people's hunting interests in the Cypress Hills. Morris reported to Big Bear that the Northwest Council was considering framing a law to protect the buffalo (1984: 241).

Non-compliance is evident as Big Bear did not want to give up the mobility of the bison hunting lifestyle. Big Bear's metaphorical statement, “... the rope around my neck” (Morris 1991: 240) was mistranslated by Reverend John McKay to mean Big Bear was fearful of being hanged (Dempsey 1984: 74). Erasmus explains that McKay was not versed in Plains Cree (1999:241). This metaphor haunted Big Bear in his dealings with the treaty officials. Dempsey notes that “...he was using a common expression used on the plains that denoted a person giving up his freedom” (1984:241).

Remarks on Adhesion

In 1885, Piapot's resistance to signing a treaty adhesion can be viewed an act of real resistance because he negotiated additional treaty provisions to assist in the transition to an agricultural lifestyle. He wanted to ensure that his people could make a living by farming and used the treaty to obtain more aid. Piapot maintained his leadership role that required him to secure the best living conditions in the interests of his people. Piapot understood the treaty as a diplomatic agreement similar to the peace pacts formerly made

with enemy tribes for bison hunts. As a leader, Piapot opposed the original treaty document because he was politically responsible for his people and was very much active in Cree band political practice. Government officials assumed Piapot and his people would naturally desire to become like Euro-Canadians, since the Cree way of life was declining. The Cree did not view treaty signing as necessitating a shift for subsistence, however, and were open to agriculture as the situation warranted, in ways that allowed them to survive and flourish as a people. To do so, they wanted the best deal possible for parting with their territory in exchange for reserves which was viewed as homeland: “Oral tradition among the Cree maintains that all three leaders [inclusive of Piapot and Big Bear] faithful the government would be in honoring the treaties, but equally important for these leaders was their belief that the treaties were inadequate and that revisions were necessary” (Tobias 1983: 524).

At first glance, the famine crisis appeared as a formidable challenge for Canadian officials wanting to advance their economic goals. The famine created a crisis that resulted in conflicting interests between the Cree and the Canadian officials regarding the treaty promises. The problem of 1879-1880 was the responsibility of the newly elected Prime Minister John A. Macdonald (Dyck 1970:30). MacDonald addressed the famine by promoting agriculture, and he knew that a great deal of financial aid would have to be distributed to Indian Affairs. The administration of Indian Affairs required the appointment of a field agent to supervise local administration. To this end, Edgar Dewdney was appointed Indian commissioner for the North-West Territories in 1879 (Dyck 1970: 31). His role was to administer Indian affairs and to deal with the famine

crisis. Dewdney exploited the opportunity to coerce the Cree through fragmenting their groups into segregated reserves.

At this time Piapot, Big Bear and Little Pine sought to effect a large concentration of Cree people in the Cypress Hills area by establishing a series of reserves. Tobias states that government officials feared such a large concentration of Cree in one area (1983: 527). In 1879, Indian Commissioner Dewdney enacted a policy regarding the distribution of rations only to those Indians who took treaty (1991: 218). Big Bear had not signed an adhesion to Treaty Six yet and this coercive measure was directed towards Big Bear's band. Hunger, it was thought, would induce submission and would provide a reason for other band members to desert Big Bear. This coercive tactic by Dewdney affected Little Pine, who took treaty in 1879 (Tobias 1983:527).

Little Pine sought a reserve in the Cypress Hills area and Piapot requested a reserve next to Little Pine's (Tobias 1983: 527). Assiniboine bands selected reserve sites near those of Piapot and Little Pine in a strategy to provide contiguous reserves in an Indian territory. The requests for reserves were granted, and the land was to be surveyed the following year. In the meantime, the Cree traveled to the bison ranges in Montana. The Americans informed these Cree that they were to return to Canada or be forcibly removed by American troops in 1880 (Tobias 1983: 528).

Later in 1880, a riot occurred at Fort Walsh over the distribution of rations. Because of the riot, Dewdney acquiesced on his policy for distributing rations to treaty Indians and distributed rations to all the local Indians (Tobias 1983: 529). The officials also knew of the Cree plans for a council to discuss treaty revisions. Tobias argues that the Cree from all regions of the prairies traveled south to meet with Big Bear and Little

Pine (1983: 529). The American militia prevented the Cree from entering the US which proved beneficial for Canadian officials. American soldiers disarmed the Cree and escorted them back to Canada. The Cree resolved to take their concerns regarding treaty revisions and the idea of a territory to Governor General Lorne (Pettipas 1994: 70).

If there was an opportunity for a Cree armed resistance, the intervention of the US military prevented it, and allowed the Canadian government to gain the upper hand (Tobias 1983: 529). At this time, the potential for the organized political action by the Cree caused Dewdney to implement the policy of compulsion (Pettipas 1994:70). Dewdney opposed contiguous reserves and restricted access to arms, ammunition, and horses and limited off reserve travel. Dewdney recommended the closure of Fort Walsh, the enlarging of the NWMP force, and the incarceration of the noncompliant chiefs (Tobias 1983: 530). Dewdney hoped to block Cree political unification through the policy and to drive the Cree away from the Fort Walsh area to end the concentration of Cree force (1983: 530).

Finally, the promises made to Piapot and Big Bear at Cypress Hills about reserves were rejected. Dewdney used the famine crisis and the disarmament of the Cree to bring them into submission (Tobias 1983: 530). The Cree were informed that assistance would be available at Qu 'Appelle, Battleford, and Fort Pitt. Big Bear signed an adhesion in 1882 because he learned that his people wanted him to take treaty (Tobias 1982: 531). Big Bear, Piapot, and Little Pine agreed to leave the Cypress Hills area. Piapot and Big Bear appeared to be subdued and resigned to taking a reserve. False compliance is demonstrated by Piapot and Big Bear for they continued to resist reserves by first appearing to concede to take a reserve, only to return to the Cypress Hills area.

