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The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine:
A Thematic History, 1734-1850

by Robert Coutts

Native Society and Economy in Transition
at the Forks, 1850-1900

by Diane Payment

NATIVE SOCIETY AND ECONOMY IN TRANSITION AT THE FORKS,
1850-1900

by

Diane Payment

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SETTLEMENT, 1850-70

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PART 1. NATIVE SOCIETY AND ECONOMY OF THE RED RIVER
SETTLEMENT, 1850-70

INTRODUCTION

The two decades from 1850 to 1870 were periods of new economic directions, social and political crises, and consolidation at the Forks. The settlements along both banks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers included the English-speaking Orkney, Scottish and "Halfbreed"¹ parishes of St. John's, Kildonan, St. Paul's, St. Peter's and St. Andrew's, locally referred to as the Lower Settlement, and the Métis and Canadien parishes of St. Boniface, St. Vital and St. Norbert (Sole River) or the Upper Settlement. The parishes of St. James and St. François-Xavier (White Horse Plain) on the north bank of the Assiniboine River were settled by Halfbreeds and Métis, the latter originating principally from the mission of Pembina (Dakota territory, USA). They had relocated north of the border in the early 1820s after the 49th parallel boundary agreement of 1818, although the presence of relatives and trading interests south of the border maintained regular communication.

The Métis and Halfbreeds have usually been described in terms of the fur trade, more specifically as the product of two differing fur trade traditions: the Montreal-based North West Company (1784-1821) and the London-based Hudson's Bay Company.² Concurrently, most authors have referred to a Roman Catholic vs. Protestant religion and French vs. English heritage³ as evidence of cultural and ethnic distinctions between the two Native groups. Studies of the past decade have challenged these views. Although the work of historians John Foster and Frits Pannekoek and economist Irene Spry have focused primarily on the Halfbreeds or

group of Native-English/Scot/Orkney/Scandinavian and other origins, increased emphasis has been placed on social and economic considerations rather than religion and ethnic origins.

The society at the Forks was both complex and varied. Whether one adheres to the thesis of a society "rife with gossip and slander, in which every man whatever his rank was intimately known and censoriously judged",⁴ or the view of more harmonious relations as reported by fur trader Alexander Ross and Bishop Provencher in the 1850s, more distinctions appear to have been made by "outsiders", such as the patriarchal Hudson's Bay Company, the rival churches and (by the 1860s) the "annexationist" Canadians than by the two Euro-Indian groups themselves. There is evidence of differences between the two populations of Native and European parentage on many issues in the history of the Red River Settlement in the years 1821-70, but there was also interaction along occupational and political lines and more specifically through intermarriage.

The 1850s and 1860s were years of transformation and adaptation for the British Hudson's Bay Company at the Forks. If the 1830-40s were "the halcyon of the Great Monopoly",⁵ the following decades were characterized as "a benevolent despotism tempered by riot".⁶ Its local authority, the Council of Assiniboia, was defied and the company responded to the demands of the inhabitants. Its fur trade monopoly, effectively challenged in 1849, was virtually laid down to rest in 1857. The Mētis free traders' commercial activities were tolerated, adopted and even periodically dominated those of the honourable company. A "modus vivendi" developed between the Mētis majority and the HBC. There were outstanding disputes and resentment. Only two Mētis ever achieved the status of gentlemen or commissioned officers in the company. Well-connected Halfbreeds could only aspire to the rank of

postmaster, while both groups dominated the servant or labouring ranks. Nonetheless, the "old order" of the HBC was much preferred by the M tis than to the intolerance and changes advocated by the annexationists from Upper Canada.

The M tis were clearly in the "avant-garde" of their Native compatriots with respect to nationalistic, political and social aspirations. Contrary to the Halfbreeds who aspired to assimilate into the British-Protestant world of their fathers, the M tis identity was based on their Amerindian and Canadien heritage. Their maternal heritage was acknowledged and they actually integrated the Canadien (Qu b cois) minority into their own culture and lifestyle, rather than vice versa, before 1870. The M tis also benefited from the support of the Catholic church on many issues. On the other hand, it appears "the paternal focus of the HBC social sphere resulted in the mobility, dispersal and ultimately assimilation of the Halfbreeds"⁷ who may have been betrayed by their company and their church.⁸

The history of the Forks during the period of 1850-70 must be viewed and told from the perspective of its main inhabitants, the M tis and their Native-English compatriots. There was an established, diverse Native society and economy at Red River by 1870. The Saulteaux (Ojibwa) and M tis had begun to gather at the Forks in the early 1800s while retired HBC officers and their Halfbreed families settled in large numbers after 1821. Based on their early occupancy as well as Native ancestry, the M tis claimed they were the "New Nation" of the North-West. They were also the most numerous and vocal group in the settlement. There is little doubt the story of the Selkirk settlers, Canadiens, Hudson's Bay Company, and other groups or interests represented in the settlement have received disproportionate emphasis in past interpretations. Even in the area of the administration of law and order, the "peace

and order of the settlement depended ultimately on the behaviour and support of the Métis".⁹

The years of 1850-70 were marked by political crises and factional disputes among both Métis and Halfbreeds. The region of the Forks also witnessed important developments during the difficult transitional period from a hunting to a mixed farming economy. There was a growing interdependence between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Métis majority. When the latter rose in final protest in 1869-70, it was not primarily against the "old order" but against the pretensions and machinations of a "new order": Canadians who wished to annex and control their homeland.

SOCIETY AND ECONOMY OF THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT

The Métis and Canadiens/The Halfbreeds, Scots, Orkney and
Canadiens

Settlement at the Forks increased after the union of the two fur trade companies in 1821. The retired servants and their families formed the bulk of this group, while a number of Freemen or gens libres who had traded in the Mackenzie and Athabasca districts since the cession of New France (in 1763) made their way to the settlement. These families were characterized by widespread endogamy which, after 1821, appears to have extended to intermarriage between both Native "mixed-blood" groups. The Indian customs of marriage "à la façon du pays" and serial monogamy were vigorously attacked by Protestant and Catholic missionaries, pressuring many to "christianize" their unions. The Native-English or Halfbreeds suffered particular pressure on this issue from the Protestant church and HBC officers.¹⁰ The ethnic and cultural distinctions between the two Euro-Indian groups were overemphasized and promoted by the churches, the HBC and European parent groups who sought to control the Métis and Halfbreeds. There is evidence of cross-marriage between Halfbreeds of HBC-Protestant background and Métis of Canadien/Scots (or NWC) -Catholic background in the parish registers of St. Boniface, St. John's and St. Andrew's. The activities of some of these families also suggests a higher

incidence of integration into the more cohesive, dominant Métis tradition. Likewise, there are strong indications of association between the Halfbreeds and Métis along economic lines in the 1850s, such as the case of the McDermot-Marion and Hallet-Letendre merchant families. There was also some political co-operation in 1847-49, 1857 and finally 1869-70. The arrival of a third group, the Canadians, in the late 1850s resulted in political and social realignments in the colony which frequently transcended matters of race and culture. This is particularly evident in the new commercial alliances of the 1850s and 1860s and in the various responses to the Riel resistance movement. The Métis and Halfbreeds often attended the same schools, irrespective of its denomination, participated to various extents in the government and administration of justice of the settlement, and formed trading partnerships.

The diversity and complexity of the social structure of the Forks in the 1850s and 1860s is well illustrated by the reaction of the various groups, both Native and non-Native, to the events of the period. The case of Recorder Adam Thom, which most of the population considered as "the cause of all the present evil", is a good example.¹¹ In all cases brought before him in the General Quarterly Court of the Council of Assiniboia, Thom was particularly disdainful of and prejudiced towards the French-speaking Métis and they vowed to dispose of him. The Métis petition of June 1850 had three objectives: an elective council and the removal of obstructionists Thom and Governor W.J. (Major) Caldwell. The signatories identified themselves as Métis "who have been nominated by the public to represent them"; among them were prominent traders and professionals such as Salomon Hamelin, William McMillan, Louis Letendre, William Dease, Louis Riel, Daniel McGillis, François Bruneau and Abraham

Montour.¹² According to one observer, the whole community including Mr. Ross, Mr. Logan and Dr. Bunn opposed Thom, although the Anglican clergyman "Rev. Mr. Cockran, from the pulpit, made an attempt to exert the sympathy of the congregation towards Mr. Thom...in this however he failed and his remarks were generally treated with contempt."¹³ HBC Governor George Simpson ordered Thom to resign his position as court recorder although he remained in the settlement until 1854. The Halfbreed population supported the M tis in their condemnation of his racist views. In the case of the sensational Foss-Pelly scandal¹⁴ which fragmented the English-speaking Native, European and clerical community, the Halfbreeds initially did not want Thom to preside at the trial. The M tis, however, did not become specifically involved in this dispute and the Halfbreeds remained on the sidelines in the M tis campaign and petition against Adam Thom. According to Frits Pannekoek's analysis, the country-born were divided on this and other issues, and frustrated in their attempts to support the more militant M tis by their clergy.¹⁵

On the issue of Major Caldwell's removal, the M tis and Halfbreeds essentially co-operated, although there were intrigues and mistrust in both groups. For example, Louis Riel, William Dease and Fran ois Bruneau petitioned in the major's favour after Eden Colville replaced him, invoking the principle of separation of government and HBC interests.¹⁶ The "discontented and disaffected" M tis who met at Louis Thibault's store in St. Boniface were quick to seize upon any opposition to the HBC which "Pensioner-Governor" Caldwell played upon to further his own position. The general M tis and Halfbreed population, however, was not persuaded and Mme Bouvet, the blacksmith's wife, reported "the Major was fit for nothing but to carry the pious pamphlets to the old women".¹⁷ There were perhaps more numerous occasions and issues, however, on which the M tis

and Halfbreeds had clearly diverse views. One example was the response to the various British and Canadian exploring expeditions which took place in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Although the Mētis were willing to be hired as guides and interpreters, they were suspicious of or feared Upper Canadian settlement and development schemes. In contrast, many Halfbreeds looked upon Canadian expansion as an alternative to annexation by the United States and a safeguard for Anglo-Protestant institutions. In 1857 Captain William Kennedy, a Halfbreed and former HBC employee, organized public forums in favour of the annexation of the Red River Settlement to Canada. Governor Simpson reported, with respect to Kennedy's activities on behalf of the Canadian Parliament, that his main supporters were the resentful Donald Gunn and friends. Louis Riel Sr., who presided at one of the annexationist's meetings, was persuaded by Bishop Taché to withdraw his support. According to Simpson's assessment, "The Roman Catholic portion of the population, guided I believe by the advice of their priests, did not join in the movement which was principally confined to the halfbreed, scotch and Orkney settlers, who acted also upon the advice of their clergy..."¹⁸ Contrary to old allegiances, the Catholic clergy or at least its bishop, rallied to the cause of the company as opposed to the Protestant clergy. This evidence supports Pannekoek's claim of the divisive role of the Protestant clergy at Red River. In the case of the Catholic clergy, however, evidence suggests a less antagonist or active role.

The Clergy and its Relationship with the Métis, Halfbreeds and Natives

Pannekoek's inquiry into the relationship between the Anglican Church and the country-born concluded that the church contributed to the "disintegration" of Red River society.¹⁹ A good case was made for Reverend Cockran's anti-French, anti-Catholic stand which prevented the concerted action of the Native-born. Pannekoek concluded:

...after 1860, it [religious animosity] grew to such intensity as to cause open sectarian strife. Prevented by religion then, from joining their racial brothers, the Métis, and prevented by race from participating fully in white European Red River, the Country-born without the unique national past of the Métis, became increasingly isolated and confused.²⁰

He adds that the country-born were unable to cope with the demographic pressures which placed a substantial burden on their means of livelihood. Their English-Canadian missionaries, such as Reverend Corbett (at Rupert's Land between 1852-55 and 1858-63), led them "to think of themselves as Englishmen rather than mixed-bloods"²¹ and subject to "the joint tyrannies of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Church of Rome".²² He rallied some Halfbreeds, such as James Ross, to the Crown Colony movement by appealing to their British patriotism and anti-Catholic sentiment. In the years of political agitation which followed, the Halfbreeds were divided on the issue of Canadian annexation or Crown Colony status. The Métis, on the other hand, became more reconciled and even supportive of the HBC, especially after their increased representation in the Council of Assiniboia in 1857. This view is supported by M. Giraud,²³ particularly with respect to the campaign of Bishop Taché: "qui rendant hommage à l'impartialité de la justice établie par la Compagnie...aux bienfaits de l'oeuvre qu'elle avait

réalisée parmi les indigènes auxquels l'exercice de son monopole commercial avait évité les ravages de l'alcoolisme...dconseillait tout changement de gouvernement."²⁴

It seems evident, however, that many of the Catholic secular clergy and Oblate Fathers (OMI) of the diocese were not as supportive of the company. Among the Métis and Canadiens themselves, particularly leaders such as Louis Riel, Narcisse Marion and the Gingras brothers, there was a long-lasting aversion to the HBC's commercial and administrative control. It could be argued that both the Catholic church and the company used the Métis to further their respective interests. Bishops Provencher (1818-53) and Taché (1854-94) both viewed the Métis as "demi-sauvages" who should be christianized and acculturated to the ways of their more "civilized" Canadian compatriots. They strove to contain the nationalist and commercial aspirations of the Métis and promoted the adoption of an agricultural economy and sedentary lifestyle. On the other hand, the HBC used the tactic of divide and rule to weaken Métis resistance. "Revolutionaries" such as Narcisse Marion and Louis Riel were not appointed to the administrative council whereas the leadership aspirations of "loyalists" such as William Dease, Salomon Hamelin and Maximilien Genthon were cultivated and would ultimately (in 1869-70) prove useful.

Whereas the Catholic bishops were essentially elitist, dogmatic and pro-Canadien, secular priests such as G. Belcourt (in the region until 1862), J.-N. Ritchot, G. Dugas and to a lesser extent, L. Laflèche (the "shaman" of Grand Coteau) were more adapted to Métis ways and supportive of their claims. They, along with local Oblates Fathers Mestre, Lacombe and André, accompanied the Métis on their hunts in the 1850s and 1860s. Governor Simpson commented unfavourably on the "subversive" political activities of Father Bermond, an Oblate missionary in St. Boniface:

...a foreigner (a Frenchman), ignorant of English laws and history, he appears to look upon the Company in no other light than that of usurper, tyrannically claiming rights and powers adverse to the interests of the Halfbreed population whom he regards as lords of the soil. He takes a leading part in political movements...exceedingly vehement in his declamations. Backed as he is in his political views by half of the population who form his congregation, and having the sympathy of the other half...I fear will prove a very troublesome character.²⁵

Simpson was known not to be particularly supportive of the christianization and settlement policies of both the Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy, especially in the early years of the settlement. But none aroused his wrath like the rebellious l'abbé Belcourt, "the apostle of the Métis". Belcourt's actions soured relations between the Catholic clergy and the company in the 1840s and early 1850s. He attracted many Métis to Pembina (1848) and St. Joseph or St. Joe (1850) when he relocated there, reinforcing the free trade base and opposition to the HBC. Belcourt did not consider the Métis and Saulteaux of his missions "uncivilized". He petitioned in their favour to the American government for treaty land rights, and declared the HBC had no right to charge the Métis for land at Red River.²⁶ Belcourt's integration into the Native and Métis lifestyle was exceptional. His ministry could be described as both temporal and spiritual. L'abbé Ritchot had a similar outlook in the 1860s. Although initially critical of the Métis hunt and lifestyle, his views altered upon firsthand observations. He declared to Louis Schmidt,

Ah, ce n'est pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense [la chasse au bison], ce n'est pas toujours un voyage d'agrément. Il faut travailler d'ûr parfois. C'est un métier comme un autre, enfin. Les paresseux ne s'y enrichissent pas.²⁷

The Catholic missionaries of Red River spoke Saulteaux and Cree. In the pre-1870 period, they did not impose French for religious instruction although admittedly schools

gave instruction in French. There is no evidence, however, that the M tis resented the use of French which they adapted to their own culture in the form of a distinctive m tchif (French-Cree) dialect. The M tis of the Forks were predominantly Catholic by the 1850s, although there is evidence they would marry or attend services at a Protestant mission if circumstances dictated or when at an isolated fur trade post. The same principle applied to education. Some Catholic M tis boys (particularly those with fathers associated with the HBC) attended the English school, possibly for a bilingual education. Ambroise Fisher, nephew of Chief Trader Henry Fisher, was one example. Another officer, James Rowand, sent his sons to the Protestant St. John's College although his daughters boarded at the Grey Nuns Convent in St. Boniface.

However, the two official churches were not as tolerant of each other's ministry. The Catholic and Protestant clergy theoretically had similar objectives with respect to education and the control of liquor or temperance movements. On many domestic issues, they voted together in the Council of Assiniboia, and both promoted the interests of their respective European ethnic origins. The main distinction, it would appear, was in the character of the individual priests in the Catholic clergy who integrated into M tis society; they did not attempt to change its "ambulant" lifestyle, at least not until the end of the buffalo economy, and they related to the M tis-Canadien nationalism. L'abb  Ritchot's leading role in the resistance of 1869-70 was an outstanding reflection of those convictions. Ritchot considered St. Norbert a microcosm of French-Canadian society but he was also convinced of the M tis' "droits des gens" as proprietors of the soil and a "nation" with established institutions, a religious tradition and a distinctive language. These convictions were the basis of the Catholic clergy's support of the M tis during the resistance

of 1869-70. The Protestant clergy did not exhibit the same attitude and did not promote the Halfbreeds' cultural and political aspirations as a Native people. Its views were more in line with that of the "civilized" ideals of the Anglo-European and Canadian inhabitants of the settlement.

The Anglican, Presbyterian and Catholic missionaries also sought converts among the Saulteaux around the Forks. They instructed, pleaded and cajoled them with very limited overall success. Reverend Cockran at St. Peter's and Bishop Provencher at St. Boniface accomplished only nominal conversions and were unable to "settle" the Indians. The bilingual Father Belcourt attracted some Ojibwa to Wabassimong (St. Paul) but only because he accommodated their needs or was tolerant of their traditional beliefs and lifestyles.

The Amerindian Population and Interaction with the Métis and Halfbreeds

There were a number of bands of Ojibwa, Swampy Cree and Assiniboine in the District of Assiniboia. They intermarried with the Métis and Halfbreeds and generally were on good terms with them. The majority of Ojibwa at the former Catholic mission of Wabassimong near St. François-Xavier followed Belcourt to the Pembina/Turtle Mountain region in the 1850s. However, they maintained intimate economic and social links with their Métis relatives in the settlement. The Cree bands to the north and northwest were also an important element of the independent hunting and trading network of the Métis, Halfbreeds and Amerindians at Red River. Their main source of opposition were the Dakota and Assiniboine bands to the southwest, traditional rivals in the increasingly bitter race for buffalo meat, robes and

other furs. The buffalo hunts brought the Métis and their Ojibwa and Cree allies into the Dakota hunting grounds and since the 1820s, Dakota and Teton bands had retaliated with numerous "unfriendly visits" to Red River. With declining opportunities in the fur trade, the Dakota often came to the settlement for food and shelter. Many Cree and Ojibwa were forced to take seasonal employment as canoe men, cart drivers and labourers on parish farms.

A number of Ojibwa bands had been cultivating their own farms or vegetable gardens on the Assiniboine River and on the shores of Lake Manitoba, north and west of the Forks for some time.²⁸ In 1821, l'abbé Dumoulin at Pembina reported the Indians in his charge were planting at four different localities, of which the main one was on the Roseau River, in British territory. Native agriculture had both subsistence and commercial objectives as produce was sold to the fur traders. It remained complementary to hunting and fishing but attested to the persistence of a traditional activity as well as adaptation to the fur trade economy.

Some authors have suggested the Métis undermined the Natives' role as post provisioners during the period 1821-70 and their western hunts aggravated Plains/Woodland conflicts.²⁹ There is little doubt the scarcity of buffalo increased the tensions and rivalries between all interested parties. The particularly unfavourable weather patterns (droughts, floods and early frosts) at the settlement in the 1850s increased the pressures of the hunt for provisions. There is evidence the Métis were particularly aggressive in their search for buffalo during those years and undermined the position of the Dakota. In 1852 "the wild cattle were numerous and not far off but Mr. Grant [Cuthbert] led the people far to the south in search of the Sioux".³⁰ The confrontation between the Métis and Dakota at Grand Coteau on 12-14 July 1851 was the climax of this conflict. The

Métis caravan from the White Horse Plain, composed of 60 families, was led by Baptiste Falcon (captain) and Moïse Breland and James Whitford (councillors). The party included about 200 carts, 70 hunters, and over 100 women and children. L'abbé Laflèche accompanied the group as chaplain. According to one account they came upon a party of over 1,000 "Sioux" (Dakota) at Grand Coteau (between the Souris and Cheyenne rivers in present-day North Dakota). The carts were put in a defensive position, that is, in a circle surrounded with entrenchments. The women and children were placed in a dugout within the circle. The outnumbered Métis attributed their victory to the religious exhortations and "miraculous" interventions of l'abbé Laflèche whom the Dakota reportedly viewed as a shaman and Manitou.³¹ Fifteen Dakota were killed and more were wounded; the Métis losses included three wounded who were taken prisoner (Antoine Desjarlais, Louison Malaterre and Louison Morin). Malaterre bore the brunt of the vengeance and was executed by the Dakota. The "steady and well-organized"³² resistance won the Métis the title of "Masters of the Plains", but the victory brought only an uneasy truce. Belcourt reported, "les Sioux tremblent au nom des Métis qu'ils craignent comme des Manitous."³³

Increased economic and social interaction between the Dakota and Métis strengthened the ties between them. A number of intermarried Métis-"Sioux" families, such as the Rainvilles, Lafrenières and Larocques, acted as intermediaries in encounters between the Dakota and Saulteaux along the boundary and at Red River in the 1850s and 1860s. The Dakota came for horses and oxen and to seek refuge from the American authorities who refused to pay their treaty indemnity. Competition for the declining plains resources and resentment against the Métis nevertheless erupted again into open confrontation in the Pembina Hills in 1858. Two Red River Métis, John Beads and

Louis Bousquet, died. In 1862, in the midst of a campaign of annihilation by the US cavalry, a deputation of 90 Dakota asked for political asylum in Assiniboia. About 600 desperate and starving Dakota sought refuge at Fort Garry during the winter of 1863-64. In the summer of 1865, a party of 50 visited Fort Garry where they were given tobacco, flour, tea and pemmican.³⁴ The defeated and humiliated American Dakota were the object of much resentment by the local Saulteaux who feared an invasion of their territory by their traditional enemies. In 1865 a party from Red Lake attacked and killed a group of Dakota near Fort Garry.³⁵ Some Dakota relatives visited Riel and the Métis at St. Norbert in a gesture of peace and solidarity in 1869, while others, including George "Shaman" Racette, were recruited by Schultz and the Canadian Party on the promise of future considerations.³⁶ However, the weakened and divided bands around the Forks (including Peguis' Saulteaux) were generally unwilling participants or bystanders in the events of 1869-70.

The Buffalo Hunt, Free Trade and Commerce, Agriculture and Other Economic Activities

Although the buffalo herds were diminishing as early as the 1850s, the hunt and associated trade remained the base and centre of Métis economic life prior to 1870. Their way of life has been described as "nomadic self-sufficiency"³⁷ based on "common-property resources",³⁸ or the sharing of the natural products of the country such as game, fish, water, timber and wild plants. The reasons for the rapid decline of the buffalo are numerous and disputed. The 1850s and 1860s were years of rising demand for provisions and robes. In 1856, for example, 7,500 robes were brought by

the M tis to southern markets in Dakota and Minnesota.³⁹ Increased trade rivalry and new American markets, however, altered the traditional economic networks. At Red River, there was an inflow of outsiders from the 1840s onward. Missionaries, big game hunters, explorers, surveyors, traders and settlers all contributed to the increased pressure on the resources. The population increased from 2,427 in 1831 to 5,291 in 1849, 6,623 in 1856 and 12,228 in 1870.⁴⁰ The increased availability of repeater rifles and whiskey also came into play. Although the heavier hunting of the M tis and Natives was a factor in the decline of the buffalo, J.G. Nelson argues convincingly that "the careful and systematic regulation of the buffalo hunt among the Plains Indians and later, the M tis, was at least in part conservationist in effect and probably in intention".⁴¹ As Irene Spry has incisively concluded, the transition from a "common-property" resource to an "open-access" resource effectively destroyed the buffalo.⁴²

By the early 1850s the hunters of Red River and the White Horse Plain did not rendezvous at Pembina. The "self-sufficient" White Horse Plain group was hunting further west and south, often wintering at camps in the Touchwood Hills, Cypress Hills, and other points north and west. The more commercially oriented St. Boniface/St. Norbert "free trading" group was primarily concerned with provisions for the pemmican trade at the Forks and to the south, and the sale of robes and manufactured products from its depots. Marketable furs and products other than buffalo were an important part of their fur trade. They were primarily traders, not hunters, and the buffalo trade was only one feature of their diversified activities.

The buffalo hunt fluctuated with the climatic conditions. In 1858 it was a complete failure which

arose from early winter and heavy fall of snow... so deep that oxen and horses could get nothing to feed on in the plains...67 [persons] died of starvation...as hunters had been out of firewood, they burnt upwards of 50 of their carts. Whole collection of Pemmican this season at Red River and White Horse Plain and Pembina...only trifle over 300 bags.43

The early 1860s were years of abundance, but 1868 marked the disappearance of the herds from Red River which, according to witness Louis Schmidt, "provoqua ni plus ni moins une révolution complète de la vie du pays et de son économie...Tout le buffalo était de l'autre côté du Missouri, ou refoulé vers l'Ouest dans le Montana, sur les bords de la rivière au Lait et au-delà."44

Free trade, the nemesis of the Hudson's Bay Company, embodied the principles of Métis independence and resourcefulness. Since the 1840s, more specifically since the dismissal of the case against Pierre Guillaume Sayer at the courthouse of the District of Assiniboia in 1849, the Métis' freedom to trade competitively was an established practice. But the HBC did not adhere to their principle that "as natives of the Country, they enjoy the privilege of trading with the Indians, and of disposing of the fruit of their labor to the best advantage, whenever that can be secured, whether on British or American soil".45 Nonetheless, the company could no longer enforce its monopoly and soon concluded it was in its best interests to do business with the independent traders. Its officers also used the tactic of divide and rule, that is, they offered licenses and generous advances to ambitious traders who were willing to work as "secret agents" for the company at strategic posts along the US boundary and in the "difficult" Carlton, Swan River and English River districts.

The explosion of free trade in the 1850s injected a new dynamism into the economy of the Forks. The settlement

became the headquarters of a network of Métis traders, freighters and hunters who followed the trails south to St. Paul and west to the Saskatchewan district. According to one report, 70 or 80 free traders with more than 300 carts loaded with whiskey, cloth and tea crossed the Plains to the Saskatchewan in 1855-56, while over 500 left Pembina and the Red River Settlement for St. Paul or St. Anthony.⁴⁶ The HBC responded by shifting its principal trade route south by cart and rail to New York via St. Paul rather than along the traditional route through Hudson Bay.

The HBC remained one of the main employers in the fur trade, but the Métis were now in a better bargaining position vis-à-vis the company. Casual and seasonal employment, low wages (usually in advances from company stores), and poor prospects of advancement beyond the rank of labourers and occasionally postmasters, were some of the grievances the Métis had against the HBC. Simpson's and the company's discriminatory attitudes toward French-Canadians and Métis "servants" were also a known fact. Chief traders Henry Fisher and Georges Deschambeault both reiterated this fact and that of their children's limited prospects in the company.⁴⁷ Some writers have referred to "a partnership of trader and native"⁴⁸ and "enduring, reciprocal benefits of employment"⁴⁹ with respect to the HBC's business practices. This situation existed to some extent by the late 1850s, when the more independent and economically diversified Métis were able to negotiate better contracts from the constrained company. But there is little evidence this practice was adopted "benevolently" by the HBC or that it contributed willingly to the Métis quest for economic opportunity and upward mobility.⁵⁰

Among the successful free traders or gens libres based at Red River in the 1850s were Métis Baptiste and Antoine Larocque, John Dease, Louis and Baptiste Letendre, William

McMillan and Abraham Montour, and Halfbreeds James Sinclair (periodically working for the HBC), Thomas Logan, Henry Cook, William Bird and Thomas Thomas.⁵¹ They owned Red River cart trains manned by shagannappies which could haul about 800 pounds each and travel 15 to 20 miles on a good day. There were also merchants who owned stores and entered into contracts with freighters and independent traders. Among them were Narcisse Marion who owned a store or provisioning depot in St. Boniface, Antoine and François Gingras who operated out of the Forks and Pembina-St. Joe, Louis Thibeault of St. Boniface, Norman Kittson, and Andrew McDermot (with son-in-law A.G.B. Bannatyne) in the vicinity of Fort Garry. Norman Kittson, who was located at St. Joe (Walhalla), and Joseph Rolette at Pembina operated in association with their Canadien and Métis relatives at the Forks. The McDermot, Marion, Kittson and Gingras alliance was cemented by intermarriage. This local "business elite" competed successfully with the HBC in the 1850s, but in the 1860s it became "reconciled" to the company. The "old order" united to thwart the commercial activities of the "new order": the Canadians.

Other important free traders from nearby St. Norbert, St. Vital and St. François-Xavier were directing their activities to the North-West in the 1850s. Urbain and Norbert Delorme, Alexis and Pascal Breland, Ecapow (Isidore) Dumont and the McGillises (Cuthbert, Alex and William) established depots in the Swan River and Saskatchewan districts; Pierre Chrysologue Pambrun went to Lac la Biche, Pierre Bruce to Ile à la Crosse and the Chartrand brothers (Michel and Pierre) controlled the trade in the Lake Manitoba district. It was reported the free traders' network extended to the Athabasca-Mackenzie districts where François Beaulieu and extended family were operating.

The opposition, that is the free traders, forced the HBC to offer higher advances in cash and better prices in

areas of dispute or intense rivalry such as the Red and Swan River districts. It also wooed enterprising traders like Henry Fisher, James McKay, and later Sinclair and Kittson themselves. But increased competition had its negative side. It was reported that Kittson, Larocque and the McGillises were selling rum to the Indians.⁵² Kittson introduced steamboat navigation between St. Paul and the Red River Settlement, thus speeding the transportation of goods. His main trade was in buffalo robes, although tongues and furs such as marten, fox and lynx were prime articles. The staff at Fort Garry lamented the loss of these high priced articles to the Americans in the 1850s and the fact that traders would often offer them "trash consisting of wolves, martens and badgers..."⁵³

By the late 1850s and early 1860s, the HBC was in many cases successfully outbidding the independents for furs and provisions which they knew came from the American side. The strategy worked but at the cost of a lower profit margin. Other less successful tactics included the hiring of fewer Métis and Canadiens and the request for British troops which were posted in the colony between 1857 and 1861. One of its most successful "coups" was to opt for the St. Paul transport route rather than the slow and costly York Factory route.

The period 1850 to 1870 also witnessed important agricultural developments. The Native inhabitants of the Forks diversified their activities. Mixed farming, particularly livestock raising, became more widespread and although grain farming was necessarily more "subsistence" than "profit" oriented, more land was cultivated. Hay, wheat and oats were the most essential crops. Among the important Métis landowners who cultivated between 30 and 50 acres of wheat, oats and barley were Emmanuel Champagne of St. Norbert, Pierre Gladu of St. Vital, the Lagimodières of St. Boniface and Urbain Delorme of St. François-Xavier.⁵⁴

During the 1860s, the Métis and Halfbreeds became increasingly concerned about the security of their traditional "staked claims": wild hay privileges, wood lots and "right of common" pastures. Although some purchased claims and sales were registered by the HBC, the incomplete record keeping, outstanding claims and the "custom of the country" created a complex situation which could prove disadvantageous in the advent of an increased demand for agricultural lands by non-Native settlers.

The climatic conditions of the Forks did not facilitate grain production and "fur trade agriculture",⁵⁵ with its low prices and limited markets, was not an economically rewarding occupation. Mechanical farming equipment was unavailable or very expensive until the post-1870 period. The tendency of past historical writing has been to comment negatively on the farming practices and attitudes of the Métis and Halfbreeds, and to stress the inherent conflict between fur trade and agriculture.⁵⁶ There is evidence, however, that the Euro-Indian population was combining both occupations or responding to the risks and uncertainties of agriculture by associating it with more profitable pursuits such as freighting and trading.⁵⁷ The Métis of the Upper Settlement were primarily engaged in trade while a higher proportion of the Halfbreeds of the Lower Settlement were engaged in farming. The growing commercial class of Métis at the Forks was supplying the inhabitants with flour, fresh meat, pemmican and other provisions. They also developed salt production (the 'salines'), pursued the cultivation of wild rice and seneca root, and until the early 1870s, gathered maple sugar sap just above the Indian settlement (St. Peter's) and in the wooded plains to the southwest. The fisheries were another small but important occupation related to the food industry of Red River. The Red and Assiniboine were teeming with catfish, pickerel, pike,

goldeye and sturgeon. The fall and winter catches of whitefish at Grand Marais and pickerel at Oak Point (St. Laurent) were important staples for sick and poor alike, especially in years of drought and early frosts. Vegetable gardens, particularly root crops, were grown by most of the inhabitants. The cost of living was very high at the Forks in the 1850s and 1860s, and the Métis endeavoured to be as self-reliant as possible and independent of company stores.⁵⁸ This was not always possible, however, and there are numerous references to famines and collections to alleviate the misery. According to one report in 1853, "There are some french people starving and I heard a man named Pépin who was even eating hides and strings...but the french and english people gathered money..."⁵⁹ The grasshopper epidemic of 1868 destroyed most of the crops and famine threatened the parishes which were most dependent on agriculture. The minutes of the Executive Relief Committee reveal that in the Upper Settlement, the more sedentary parishes of St. Boniface and St. Vital suffered the most and the inhabitants who had diversified their means of livelihood made fewer claims to the committee.⁶⁰ One outstanding example was the primarily pemmican provisioning and trading community of Pointe à Grouette (later parish of Ste. Agathe), which reported no needy families.

The dichotomy of the Red River economy prior to 1870, that is the uncertainty of both the buffalo hunt and agriculture,⁶¹ prevented the emergence of independent and viable commercial activities. Attempts at diversification and industrial development were expensive and risky. The water-powered wool mill project attempted by the consortium of Henry Fisher, Louis Riel, François Bruneau, Pierre Gladu and Charles Larence in 1857 is one example. The factory equipment, transported at great cost from Lower Canada, faced the insurmountable odds of both competition and monopoly from the HBC.

During the period of 1850 to 1870, the mixed economy of the settlement ensured its survival but with little opportunity for growth or prosperity. Geography, declining resources, limited markets and the administrative constraints of the HBC limited and, to some extent, thwarted the initiatives of its Native inhabitants.

THE METIS AND HALFBREEDS AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HUDSON'S
BAY COMPANY IN THE 1850s AND 1860s

This period was marked by an economic transition from monopoly to competition with the Métis and Halfbreed Red River traders in the settlement. The HBC was compelled to meet some of the claims of the free traders and offer higher advances. It also bought their furs, provisions and robes whether they had been procured in British or American territory. Influential and powerful traders such as Sinclair, McDermot, Kittson and McKay were courted by the company and by the late 1850s-early 1860s, there was a definite "rapprochement" on the principle of "mutual interests". The hunting and freighting group retained its mistrust of company modus operandi; however, labour shortages and competition improved its position. Its members did not hesitate to strike or abandon the boat brigades to protest unacceptable rates or working conditions.

The Council of Assiniboia

The Red River Settlement was a portion of the original 1811 Selkirk Grant, an area "which extended fifty miles in all directions from the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers".⁶² The 1818 British-American boundary agreement extended the 49th parallel across the prairies. The

settlement subsequently comprised an area described as "in breadth four miles from the nearest point of either river [Red and Assiniboine] and in length four miles from the highest or lowest permanent dwelling".⁶³ It was under the administrative authority of the District of Assiniboia established in 1841. The government of Assiniboia was composed of a governor, an appointed council and committees to look after public works, economy, education, administration of justice (civil and 'petty' crime), and the maintenance of order or local constabulary. Both governors, Recorder F.G. Johnson (1855-58) and W. Mactavish (1858-69), were considered impartial if not particularly skillful administrators, while the establishment of a more bilingual judiciary did much to pacify if not completely reconcile the Métis majority.

In the Council of Assiniboia, sometimes referred to as the "administrative tool" of the company, there were new directions and alliances. Métis representation was increased, although its members were selected from a loyalist group and not elected. The governor and council were unable to administer law and order without both the passive acquiescence and active support of the Native population.⁶⁴ By force of numbers and military effectiveness, the Métis controlled the situation when united in a common cause, such as in the free trade issue of 1846-49, the revocation of Recorder Adam Thom's commission in 1850, petitions to the governor and council of the company in the 1850s, and ultimately in the resistance to the machinations of the Upper Canadians in 1869. Both Métis and Halfbreeds were represented in the local courts, acted as constables and were active in public works projects.