The Cree viewed reserves as homelands where they could continue with hunting pursuits (Tobias 1987). The officials explained to the Cree that they could choose a reserve site in the timeframe of their choosing. The Cree were to reside on the reserve lands, where they could learn agriculture and continue hunting and trapping. Cree scholar Neal Macleod argues that the Treaty emphasized hunting rights ensuring that the hunters could continue their hunting pursuits (2007:43). Big Bear sought the interests of the bison hunters prior to treaty negotiations and after treaty signing. Big Bear's initial position was to protect the mobile hunting lifestyle and to reject rations or reserves, and thereby to retain a sense of power (Macleod 2007: 42). Finally, and with no other recourse, Big Bear and Piapot agreed to the adhesion with the understanding that they would be entitled to select reserves of their own choosing. They wanted their treaty obligations upheld and the hunting lifestyle to continue.

Discussion on Resistance to Adhesion

The real resistance of Piapot and Big Bear to treaty adhesion was grounded in the fact that they represented autonomous political band units. They practiced a traditional hunting and gathering culture that was mobile, pivoting around the bison economy. Their political orientation was focused on the collective well being of the people, their territory, and the bison. The disappearance of the bison affected the Cree survival needs as they could no longer thrive on this resource. The Cree took treaty because it promised immediate aid and a new way of making a living, through agriculture.

Ultimately Dewdney's implementation of the policy to distribute rations to those who took treaty was an act of violence. The withholding of food in exchange for treaty furthered Dewdney's goals to obtain land title through treaty. The treaty was the colonial

instrument through which Aboriginal land title was both recognized and extinguished in order to expand the Canadian state. The Prime Minister was anxious for the northwest Indians to begin an agricultural program which would ease the financial burden associated with providing assistance as promised in the treaties. Dewdney wished to advance these goals by obtaining treaty and promoting the agricultural program on reserves. According to Dyck, Dewdney was allowed flexibility in matters dealing with the famine crisis (1970: 31), and he used it to implement his policy to coerce the Cree to sign treaties in exchange for rations. Ultimately, Dewdney's authority flowed from higher ranking Ottawa officials, and his implementation of policy is characteristic of political imperialism. Galtung's theories apply: he contends that manipulation by threat of direct violence is indicative of psychological and physical violence (1969: 169). Hunger and death were experienced by the Cree which motivated Piapot and Big Bear to sign adhesions. Moreover, Maureen Lux observes that in the winter of 1881-82, Frederick White, the NWMP comptroller, urged Dewdney to take action on behalf of the nearly 2000 people "almost naked and on the verge of starvation" (2001:39).

Dewdney's policy of compulsion also indicates military imperialism because he also sought to restrict access to guns. Galtung typifies military imperialism by a nation's control of the means of production for guns (1971: 92). The Cree having no such means were controlled by Dewdney's policy of restricting access to firearms. Similarly, Cree mobility was obstructed as travel was restricted. There were also Cree hunters, who did not have arms or horses because of the American intervention. Both guns and horses were necessary to obtain the bison, now fewer and farther away. The policy of compulsion would starve the Cree by driving them away from the area, thus threatening

Cree survival. At this point the Cree were trapped in a situation of diminished survival means.

Spirited Resistance - After Adhesion

Dewdney's policy was designed to eliminate any politically oriented gatherings that served as barriers to the goals of the Canadian government. In 1882, a recession struck the Canadian economy, and Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, Vankoughnet, was instructed to reduce his budget for Indian affairs (Dempsey 1984: 120). Vankoughnet lowered costs by reducing rations, and Dewdney used the situation to try to crush Cree leaders (Lux 2001: 40).

Piapot traveled to the Qu'Appelle area in 1882, only to return later that summer to Cypress Hills with complaints that he was mistreated at Qu'Appelle (Tobias 1983: 531). He conveyed to the chiefs at Cypress Hills that they would lose autonomy when the government dealt with them separately. Piapot asserted the unity of the Cree interests, and in order to avoid conflict, NWMP Commissioner Irvine distributed rations to the Cree. The Cree leaders still resisted leaving Cypress Hills being determined to get the reserves promised to them through the treaty (Tobias 1983: 531).

Piapot was refused rations, and was then relocated to another reserve site in the Sintaluta area (Pettipas 1994: 13). After experiencing a hard winter on this reserve, Piapot announced plans for a Sun Dance. He would put forward his request for a reserve in the Qu' Appelle territory at that time. It was during this time that Dewdney ordered that all Indian Department officials be appointed stipendiary magistrates in order that all Indian troublemakers be brought to justice quickly (Tobias 1983: 534). Dewdney communicated to Prime Minister John A. MacDonald by saying, "The only course with

the great proportion [of Indian bands] is to adopt a [policy] of sheer compulsion (Tobias 1983: 534). Dewdney was violating the Cree rights to freedom of religious practice through law enforcement.

Spirited resistance occurred in 1884, when Haytor Reed, Assistant Indian Commissioner of Indian Affairs, attempted to prevent Piapot from holding a Thirst Dance on Paquah reserve. NWMP Commissioner, Irvine, and a contingent of forty-six men armed with a seven pounder gun were sent to arrest Piapot on the charge of trespassing (Tobias 1983: 532). Piapot convinced Irvine to permit him to travel to Fort Qu' Appelle so that he could discuss grievances with the Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Haytor Reed (Lee 1992: 257). The officials acquiesced to Piapot's request for a reserve located next to Pasquah, but only if Piapot returned to Indian Head temporarily. Following the Sun Dance, Piapot traveled to Indian Head and then traveled back to Pasquah reserve, thus demonstrating acts of dissimulation and false compliance. Tobias argues that Piapot made an agreement with Reed and Irvine to return to Indian Head temporarily. Piapot did travel to Indian Head, but immediately returned to his new reserve.

Piapot was able to accomplish his goals: conducting a Thirst Dance, holding a council, and meeting with Reed for reserve selection. Piapot effected a huge concentration of 2000 Cree in the Qu' Appelle River for the Thirst Dance (Tobias 1983: 535). His spirited resistance occurred during the Thirst Dance which mobilized Cree unity over the issue of reserve land. The ceremony was a traditional Cree religious gathering which was viewed by officials as detrimental to their assimilation goals. Piapot was motivated to procure a reserve next to Pasquah and to maintain Cree unity through

this contiguous reserve system. Since Piapot acceded to treaty, it can be suggested that his resistance style was similar to that described by Scott as cultural resistance where rituals are allowed by the dominant officials, making it possible to break the rules (1985: 287).

Despite the military intervention of the NWMP, Piapot was able to hold the ceremony to discuss political issues surrounding the treaties. Through Piapot's diligence, he was able to select the reserve of his choice despite opposition from the officials; yet he demonstrated his intention in the accommodating agreements he made with the dominant officials. The complex forms of resistance that Piapot undertook contain elements that Scott delineates as forms of everyday resistance or false compliance. Scott posits that examples of open confrontations are evident within colonial situations, as subordinates are brutally reduced from open radical political activity at one moment to "petty" resistance at another (1985: 299). Furthermore, Galtung's notion of military imperialism (1971: 92) is evident because the NWMP were armed with a seven pounder gun to avoid conflict and maintain cooperation from Piapot. In this case, the government officials feared a general uprising for which the size of the NWMP force was inadequate (Tobias 1983: 535).

Considering Scott's notions, it can be suggested that Piapot oscillated between real and everyday resistance, depending on the circumstances. With real resistance, Scott argues that the structure of dominance defines what is and what not resistance (1985: 299) is. The military intervention of the NWMP was thwarted by Piapot's warriors and because Irvine feared conflict if he tried to prevent Piapot from attending a Thirst Dance. Piapot feared that his people would experience a fate similar to the tribes in the US and

was intent on seeking an equitable solution--a suitable reserve for his band. The situation was tense as both Piapot and government officials feared open conflict. The resistance tactics of Piapot shifted to accommodate the situation with the government, when officials sought to aggressively force Piapot to settle on a reserve.

Meanwhile, Big Bear encountered difficulties in his plan for a Thirst Dance and council at Poundmaker's reserve. Dewdney attempted to stop Big Bear from reaching the ceremony, fearing the large assembly since Big Bear had invited the Blackfoot and all the Treaty Six Indians (Tobias 1983: 535). While waiting for the Thirst Dance, Big Bear revealed to Dewdney that he wanted a reserve near Poundmaker's, arguing that the agreement made with Vankoughnet was null and void due to the refusal of rations (Dempsey 1984:125). Dewdney refused Big Bear's choice for this new reserve site as it would create a concentration of Indians on contiguous reserves in the Battleford area. Dewdney convinced the government to make it illegal for a band to refuse to move to a reserve site chosen by the commissioner in the hopes that the chiefs would ignore a direct order for reserve selection near Battleford and consequently be arrested (Tobias 1983:535).

Dewdney strategized to have horses, guns, and ammunition bought by the Indian agents at Battleford and Fort Pitt to prevent an armed mobilization of the Cree (Tobias 1983:536). Big Bear successfully out-maneuvered the officials and held his ceremony. However, a farm instructor was assaulted when he refused to distribute rations. This action resulted in an arrest, but not an outright uprising. NWMP Superintendent, Crozier, argued that an uprising was averted due to "the discipline of his men and to the actions of

Little Pine and Big Bear, who did all humanely possible to discourage any attack of the police (Tobias 1983: 536).”

Through sponsoring the Thirst Dance, Big Bear was able to discuss matters of rations and to receive a commitment from the chiefs to empower him as the spokesperson to deal with Dewdney (Dempsey 1984:123). The determination of Big Bear to hold a Sun Dance is another example of spirited resistance whereby he formed a unified council to deal with political treaty matters. In the bison hunting days before treaty, the chiefs discussed hunting strategies and political matters of peace treaties with enemy tribes (Dempsey 1984: 123). Dempsey states that instead of buffalo, the talk now regarded rations and instead of enemy tribes, the government (1984:123). The Cree chiefs acted in a unified manner by collectively presenting the issues of rations and unfulfilled treaty promises.

Big Bear's resistance to reserves

The first act of resistance concerned the establishment of contiguous reserves in the area of Cypress Hills. Secondly, Big Bear resisted a reserve site east of Frog Lake. In 1884 Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs; Vankoughnet, who was visiting the northwest to determine the state of Indian affairs, pressured Big Bear to take a reserve by November or rations would be cut off (Dempsey 1984: 121). Big Bear resisted and argued he would select a reserve the next spring. The resistance demonstrated by Big Bear is an example of false compliance for Big Bear wanted to obtain rations for his people, would not choose a reserve at that time, and rejected the reserve at Frog Lake. Big Bear utilized false compliance to strive for political unity with other Cree chiefs at this time.

Unity continues - The Duck Lake Council

Big Bear held council with the Cree chiefs from the Fort Carlton area at Duck Lake to discuss treaty matters in 1884 (Dempsey 1984: 136). In order to monitor their activities, Indian agents offered to feed the chiefs if they moved their meeting to the fort. The chiefs agreed and the council was moved to Fort Carlton. After the meeting, an itemized list of eighteen grievances was presented to Subagent Macrae. These grievances began with the suggestion that the £300,000 given to the HBC in the sale of Indian land be redirected to create a new treaty (Dempsey 1984: 138).

The grievances included the non-fulfilled treaty promises of the medicine chest and schools. Treaty items that were provided were not useful. The horses, oxen and cattle were too wild. The inferior wagons and implements were susceptible to breaking. Requests were included for more quality farming implements and clothing; the prevalent issues were food and the reserve lands [they wanted maps to ensure they were not being robbed]. The council was intent on having their requests fulfilled and intended to hold another council in a year and invite chiefs from other treaty areas. Dewdney and Reed viewed some of the grievances as valid but chose to view Big Bear as a troublemaker who was affiliated with Riel and the Métis community (Dempsey 1984: 139). The unity of the council of the Carlton chiefs and Big Bear produced evidence of unfulfilled treaty promises. The officials provided the usual treaty provisions and a small quantity of clothing. At the same time, officials surveilled the Cree taking stock of their available guns and ammunition.