The council was dominated by the Anglican and Catholic clergymen who claimed to represent the wishes of "their flocks". Reverend Cockran and Bishop Provencher disagreed

on many issues in the 1850s and Cockran's virulent anti-Catholicism aggravated the situation. Bishops Taché, who was nominated to the council in 1858, and Anderson, who sat on the council between 1858 and 1865, were more conciliatory. Increased representation of the general population in the council was a prerequisite for better relations between the HBC and the inhabitants of the settlement. Most of the representatives were old company officers of European origin, and after 1857, the Métis and 'Halfbreed' elite or merchant group was represented. The interests of the Métis hunters and freighters, however, were never adequately represented as none ever sat on the council.

Métis and Halfbreed Representation and Alliances

In a petition to Governor Simpson in 1850, the Métis asked for an elected council and judiciary. They reminded him, "You promised us last year that we should have counsellors chosen from our nation by ourselves...we have often been called a band of savages, and at this time it may be said with truth; for we are now without justice."⁶⁵ Democratic elections were not introduced but the principles of consultation and "popular" representation became general practice. At the demand of both the Métis and Halfbreeds, the ineffective "Pensioner" governor, Major Caldwell, was temporarily removed but later reinstated when the Métis invoked the principle of the separation of the HBC's commercial and administrative interests. Wary of Colville's joint appointment as both governor of Assiniboia and Rupert's Land, some Métis rallied to support the more independent Caldwell. Louis Riel (père) was a leader in that movement against the company and it was reported his

"party" of Canadiens and Métis were trying to gain influence in the settlement.

In 1849 Bishop Provencher proposed the candidacies of two Canadiens, Narcisse Marion and Maximilien Genthon, and three Métis, François Bruneau, Salomon Hamelin and Pascal Breland, as well as l'abbé Louis Laflèche to the council. Simpson rejected the nomination of Marion (an independent trader), remarked that the others were ignorant and illiterate, but supported Laflèche's nomination.⁶⁶ This increased the Canadian, but more specifically the clerical representation in the council.

New appointments were made to the council in 1851, and in 1853 François Bruneau, a Métis, was appointed. Other Métis were appointed in 1857 and 1858, but neither Simpson or Taché put forth Riel's candidacy. It is generally believed Riel's record against the HBC and his association with Belcourt and the free traders at Pembina alienated him from the company. Riel was absent from the settlement in 1857-58 when he travelled to Lower Canada to pursue his milling scheme. He became more involved in generally unsuccessful commercial ventures between 1852 and 1862, but it is possible that if an early death in 1864 had not claimed him, "the agitator" would have played a more active role in the political affairs of the colony during the transition from HBC to Canadian administration.

The year 1857 was a turning point in the affairs of the HBC in British North America. A committee of the British House of Commons was asked to investigate the company's status and commercial activities in Rupert's Land. Its license was up for renewal and there was both political and commercial opposition to its monopoly. Both the company and the Native inhabitants made submissions to the committee. Among the areas investigated were the HBC's trade monopoly and government, the status of Halfbreeds and Indians, and the political future of Rupert's Land. The commission

reported positively on the settlement potential of the territory and recommended its eventual annexation to Canada. The inquiry fostered a realignment of parties in the Red River Settlement. Although in agreement on the issue of unrestricted trade, the two mixed-blood populations adopted a generally different position on the issue of annexation. In their petition to the British government the Halfbreeds identified themselves as British subjects intent upon "the protection of Canadian Government, Laws and Institutions".⁶⁷ The Métis, on the other hand, adopted a more conciliatory attitude towards the administration of the HBC from which they had obtained some concessions. They generally opted for the status quo and were mistrustful of Canadian, or more specifically Anglo-Protestant Canadian interests. These "écart" and opposing views were fostered by their respective religious authorities, Protestant and Catholic.⁶⁸ As a result of the British inquiry, the company's right to exclusive trade was not renewed in 1859. Moreover, in 1863 the majority of its stock was acquired by new investors, the International Financial Society, further weakening its commercial status and ultimately its political position.

The pro-Canadian position of the Protestant clergy during the Halfbreed James Ross and William Kennedy representations against the HBC and the petitions to the British House of Commons in 1857 and 1858 convinced Simpson of the "Protestant alienation". On the contrary, he reported that l'abbé Laflèche was "well disposed, a very amiable, worthy gentleman...popular with the Protestants",⁶⁹ while the usually defiant Father Bermond had persuaded Louis Riel to withdraw his support and that of the Métis. F.G. Johnson advised Simpson he should act on the French nominations to the council, as

...although Kennedy has failed among them, they won't stir against him until they see how the cat jumps. Not a man whom I recommended for councillor [ie., Pascal Breland, Salomon Hamelin, and Henry Fisher] has signed [the petitions] and they just want to be put in good humour to come out boldly on the other side...Vive la compagnie ought to be the national cry of Red River.⁷⁰

In June 1857 Henry Fisher, a former chief trader, took his seat in the council, followed by Maximilien Genthon, William McMillan, Salomon Hamelin and Pascal Breland. A year later, Bishop Taché was sworn in and a petition in French was circulated, expressing opposition to the annexation of Assiniboia without guarantees for its inhabitants. Five other Métis, John and William Dease, Roger Goulet, James McKay and Magnus Burston, were appointed in the 1860s.

The period between 1857-62 has been described as the "Métis Years" of the council.⁷¹ The Métis councillors tabled numerous petitions (many in French) dealing with trade and agriculture, including one requesting action on a 20 per cent import duty on goods from the settlement entering the United States. Another important petition, submitted by surveyor Roger Goulet, concerned the clarification of discrepancies in lot lines along the Red River. Petitions dealing with issues such as land ownership, the maintenance of wood and hay lots, and cattle raising confirm the Métis' agricultural activities during this period. It is also important to note the Métis did not usually vote "en bloc" or along religious-linguistic lines, but more according to economic interests or occupations. The so-called "Loyal French" of the council formed a sort of family compact. They ensured patronage appointments to their relatives and friends and promoted their business interests. Having been co-opted by the HBC, they adopted a slow, prudent and "bureaucratic" attitude. Their English-speaking compatriots who sat in the council during the 1850s and 1860s, namely John Inkster, Dr. John Bunn,

Thomas Thomas, Thomas Sinclair and William Ross, likewise represented the commercial and agricultural interests of the "bourgeois elite". They also adopted a conservative attitude with respect to political and social change. The majority of inhabitants, the small farmers, freighters, hunters and many of the "intellectual elite" who did not support the status quo, were not represented in the administration of the settlement.

Law and Order

The years 1857-69 were ones of increased conflict and upheaval at the Forks. Fearing trouble from both the Canadian and American annexationists, Simpson thought it prudent to request some troops at Fort Garry. The Royal Canadian Rifle Corps under Major Seton arrived in 1857 and remained until 1861. The officers occupied the main dwelling house in the fort, and the HBC supplied the troops with cattle, pasturage and vegetable garden grounds.⁷² A report by Seton in 1858 indicated that "troops were never less needed at Red River...our own presence seems not unlikely to stir up the very broils which before our arrival, existed only in the imagination of those members who do not reside in the Territory..."⁷³ The Métis and Halfbreed constables provided the settlement with sufficient and satisfactory police protection.

The Company vs. the Annexationists

By the mid-1860s, there were some clear indications of diversity of opinions and attitudes among the Métis on the

issues of "newcomers" and "impending changes in government". The St. Charles-St. François-Xavier-Baie St. Paul (White Horse Plain) group was reportedly open to the idea of Canadian takeover whereas the Upper Settlement group was opposed to unconditional annexation.⁷⁴ These alignments would be confirmed in the events of 1869-70. Both Métis groups, however, were opposed to the Canadian Party who in the 1860s expressed its discontent in the local weekly newspaper, The Nor'Wester. The agitation for change was confined mainly to the Upper Canadian population as well as a few Halfbreed individuals. Some of the Protestant clergymen, although not the bishop of Rupert's Land, were to throw in their lot with the advocates of Canadian or Crown Colony status. Among them were the Reverend Corbett and councillor of Assiniboia, James Ross. The Métis had no sympathy for this anti-Catholic "Corps Bête" and his cause,⁷⁵ and the incidents surrounding his incarceration for "moral offenses" may have produced some division and misunderstanding between the Métis and Halfbreeds. Whether by 1863 the Halfbreeds were united "to liberate Red River from the two tyrannies of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Church of Rome and follow Corbett into a thoroughly Protestant and liberal British Empire in which they, as Protestant Englishmen, would have the balance of power"⁷⁶ is open to some debate. There is little doubt, however, that some dissension and hostility existed between as well as within the two Native groups at the Forks. The Catholic governor, William Mactavish, who was related through his wife Sara McDermot to many prominent Métis families, attracted Métis support and was likewise sympathetic to their rights and claims.

This was pretty well the social and political setting in the settlement on the eve of a Métis resistance directed not against the HBC, but focused on the outsiders or Canadian Party who proposed unconditional annexation by

Canada. Many Métis, particularly the councillors and their relatives, refused to join the movement, some out of loyalty to the company, others to support the Canadian Party. They were primarily concerned with the advancement of their interests and upholding old family and occupational class alliances. It would appear these interests, more than so-called ethnic and religious lines, were to influence the actions of the Métis and Halfbreeds in 1869-70.

The Upper Fort During the 1850s and 1860s

The 1850s and 1860s were years of consolidation and final expansion at the fort. Between 1857 and 1870, Upper Fort Garry was an entrepôt for the entire Northern Department of the HBC, the administrative centre for the District of Assiniboia, and a retail shop for the settlers. During a second construction phase, from 1859 to 1875, five major structures and two significant additions were made. These developments are documented in detail by Brad Loewen and Gregory Monks in "A History of the Structures at Upper Fort Garry, Winnipeg, 1835-87".⁷⁷ Among the most important structural changes was the northward extension of the fort walls and the construction of a new Main or Government House in 1854, and the administration and mess buildings. In 1860 a building known as the General Depot was erected in the northeast corner. During this period, the old north wall was removed and interior fencing was erected to separate the residential enclosures in the north quarter of the fort from the workday southern part. The area between the western row of buildings and the western wall was almost completely filled with small sheds.

The 1850s were years of tranquility and prosperity. One exception to this was the flood of 1852 when the

pressure of the ice and current swept away the fences that ringed the fort and extended to the Forks and eroded the dilapidated structures of the old Fort Garry.⁷⁸ The use and layout of the fort changed in the 1860s and 1870s with increased access from Winnipeg Road (Garry Street). The shifting of the trade route southward to the US increased the volume of goods passing through Fort Garry, which necessitated the construction of new stores. The arrival of the Royal Canadian Rifles meant the need to requisition some buildings for barracks. The smaller buildings erected after 1857 related to the military or to Upper Fort Garry's new role as a manufacturing centre for the fur trade.⁷⁹

In 1869 Louis Riel's provisional government occupied the "office building", also known as the clerks' house and bachelors' hall. Constructed in 1852 the building was intended to be the administrative and bureaucratic focus of the fort and served as the meeting place for the Council of Assiniboia in the 1850s and 1860s.

THE RED RIVER RESISTANCE OF 1869-70: THE STRUGGLE FOR A
NEGOTIATED ENTRY AND PROVINCIAL STATUS IN THE CANADIAN
CONFEDERATION

Background and Causes of the Resistance

From the mid-1860s, it was clear that a transfer of the Hudson's Bay Company's holdings and authority was imminent. During the last years of HBC administration, between 1862 and 1869, the Red River Settlement suffered from a want of government. "On matters of major importance [dealing with bad crops, famine and epidemic diseases] the council seemed unable to act strongly. Its activity tended to become more and more a housekeeping function."⁸⁰ This ineffectiveness, coupled with Governor Mactavish's illness, meant there was a vacuum of authority at Red River. The general atmosphere among the inhabitants was one of mistrust and apprehension. There were political divisions, economic hardships, and a general atmosphere of racial bigotry and religious intolerance which rendered the situation explosive. The Métis were clearly the more politically conscious, nationalistic and economically frustrated group. W.L. Morton has placed their resistance in a nationalistic and ethnic context. "The Métis were seeking to safeguard their survival as a people, to perpetuate the 'new nation' within the framework of the new order in the North-West."⁸¹ They also wanted a responsible government and the franchise and confirmation of "the custom of the country", that is, titles

to their lands. Where they apparently differed with their Native counterparts, the Halfbreeds, was on the issue of the preferred type of political association. Very few Métis favoured annexation to the United States. Some Métis traders such as Joseph Rolette, Norman Kittson and François Gingras, who were based in Dakota (North) and Minnesota, tried to sway their relatives and associates at the Forks, but only Rolette worked actively on this issue in 1869-70. Their main interests were economic rather than political. The Métis were not against the idea of union with Canada, but the Canada they had been exposed to since the mid-1860s was the Anglo-Canadian, Protestant, anti-Native rhetoric of annexationists J.C. Schultz, C. Mair and their associates.

The Roman Catholic clergy supported the Métis in these views and apprehensions. To Bishop Taché, however, a political change was premature. The Halfbreeds were more sympathetic to the Canadian Party and some of their leaders, particularly William Hallet and James Ross, were clearly hostile to the HBC. In this view, they were supported by the Anglo-Protestant clergy. The lack of ethnic solidarity between the two Native groups on this issue was evident. During the events of the resistance, there was a natural sympathy between the two groups, particularly in response to the arrogance and racism of the 'foreigners'. According to M. Giraud, however, "Dans les années d'insurrection (1869-70), c'était le groupe canadien qui allait diriger l'opposition, souvent avec l'approbation des métis écossais, plus rarement avec leur appui efficace."⁸²

The Métis, exasperated at the turn of events in the settlement, namely a moribund company administration, the violent anti-Métis campaigns of the Canadian Party and the unwillingness of the Canadian government to recognize the HBC charter (and thus their customary rights), decided to act. Little was known at Red River about the nature of the

transaction whereby the HBC was to surrender its sovereignty in Rupert's Land. From the company's perspective, it was not officially informed by the Canadian government of how it proposed to take over the government of the territory, nor was it asked to perform any act or make any actual preparation.⁸³ All three parties - the HBC, the imperial and Canadian governments - thought of the transfer as a legal and financial act. Authority and proprietary rights of the HBC were to be surrendered to the Crown, to be followed by a transfer of that authority and those rights to Canada on the payment of £300,000 to the company. No thought or preparation was given to the actual transfer of authority in Red River. The past actions of the Canadian government with respect to Native rights were not reassuring. The Dawson route project (a road from Fort Garry to Lake of the Woods) had been initiated without consultation with the local inhabitants. The accompanying survey party, presumptuously assembled in the settlement in 1868-69, was composed of Ontarians who were scornful towards the Métis and associated themselves with the offensive John Christian Schultz, the head of the Canadian Party. The annexationist group was insensitive to the traditions and laws of Red River, chauvinistic in their attitudes toward the local inhabitants (particularly the Métis), and aggressive to the point of violence in pursuit of their goals. Schultz and his party also exploited Métis rivalries by drawing to the Canadian annexationist cause "old Loyals", such as William Dease and Pascal Breland. In essence, the actions and rhetoric of Schultz and the Canadian Party provoked a resistance on the part of the Métis.

Unauthorized surveys of the settlement, ordered by the Canadian Minister of Public Works, William McDougall, and the presence of speculators on lands at Pointe Coupée (St. Adolphe) in the summer of 1869, set into motion the first phase of organized Métis resistance to Canadian prerogatives

in Red River. The fact that the Canadians were staking out land in anticipation of the little explained transfer was very disturbing to the Métis. They feared the lands they occupied and the territory they regarded as belonging to their "nation" might be lost to newcomers for want of title recognized by the Canadian government. According to Louis Schmidt, who witnessed these events and took part in the resistance,

Les desseins du Canada devinrent bientôt manifestes. Il voulait s'introduire dans le pays, comme dans une terre déserte, sans plus s'occuper du peuple qui l'habitait...les arpenteurs...se mirent à tirer des lignes de tous côtés, sans s'occuper s'ils étaient sur des propriétés privées ou non.⁸⁴

The Métis Resistance in the Upper Settlement

The events and actions of October 1869 were of both symbolic and political importance. They challenged the right of Canada, a foreign state, to conduct surveys anywhere in the North-West, particularly in that block of land south of the Forks (the Upper Settlement), the Métis' traditional "homeland". On October 11, Louis Riel and a group of Métis from St. Vital and St. Norbert stopped J.S. Dennis' survey party in the vicinity of riverlots 12 and 13 on the west bank of the Red River in the parish of St. Vital. The clash occurred on the land of either André Nault (lot 12) or Edouard Perreault (lot 13).⁸⁵ Among the 15 or so Métis who participated in the incident were Baptiste Tourond, Normand Marion, Janvier Ritchot, Elie Carrière and the Nault brothers (Romain, Benjamin and Godefroi). They were primarily farmers and tradesmen. Following this successful protest, they formed a Comité National whose mandate was to defend and promote Métis political and economic interests.

John Bruce was elected president and Riel was secretary. From St. Vital, the committee or council moved to Rivière Sale (St. Norbert) where they could control movement in and out of the settlement via the Pembina Trail. Métis patrols were to ensure that no "strangers" would establish themselves in their homeland, roughly the area of the Forks extending south to the international boundary and north to Lake Winnipeg.⁸⁶ The news from Canada was disturbing. In late September, it had been announced that William McDougall, who with Sir George-Etienne Cartier had concluded negotiations between the HBC and Canada in London, would be the first lieutenant governor of the territories. It was a poor choice, as McDougall's Anglo-Ontarian expansionist views were well-known. The anti-Métis governor-designate was already on his way to the settlement via Pembina. The transfer was to take place on 1 December 1869.