During the annual treaty payments at Fort Pitt in 1884, Big Bear decided to locate to a reserve at Vermillion Creek. He requested food for the trip but Subagent Quinn was noncommittal with regard to his requests. Big Bear then said he would move the

following spring Dempsey 1984:148). Dempsey argues that Big Bear was hoping that Twin Wolverine's band would join him, thereby producing a larger reserve (1984: 184). Big Bear and his band wintered at Frog Lake and Big Bear hunted when he could to feed his family. He assured Quinn that he would take a reserve the next spring (1984: 148).

Big Bear chose the site at Spotted Creek near Buffalo Lake where Twin Wolverine was camping. This reserve was rejected by the majority of his band who wanted a reserve near Dog Rump between Saddle Lake and Frog Lake. Big Bear agreed to take a reserve but it was too late. The band became factionalized and some people began to follow Imasees. Big Bear's decision to take a reserve was precipitated by conditions which demanded it, for the people had suffered from hunger in overcrowded inadequate dwellings during that winter at Frog Lake (Dempsey 1984:148-149).

Big Bear desired a reserve near Poundmaker but that choice was refused by officials who wanted to eradicate any form of contiguous reserves that might result in large concentrations of Cree. The Vermillion Creek site was a delay so that Big Bear and Twin Wolverine could consolidate and obtain a larger reserve. Finally, Big Bear conceded and accepted his bands choice of a reserve at Dog Rump (Dempsey 1984: 148).

Big Bear's resistance to reserve settlement lasted from 1876 until 1885 and could be said to constitute dissimulation. He strategized to preserve unity which depended on Twin Wolverine joining with his band. The amalgamation of Twin Wolverine's band with Big Bear's band would have resulted in a larger concentration of Cree on two contiguous reserves. Big Bear was motivated to keep his family together and ultimately create a larger band but tension affected his band as the membership factionalized and many grew tired of Big Bear's ruse of taking reserve and then changing his mind. They

wanted aid to improve their quality of living conditions as promised by government officials. However, they were in desperate conditions and were not as aware of the larger situation - the slow implementation of treaty promises that other Cree were experiencing on reserves. Big Bear's band believed that if only Big Bear would take a reserve then they could obtain rations (Dempsey 1984: 149).

The events of 1885 marked a disastrous time for Big Bear. The Riel rebellion occurred and although Big Bear was uninvolved, there was much dissension in the area as the warriors led by Wandering Spirit raided Frog Lake in April of 1885 (Dempsey 1984: 153). Canadian forces mobilized to deal with the Riel Rebellion and were pre-occupied with that conflict, but they would soon organize to deal with the Frog Lake conflict. Big Bear heard of the raid and rushed to Frog Lake to prevent bloodshed. However, the warriors fueled by liquor and “pain killer” found in the stores let loose a rampage of looting stores. Nine people were killed and the rest of the community was taken captive. In 1885 Big Bear experienced a total loss of freedom because he was implicated in the Frog Lake Massacre. The Frog Lake Massacre was the pivotal moment for Big Bear’s freedom where acts considered criminal by Canada led to his imprisonment and his eventual return to Little Pine reserve, only to die.

Stonechild argues that Big Bear was implicated in the Frog Lake massacre simply by his presence at the event (1985:57). He was not shown any leniency for his attempts to maintain peace. Stonechild documents that on August 5th of 1885, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald requested murder charges be laid against those Indians involved in the Frog Lake massacre (1986:57).

Incarceration

When all the events of 1885 and the so-called North West Rebellion were over, Big Bear was found guilty on four charges of treason felony and sentenced to three years at the Stony Mountain penitentiary. In 1885, Big Bear was shackled and shipped by train to Stony Mountain in Manitoba. He served his sentence but grew ill and requested he be set free. The politicians, fearing embarrassment, devised a way to free him. Big Child and Star Blanket petitioned for a pardon of the remainder of Big Bear's sentence and he was released on January 27th of 1887. After a month long journey, Big Bear arrived at the home of his daughter, Earth Woman, on Little Pine reserve. Big Bear left for the spirit world on January 17th, 1888 (Dempsey 1984: 198).

Piapot was also imprisoned in for his acts of resistance in continuing rites in the ceremonial Sun Dance. In 1891 Piapot spent two months in the Regina prison for interfering with the dispensing of officers' duties (Pettipas 1994: 15). He was removed from his position as traditional chief in the 1895 (Pettipas 1991: 15). The official charge was drunkenness. Piapot continued his resistance during the early reserve years. His people continued to consider him their leader and refused to elect another chief, thus demonstrating the resistance of Piapot's people and the persistence of traditional leadership.

Concluding Remarks

During the administration of Vankoughnet in 1884, incidents over food distribution occurred. Tobias observes that in the Fort Pitt, Edmonton, and Crooked Lakes areas, farming instructors were assaulted and government storehouses were robbed. At Crooked Lake the NWMP intervened to restore order. Haytor Reed promised to restore assistance to the area and promised that the police would not take prisoners

from the reserve (Tobias 1983: 533). In 1885, the Métis clash with NWMP at Duck Lake coincided with a council at Sweet Grass reserve. The Sweet Grass Cree thought that they could urge rations from Indian Agent Rae (1983:543). In extreme hunger the Cree men along with their women and children traveled to Battleford. They found the community abandoned. Residents thought the Cree had joined forces with Riel and sought refuge with the NWMP, so the Cree then helped themselves to the available food in the houses and abandoned stores (Tobias 1983:543). Famine was common with the Treaty Four and Treaty Six Cree because policy directed the distribution of food in the form of rations.

In all, Dewdney's policy of rations in exchange for treaty resulted in Piapot and Big Bear eventually signing treaty adhesions. After Prime Minister MacDonald authorized complete control over Indian affairs to Dewdney in 1884, Dewdney devised policy to further his goals to settling Cree on reserves, to advance government goals of securing its economic interests, and for promoting Canadian settlement in the northwest (Tobias 1983: 537). Piapot and Big Bear wanted to maintain political unity to ensure treaty promises were upheld. Any acts that were contrary to the goals of the Canadian officials were viewed as rebellious, yet Piapot and Big Bear maintained their Cree political orientations for betterment of their bands. The situation relates to Farmer's argument that structural violence is violence exerted systematically and that any residual guilt felt by the government officials is blamed on the individuals (2001: 307). The literature demonstrates this point; such was the case for Big Bear, viewed as a troublemaker and as the instigator in Cree acts of rebellion.