According to Louis Schmidt, these developments incited Louis Riel, the actual leader of the movement, to consult with older and experienced men such as l'abbé Ritchot and Bishop Taché. Meetings were held throughout the parishes to discuss the impending transfer. It was resolved to prevent William McDougall from entering Red River and assuming office. It was alleged he was being escorted by 200 heavily armed men, and several crates of federal guns had already been sent into the settlement "pour armer un détachement qui devra aller se rejoindre à celui qui accompagne le nouveau Gouverneur".⁸⁷ McDougall did have some 350 rifles in his baggage.⁸⁸ The threat of military force against them determined the Métis to act accordingly. The immediate threat, however, came from Schultz and his party, who wanted to let McDougall enter the colony. They were supported by some Halfbreeds and Métis, among whom were John Grant, William Hallet, William Dease and George "Shaman" Racette. According to l'abbé Ritchot, "les amis et les partisans de

les partisans de McDougall n'avaient rien épargné pour diviser les Métis."⁸⁹ They were not successful, however, in rallying the members of the Council of Assiniboia to their cause, although it was known that Councillor Dease, a minion of Schultz, was supported financially by the council in his opposition to Riel. It was also apparent that the Native-English settlers would not fight the French. According to W.L. Morton's assessment, support for the Métis was divided. The Kildonan Scots and Orcadians remained aloof while some of the pensioned soldiers supported the Canadian Party. The majority of European settlers were passive while "among the halfbreeds, were many who disliked the Canadians...had little active sentiment for Union with Canada or were sympathetic if generally inactive."⁹⁰

McDougall was not given the opportunity to rally the Halfbreed and Canadian settlers to his side. On October 20 the Métis held an assembly which named a committee to administer the rules and regulations of the "custom of the country". The committee appointed captains to lead soldiers to intercept McDougall and his expedition "qui avance dans le pays contre le droit des gens, avec le titre de Gouverneur de ce pays au nom d'une puissance étrangère et dont l'autorité est absolument inconnue à la nation" [emphasis mine].⁹¹ The following day, a note was sent to McDougall at Pembina, informing him that,

Le Comité National des Métis de la Rivière Rouge intime à Monsieur W. McDougall l'ordre de ne pas entrer sur le Territoire du Nord-Ouest sans une permission spéciale de ce comité.

Par ordre du Président John Bruce,
Louis Riel, Secrétaire

Daté à St. Norbert, Rivière Rouge
Ce 21e jour d'octobre, 1869.⁹²

André Nault subsequently led a group of men to the Pembina Trail crossing on the Sale River at St. Norbert.

There they established a camp and rail fence - 'La Barrière' - across the roadway in order to deny McDougall, his agents and other "dangerous objects" access to Red River. Meanwhile, mounted patrols were dispatched southward. While La Barrière was being erected, Nault reportedly had a conversation with l'abbé Ritchot about the strategy of leaving his post to get provisions. Ritchot declared, "Tu as pris les armes, fait la guerre pour de bon."⁹³ The parish priest, l'abbé Dugas and Father Bermond in St. Boniface, gave the resisters their total support and counsel. Ritchot in particular mediated between the two Métis factions, the 'loyalists' and the resisters (re McDougall's entry), and the latter got a unanimous vote of confidence at a meeting on October 24. Those who did not endorse the resolution of resistance (by force of arms if necessary) promised to remain neutral. But Riel and Ritchot's efforts to unite the Métis were again hampered by Dease and his friends who were spreading rumours that the English settlers and Halfbreeds were prepared to fight the Métis.⁹⁴ There were insults and threats at a meeting in St. Norbert on October 27. Dease lost most of his supporters, swayed by the appeals of Ritchot and the Métis leaders. Both HBC Governor Mactavish and the dominion's principal agent, surveyor Dennis, refused to provision Dease's men with guns to escort McDougall via the "old crossing" of the Rivière Sale.⁹⁵

There is evidence in the "edited" notebook of l'abbé Ritchot that the Métis codified "the laws of the prairie" and organized a new government in October 1869.⁹⁶ The new government would consist of elected representatives of the Métis, including a president, vice-president and secretary. Ritchot took the oath of office as Métis council member.⁹⁷ Thus by October 30, many Red River Métis had placed themselves under the guidance of a body which called itself "le conseil ou Sénat Métis", which resisted McDougall's

entry and thus defied the Canadian government's initial attempt to establish sovereignty.

On October 31 McDougall reached Pembina where he was handed the Métis' note of October 21, instructing him not to enter Assiniboia. This document, along with J.S. Dennis' dispatches, persuaded McDougall to halt at the HBC post two miles north of the international boundary. The governor-designate's secretary, J.A.N. Provencher, tried to reach Fort Garry to seek the assistance of the authorities. He was followed and stopped at St. Norbert where he attempted to reassure the Métis leaders, who replied it was too late.⁹⁸ Provencher acknowledged they had not been consulted and had been greatly abused by a few people looked upon as representing the views of the Canadian government.⁹⁹ McDougall then sent an "unofficial" emissary, Captain Cameron, to Fort Garry. He too was intercepted at "La Barrière" and, according to Métis accounts, attempted to force the barrier, but the bridles of his horse were seized and he was taken prisoner.¹⁰⁰

On November 1, the Métis council increased the level of its resistance. Ambroise-Didyme Lépine subsequently led a party which expelled McDougall from the country. The Métis had succeeded in isolating him and his partisans within the colony. Their success rallied most of the Métis of St. Boniface, St. Vital and St. Norbert (and some from Pointe à Grouette and St. François-Xavier) to the cause of the "Sénat".

The Occupation of Upper Fort Garry and the Conventions
Leading to the Provisional Government of 10 February 1870
At the session of 2 November 1869 the Métis council dealt with two important issues. One called for the seizure

of surveyor J.A. Snow's provisions and ordered him to suspend the surveys at Pointe de Chênes (Ste. Anne) within eight days. The other called for the seizure and occupation of Fort Garry. A Métis detachment of about 200 men under captains travelled from St. Norbert to the Forks. The decision to take Fort Garry was important for military and political reasons. Fort Garry offered a strong and defensible position, as well as food and shelter. Politically, the fort was the symbol of HBC authority in the area and whoever controlled it, whether Canadians or Métis, would become de facto rulers of the colony. On November 2 the fort was occupied without the firing of a single shot. It became the headquarters of the resistance. From this base, Riel worked to unite the settlement and form his provisional government with representatives from all sections of Red River. That was not easy. According to Louis Schmidt, who came to reside with Riel at Fort Garry in early November,

Il ne faut pas croire que le parti canadien s'avouait déjà vaincu, ou demeurait inactif. Au contraire, McDougall à Pembina, Dennis au Portage [la Prairie] et ailleurs, et Schultz à Winnipeg organisaient une contre-révolution, et s'efforçaient d'attirer à eux l'ancienne population anglaise de la colonie, demeurée à peu près neutre jusque là, quoi qu'avec un penchant plutôt hostile aux Métis français [c'est nous qui soulignons].¹⁰¹

The passive acquiescence of the HBC, the participation of the Catholic clergy, and the support of individuals such as Alexander Begg, A.G.B. Bannatyne and James Ross reinforced the Métis position. Schultz reportedly rallied some Saulteaux Cree from St. Peter's and Ojibwa of Lake of the Woods to his cause by playing on their differences with the Métis on the issue of land claims.

On November 6, a notice was sent to the English-speaking parishes, inviting them to send 12 delegates to a November 16 convention. They agreed somewhat reluctantly.

At the first meeting, little was accomplished and the English-speaking delegates, led by Halfbreed James Ross, criticized the exclusion of McDougall as smacking of rebellion. Riel angrily denied the allegation and responded convincingly to other charges. At the next convention on November 23, Riel proposed the formation of a provisional government to replace the Council of Assiniboia and to negotiate the terms of union with Canada. Riel and his council then proceeded to draft a "List of Rights" which proposed representation in the Canadian Parliament, guarantees of bilingualism in the legislature and the courts, and arrangements for land titles, free homesteads and Indian treaties. The list did much to reconcile some of the English-speaking population to the Métis cause. When the convention met again on December 1, however, Riel failed once more to obtain unanimous support for a provisional government. Nonetheless, the English-speaking delegates refused a call to arms by Dennis to support McDougall. In late November, in anticipation of the scheduled December 1 transfer, McDougall issued his own proclamation from Pembina, announcing the annexation of the North-West to Canada. It was unauthorized and later disavowed by John A. Macdonald's federal government, but at the time it created much tension and division within the settlement. On December 7, in the face of an attempt by Schultz and his party to seize power, the Métis soldiers surrounded his store and forced their surrender. They were imprisoned in Fort Garry. The next day, Riel proclaimed a provisional government and Bruce was named president. Having been informed of these events at Fort Garry, McDougall and his party left Pembina for Ontario.

The fleur de lys of the provisional government now flew at Red River. The flag was described as having a white background with fleurs de lys and a clover and bison at its base.¹⁰² Riel had founded his action on the forfeiture of

the government of the North-West by the HBC and the droits des gens to form their own government in the absence of authority.¹⁰³ Apparently unknown to the people at Red River, the Canadian government had on November 26 postponed union until the British government or the HBC could guarantee a peaceable transfer. Thus the provisional government had unknowingly become a government "ex necessitate" for the protection of life and property within the settlement. On December 27 Riel took over from Bruce as president of the provisional government. The Métis, described rather condescendingly by W.L. Morton as "the most distinct and most excitable of neo-archaic Westerners",¹⁰⁴ now held power in the settlement.

The next few months were times of negotiation between the provisional government of Red River and the Canadian government. Among the Canadian delegates were l'abbé Thibault and Colonel de Salaberry (in December 1869), followed by Special Commissioner Donald A. Smith. He had been charged by Macdonald to offer money or employment (bribes) to any leaders of the settlement amenable to co-operation, and to present the Canadian government's plans. To conceal his status, Smith left his commission and other pertinent official documents at Pembina in Provencher's hands, with instructions to surrender them later to himself or to his brother-in-law, Chief Trader Richard Hardisty. Riel placed Smith under guard and undertook a plan to intercept his documents and determine their contents before granting him access to the settlement. In this matter, as on previous occasions, some Métis opposition played an important if conspiratorial role in assuring Hardisty's safe transfer of Smith's papers. Among those involved were Angus McKay, John F. Grant, Pierre Lèveillé and the scheming William Dease. Riel decided not to resort to force to intercept the papers, which were used to some degree by Smith to undermine Riel's position. In

order to bring the situation into the open, Riel convened a meeting for 19 January 1870 in the square at Fort Garry. Smith promised a liberal policy in confirming land titles to present occupants and representation on the proposed territorial council. In order to look further into the matter and to devise means of negotiating specific rights with Ottawa, Riel and Bannatyne moved that a convention of 40 delegates, 20 French-speaking and 20 English-speaking, meet to consider Smith's instructions in detail and draw up a list of rights for future negotiations.¹⁰⁵ The motion received unanimous approval. Riel's careful planning had won over the machinations of Smith. Sessions began and discussions on a revised list proceeded in earnest. The "Grande Convention" was presided by Judge J. Black, while William Coldwell and Louis Schmidt acted as secretaries. According to Schmidt, Thomas Bunn and James Ross directed the discussion on the English side while he and O'Donoghue led the debates in French.¹⁰⁶ At the February 3 meeting, Riel proposed the immediate demand of provincial status for the North-West. The proposal was rejected, some considering it premature. Schmidt remarked that the timidity of the English-speaking delegates was appalling: "Ils trouvaient presque toutes nos demandes excessives...ils ont été bien heureux pourtant, dans la suite de jouir de ce que nous avons pu obtenir..."¹⁰⁷ After further discussions with the Canadian emissaries (Thibault, de Salaberry and Smith), it was agreed the provisional government could send delegates to Ottawa to negotiate. On February 10 Riel obtained the delegates' approval for a provisional government with an assembly of 24 elected French-speaking and English-speaking representatives. The convention chose Riel as president and François Dauphinais as vice-president. They in turn selected an executive composed of Thomas Bunn and Louis Schmidt (secretaries), W.B. O'Donoghue (treasurer) and James

Ross (chief justice). Three men - l'abbé Ritchot, Judge Black and Alfred Scott - were to proceed to Ottawa to present the List of Rights to the Canadian government. Riel had reached "the pinnacle of his hopes and ambitions".¹⁰⁸ It now appeared that a united front had been achieved in the settlement. Riel could afford to be generous. He promised to release all the prisoners held at Fort Garry. That evening, reported Louis Schmidt, there was a celebration in the fort. "Des feux de joie furent allumés, et ce fut un des rares bons moments qu'on passa dans le fort."¹⁰⁹

The Opposition to the Provisional Government - The Scott Incident

Schultz, Mair and Thomas Scott, a young Ontarian Orangeman who had been imprisoned by the Métis in December 1869, had escaped in January 1870. The unscrupulous triumvirate continued to foment civil war to eliminate the Métis and overthrow the provisional government. On February 17 a party from Portage La Prairie, led by Charles Boulton and including Scott, approached the fort. A small force of 50 Métis led by A.-D. Lépine arrested the 48 Canadians, including Scott and Boulton, and took them to the recently vacated cells at Fort Garry. Schultz, realizing he was a marked man, left for Ontario.

Riel had cause to be angry. Twice the Canadians had resorted to force to overthrow the provisional government. One of the leaders needed to be punished. Boulton was condemned to death by a Métis military tribunal, but reprieved when a number of people, among whom was the mother of one of the victims of his attempted coup d'état, intervened on his behalf. Mrs. Sutherland's son, John, had

been shot accidentally by Norbert Parisien who had escaped from Schultz and Boulton. Parisien was recaptured by them and severely beaten.¹¹⁰ Sutherland died shortly after the incident and Parisien died of his injuries in early March. They were the first fatalities of the Red River resistance. The settlement was on the verge of civil war. Few accounts of the resistance fail to mention the trial and execution of Thomas Scott. Almost forgotten, however, is the story of these two mixed-blood victims.

The Canadian prisoner Thomas Scott was an ignorant and bigoted young man with a profound contempt for all Métis. He was abusive towards his guards and so insulting that they would have given him a severe beating had Riel not intervened. The guards insisted he be tried by court-martial; he was charged with insubordination. Scott was sentenced to death by a jury which was presided over by A.-D. Lépine and included Baptiste Lépine, André Nault, François Guillemette and Elzéar Goulet. On this occasion, the appeals of D.A. Smith and others were firmly rejected by Riel. The reasons for this decision will always be debated. According to Louis Schmidt, it was necessary to intimidate the Canadian conspirators and show Canada that the Métis and their government would have to be taken seriously.

Je crois qu'aujourd'hui [1912], tout homme désintéressé concède que Riel et son gouvernement avaient parfaitement raison d'en agir ainsi. Ce gouvernement était le seul du pays, il avait été établi et reconnu par ses représentants. N'avait-il pas le droit de mettre à mort comme font tous les gouvernements, ceux qui troublent la paix, et ne cherchent que séditions et massacres?¹¹¹

In the settlement, the death of Scott on March 4 was soon forgotten but in Ontario the "murder" became a major

issue. Riel had miscalculated the political impact of his decision. Meanwhile, Bishop Taché, who had been absent from the settlement, returned from Rome via Ottawa with a copy of the Macdonald government's proclamation of amnesty. He had been given assurance by Cartier that it covered every action that had taken place or might take place before his return to the settlement, including any acts of violence. He extended this assurance to Riel and Lépine, reported that Ottawa had found the List of Rights "in the main satisfactory"¹¹² and delegates should come to Ottawa to work out an agreement. Taché then requested and obtained the release of all prisoners of the provisional government.

A third "Bill of Rights" was prepared by the executive of the provisional government. It included the following provisions: the establishment of a province, control of public land, the use of the English and French languages in the legislature, the courts and in all public documents and acts, and an amnesty for all members of the provisional government. Before the delegates left, a fourth list was drawn up, no doubt with Riel and Taché's blessing. This added a provision for separate schools and outlined the structure for a provincial government. On March 23-24 Alfred Scott, Ritchot and Black left for Ottawa. Ritchot, who would act on behalf of the largely Métis, French-Catholic element, headed the delegation.

The atmosphere at Red River was one of peace and goodwill. According to Schmidt, "Riel lança une proclamation, déclarant que tout était revenu à l'état normal dans le pays. Après cela, presque tous les Métis retournèrent dans leurs maisons. Les hivernants arrivèrent, et firent leurs marchés comme à l'ordinaire. Tout était tranquille enfin, et on respirait à l'aise, après tant de troubles et d'anxiété."¹¹³

The provisional government's negotiators, Scott and Ritchot, travelled to Ottawa using mainly American routes, until they crossed over to Prescott, Ontario from Ogdensburg, New York on April 11. They were met by G. McMicken, a Canadian Secret Service Agent who had been delegated by the prime minister, to escort them safely to Ottawa. There was now a price on the heads of the representatives of the provisional government.

When Schultz and Mair had arrived in Toronto in early April, they met secretly with George T. Denison and other members of what became the Canada First Group. Ontarians had been rather indifferent to the events in Red River, but news of Scott's execution provided the opportunity to whip up a frenzy of hatred against Riel and the Métis. The Denison-Schultz activists secured the editorial support of most of the Toronto newspapers. They addressed meetings where the themes were anti-French, anti-Catholic and to some extent anti-Macdonald, for receiving a delegation representing the "murderers" of the "heroic" Thomas Scott. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Ritchot and Alfred Scott. They were actually arrested soon after their arrival in Ottawa, released, then rearrested on a new warrant and subsequently freed.

The Negotiations Between the Métis and Ottawa Regarding the Province of Manitoba

The negotiations with Macdonald and Cartier began informally on April 22. The delegates were not initially formally recognized as official representatives. Ritchot stubbornly insisted on such recognition, which was tantamount to insisting upon de facto recognition of Riel's government both by the dominion and British authorities.¹¹⁴ Written

acknowledgement of their status as delegates of the North-West was extended only on April 26 in the form of brief letter from Joseph Howe, the Canadian Secretary of State.

The negotiations proved protracted and difficult. Ritchot was the real spokesman of the delegation, Black being inclined to compromise and Scott being a silent supporter of Ritchot. Early on, Canada conceded provincial status and separate schools but withheld authority to control natural resources, including all lands. Ritchot countered this by requesting that three million acres be reserved for the Métis and Halfbreeds. Macdonald offered 200,000 acres as sufficient compensation but after hard bargaining, the negotiators compromised on 1.4 million acres. At this point, Macdonald became "indisposed" and delegated Cartier to negotiate the addition of Portage La Prairie to 'Manitoba' (the name favoured by Riel),¹¹⁵ and to fend off Ritchot's constant appeal for a written promise of amnesty to those involved in the resistance and the execution of Thomas Scott.¹¹⁶ By May 4 the "Manitoba Bill" was introduced in the House of Commons. Subsequent negotiations completed the act and addressed the amnesty issue. Ultimately, Ritchot settled for what he assumed - mistakenly - to be dependable verbal assurances.

Somewhat isolated from the events in Ottawa, Riel had given his attention to the affairs of the settlement. As president of the provisional government, he had remained in Fort Garry, though he returned control of the fort to the HBC to allow the resumption of trade. He worked assiduously to maintain the uneasy peace of the settlement. Ritchot returned to Red River on June 17 and met immediately with Riel. On June 24 the assembly voted unanimously in favour of the terms of the Manitoba Act. The motion was introduced by Louis Schmidt and seconded by Dr. Bunn.¹¹⁷ Ritchot's crucial role in these negotiations was acknowledged by all,

including the other delegates.¹¹⁸ On 15 July 1870 Manitoba entered Confederation as a new province.