The treaty was a colonial instrument for the acquisition of Indian title and in exchange, the Cree would receive reserve lands. Economic imperialism was evident in

the vertical exchange of all Cree territory for parcels of land and promises. Moreover, the reserve system was molded after imperial feudal interaction structures and entailed the vertical interaction of Canadian officials and reserve people, which manifested in the inequality of power between the Indian agent and the reserve people. Another view on the reserve related to structural violence is the marginalization of the Cree. Galtung compares violence, with locking people in, as in the case of being assigned to reserve or experiencing dislocation to a foreign land (1990: 293).

Alienation and repression restrict the people's freedom needs (Galtung 1990: 292). Dewdney sought to place the Cree on reserves and to maintain the interests of the Canadian government by keeping the Cree atomized, separated from each other and far away from Euro-Canadian settlers. The reserves provided a small parcel of land for Cree occupancy once the Cree were removed from traditional territory and resources. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was established by imperial powers to regulate Indian lands, and the BNA Act of 1867 transferred this authority to the nation of Canada. The Indian Act was the prime instrument that regulated Treaty Indians. Once the Cree accepted the treaty, they fell under its authority. Lux argues that in 1876:

while the treaties were solemnly negotiated, the government had enacted a comprehensive piece of legislation, The Indian Act. It presumed to define who was not and not an 'Indian', regulated Aboriginal people to the status of wards of the state, defined how reserves could be subdivided and surrendered, defined the political structure of bands and established the department of Indian Affairs. (2001: 32)

Finally, Lux maintains that it would be years before Aboriginal people learned of the existence of the Indian Act and they certainly never agreed to its terms (2001: 32).

Political imperialism is prominent in the assimilation policies that were intended to civilize the Cree by implementing a sedentary agricultural lifestyle on reserves. Lux

maintains that "The Indian Act defined the relationship between Aboriginal people and government and codified the assimilationist agenda" (2001: 32). The Cree were open to agriculture, but the government was slow to provide agricultural assistance. Agriculture was part of assimilation policy because officials felt sure that Euro-Canadian cultural values would naturally follow from it. The assimilation policy that was developed in the east became more aggressive in the west with the introduction of a direct prohibition on any form of tribal custom since these customs were viewed as barriers to civilization. Traditional leadership was considered a tribal vestige, which could be removed by the Indian Commissioner Dewdney when he implicated Big Bear and Poundmaker in the Frog Lake massacre. Tobias argues that charges against Big Bear and Poundmaker were designed to deprive the Cree movement for the revision of treaties of its leaders (1983:547).

Dewdney violated the promises made to Piapot and Big Bear at Cypress Hills by the Treaty commissioners and in the written treaties (Tobias 1983: 530). Dewdney's ideas represent structural violence against the Cree, with his policy of compulsion that set out to splinter the Cree by moving them to reserves that were not contiguous. Dewdney's policy regarding the distribution of rations violated the physical well-being of the Cree (Galtung 1969: 170-171). Following the imprisonment of Big Bear, Dewdney increased his subjugation of the Cree (Stonechild 1986:93).

Chapter V: Conclusion

Introduction

Piapot and Big Bear are remembered as traditional Cree leaders to be celebrated in the oral traditions and memories of the plains Cree people. Piapot spent the remainder of his years on his reserve in the Qu'Appelle Valley until his death in 1908 (Pettipas 1994: 16). He continued in his role as a traditional Nehiopwat chief, thus showing the persistence of Cree leadership practice. Big Bear's political endeavors ended in 1885 with the Frog Lake killings (Dempsey 1984: 182). Big Bear faced four charges of treason felony, was found guilty and sentenced to three years in Stony Mountain penitentiary. Big Bear was released in 1887 and died on the reserve of Little Pine (Dempsey 1984: 198). Ultimately, the irony demonstrated by Dempsey is that the remnants of Big Bear's band were scattered and had no reserve of their own (1984:200).

The *Royal Proclamation of 1763* had prohibited Indians from being dispossessed of their lands without a settlement and the treaty was to extinguish Indian land title in exchange for reserves, annuities and provisions for changing to a sedentary agricultural lifestyle. The treaty permitted the Cree to have lands of their choice in consultation with a commissioner. This was denied as Dewdney saw that band choices of contiguous reserves would provide the Cree with political leverage. From the beginning Big Bear was suspicious, as Dempsey asserts:

Big Bear was different. At first, he saw the treaty as a trap, as a means for making his people give up their freedom. Later, when reserve life became inevitable, he wanted the government help as long as it would take to for his people to become self-sufficient. (1984: 201)

The Literature

The historic literature specific to Piapot and Big Bear is imbued with the ethnocentric views of the time. Hunting and gathering societies were seen as inferior and incongruous with the Euro-Canadian sedentary agricultural lifestyle. The treaty offered a way for the Cree to subsist by adopting some of the Euro-Canadian production patterns, shifting from a hunting to an agricultural economy. The bison herds were declining, and disease affected the Cree, who were open to discuss an agreement. In the meantime, Piapot and Big Bear would continue traditional hunting and gathering while awaiting opportunities to discuss the treaty. In the end, as John L. Tobias shows, the Cree accepted the treaty because it offered a homeland and instruction for learning to farm (1992:149).

Cree narratives recorded by non-Native writers reflect the salvage ethnographic style of the time. Blowden Davies' paraphrasing of Abel Watetch's account of Piapot is an example of salvage ethnography from the early 20th century. Euro-Canadian writings of Cree accounts generally rely on the memory of the individual who was there at the time and are told from one sole perspective, as in the case of Watetch. Similarly, Fine Day was at the treaty signing, but the account offers the perspective of an individual narrative. It does not capture the collective account of the event (Fine Day 1926: 12-17). Recorded Cree accounts of the last days of the treaty era are few, and those that exist are of the kind exhibited in Watetch (2007) and Fine Day (1926).