The fact that Red River did not fall precipitously into the hands of Canadians like Mair, Schultz, Boulton and McDougall was attributed to Riel and the Métis. The establishment of Manitoba as a province which, at least on paper, guaranteed the linguistic, religious and proprietary rights of its "native citizens" was the contribution of St. Norbert's "obdurate priest", l'abbé Ritchot.¹¹⁹

The Betrayal of the Métis and the Triumph of Ontario Democracy

Riel and the Métis were proud of their achievements and confident of Canadian "justice and democracy". But Bishop Taché was worried because Ritchot had not brought back a written guarantee of amnesty. He returned to Ottawa to see Cartier but received only the assurances that the Canadian government was unwilling or unable to issue it before the union, but it would be forthcoming from the Queen.¹²⁰ A new concern appeared in May 1870, when a military expedition was dispatched to Red River on an "errand of peace". Ontario's demand for action had precipitated its departure. Although the commander, Colonel G.H. Wolseley, was a disinterested British officer, the militia units "were dominated by young Ontario Orangemen thirsting for Métis blood, Riel's in particular".¹²¹

Cartier had reportedly asked Riel to continue governing the country until the arrival of the Canadian authorities.¹²² All was not conducive to a peaceful transfer of power in the settlement; however, Riel was concerned about the weakening of the always fragile relations between the Métis and the English-speaking

elements of the Forks. He could not count on the total or sustained support of all the Métis. The old "loyal" group of traders, such as Pascal Breland and Salomon Hamelin, and rival politicians such as his cousin Charles Nolin and his following, were already conspiring against the "rebels". More importantly, however, Riel was worried by reports of the Ontarian volunteers in the approaching Wolseley expedition. There was no word on the promised amnesty and the new governor had not arrived. In this atmosphere, W.B. O'Donoghue, who had Fenian connections, was sowing seeds of mistrust concerning all Canadian politicians and seemed to be gaining influence.

On August 24 Riel learned that Wolseley's troops were planning to lynch him. He was forced to vacate Fort Garry a few hours ahead of them. Louis Schmidt summed up the profound deception of the Métis:

Ainsi tout tournait mal et contrairement à ce qui nous avait été promis. Le Canada allait agir en traître jusqu'au bout, et d'une façon indigne d'un peuple civilisé.¹²³

Riel, Schmidt, O'Donoghue and a few others crossed the Red River to Taché's residence in St. Boniface. Riel declared, "No matter what happens now, the rights of the Métis are assured by the Manitoba Bill: it is what I wanted - My mission is accomplished."¹²⁴ He then proceeded to his mother's home in St. Vital, but fearing for his and their safety, he took refuge at the mission of St. Joe's in Dakota territory. On September 2 Lieutenant Governor A.G. Archibald finally arrived in Winnipeg, where riots and violence had become the "new order".

For Canada, the "troubles" of 1869-70 ended on that rainy August 24 when Wolseley's troops "captured" an undefended Fort Garry. But for the Métis, troubles had just begun. As a result of the Canadian troops' hostility, "more blood was shed in the nine days between the arrival of Wolseley and that of Lieutenant Governor Adams G. Archibald

than had been shed in the nine months of the provisional government."¹²⁵ The most notable among the Canadians' victims was Elzéar Goulet.¹²⁶ Toussaint Lussier, André Nault and Baptiste Lépine were attacked and severely beaten while François Guillemette, who had delivered the coup de grâce to Thomas Scott, was shot at Pembina. Bob O'Lone of the Red Saloon was killed in his own bar during a brawl. "Sombre days" had come to Red River.¹²⁷

Archibald's first cabinet reflected the politician's sense of justice and conciliation. He chose moderate members from both the French and English-speaking groups and excluded the Canadian Party. Riel and a number of Métis had met at St. Norbert in September to draft a "Memorial and Petition" to the president of the United States. It requested his intercession with the Queen on their behalf, to force an investigation of Métis grievances. O'Donoghue argued the petition should call for the annexation of Red River.¹²⁸ This course was bitterly and effectively opposed by Riel who rallied the Métis against O'Donoghue and the Fenians who planned to launch an invasion from Pembina. Riel wrote to Archibald to offer the services of the Métis in defense of the province. It was hoped a visible demonstration of imperial loyalty would help counter their image as "rebels" and speed the proclamation of a general amnesty. In the end, the Métis levees did little more than help patrol the frontier in the face of renewed rumours of invasion. Reports of Archibald's "infamous handshake"¹²⁹ during a review of Métis volunteers in St. Boniface provoked an outburst of indignation amongst the Canadians who would use this opportunity to discredit him and eventually, with the support of Ontario, effect his recall.

On December 30 Manitoba's first general election was held. The 24 newly elected members reflected the ethnic and religious duality of the province. Among them were Angus

McKay, John McTavish, Henry Clarke, André Beauchemin, Louis Schmidt and Pascal Breland.

Theoretically, the rights of the "old order" were protected under the Manitoba Act. But during the period 1870-1900, Manitoba witnessed unprecedented social and economic upheaval and transformation. The Canadians and later Europeans who immigrated to the province altered the region's distinctive Euro-Indian community and its culture. Two of the most important provisions of the Manitoba Act - continuity of land tenures and Native self-government - were subsequently restrained and denied. The dispossession of the Métis was the legacy of Canadian expansionism into the North-West.

PART II. NATIVE SOCIETY IN TRANSITION IN MANITOBA,
1870-1900

INTRODUCTION

Euro-Canadian history has traditionally represented this period in Manitoba as a positive and vibrant one.¹

Progress, civilization, settlement, and law and order were the recurrent themes and slogans of the new society which was replacing the old. Native society, which comprised the "old order", was doomed to extinction, or at best assimilation. From a Native perspective, the implementation of Canada's "western destiny" implied displacement and suppression of its traditions and lifestyle. The conquerors' main agents - government, church and police - directed the dismemberment, much as in other colonized states.

What needs to be emphasized, however, is that Native society in western Canada, in this case Amerindian and Métis, resisted these imposed changes. Their version of the history of the period is one of adaptability and new initiatives in the face of dispossession and exclusion.

In 1870, the majority of the population of the new "postage stamp" province was of Native origin: more specifically, 9,800 Métis and Halfbreeds, 560 Indians and 1,600 Whites or Euro-Canadians.² By 1885, at least 4,000 Métis and Halfbreeds had emigrated to the Northwest Territories, effectively and permanently altering the Native character of the province.

THE AMERINDIAN PEOPLE: THE INDIAN ACT AND THE TREATIES

The British North America Act of 1867 assigned to the federal government jurisdiction over "Indians and lands reserved for Indians". In 1876 Canada instituted the first Indian Act to provide the framework for the administration of "its aborigines". The statute dealt with status, education, local government, management of reserve land and communal monies. It was paternalistic and coercive. Although originally conceived to protect Indian rights and lands, it promoted assimilation into White society. Indian status was seen as a transitional state, protecting them until they settled on the land as individual farmers and adopted the European way of life. Agriculture and enfranchisement were the cornerstones of this assimilation policy. In the 1880s and 1890s, many successful Indian attempts at agriculture were nonetheless thwarted by federal agents. The pressures of Euro-Canadian immigration, poverty and starvation precluded an independent and self-sufficient Native lifestyle in the late 19th century. Enfranchisement and the accompanying repudiation of reserve life and rights, although not very successful during this period, was culturally and economically subversive. In sum, the Indian Act established a system of apartheid in Canada: a regime of control, dependence, separation and assimilation which persisted with few alterations for over a century.

The 1870s ushered in the treaty and reserve period for the Indians of western Canada. The objective of the Canadian government was the peaceful removal of the Indians

to open up land for agricultural settlement by Euro-Canadians. Beginning in 1871, a series of treaties were "negotiated" by commissioners on the basis of precedents established in eastern Canada, more specifically the Robinson Treaties of 1850 in the Lake Superior-Lake Huron district. The traditional White attitude towards treaties was that they established a permanent immutable relationship between the Canadian government and the Indian nations of the West. There is, however, substantial evidence to suggest the Indians did not view them as such. In the face of government attempts to eradicate their culture, the leaders who signed treaties subsequently argued they needed to be modified. The "Treaty Rights Movement" of the early 1900s invoked the "spirit" of the treaty made, or as it was understood by the elders at the time of the negotiations and agreements. For example, the parent-child metaphor used by Lieutenant Governor Morris implied a ward-guardian relationship, but in Cree family tradition a child had a great deal of autonomy. The parent-child or trust relationship implied both independence for the child and responsibility for the guardian.³ In the 1870s and 1880s, however, the government's interpretation of a trust relationship or wardship prevailed. Reserves provided the ideal device for both land acquisition and subjugation. To the Natives, this meant not only removal from their ancestral lands held "in common" but suppression of their culture. Government control was effected through the surveillance of the Indian agent and farm instructor assigned to reserves, while the infamous "detrribalization" policy disrupted traditional religious ceremonies, economic activity and social structure.

Notwithstanding, the Indians were in a comparatively superior bargaining position at the onset of the treaty-making process or for Treaties One, Two and Three.

In fact, it has been argued the treaties were initiated at the insistence of the Ojibwa of the North-West Angle and the Saulteaux of the tiny province of Manitoba.⁴ Yellow Quill's band of Saulteaux turned back settlers who tried to go west of Portage La Prairie in 1868 and the leaders insisted upon enforcement of the Selkirk Treaty of 1817. By that treaty, the Native inhabitants of the area around the Forks had ceded lands adjacent to the Red and Assiniboine rivers, described as "extending in breadth to the distance of two English statute miles back from the banks of the river".⁵ The descendants of Peequahkeequah (The Bear), who had signed the treaty with Lord Selkirk, protested with justification that White settlers were trespassing and laying claims to lands that had never been ceded. There was a definite need for a new treaty to ward off confrontation.

Pressure from the Indians and fear of violence or the intimidation of Anglo-Canadian settlers thus motivated the government to respond to their demands. Macdonald's National Policy for settlement and development of the West depended on the peaceful settlement of the Native population.⁶ The Saulteaux and Swampy Cree near the Forks were reluctant to retreat to reserves but they used the opportunity to bargain for better terms. At first, Canada offered only reserves and a small cash annuity, but the initiative and foresight of the Fort Frances-Rainy Lake bands in 1870 set the precedent for the Manitoba Indians. They had invoked the principles of Native sovereignty and limited land transfer to the Crown when they allowed "right of passage" to the Wolseley Expeditionary Force in exchange for appropriate indemnity. Because of the extenuating circumstances, the government was forced to accede to their demand. Its ultimate objective, however, was extinguishment, not limited transfers.

When the Saulteaux of the Fort Garry area met with Lieutenant Governor Archibald upon his arrival, they declared their unwillingness to allow the settlers the free use of the country for themselves or their cattle.⁷ When an invitation was sent to them to meet at Lower Fort Garry on 25 July 1871, the Indians delayed the meeting until the arrival of all their chiefs and headmen two days later. The discussions were protracted and initially unsuccessful. The Indians asked to retain their lands (two-thirds of the province)⁸ while agreeing to relinquish small portions to the government. Archibald and Commissioner Wemyss Simpson finally issued an ultimatum declaring that this was unacceptable. "White" settlement was imminent and only land grants or reserves on the basis of 160 acres per family of five were to be offered. The lieutenant governor stated, "If they thought it better to have no treaty at all, they might do without one, but they must make up their minds; if there was to be a Treaty, it must be on a basis like that offered."⁹ Three days later, negotiations resumed on issues such as government assistance in education, farm animals and implements. An agreement was eventually concluded with all the chiefs except Ozawekwun (Yellow Quill) of the Portage band; Treaty One was signed at Lower Fort Garry on 3 August 1871.

Chief Miskookenew's (Red Eagle), alias Henry Prince's band, was allocated land "on both sides of the Red River, beginning at the south line of St. Peter's parish".¹⁰ Wakowush (Whipporwill) and two associate chiefs were to select lands in the area surrounding the mouth of the Roseau River. The Kakekopenais (Bird Forever) and Nashakepenais (Flying Down Bird) bands, of which a good number were Métis or Halfbreeds, were told to take up reserves around Fort Alexander and Brokenhead respectively. Meanwhile, one of the most defiant of the chiefs, Ozawekwun (Yellow Quill) was

to "receive" lands on the south and east side of the Assiniboine, about 20 miles above the Portage (La Prairie).¹¹ Ozawekwun's band belatedly and reluctantly agreed to the reserve boundaries and terms in 1876. One of the Portage bands, led by Short Bear, included some Wahpeton (Dakota) refugees from the United States. These Siouian bands were later granted reserves in the area by the Canadian government.¹²

Miskookenew's band, located just north of the Forks and Ozawekwun's at Round Plain near Portage La Prairie, were in the most precarious locations with respect to incoming settlers. They had established small villages and were growing wheat, barley and potatoes in their well-tilled fields. Already making the transition to agriculture, they resented being closed in on "lots" with no provisions for expansion and the pursuit of range activities such as haying and woodcutting. Ozawekwun tried in vain to obtain a tract of land or enclosure of "twenty-five square miles of equal breadth around the homestead reserve".¹³

In return for the cession of all claims to lands in the postage stamp province of Manitoba, an area of approximately 13,500 square miles, the Treaty One bands received an immediate gratuity of \$3 each, an annuity of \$15 in cash or goods per family of five, and reserves in the amount of 160 acres per family of five plus a school on each reserve.¹⁴ Most important there was an informal or unwritten agreement on farm implements, animals and clothing, "outside promises" which the government was persuaded to acknowledge four years later in 1875. The Indian leaders had proven determined and wary negotiators, but Archibald and his associates had been able to take advantage of some dissension and rivalry among the chiefs and headmen. Similar negotiations took place and terms were agreed upon at Manitoba Post (an HBC post at the northwest extremity of Lake Manitoba), the site of Treaty Two, in August 1871.

It was evident the government and the Indian bands were negotiating on the basis of different interests and assumptions. The most crucial and irreconcilable was the concept of land. The Indians entered into negotiations for a treaty on the basis of the right to use **their** lands. The sale of land was not a familiar concept. Land was a commodity for common, not private use. The Indians were willing to negotiate with, and to a just extent, accommodate the newcomers. Euro-Canadians, however, thought in terms of exclusive property rights, a resource-based economy and eradication of Native cultures.

The "success" of the negotiations on the Indian side was directly related to their strategic position vis-à-vis Canadian settlement and resource development. The position of the "recalcitrant" Ojibwa bands of the Lake of the Woods-Fort Frances districts in the early 1870s is a prime example. Thrice they refused treaties that only included reserves and annuities. The residents of the North-West Angle learned much from the neighbouring Manitoba and American negotiations. Rumours of silver discoveries strengthened their position and they asked for higher annuities. Although they also lost on the sovereignty issue, Lieutenant Governor Morris and his commissioners acceded to most of their demands for higher gratuities and annuities. Their success launched an irate protest on the part of the signatories of Treaties One and Two, which led to a renegotiation and similar gratuities in 1875.¹⁵

By Treaties One and Two, the Crown had acquired "the extinguishment of the Indian title in Manitoba, and in a tract of country fully equal in resources beyond it".¹⁶ The path had been cleared for the government's colonization offensive and the anti-Native repressive policies (referred to as "protective legislation") of the succeeding decades.

It has been convincingly argued that in the 1870s and early 1880s opportunities existed between the Indians and government for a co-operative relationship that could have fostered the establishment of self-supporting and self-governing Indian communities.¹⁷ At the conclusion of Treaty One, Commissioner Simpson reported the Indians at St. Peter's, Rivière Marais and the town of Winnipeg were favourable to agricultural pursuits, already cultivating small patches of corn and potatoes. The shortage of labour also made them indispensable on Euro-Canadian farms.

The Indians in the vicinity of the Forks resisted the gradual encroachment on their lands. They resisted even more stubbornly assimilation into the White ethos as government tightened the screws on their religious and cultural ceremonies. Willing to explore the alternative of agriculture, adapt to changed environmental and economic circumstances, they were refused assistance. Rather than aiding Indians to make the transition to new forms of self-sufficiency, the so-called "humanitarian" policies pursued by the federal government sabotaged the Indians' efforts to preserve their autonomy and make a viable transition to new ways of life.¹⁸ By the turn of the century, its relentless interference and control of "Indian affairs" had fostered internal divisions and irrevocably altered Native societies and cultures. The people who called themselves the "first that were planted here"¹⁹ were effectively removed to make way for Canadian sovereignty and imperialistic conquest. For the Amerindians, the transition from a Native-oriented to a Euro-Canadian society and economy had been swift, involuntary and absolute.

THE METIS AND HALFBREEDS IN THE "NEW" MANITOBA

Upper Fort Garry

In the 1870s the fort provided the transition into the new era. It served as the temporary quarters of the provincial government while commerce and business moved north to the town of Winnipeg. The 1870s and 1880s, however, were the years of decline and demolition of the fort structures.²⁰ Around 1872, the southern end of the fort was cleared of the old Main House and a store on the inside of the south wall, creating the spacious interior appearance depicted in many later photographs. A liquor store was erected along the outside of the south wall, the last building constructed at the fort. In 1873 two structures were dismantled, and by 1878 the massive stone walls had all been leveled. Upper Fort Garry was largely demolished in 1882. The entire southeast corner and some minor buildings were torn down to make way for Main Street. The fort was also abandoned as an administrative centre by the HBC. Between 1889-1900, the remaining buildings were removed, leaving only the bastion gate. A unique vestige of the exploration and fur trade era of the West had been removed in the name of progress and civilization. The principal inhabitants or clients of the fort and its surroundings, the Métis and Halfbreeds, were simultaneously displaced by a British-Ontarian community.

The Population

The Métis and Halfbreeds formed the largest population around the Forks in the new "postage stamp" province of Manitoba. The riverlots along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine were at the heart of their homeland. The Métis provisional government had drafted the List of Rights which formed the basis of the negotiations with the Canadian government and the drafting of the Manitoba Act or "Treaty". The Province of Manitoba was essentially a Métis achievement, with guarantees for land, language and other Métis institutions. The period between 1870 to 1900, however, was not one of harmonious interaction and partnership with the newcomers. Rather, it was a period of conflict and dispossession, culminating with the imposition of British political institutions, social hierarchies and economic institutions.

This phase of Métis history in Manitoba has either been ignored by Euro-Canadian historians, depicted as one of disaggregation and exodus for a "primitive" society, or conversely, seen as a triumph for Canadian expansionism and democracy.²¹ Another emerging view, however, is that of a leading group or majority isolated from the new and imposed industrial capitalist culture, dispossessed of its lands by government and entrepreneurs, and increasingly discriminated against in terms of its Native and Francophone heritage and culture.²²

Notwithstanding his subscription to the inherent weakness and racial inferiority of the Métis, the French ethnologist Giraud acknowledged they were disinherited and relegated to a subordinate status in Manitoba in the post-1870 period. The 1870s and 1880s were critical transitional years. An examination of the developments of the period reveal that the Métis resisted infringements on their rights by the intruders and reoriented their economic

activities. There is clear evidence that the Canadian government had no desire to respect the two basic rights of land tenures and self-government guaranteed by the Manitoba Act.²³ In fact, Sir John A. Macdonald had made such promises only to pacify the "insurgents". His strategy was conquest: "They will have to be ruled by a strong hand until they are swamped by the influx of settlers."²⁴ With this objective in mind, police, land surveyors and a variety of public servants were sent out to establish Euro-Canadian institutions and seize unappropriated resources. The promotion of Anglo-Canadian expansionism was guided by British traditions, rule by law and a conservative agricultural order. The alternate French-Canadian view, guided initially at least by integration and collaboration with the Métis,²⁵ was short-lived.

Canadian expansionism in the post-1870 period implied a perception of the Métis as "defenders of the wilderness" and enemies of Canada.²⁶ Anglo-Ontarians expressed disdain and ignorance of the pre-1870 West. The French Catholic traditions of the Métis were dismissed as "foreign" and backward, while the myths of the Selkirk "Settlement", the Seven Oaks "Massacre" and the Métis "Rebellion" were promoted.

Political Representation and Displacement by New Political Alliances and Traditions

Representation and active participation in the government and judiciary were means by which the Métis hoped to direct their integration into the Canadian system. But an unhealthy sectionalism and bigotry dominated Manitoba politics in its first decade. The nomination of John Christian Schultz to the North-West Council by Lieutenant Governor Morris in 1872 signalled the triumph of the Canadian Party over the "Métis-Canadiens". The first lieutenant governor,

Adams G. Archibald, had been comparatively tolerant and respectful of M tis traditions, so much in fact that he was recalled by Prime Minister Macdonald in 1872 for encouraging their "fanciful rights".²⁷

These transitional years in Manitoba politics have been interpreted differently by various historians.²⁸ It is agreed, however, that the outcome of the first elections reflected the linguistic and cultural character of the new province. Between 1870 and 1874, the Halfbreeds were represented by David Spence, Alexander Murray and Andrew Bourke while Louis Riel, Louis Schmidt, Maxime L pine and Georges Klyne represented the M tis. Their election reflected a Native presence and influence in the legislature. This balance was soon upset, however. Anglophone representation shifted to the new immigrants from Ontario. Riel was forced to abandon his seat in the federal parliament and M tis political power in Manitoba gradually shifted to French-Canadians. In 1874 Marc-Amable Girard, "the amiable non-entity", became the first premier as defined by the principle of responsible government. There was evidence of growing sectionalism between the M tis and Halfbreeds as well as between the M tis and the French-Canadian politicians by the mid-1870s. In 1878 Manitoba elected a Halfbreed premier, John Norquay, who soon came into conflict with the "new order", both Anglo and French-Canadian. The ministerial crisis of 1879, which culminated in an aborted "coup" by French-Canadian Joseph Royal to defeat Norquay, confirmed "racial" tensions and rivalries between the "new" and "old" settlers.²⁹ Greedy "borderline" politicians such as Norquay and J.H. Clarke allied themselves with the Ontarian representatives with which they had come to identify rather than with the M tis and Halfbreeds. On the other hand, there is evidence that Royal was guided by personal ambition and "betrayed" the M tis' interests in favour of "French" power. The political

divisions among the Métis themselves and the condescending attitudes of Royal, Joseph Dubuc and other French-Canadian politicians toward the Métis cannot be denied. The Catholic clergy, namely Bishop Taché and local parish priests, generally favoured French-Canadians over Métis, thus accentuating the tensions. Some Métis, like Charles Nolin of Ste. Anne des Chênes, were also personally confrontational and controversial in their actions. The compromises between French and English, Native and non-Native were destroyed in the struggle for personal wealth and power and the imposition of British political traditions. Unfortunately, the more diplomatic Métis politicians such as Pierre Delorme of St. Norbert, André Beauchemin of St. Vital and Alexandre Kittson of Ste. Agathe were not in the forefront. Another situation which played against the Francophone French-Canadian/Métis united front was the more conservative or "bleu" affiliation of French-Canadians Bétournay, Royal and Dubuc, in opposition to the more liberal or "rouge" tradition of the Métis group, a situation which polarized itself even further in the post-1885 period.

Though the "French bloc" lost power in 1879, the Métis continued to elect representatives in St. Boniface and surrounding Francophone parishes. Among them were Maxime Goulet (MLA for La Vérendrye, 1879-86), Roger Marion (St. Boniface and Carillon, 1886-99) and William Lagimodière (LaVérendrye, 1888-1907). Most of the Métis voted Liberal after Riel's execution under Macdonald's Conservatives. Horace Chevrier,³⁰ who represented St. Boniface between 1903-07, was a leading figure in the Manitoba Liberal convention of 1902. The delegates included Martin Jérôme, Pierre Lavallée, Vital Nault, Joseph Riel and Joseph Vermette.³¹

Social and Cultural Issues

In terms of social and cultural development, the 1880s and 1890s provided new directions. Amidst an atmosphere of bigotry and hostility, there was a resurgence of nationalism and outbursts of "peaceful" resistance in Métis communities around the Forks. In 1887 the Métis of St. Boniface, St. Vital and Winnipeg formed the Association St. Joseph which in 1910 became the Union Nationale Métisse St. Joseph du Manitoba. Among its objectives were the fostering of Métis heritage, economic assistance to their compatriots in need, and the publication of their interpretation of the events of 1869-70 in Manitoba and of 1885 in Saskatchewan. Marcel Giraud has referred to the adaptive "superiority of the Red River group"³² of Métis in comparison to their western brethren. Notwithstanding his particular definition, in terms of the degree of integration into the "dominant" French-Canadian group, the Métis of St. Boniface and surrounding parishes were involved in many activities and maintained their cultural traditions between 1870 and 1900.

The resettlement of many Manitoba Métis in the Saskatchewan and Assiniboia districts in the 1880s had both economic and social origins. The immigrant land seekers of this period in Manitoba were Ontarian and Québécois, as well as some Maritimers, Americans and British. Francophone immigration, which was perceived by the Catholic clergy as the cornerstone of a Métis-Canadien (and Franco-Catholic) "bloc" in Manitoba, was unsuccessful in offsetting the Ontarian "invasion". The French-Canadian clergy and elite advocated a program of settlement based on agriculturalism, clerical conservatism and traditionalism, whereas the Québécois were more attracted to the jobs in the factories in nearby New England than by the prospects of farming in a "foreign" and hostile province.³³ French immigration agents spoke of Manitoba as the "new Siberia" while the federal government transportation subsidies shifted towards western

Europeans (as opposed to British) and the special grants available to French-Canadian "repatriates" from the United States were lifted or decreased.

The abolition of French as an official language in Manitoba in 1890, along with the problems arising out of the Manitoba schools question, also worked against the movement of French-Canadians into Manitoba and western Canada. It was not that they lacked "the frontier spirit of Ontarians",³⁴ but more convincingly the combined effect of an "indifference" at official levels in Québec and the active determination of the Protestant-Ontarian majority by the 1880s to limit (if not eradicate) French language and Catholic religious rights in Manitoba.

The Métis response to the new settlers from Canada and Europe between 1870 and 1900 was three-fold: some opted for rapid integration into the dominant English-speaking group, others chose to identify with their French-Canadian and European-French compatriots while a persistent minority continued to identify themselves specifically as Métis. The largest concentration of Métis around the Forks was on the east bank of the Red River in St. Vital and St. Adolphe. They also formed the majority in the outlying rural communities of Rivière aux Rats (St. Pierre Jolys/St. Malo), Ste. Anne des Chênes and St. Laurent (Lake Manitoba) until the early 1900s. The majority of Métis, however, chose to leave Manitoba and resettle in homogeneous communities in the Northwest Territories. Bishop Taché's ideal of a nucleus of Métis communities along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, forming the cornerstone of a French-speaking "bloc" settlement, was shattered by 1885.

The activities and outlook of the Halfbreeds during these years are less well-known. Many continued to inhabit the traditional parishes of St. Andrew's, St. James, and other communities north and west of the Forks. The main occupations on these riverlots were grain and mixed

farming. Businessmen such as A.G.B. Bannatyne and Henry McDermot (son of Andrew) operated a store in the new town of Winnipeg during the 1870s and 1880s. Bannatyne, who was married to the Halfbreed daughter of Andrew McDermot, supported Riel and was closely allied to the M tis through his extended family, the Marions, Carri res and Taillefers.³⁵ He also became involved in the entrepreneurial activities of the "new order", more specifically immigration, land speculation, the CPR, and even M tis and Halfbreed scrip.

Many M tis and Halfbreed bourgeois or trading families were intermarried and allied commercially and socially. Occupation and family ties appear to have been stronger than religious and ethnic considerations. Evidence seems to suggest that more prominent or prosperous Halfbreeds such as A.G.B. Bannatyne, J. Norquay and A. Cunningham associated themselves with the interests of the Anglo-Ontarians in Manitoba by the 1880s. The Halfbreeds as a group tended to assimilate into the dominant Anglo-Protestant society,³⁶ although the alliance and outlook of the farming and labouring groups remain unknown.

Land Claims Under the Manitoba Act

One of the main reasons for the M tis dispersal and resettlement was the questionable enforcement of the land claims provisions of the Manitoba Act. The statute seemed to recognize M tis land custom ("usage traditionnel") of riverlots, hay privilege and common grazing. Section 32 appeared to guarantee possession according to traditional custom or to everyone who occupied land without title. The next generation seemed equally secure with the promise in section 31 that a territory nearly equivalent to the land already occupied (1.4 million acres or 565,000 hectares)

would be locked up from trespass by newcomers, reserved "for the benefit of the half-breed residents". The reality was that the government of Canada had no intention of creating an autonomous "half-breed" province.³⁷ The new province of Manitoba was denied control over its public lands, notwithstanding section 30 of the Manitoba Act which prescribed that land granted before the transfer, or the "old settlement belt", fell under provincial control.³⁸ The absence of a government based on a Métis majority representation by 1875 likewise prevented the passage of legislation to safeguard these rights. The federal government policy appears to have been one of calculated delays in order to thwart Métis land entries and secure them "for the purposes of Dominion".

No applications under section 32 were accepted until the completion of the surveys in 1873. The riverlot surveys along the Red, Assiniboine, Rat and Roseau rivers or in the "old parishes" were confirmed, but elsewhere the sectional system was adopted, contrary to Métis custom and wishes. Upon completion of the surveys, a series of contrary and possibly unconstitutional³⁹ amendments were made to the Manitoba Act, which in effect abrogated its original provisions. In May 1873, the dominion "clarified" section 31 to disqualify those Half-breeds who had become heads of families subsequent to the time of transfer. The maneuver dispossessed about 4,000 individuals or 40 per cent of those eligible to receive land from the 1.4 million-acre reserve.⁴⁰ The "heads of families" were reinstated in 1874 and given scrip worth \$160 towards the purchase of land but no direct land grant. The 1873 amendment also stringently redefined "peaceable possession" of a riverlot, and officials in Winnipeg refused claims where improvements were slight and no proof of ownership was found in the old HBC land register.

The hay cutting privilege (Outer Two Miles) was also challenged when the government announced it would be open for settlement by newcomers.⁴¹ Finally, further legislative amendments in 1874 and 1875 altered the eligibility dates for occupancy (pre-emptive land right) from 8 March 1869 to 15 July 1870, effectively disenfranchising many Métis freighters and traders. The same legislation removed from the courts the responsibility for adjudicating disputes between individuals about land rights. During the 1870s further amendments, orders-in-council and questionable administrative practices increasingly complicated and obstructed the recognition of Métis land claims.

The first census of Manitoba in 1870 had enumerated 9,800 Métis and Halfbreeds. A second census of the Métis population in 1875 showed that about 3,000 of the male and female heads of families, and nearly 6,000 of their children, were still in the parishes in which they had been enumerated in 1870.⁴² But the new settlement duties and delays between 1873 and 1878 discouraged many Métis along the Red and Assiniboine rivers. The dates correspond with the resettlement at St. Laurent de Grandin, Wood Mountain, the Touchwood Hills in the Northwest Territories, and the Turtle Mountain district along both sides of the American and Canadian border.

The situation had become critical by 1882, so much that l'abbé Ritchot and Conservative M.P. Joseph Royal appealed to Macdonald to keep his promises to the Métis. Ritchot in particular protested with indignation when the dominion government established 1 May 1882 as a deadline for patent applications based on "peaceable possession" and "sanction and license" clauses of section 32. Ritchot confronted Macdonald, reminding him that the Métis custom of land tenures had been fully explained to him in 1870, that the greatest liberality had been promised to safeguard their rights, but they had been deceived and dispossessed.⁴³ In

April 1884, the Canadian government extended the deadline for applications under section 32 to 1 May 1886. According to tabulations by Sprague and Frye, "by 1883, more than 70% of the Métis and more than 50% of the native English had seen the land they occupied in 1870 patented to others."⁴⁴ Confused by the constantly changing and increasingly stringent regulations, frustrated by the slow moving Anglo-Canadian bureaucracy and plagued by speculators, the Métis left the Forks and Manitoba in search of new opportunities to the west. It is important to note that not all of the Métis who left Manitoba were landless. Some sold at a profit before the crash in land values of 1882. According to one real estate dealer, Joseph Lecomte of St. Boniface, lots were selling at \$50 to \$52 an acre at St. Norbert.⁴⁵ Some of the Métis patentees who sold and moved out to the Saskatchewan district evidently did so for shrewd business reasons. Traders such as Salomon Venne of St. Norbert, Xavier Letendre of St. Boniface and Baptiste Boyer of St. François-Xavier had already established stores at Batoche, Saskatchewan.

From a farming perspective, riverlots were at a premium around the Forks by the mid-1880s and many Métis who had located on prairie quarter sections found them unsuitable. For those who remained and applied for patent to their riverlot farms, the process was often long and complex. The case of the Riel family, on lots 50 and 51 in the parish of St. Vital, can be cited as an example. Mme Julie Riel (widow of Louis Sr.) had established residence around 1864, made an "official" entry under the Manitoba Act in 1875, applied for patent in 1878, but only obtained title to lot 51 in 1884 and lot 50 in 1892, after protracted negotiations with the Dominion Lands office.⁴⁶ Yet the Riel family was comparatively well-informed, in continuous residence and had fulfilled the cultivation requirements. According to a recent survey, about 20 per cent of the Métis received

patents, whereas 80 per cent were non-patentees.⁴⁷ The landless Métis' only favourable option was migration to yet unoccupied lands in the Northwest Territories. More than 80 per cent of the Métis who settled at St. Laurent de Grandin and environs between 1873 and 1882 were from this group.⁴⁸ The desire for a land base, better economic opportunities and social continuity appear to have been the prime considerations for the mass migrations and resettlement, not an attachment to nomadism or a lack of appreciation for the value of land as stated by Giraud, Morton and other writers.⁴⁹

The inherent problem to the failure of the Métis grant under section 31 of the Manitoba Act was the introduction of scrip, certificates negotiable for land or money, as the means of distribution. In 1874 the Métis heads of families were given scrip worth \$160 ostensibly redeemable in land. Scrip of \$240 or 240 acres was issued to the children between 1876 and 1886. As of 1878, however, scrip allotments were exempt from regulations. Money scrip was highly negotiable and provided the basis for a frantic speculation while land scrip allotments were done by lottery, which prevented selection of desired lots. The legal acceptance of assignment of claims through power of attorney resulted in fraudulent sales, transfers and loss through court orders.⁵⁰

The scrip system facilitated sale or disposal and prevented the emergence of a consolidated Métis land base in Manitoba. By 1886, all of the 1.4 million acres had been allotted. Almost 90 per cent had been patented and over 5,000 patents had been issued. But only 20 per cent of these nominal owners still enjoyed the benefits of actual ownership.⁵¹ The redistribution of Manitoba lands to newcomers and the accompanying dispossession of its Native population was a fait accompli.

Economic Changes and Métis Opportunities

The years 1870 to 1900 have been described as transitional from a "frontier economy" to an industrial capitalist way of life. The new economic structure was imposed and controlled largely by the federal government. Whether the National Policy was an instrument of the Canadian imperialists to exploit a western hinterland,⁵² or conversely, did not significantly affect or hinder the development of Euro-Canadian settlement in western Canada⁵³ is a debate which remained somewhat peripheral to the situation of the Métis during the 1880s and 1890s. By the mid-1890s, their way of life had been altered irrevocably by new economic and social institutions such as private property, an agricultural export economy and a western European, or more precisely, a British-Ontarian business elite. Except for a few bourgeois traders and politicians who "melted" into the new society, the Métis did not participate in entrepreneurial and capital intensive activities such as banking, real estate and commercial industries. Among the Métis and Halfbreed business and professional "elite" in St. Boniface and Winnipeg were John Norquay, William G. Fonseca, François and Normand Gingras, Henri Coutu and Roger Goulet. A. de la Giclais owned a real estate and brokage firm. Some Métis and Halfbreeds such as James McKay, Joseph Hamelin, James Mulligan and A.G.B. Bannatyne even dealt profitably in scrip.⁵⁴

In response to land pressures in the old parishes around the Forks in the 1870s, some Métis farmers staked out riverlots along the Rat and Prune rivers or around the new parishes of St. Pierre-Jolys and St. Jean-Baptiste respectively. Joseph Riel and William Gladu of St. Vital were wintering cattle and cultivating land at "la rivière aux Rats", while Daniel Branconnier and Baptiste Vandal of St. Norbert relocated to farms at "la rivière aux Prunes". The Métis who remained in the area of the Forks, however,

were mainly subsistence farmers and labourers. But the years before 1900 were not generally good farming years. They were marked by floods in the 1870s and grasshopper invasions and droughts in the 1880s and 1890s. Dry farming techniques, summer fallowing and the more resistant Marquis wheat were improvements of the early 20th century. In terms of markets, the international depression of 1873-96 precluded the large scale exportation of wheat and other agricultural crops. Some prosperous farms could be found in St. Pierre Jolys, Ste. Rose du Lac and Oak Lake districts.⁵⁵ Hunting of wild game such as moose and elk became a popular and profitable tourist industry. Métis worked as guides at fishing and hunting lodges on Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba. Duck hunting became an important industry at St. Ambroise by the turn of the century and some Métis also established muskrat and mink ranches.⁵⁶ Small fur bearing animals could also be trapped profitably. Some Métis who resettled in the Woodridge-Marchand district were successful in the woodcutting and lumbering industry. Most of the Métis who remained in the urban Winnipeg-St. Boniface area, however, were relegated to the service and labouring industries. They became servants, not partners, in the activities related to the industrialization of the Forks.