Regrettably, then, voices of the Cree are few since there are only sparse Cree records of the treaty. Another example of the single Cree narrative is the account by Ahenakew, who briefly notes Big Bear's resistance to the treaty of 1876 (1973:158). Joseph Dion also offers a Cree perspective on the treaty era, depicting the treaty as the

prime catalyst for cultural change because of its effects on Cree mobility (1979:79). Contributions by such writers to literature are noteworthy as literary pieces but they only offer a part of the Cree history. An individual could provide just one perspective on the story, whereas the Cree practice of historical accounting involves a collective sharing of stories to obtain the clearest picture of a single event. The Cree relied on the collective retellings for historical accounting (Venne 1997:176). The reconstructions by Dempsey (1984) and by Stonechild and Waiser (1997) utilize the Cree tradition, as well as other published materials and government records, to enhance their reconstructions of the situation during the Treaty Six period.

Dempsey's biography of Big Bear is another historical reconstruction conducted in a novel genre (1984). Dempsey provides a view of Big Bear as a political leader who endeavored to maintain his people's interests. The account has much to offer, but it does seek to detail the policy of the government. The main themes of this work are related to Big Bear's resistance to treaty signing and his attempts to have treaty commitments honored by Canadian officials (Dempsey 1984 201).

The work by Stonechild and Waiser critiques the general view of the Indian-Métis uprising of 1885 (1997). These authors incorporate Cree oral tradition demonstrating the loyalty of the Treaty Cree during the Métis uprising. Another important point raised by Stonechild and Waiser coincides with Tobias's work: historical myth as perpetuated by Stanley grew to be generally accepted by Canadians as history (1983). This point is evident in Ray, who states that the process whereby Indians were settled onto reserves was a peaceful one (1998:228). Furniss agrees that national histories of Canada represent

the state as benevolent in its relations with Aboriginal people, which is a historical myth (1999:59).

Most notably, the accounts by the captives taken at the Frog Lake incident contain biased ethnocentric views. While there was cause for anxiety, prejudice colors their writings as both Gowanlock and Delaney write of the Indians and squaws. They make no reference to Cree people as men and women. Gowanlock regards the “warriors with cruel mouths and devilish eyes, well matched with their murderous clubs” (1999: 17). When Delaney is released from a captor, she claims to have been released from the power of a “painted devil” (1999: 70). Delaney describes Mr. Pritchard, who bought her away from her captors as a “truly good man” (1999:70). The captives at Frog Lake, in collaboration with a journalist provide ethnocentric views of the Cree (Carter 1997:86). Cameron’s description of a pipe ceremony is placed in the context of war, depicting the Cree as warring people (1926:85). These examples were written upon reflection about the event; they retain the anxiety of the situation and were reported from the cultural perspectives of the writers. Therefore, the accounts of the early Canadian settlers added to the wild-west mythology to compensate for their lack of cultural knowledge about the Cree. Generally, ethnocentric accounts of the settlers positioned the Cree as unwilling to let go of their tribal ways and resistant to the agricultural lifestyles offered by the treaty.

The dominant literary portrayals are biased, and they present the prominent view of the Cree as savage, and unwilling to let go of their tribal ways. Themes found in such literature of the time run parallel to the goals of the program of "directed and aggressive civilization that was characteristic of Indian policy and legislation in the period of 1870..."(Tobias 1991:136). In contrast, Stonechild and Waiser demonstrate the loyalty

of many of the Cree to their promises. They suggest that Big Bear was made an example of in the Frog Lake incident because of his reputation as a troublesome leader, whose band committed one of the “vilest acts in Canadian history” (1997:3, 207). The Frog Lake event of 1885 was a primer for Dewdney to institute even stiffer travel conditions from those located at Cypress Hills. The Policy of Compulsion was designed to prevent travel for the Cree (Stonechild 1986:93). Traditional cultural habits, such as the mobility and traditional leadership of the Cree were to be abolished because government officials viewed any lingering practices as obstructive to civilization efforts. Tobias argues that the Canadian government demonstrated its acceptance of the principles established by the colonial government regarding land title purchase and reserve cultural change on reserves by means of the treaties (1992:107).

Another historical reproduction appears in Pettipas, who captures perspectives of the Indigenous people. Her methodology derives information from both the recorded Cree narratives and government records (1994). Pettipas reconstructs Piapot as a leader who was unwilling to give up Cree religious practices using literature on Piapot, government documents, and Indian Affairs records (1994: 6). Pettipas emphasizes the spirited resistance of the Cree despite the prohibitions on ceremonialism within the *Indian Act*; that Indians were supervised by the Indian agents, and that the prohibitions were enforced by the NWMP [RCMP]. Pettipas argues for the persistence of Cree ceremonialism despite the extreme oppression that occurred within the confines of the reserve (1994:221). These circumstances are characteristic of the direct aggressive approach of the *Indian Act* on the Plains Cree.

Tobias' work on the subjugation of the Plains Cree offers a perspective depicting the Cree as a strong people, who, despite hunger and oppression by the officials, strategically unified to maintain their political autonomy (1983:526, 527). The Cree strategy for unity would have been most effective through contiguous reserves. Contiguous reserves would have provided a territory for a high concentration of Cree. The Cree would be then have been able to maintain a unified political front when addressing their treaty concerns. Prime Minister John A. Macdonald informed Dewdney that more police were under recruitment for the west and that the *Indian Act* was under amendment, which would permit Dewdney to arrest any Indian who was on another reserve without the permission of the local Indian official. Thus Dewdney was given the instruments to make his policy of compulsion effective (Tobias 1992: 224).

Dewdney's implementation of his policy of rations for treaty, and finally, his policy of compulsion directed a more aggressive approach to drive the Cree into submission. Dewdney was able to force the Cree away from the Fort Walsh area, but he was not able to terminate Cree endeavors for contiguous reserves. Piapot and Big Bear strategically diverted their efforts toward securing reserve locations near other Cree reserves. Piapot was successful in achieving a reserve near Pasquah, while Big Bear was unsuccessful in achieving a reserve near Poundmaker (Tobias 1983: 535).