CONCLUSION

The period 1850-1900 was a difficult and transitional one for the Indians and Métis around the Forks. Bands of Saulteaux and Dakota farmed, hunted and traded on their own terms in the area, but their independence and traditional cultures were subject to increasing external pressures by the 1850s. The Saulteaux were forced "to take Treaty" at Lower Fort Garry in 1871. They wished to give the newcomers "the right to use their lands" but the government insisted on extinguishment to appropriate the lands in southern Manitoba for agricultural settlement and resource-based development.

During the 1850s and 1860s, the Métis of Red River diversified their fur trade activities while the Halfbreeds engaged primarily in agriculture. Both groups felt external pressures from the churches, the HBC and their Euro-Canadian peers.

The Métis struggle for recognition of their customary political and land rights culminated in the resistance of 1869-70. Their Halfbreed countrymen were generally sympathetic if inactive in the protest while the Saulteaux and Dakota around the Forks were mainly unwilling participants or bystanders. The Métis occupied Fort Garry on 2 November 1869. From these headquarters, Louis Riel worked to unite the settlement, drafted a List of Rights and formed a provisional government. Negotiations with the Canadian government culminated in the adoption of the Manitoba Act which guaranteed provincial status as well as

the linguistic, religious and proprietary rights of its Native citizens.

The terms of the Manitoba Act, however, were not respected. The Government of Canada subsequently "presided over the dissolution of the terms of the Manitoba Act".⁵⁷ The Canadians and Europeans who settled in the new province likewise altered its distinctive Euro-Indian character and culture. Forced to disperse, most of the Métis relocated to the Northwest Territories and reoriented their economic activities.

The 1870s in Manitoba were years of terror for the Métis. Most land claims were denied or appropriated through fraudulent scrip deals while their political rights were violated. Indian traditions and lifestyles were similarly suppressed and their lands appropriated. By 1900, frustrated in their attempts to make a viable transition to agriculture on their reserves, the aboriginal people became increasingly dependent and despondent and virtual "visitors" in their original homelands around the Forks.

ENDNOTES

PART I. NATIVE SOCIETY AND ECONOMY OF THE RED RIVER
SETTLEMENT, 1850-70

- 1 The term "Halfbreed" is used in the context of a 19th century ethnic group. Although generally condemned as pejorative and racist, it was widely used by the people of Native-English or non-Métis origins in the 1800s. Europeans and "White" Canadians, however, used the term as a racial classification and to institutionalize discriminatory practices. Although the term should be used with discretion, it is in many ways preferable and no more "racist" than the more contemporary racial term "mixed-blood" or the rather esoteric and restrictive appellation of "country-born". In this text the term Métis refers to the people of Canadien and Amerindian parentage at the Forks. Since the 1970s, Metis (without the accent) is the "official" name used by (and for all) the people of mixed European and Amerindian ancestry. Identification as a Metis usually implies political and nationalist affiliations.
- 2 This has been the definition of 'traditional' fur trade and 'frontier' historians such as A.S. Morton and G.F.G. Stanley as well as some more recent ones. See John E. Foster, "The Origins of the Mixed-Bloods in the Canadian West", in The Prairie West, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985), pp. 86-99 and "Some questions and perspectives on the problem of métis roots," in The New Peoples:

- Being and Becoming Métis in North America, ed. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), pp. 73-91.
- 3 See, for example, W.L. Morton, ed., "Introduction," Alexander Begg's Red River Journal: and other papers related to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1956), pp. 1-149.
 - 4 W.L. Morton, "Introduction," London Correspondence Inward from Eden Colvile, 1849-52, ed. E.E. Rich (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1956), p. liii; F. Pannekoek, "The Anglican Church and the Disintegration of Red River Society, 1818-70," in The Prairie West, pp. 100-15.
 - 5 J.S. Galbraith quoted in Glyndwr Williams, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Fur Trade: 1670-1870," The Beaver (Autumn 1983), p. 55.
 - 6 I. Cowie, The Company of Adventurers (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1913), p. 160.
 - 7 Jennifer S.H. Brown, "Company Men and Native Families: Fur Trade Social and Domestic Relationships in Canada's Old Northwest." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1976, p. 277.
 - 8 Sylvia Van Kirk, "Fur Trade Social History: Some Recent Trends," in The Prairie West, p. 80.
 - 9 J.L. Taylor, "Law and Order and the Military Problem of Assiniboia, 1821-1869." Master's thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1967, p. 48.
 - 10 Sylvia Van Kirk, "Fur Trade Social History: Some Recent Trends," pp. 78-79, quoted from Jennifer S.H. Brown, "Company Men and Native Families: Fur Trade Social and Domestic Relationships in Canada's Old Northwest," p. 277.
 - 11 Provincial Archives of Manitoba (hereafter cited as PAM), MG2, B5, A. McDonnell to A. Christie, 30 November 1845.

- 12 Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), D5/28, Petition to Sir G. Simpson, 1 June 1850.
- 13 HBCA, D5/25, James Sinclair to G. Simpson, 14 June 1849.
- 14 For an account of this scandal or "presumed affair" which rocked English-speaking Red River society, see Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur Trade Society (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980), pp. 220-30.
- 15 F. Pannekoek, "The Anglican Church and the Disintegration of Red River Society, 1818-70," p. 108.
- 16 Archives de l'Archevêché de Saint Boniface (hereafter cited as AASB), Fonds Fisher-Deschambeault, A.G.B. Bannatyne to H. Fisher, 24 September 1850.
- 17 HBCA, D5/29, E. Colvile to G. Simpson, 22 November 1850.
- 18 HBCA, D4/77, Simpson to Governor and Committee in London, 30 June 1857.
- 19 F. Pannekoek, "The Anglican Church and the Disintegration of Red River Society, 1818-70."
- 20 Ibid., p. 108.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 109-10.
- 22 Ibid., p. 109.
- 23 Marcel Giraud, Les Métis Canadien (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1945), pp. 954-60.
- 24 Ibid., p. 956.
- 25 HBCA, D4/76, Simpson to Governor and Committee, 26 June 1856.
- 26 Assumption Abbey Archives, Belleau Collection, G. Belcourt to H. Sibley, 9 June 1850.
- 27 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 22.
- 28 D. Wayne Moodie and Barry Kaye, "Indian Agriculture in the Fur Trade Northwest," Prairie Forum, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall 1986), pp. 171-83.

- 29 See Arthur J. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade: Their role as trappers, hunters, and middlemen in the lands south-west of Hudson Bay, 1670-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 213-20.
- 30 HBCA, D5/34, A.W. Buchanan to Simpson, 29 September 1852. The term "Sioux" was used by Euro-Americans and Euro-Canadians to identify the Dakota. It is an offensive Algonquian phrase coined by the French explorers which means snake or enemy. The name Dakota recognizes the common roots of all the divisions of this nation. See Peter D. Elias, The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest, Lessons for Survival (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), introduction.
- 31 Assumption Abbey Archives, Belleau Collection, G. Belcourt to C.F. Cazeau, 13 September 1853.
- 32 HBCA, D5/32, J. Black to Simpson, 9 December 1851; AASB, Rapport sur les Missions, Diocèse de Québec, 11 1845-63, L.R. Laflèche à un ami, 4 septembre 1851, pp. 44-70.
- 33 Assumption Abbey Archives, Belleau Collection, G. Belcourt to C.F. Cazeau, 13 September 1853.
- 34 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 35.
- 35 Ibid., p. 36.
- 36 Archives paroissiales de Saint Norbert (hereafter cited as APSN), L'abbé J.-N. Ritchot, Cahier Historique, I, pp. 28-29.
- 37 Irene M. Spry, "The Transition from a Nomadic to a Settled Economy in Western Canada, 1856-96," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Vol. 6, Series 4 (June 1968), p. 191.
- 38 Irene M. Spry, "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada," in As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows, ed. Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), pp. 204-6.

- 39 Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), p. 330, quoted from R. Burlinghane, "The Buffalo in Trade and Commerce," North Dakota History Quarterly, Vol. 3, No. 4 (1929), pp. 262-91.
- 40 Irene M. Spry, "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada," p. 208, n. 21.
- 41 J.G. Nelson, The Last Refuge (Montreal: Harvest House, 1973), p. 89.
- 42 Irene M. Spry, "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada," p. 212.
- 43 HBCA, J. Swanston to Simpson, 9 December 1858.
- 44 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, pp. 14, 67.
- 45 PAM, MG2, B5, A. Christie to Simpson, 31 December 1845.
- 46 Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, p. 294, quoted from Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, 1857, pp. 108, 142.
- 47 This is a recurrent theme in the correspondence of Chief Traders H. Fisher and G. Deschambeault. See, for example, AASB, Fonds Fisher-Deschambeault, G. Deschambeault to Sir S. Northcote, June 1870.
- 48 W.L. Morton, "Introduction," Alexander Begg's Red River Journal, p.2
- 49 P. Goldring, "Employment Relations in the Fur Trade, 1821-92," Canadian Historical Association Papers (1981), p. 2, quoted from H.C. Pentland, "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Vol. 30, No. 4 (November 1959), p. 454.
- 50 Irene M. Spry "The 'Private Adventurers' of Rupert's Land," in The Developing West: Essays on Canadian History in Honor of L.H. Thomas, ed. J.E. Foster (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983), pp.

- 51-59. After 1850, the company did not enforce its monopoly but it attempted to out-compete the free traders.
- 51 Marcel Giraud, Les Métis Canadien, p. 930; PAM, MG2, B5, Alexander Christie to G. Simpson, 31 December 1845; HBCA, D4/74, Simpson to Governor and Committee, 30 June 1854; D4/76A, 26 June 1856.
- 52 HBCA, D5/30, E. Colvile to Simpson, 7 June 1856; D4/77, Simpson to Governor and Committee, 30 June 1857.
- 53 AASB, Fonds Fisher-Deschambeault, A.N. Buchanan to H. Fisher, 27 January 1853.
- 54 R. Gosman, "The Riel and Lagimodière Families in Métis Society, 1840-1860," Manuscript Report Series No. 171 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1977), pp. 31-45; PAM, MG2, B3, Red River Settlement Censuses, 1856, 1870.
- 55 D.W. Moodie, "Agriculture and the Fur Trade," in Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference, ed. Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 286-7.
- 56 See, in particular, W.L. Morton, "Agriculture in the Red River Colony," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 30 (December 1949), pp. 304-21; M. Giraud, Les Métis Canadien, pp. 779-86. One notable exception was Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, pp. 301-10.
- 57 Irene M. Spry, "The 'Private Adventurers' of Rupert's Land," pp. 60-61; D.W. Moodie, "Agriculture and the Fur Trade," pp. 286-87; B. Kaye, "Some Aspects of the Historical Geography of the Red River Settlement from 1812-70." Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1967, pp. 166-72.
- 58 AASB, Fonds Fisher-Deschambeault, J. Black to H. Fisher, 24 February 1852; J. Rowand to H. Fisher, 11 December 1852; A.W. Buchanan to H. Fisher, 27 January 1853.

- 59 Ibid., Ambroise Fisher to his uncle, 25 February 1853.
- 60 PAM, MG2, B6, Minutes of the Executive Relief Committee, Reports for the parishes of St. Boniface, St. Vital, St. Norbert, St. François-Xavier-Baie, St. Paul (White Horse Plain), St. Laurent (Lake Manitoba), St. Charles and Ste. Anne (Pointe de Chênes).
- 61 Barry Kaye, "The Settlers' 'Grand Difficulty': Haying in the Economy of the Red River Settlement," Prairie Forum, Vol 9., No. 1 (1984), pp. 1-10.
- 62 E.H. Oliver, ed., The Canadian North-West: Its Early Development and Legislative Records (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), Vol. I, "Introduction," p. 32.
- 63 Ibid., "Minutes of the Council of Assiniboia," 21 June 1841, p. 296.
- 64 J.L. Taylor, "Law and Order and the Military Problem of Assiniboia, 1821-1869," p. 119.
- 65 HBCA, D5/2, Petition of 1 June 1850.
- 66 Lionel Dorge, "The Métis and Canadien Councillors of Assiniboia, Part I," The Beaver (Summer 1974), pp. 15-16.
- 67 PAM, MG20, E4, Petition to His Excellency Sir Edmund Walter Head Bart, Governor-General of British North America from the Inhabitants and Natives of the Red and Assiniboine Country, 1857.
- 68 Marcel Giraud, Les Métis Canadien, p. 960.
- 69 HBCA, D4/77A, Simpson to Governor and Committee, 26 June 1856.
- 70 HBCA, D5/43, F.G. Johnson to Simpson, 9 April 1857; 23 May 1857.
- 71 Lionel Dorge, "The Métis and Canadien Councillors of Assiniboia, Part II," The Beaver (Autumn 1974), pp. 39-45.
- 72 HBCA, D44/77, Simpson to Governor and Committee, 30 June 1857.

- 73 HBCA, D5/46, Report by Major Seton, 5 February 1858.
- 74 Lionel Dorge, "The Métis and Canadien Councillors of Assiniboia, Part III," The Beaver (Winter 1974), p. 51.
- 75 F. Pannekoek, "The Anglican Church and the Disintegration of Red River Society, 1818-70," p. 111.
- 76 Ibid., p. 112.
- 77 Brad Loewen and Gregory Monks, "A History of the Structures at Upper Fort Garry, Winnipeg, 1835-87," Microfiche Report Series No. 330 (Ottawa: Environment Canada, Parks, 1986), pp. 100-49.
- 78 Ibid., p. 104.
- 79 Ibid., p. 133.
- 80 Lionel Dorge, "The Métis and Canadien Councillors of Assiniboia, Part III," p. 55.
- 81 W.L. Morton, "Introduction," Alexander Begg's Red River Journal, p. 30.
- 82 Marcel Giraud, Les Métis Canadien, p. 960.
- 83 W.L. Morton, "Introduction," Alexander Begg's Red River Journal, p. 27.
- 84 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 71.
- 85 PAM, RG17, Surveyor G. McPhillips Notebook No. 555, 1873 Parish of St. Vital, lots 12-13.
- 86 Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Historic Resources, Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Winnipeg, 1986, Chapter III, p. 5, n. 6 from APSN, J.-N. Ritchot, Cahier Historique I.
- 87 Ibid., p. 21.
- 88 W.L. Morton, "Introduction," Alexander Begg's Red River Journal, p. 48.
- 89 APSN, J.-N. Ritchot, Cahier Historique I, p. 23.
- 90 W.L. Morton, "Introduction," Alexander Begg's Red River Journal, p. 12.
- 91 APSN, J.-N. Ritchot, Cahier Historique I, p. 3.

- 92 W. McDougall to J. Howe, 31 October 1869 in Sessional Papers, 1870 quoted in Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter III, p. 7, n. 18.
- 93 APSN, J.-N. Ritchot, Cahier Historique I, p.23.
- 94 Ibid., p. 27.
- 95 J.S. Dennis to W. McDougall, 27 October 1869, Sessional Papers, 1870 quoted in Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter III, p. 13, n. 35.
- 96 APSN, J.-N. Ritchot, Cahier Historique II, p. 4.
- 97 For a discussion of the role of Ritchot in the Métis council, see Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter III, p. 22.
- 98 J.A.N. Provencher to W. McDougall, 3 November 1869, Sessional Papers 1870 quoted in Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter III, p. 16, n. 42.
- 99 Ibid., p. 17, n. 44.
- 100 Ibid., p. 18, n. 48, Sworn Statement of André Nault.
- 101 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 73.
- 102 Ibid., p. 76.
- 103 W.L. Morton, "Introduction," Alexander Begg's Red River Journal, pp. 76-77. Morton states that although the provisional government had a moral and practical validity, it was not legal. According to him, the British Crown was the only legal authority in the settlement. He denies the principle of "droits des gens" as a basis for the right of the Métis to form a "legally" constituted government in 1869-70.
- 104 W.L. Morton, "A Century of Plain and Parkland," in The Prairie West, p. 22.

Although Morton acknowledged the Métis formed a "new nation" or a unique ethnic and political identity, he considered them "primitive".

- 105 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 80.
- 106 Ibid., p. 81.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Lewis H. Thomas, "Louis Riel," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. XI, p. 740.
- 109 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 82.
- 110 W.L. Morton, ed., Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and Other Papers Relative to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70, pp. 309-10, 16 February 1870.
- 111 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 84.
- 112 Lewis H. Thomas, "Louis Riel," p. 741.
- 113 PAM, MB9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, pp. 84-85.
- 114 Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of A Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter III, p. 27.
- 115 Raymond Huel, ed., Les Ecrits Complets de Louis Riel (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985), Vol. I, p. 86, texte 1-057, L. Riel à J.-N., Ritchot, '70/04/19. Riel wrote, "Le nom du pays est déjà écrit dans tous les coeurs, c'est celui de Manitoba [dérivé soit du cri "manitou wapon", ou de l'objiwé "manitou-ban"]..." The term has been interpreted in English as "The God that speaks" or alternatively as the "channel of the Spirit" or of the narrows of Lake Manitoba (n. 6, p. 87).
- 116 Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter III, pp. 27-28.
- 117 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 87.
- 118 This fact is supported by both G.F.G. Stanley, Louis Riel (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1963), pp. 140-47 and W.L. Morton, Manitoba: The Birth of a Province (Altona: D.W. Friesen and Sons, 1965), p. 153.

- 119 Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter III, p. 28.
- 120 Lewis H. Thomas, "Louis Riel," p. 742.
- 121 Ibid.
- 122 PAM, MG9, A31, Mémoires de Louis Schmidt, p. 87.
- 123 Ibid., p. 89.
- 124 Quoted in Lewis H. Thomas, "Louis Riel," p. 742 (trans.).
- 125 James J. Jackson, The Centennial History of Manitoba (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), p. 111.
- 126 See account of this incident in Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter IV, p. 2; G.F.G. Stanley, Louis Riel, pp. 160-1.
- 127 G.F.G. Stanley, Louis Riel, p. 161.
- 128 For a brief account of the annexationist platform of the Fenian O'Donoghue, see Philippe Mailhot, "The Evolution of a Red River Parish: St. Norbert 1800-1914," Chapter IV, p. 3.
- 129 Riel was not formally introduced to Archibald when he reviewed the Métis volunteers in St-Boniface on October 8. Marc-Amable Girard who introduced the Métis leaders reportedly was careful not to mention Riel's name although Archibald was never in any doubt about the identity of the man to whom he spoke. The conciliatory gesture was instrumental in Archibald's demise. See G.F.G. Stanley, Louis Riel, pp. 175-80.

PART II. NATIVE SOCIETY IN TRANSITION IN MANITOBA
1870-1900

- 1 The traditional survey studies on Manitoba and the pre-1905 North-West Territories have described these decades as ones of "civilization", triumph of the "new order" and resolution of the Indian or Native "problem". See in particular W.L. Morton, Manitoba, A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) and G.F.G. Stanley, The Birth of Western Canada (Toronto: Longmans, 1960). A recent history by Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), gives consideration to the Native peoples situation but it ultimately subscribes to the view of the positiveness of the Euro-Canadian settlement of the West and the imposition of its institutions.
- 2 Canada. Sessional Papers, No. 20 (1871), p. 91.
- 3 John L. Tobias, "Canada and the Plains Indians," NeWest Review (February 1987), pp. 12-13.
- 4 John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXIV, No. 4 (December 1983), p. 520.
- 5 A. Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke and Co., 1880), p. 16.
- 6 For a detailed discussion of this policy and its implications, see Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History, Chapter 8, pp. 162-94 and Gerry Berkowski, "The Forks: Post-1870 Storyline."

- Manuscript on file, Historical Services, Canadian Parks Service, Winnipeg, 1987, Introduction and Chapter 2.
- 7 Gerry Berkowski, "The Forks: Post-1870 Storyline," p. 37.
- 8 Ibid., p. 34.
- 9 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
- 10 A. Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians, Appendix, p. 315.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 G. Laviolette, The Sioux Indians in Canada (Regina: Marian Press, 1944), pp. 114-5. The Portage La Prairie Sioux Village Reserve No. 8 (a) was established in 1898, although the Wahpeton had been there since the 1860s. Some of them moved to the Long Plain Reserve (No. 6A) in 1934 and subsequently to the Oak Lake Reserve (No. 59).
- 13 A. Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians, p. 129.
- 14 Ibid., Appendix, p. 314.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 126-42.
- 16 Ibid., p. 31.
- 17 N. Dyck, "An Opportunity Lost: The Initiative of the Reserve Agricultural Programme," p. 121 in 1885 and After, ed. F.L. Barron and J. Waldram (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1986), pp. 121-37.
- 18 Ibid., p. 121.
- 19 A. Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians, speech by a Lac Seul Chief, North-West Angle, 1 October 1873, p. 63.
- 20 For details and analysis, see Brad Loewen and Gregory Monks, "A History of the Structures at Upper Fort Garry, Winnipeg, 1835-87," and their article entitled "Visual Depictions of Upper Fort Garry," Prairie Forum No. 13 (Spring 1988), pp. 1-24.

- 21 The former view has been advanced by Marcel Giraud, Les Métis Canadien, while the latter has been argued by W.L. Morton, G.F.G. Stanley and D. Owram, Promise of Eden, The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).
- 22 D.N. Sprague, "The Manitoba Land Question 1870-1882," Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Fall 1980), pp. 74-84; "Government Lawlessness in the Administration of Manitoba Land Claims, 1870-1887," Manitoba Law Journal, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1980), pp. 415-41.
- 23 This is the essence of D.N. Sprague's findings and arguments in Canada and the Métis 1869-1885 (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988).
- 24 National Archives of Canada (hereafter cited as NAC), MG26A, J.A. Macdonald to J. Rose, 23 February 1870, quoted in D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of the Red River Settlement 1820-1900 (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1983), p. 26.
- 25 For an insight into the activities of "Père Ritchot" in support of the Métis, more specifically in St. Norbert, see Philippe Mailhot, "St. Norbert Parish 1859-1930: "Father" Ritchot and the Métis." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1986. For an account of the policies of Bishop Taché and the French-Canadian politicians of the 1870s and 1880s vis-à-vis the Métis, see Robert Painchaud, Un rêve français dans le peuplement de la Prairie (St. Boniface: Les Editions des Plaines, 1987).
- 26 W.L. Morton, G.F.G. Stanley and D. Owram, Promise of Eden, pp. 196-7.

- 27 P.R. Mailhot and D.N. Sprague, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-1885," Canadian Ethnic Studies, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (1985), p. 3, n. 16.
- 28 Gerald Friesen, "Homeland to Hinterland: Political Transition in Manitoba, 1870 to 1879," Canadian Historical Association Papers (1979), pp. 33-47. He argues that the leading French-Canadian politician, Joseph Royal, betrayed his Métis compatriots in his bid to defeat the Norquay government in 1879. Friesen, however, does not raise the issue of the assimilated Halfbreed Norquay's duplicity and anti-Native stance. He states there is no evidence of Royal's allegations of an anti-French campaign in the legislature (p. 42) and Norquay's actions were that of a "man of compromise" who "left the old order behind" (p. 45). A.I. Silver and R. Painchaud place the actions of Royal and associates in the context of an isolated and embattled minority fighting for its land and cultural rights. See A.I. Silver, "French Canada and the Prairie Frontier 1770-1890," in The Prairie West, p. 147 and Robert Painchaud, Un rêve français dans le peuplement de la Prairie, p. 13. In support of Friesen's argument, there is clear evidence of conflict and rivalry between the French-Canadians and Métis politicians in the 1870s. It is unfair to suggest, however, that Norquay's Anglo-Halfbreed alliance to defeat the "French bloc" was also bereft of any ethnic and conspiratorial overtones.
- 29 Gerald Friesen, "Homeland to Hinterland: Political Transition in Manitoba, 1870 to 1879," p. 33-47.
- 30 Horace Chevrier (1875-1935) was of Swiss origin. His father, Senator Noël Chevrier, settled in Manitoba in 1872. The Chevriers owned the "Magasin Bleu", located

at 426 Main Street in Winnipeg. Horace married a Métisse, Marguerite Gingras, and became a spokesman for Métis interests.

- 31 Bernard Pénisson, Henri d'Hellencourt, Un journaliste français au Manitoba (St. Boniface: Les Editions du Blé, 1986), Appendix D, p. 279.
- 32 Marcel Giraud, The Métis in the Canadian West (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986), Vol. II, p. 469.
- 33 Robert Painchaud, "French-Canadian Historiography and Franco-Catholic Settlement in Western Canada, 1870-1915," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LIX, No. 4 (September 1978), pp. 447-66.
- 34 A.I. Silver contends that the insular French-Canadians did not possess the frontier spirit of Ontarians. He refers to their immobility and backwardness and other ideological characteristics of a "conquered society". See "French Canada and the Prairie Frontier, 1770-1890," pp. 151-4. This negative view was disputed by Robert Painchaud in Un rêve français dans le peuplement de la Prairie, pp. VIII-IX, who pointed to the mass migrations of Québécois during the period 1850-1900 and to the social and economic factors, not the absence of a frontier spirit, which influenced the relocation of the French-Canadian population.
- 35 J.E. Rea, "Andrew Graham Ballenden Bannatyne," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. XI, 1881-90, pp. 44-47.
- 36 Marcel Giraud, The Métis in the Canadian West, Vol. II, p. 470.
- 37 P.R. Mailhot and D.N. Sprague, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Métis 1870-1885," p. 3.
- 38 Ibid., p. 28, n. 14.

- 39 The argument put forth by the Manitoba Metis Federation is that according to the BNA Act, the Dominion was not competent to amend the Manitoba Act. The case will shortly come before the courts and will have important bearing on the reinstatement of Métis land claims.
- 40 D.N. Sprague, "The Manitoba Land Question, 1870-1882," p. 78.
- 41 P.R. Mailhot and D.N. Sprague, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Settlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-1882," p. 4.
- 42 Ibid., p. 5, tabulated from affidavits in NAC, RG 15, Vols. 1319-1324.
- 43 NAC, MG20A, J.A. Macdonald, incoming correspondence, pp. 14154-526, Ritchot to Macdonald, 15 January 1881.
- 44 P.R. Mailhot and D.N. Sprague, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Settlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-1885," p. 6.
- 45 AASB quoted in letter by l'abbé Samoïsette to Bishop Taché, 11 February 1882.
- 46 D. Payment, "Riel Family: Home and Lifestyle at St. Vital, 1860-1910," Manuscript Report Series No. 379 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1980), pp. 10-14.
- 47 P.R. Mailhot and D.N. Sprague, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Settlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-1885," pp. 7-8.
- 48 Ibid., p. 7.
- 49 Marcel Giraud, The Métis in the Canadian West, Vol. II, p. 380; W.L. Morton "A Century of Plain and Parkland," in The Prairie West, p. 23; Robert Painchaud, Un rêve français le peuplement de la Prairie, p. 11.
- 50 D.N. Sprague, "The Manitoba Land Question, 1870-1882," pp. 78-79. According to The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation (Table I, p. 87), the rate of dispossession of Métis children before the courts was 75 per cent.

- 51 D.N. Sprague, "Government Lawlessness in the Administration of Manitoba Land Claims, 1870-1887," Manitoba Law Journal, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1980), p. 421.
- 52 Vernon C. Fowke, The National Policy and the Wheat Economy (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957).
- 53 Kenneth H. Norrie, "The National Policy and Prairie Economic Discrimination 1870-1930," in Canadian Papers in Rural History, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1978), Vol 1; John H. Dales, "Some Historical and Theoretical Comments on Canada's National Policies," Queen's Quarterly, Vol. LXXI, No. 3 (Autumn 1964), pp. 297-316.
- 54 List of Patentees as opposed to original claimants compiled in D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation, Table 5.
- 55 Marcel Giraud, The Métis in the Canadian West, Vol. II.
- 56 Eudore Chevrier, "Mes Souvenirs," Les Clocheode Saint Boniface, Vol. LIV (1955), pp. 75-80, 94-100.
- 57 D.N. Sprague, Canada and the Métis 1869-1885, p. x.

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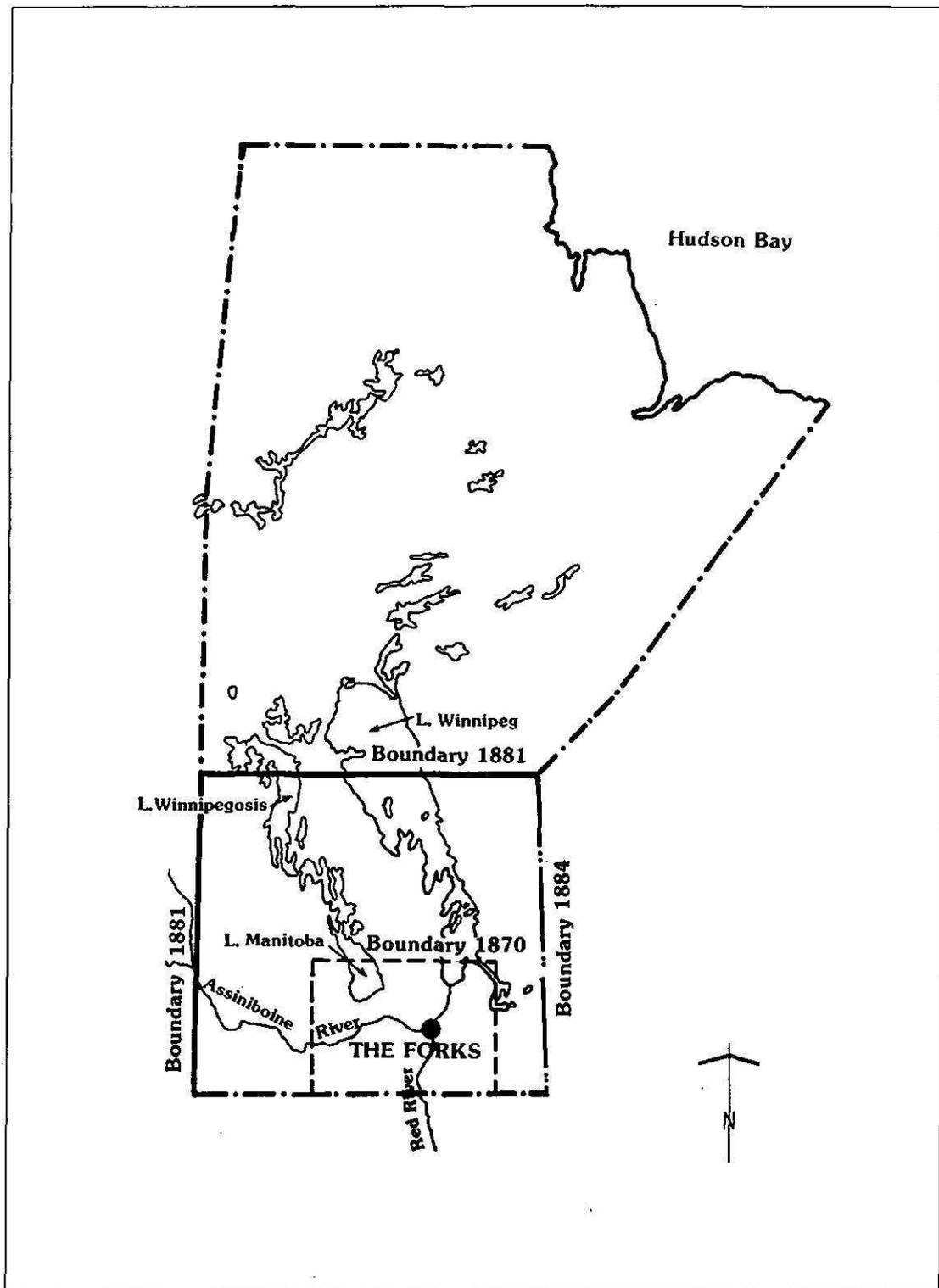
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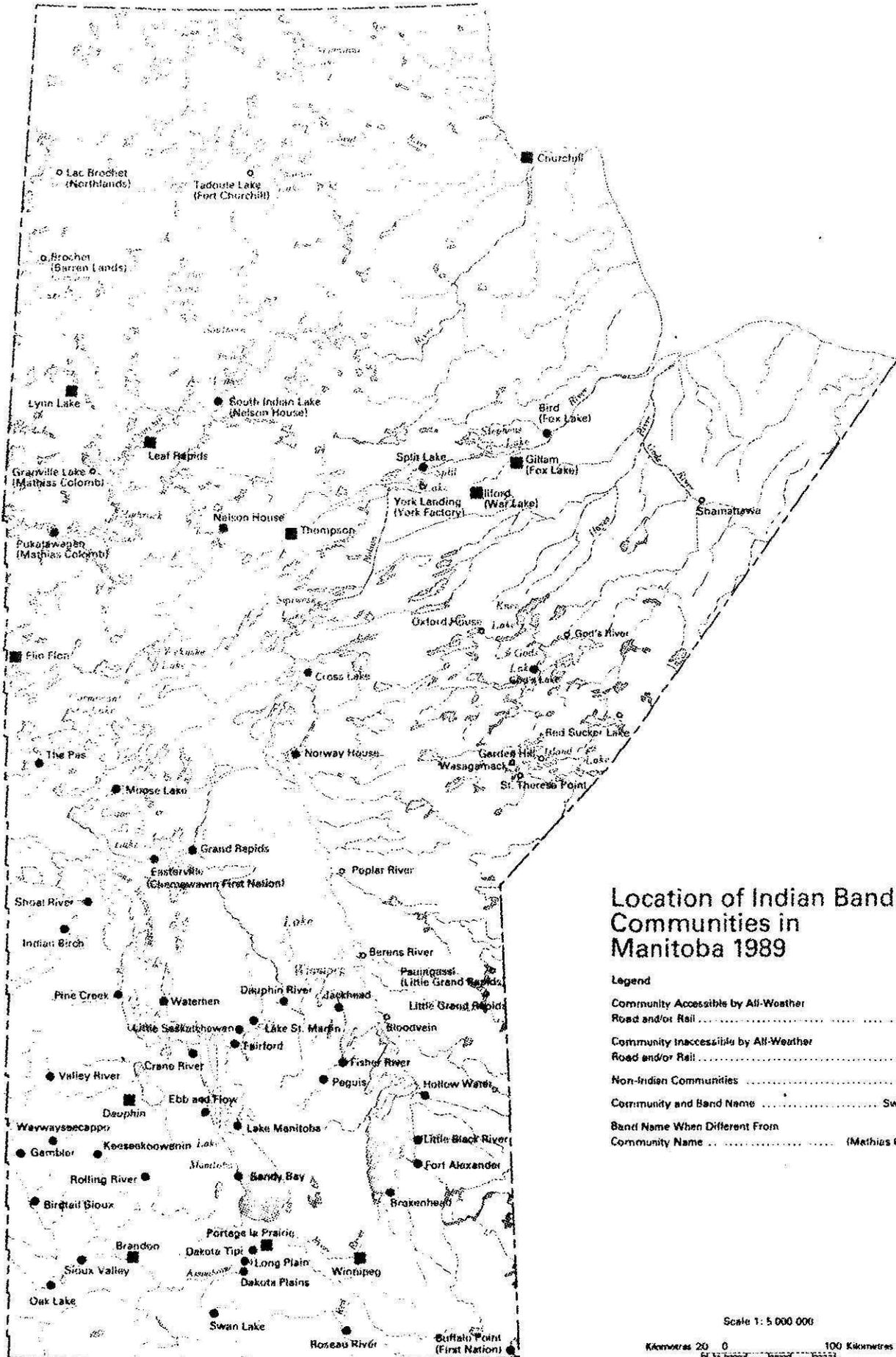
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2 Territorial evolution of the Province of Manitoba, 1870-84. (Drawn by D. Elrick, Canadian Parks Service, Winnipeg.)



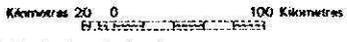
- 3 A.G.B. Bannatyne and Mrs. Annie Bannatyne (née McDermot) in front of their combined store and house near the Forks in 1858. The Bannatynes and McDermots were intermarried with other important Métis and Halfbreed merchant families such as the Marions, Kittsons and Logans. (Manitoba Archives.)



Location of Indian Band Communities in Manitoba 1989

- Legend**
- Community Accessible by All-Weather Road and/or Rail ●
 - Community Inaccessible by All-Weather Road and/or Rail ○
 - Non-Indian Communities ■
 - Community and Band Name Swan Lake
 - Band Name When Different From Community Name (Mathias Colomb)

Scale 1: 5 000 000



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