Both Piapot and Big Bear were formidable Cree political leaders, but the Euro-Canadian officials derided their leadership position beginning from the HBC days. Indeed, the HBC refused to deal with Piapot as a trade chief because he was known to engage in warrior exploits (Pettipas 1994: 10). MacDougall denigrated Big Bear as a leader stereotyping him as a Saulteaux "mischief maker" (Morris 1991:174).

MacDougall's claim that Big Bear originated from Jackfish Lake and was not a true plains person, showed the lack of cultural knowledge government officials had of Cree customs of mobility. Traditional Cree leadership was to be destroyed owing to the belief that elements of tradition would obstruct progress and the expansion of the Canadian west. Thus, the views of HBC officials of Piapot and Big Bear would continue to distort the literature long after the decline of the fur trade.

The historical literature is distorted because certain or select facts are presented by the dominant group as the whole story. The Canadian officials in the 19th century operated with erroneous and ethnocentric views of Indigenous peoples. They relied on reports that were filled with images of a wild, lawless frontier, which had been written by an anxiety filled people with Euro-Canadian worldviews. These views were built upon myths from the 1500s and 1600s exploration era (DePasquale 2003:7).

These myths did not represent Indigenous peoples as rights-possessing peoples, or as individuals who valued the needs of their families and communities. The economic interests of the newcomers were foremost, as they desired ever more land and resources. The treaties were used to enter into agreements with the Cree to extinguish their ownership rights. The treaties also promised reserves and assistance for the transition to an agricultural lifestyle. The treaty making process occurred during a time of dwindling bison, upon which the Cree depended for survival. The destitution of the Cree is a central theme in much of the literature, as were the promises of assistance. Learning a sedentary agricultural lifestyle appeared acceptable during the famine crisis. Any resistance or undertakings for better conditions were viewed as rebellious. The idealism of the government's treaty promises, along with existing ethnocentric perceptions, affected the

perspectives of the writers in the Frog Lake accounts. The dominant nation had to rationalize any expropriation of lands, or even acts of violence, by creating myths. Thus, literature supports Galtung's argument that cultural violence is the legitimization for violence, and that it makes violence look right (1990:292).

Tobias argues against Stanley's depiction of the government as benevolent.

Stanley wrote:

The Canadian government was paternalistic and farsighted in offering the Indians a means to become civilized and assimilated into white society by the reserve system, and honest and fair minded in honoring legal commitments in the treaties. (1983: 519)

Tobias asserts that Stanley's interpretation became the accepted view which continues to be taught to students in Canada. This is evident in Ray's reference to the treaty period as a relatively peaceful era (1998:228) This standard interpretation was built on the bias of treaty officials who used previous biased accounts and who were ultimately concerned to protect their career goals. This background negates Cree authority, and the writers had the means to do so. Farmer notes that sources such as Stanley's historical account come reflect the inevitability of the clash of cultures and leave relevant points out (2004:309). Additionally, Farmer contends that inequality is structured and legitimated over time (2004:309). This is evinced in the lingering presumed superiority of the Euro-Canadian culture. Galtung argues that "cultural violence highlights the way in which the act of direct violence and the fact of structural violence are legitimized and thus rendered acceptable in society" (Galtung 1990:292). Furniss' critique of the historical portrayals of Collins and Sheffe (1979) and by Bowers and Garrod (1987) shows that these writers assumed Aboriginal peoples were inferior and sought to legitimate European expansion and domination (1999:57).

The critical incident of Frog Lake provided more impetus for Dewdney to accelerate his policy of subduing the Cree. Stonechild's account describes how the Uprising of 1885 affected relations between the government and the Cree as officials were anxious to gain control over the Indians (1987:88). Officials were desirous of maintaining public confidence. The settlers viewed the Indian people as hunters and warriors, devoid of ethics or political convictions. Big Bear's opposition to government policies – his so-called involvement in the rebellion -- was singled out as worthy of punishment (Stonechild 1987: 87).

Colonialism - Indian Policy

The Dominion of Canada developed Indian policy in the 1870s and exerted its authority over Plains Indians through the treaty system. It acquired Indian title to land through treaties and set forth the reserve system to facilitate cultural change. The consolidation of previous legislation became the *Indian Act of 1876*, which set the foundation for all future Indian legislation (Tobias 1991:131-132).

The *Indian Act of 1880* created the Department of Indian Affairs which empowered the Superintendent to impose the elective system. This regulation deprived traditional leaders of recognition by ensuring that the spokesmen of the bands were those elected by means of the *Indian Act*. Indian Affairs sought to remove Piapot as traditional chief, but his people resisted this measure by refusing elect another chief. Piapot remained traditional chief until his death in 1905 (Pettipas 1994:16). Big Bear was no longer a chief at the year of his death (Dempsey 1984:196).

Since the early days of the development of Indian policy, British imperialism initiated, enforced, and directed its administration in Canada. Political imperialism

influenced and oriented other subtypes of imperialism. Political imperialism itself can be viewed in the treaty that entails the surrender of lands in exchange for reserves. As part of the treaty promises of assistance and necessary items for the transition to agriculture, the treaties specified that the Indian people would "promise and engage, that they will, in all respects, obey and abide by the law..."(Morris 1991:333,355). The NWMP were established as a military presence in the west by 1873, ensuring law and order for the incoming settlers (Macleod 1985:189).

Communication was one-sided, as shown in Alexander Morris' treaty accounts. They were written from the perspective of the treaty officials with their goals to obtain treaty (1991). In contrast, there were no Cree writers recording the treaty events. The exception to this statement – Peter Erasmus originally interpreting for the Cree- was present at Treaty Six (1999: 239-264).

At the time, cultural imperialism is evident as Dewdney's administration forced the removal of Cree to reserves in order to institute the agricultural training program for reserve Indians (Tobias 1983:526, 1992:148). The *Indian Act* set out the procedure for administering Indians and lands, thus instituting its dominance and power over Indian peoples. Dewdney as Indian Commissioner, followed the orders of his superior Lawrence Vankoughnet, who in turn received instructions from the Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. These administrators would make decisions and create policy as designated in the *Indian Act* for the regulation of Indians and reserve lands. Reserves would provide a training ground where the Cree could learn Euro-Canadian cultural ways and values; these practices would serve as the model for the Cree to follow as was specified in the *Indian Act*.

The treaties were enacted as part of Indian policy as the instrument for acquiring land title in exchange for reserves. Political imperialism instituted a feudal structure on reserve to reinforce the *Indian Act* and to administer Indian affairs. The reserve system had been enacted in eastern Canada since the 1830s (Tobias 1992: 129). Piapot and Big Bear initially resisted pressure to select small isolated reserves because they wished to maintain Cree political unity on contiguous reserves.

Resistance

James Scott's study of everyday forms of resistance practiced by peasants in Malaysia is not entirely applicable to the resistance strategies employed by Piapot and Big Bear (1985: xvi). Piapot and Big Bear resisted treaties because they wanted to see how the government fulfilled the promises of earlier treaties (Tobias 1983: 524). Piapot and Big Bear engaged in what Scott refers to as "real resistance" -- a type of resistance that is "organized, systematic, and cooperative, principled or selfless, has revolutionary consequences, and/or embodies ideas or intentions that negate the basis of domination" (1985: 292).

Scott's forms of dissimulation and false compliance are applicable in varying degrees to tactics of resistance employed by Piapot and Big Bear. Piapot and Big Bear performed dissimulation by saying they would take a reserve and then retreating to another location. And, they pretended to take reserves. Clearly they were resisting the idea of reserves and the prospect of a diminished land base with limited freedom. Scott argues that the practice of everyday forms of resistance by subaltern groups demonstrates that they have not consented to the dominance of those who seek to exploit them (1985: xvi).

Spirited resistance was evinced in the spiritual and political fight for land and rights (Dowd 1992: 91). The spirited resistance of Piapot and Big Bear occurred at the ceremony of the Sun Dance, which was the appropriate place for the Cree to meet for political conferencing. Piapot and Big Bear met with other Cree leaders to discuss the unfulfilled treaty issues. These leaders resisted the Canadian nation state, struggling against their relegation to reserves not of Cree choosing. Structural violence occurred through the enactment of Dewdney's policy. He wanted the Cree to take treaty and settle on reserves (Tobias 1983: 526). In exchange for the surrender of land title, the Cree would receive reserves. The loss of lands through this process would eradicate the mobility of the Cree who traditionally utilized the natural resources of the land. With the loss of a land base and the relegation to reserves, the Cree would endure hunger due to the very limited availability of game and vegetation. Their economic interests were in jeopardy. Their quality of life decreased dramatically. Whereas the Cree once thrived on hunting and gathering, the treaty offered small parcels of land. Dewdney used their hunger and the promise of rations to coerce the Cree to take treaty (1983:526).

In the 1870s, the Cree leaders Piapot, Big Bear, and Little Pine sought to maintain their autonomy by convincing the government to limit the bison hunt (Tobias, 1991:217). The bison herds were on the decline and these Cree leaders wanted to preserve their way of life as long as they could. The matter of the bison was not addressed until 1877, however by the time a bison hunting ordinance was achieved it was ineffective in arresting the decline of the bison (Dyck 1970:20). The Cree viewed the disappearance of the bison as the disappearance of their way of life as they knew it. This hunting lifestyle involved mobility and adherence to seasonal rounds over Cree territory. With the bison

gone, and the way of life over, the treaty would provide an alternate way of life on a parcel of land.

In 1875, Piapot was not impressed with the treaty when he saw the document and requested additional items (Dempsey 1984: 60). He signed an adhesion only when he thought his requests would be fulfilled. Big Bear signed an adhesion in 1882 after he learned that his people wanted him to take treaty (Tobias 1982: 531). His band members were coerced by Dewdney, who used rations to extort treaty acceptance. It appears that Piapot and Big Bear both wanted to see whether the government would fulfill their promises.

Piapot's first resistance to selecting a reserve arose because of the unfulfilled treaty promises for assistance in the transition to agriculture. Because he realized the bison hunting days were over, Piapot was open to a new means of subsistence. Piapot's 1885 resistance to treaty adhesion can be viewed as an act of real resistance because he negotiated additional treaty provisions to assist in the transition to an agricultural lifestyle. He wanted to ensure that his people could make a living by farming, and strategically used the treaty to obtain more aid. Piapot was motivated to procure a reserve next to Pasquah, wishing to maintain unity of the Cree in a contiguous reserve system.

Big Bear took a reserve after three occasions of pretending to take a reserve but then changing his mind. The actions of Big Bear were not arbitrary; rather, they were a strategy to gain reserves in a contiguous system similar to Piapot's arrangement. Surely these two chiefs collaborated, as it appears that they wanted to maintain a united concentration of Cree. The treaty promises were meant to ensure the quality of

conditions for their people, for as leaders; these chiefs had ethical and political convictions.

Conclusion – Coercion Continues

Following the incarceration of Big Bear, Dewdney recommended that a pass system be implemented to effectively imprison the Cree on reserves (Stonechild 1986:60). The Cree would not be permitted to leave the reserve without the written permission of the Indian Department. The coercion forced on the Cree would continue as the reserve system would relegate the Cree to a position of peasantry. After 1885,"what little influence the Indians had over their lives was removed, and they became vulnerable to government whim, manipulation and mismanagement (Stonechild 1986: 61). Tobias argues that by 1890 through vigorous implementation of the Indian Act, Dewdney and his successor, Haytor Reed, had begun the process of making the Cree and administered people (Tobias 1983: 548). While they became subjected to Canadian legislation, however, Cree peoples never ceased to resist. In fact, it could be argued that spiritual resistance has become a new Cree tradition. It is this legacy of Big Bear and Piapot that carries forward to this day.

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