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Canada

**"Trucking and Trading with Outsiders": Blood Indian Reserve
Integration into the Southern Alberta Economic Environment,
1884-1939, A Case of Shared Neighbourhoods**

by

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**A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of History
Memorial University of Newfoundland**

May, 1999

St. John's

Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the economic association that existed between the Blood Indian reserve and the surrounding region of southern Alberta for the period of the 1880s through the 1930s. This study fills the gap left by Canadian historiography that has largely ignored the economic associations between Natives and non-Natives living in a common and limited environment. Instead historians have uncritically accepted the perception that Native reserves have played only a minor role in regional development. Consequently Natives and their reserve land base are seen by Anglo-Canadians to have had little influence on the economic circumstances in which Natives and newcomers found themselves in the post treaty period on the Canadian Plains.

The Blood tribe and their large reservation were a significant factor in the southern Alberta region in which they were located. Their land base was important to the nascent and established ranching industry near the reserve through the period of the Depression. The produce of the Blood reserve, especially coal and hay, were commodities in demand by settlers and the Bloods were encouraged to provide them as needed. The Bloods became expert freighters and the local community sought them out to

transport the much needed produce from the reserve and to trans-ship goods for non-Native entrepreneurs. Blood field labour in the Raymond area sugar beet fields was at times critical to the functioning of that industry. Their availability and willingness to work was a deciding factor in the operations of the Knight Sugar Company especially during the first decade of operations. Finally the Bloods' ties to the merchant community, especially in Cardston and Fort Macleod, resulted in a significant infusion of money into the local economy. Importantly, much of this cash resulted from the personal wealth of the Bloods and was not a consequence of Department of Indian Affairs charity. The Bloods were not a drain on the local resources but were important contributors to the developing economy of the region. The relationship that the Bloods had with local merchants was very much like that of their White neighbours.

Unfortunately the Department of Indian Affairs did not recognize the potential of the reserve to serve the needs of the Bloods, or at least did not let this recognition mitigate their policies of restriction and paternalism. Had they done so the fortunes of the Bloods, and many other Native reserves, might be much different today. So too might there be greater recognition of the part played by Natives in regional economies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals and organizations are owed a debt of gratitude for their valuable assistance and contribution to this project. I wish to acknowledge the advice and assistance of Dr. A.A den Otter, Dr. Ralph Pastore, Dr. Chris Youe and Dr. Lewis Fischer of Memorial University. The archivists and staff of the National Archives of Canada, Provincial Archives of Alberta, and the Glenbow-Alberta Institute were very helpful. Douglas Cass of the Glenbow is deserving of special mention. My appreciation also extends to Joanne Denton of the Roger's Sugar Company for her kind assistance. I am also grateful to the Queen Elizabeth II Library especially the staff of Libline. In addition Donna Donald of Elkford Secondary School and Melanie Paterson, Jolene James and Irene Naidu of the Elkford Secondary Art Career Preparation Program gave kind assistance.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Herman Ganzevoort of the University of Calgary and to Karen Fry. Dr. Ganzevoort is thanked for assistance many and varied and for his constant encouragement of my work.

Many thanks are also due to my supervisor Dr. Joseph Cherwinski. Without Dr. Cherwinski's expert advice and assistance this project would have been a longer and much more tedious undertaking than it was. It was due to his encouragement that I embarked on this project in the

beginning.

Thanks to mom and dad for the constant encouragement.

I thank the Graduate Studies Department, Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Ewart Fund, University of Manitoba for much needed financial assistance.

Last but not least I wish to thank my wife Anne for her understanding, encouragement and patience without which the long hours in the 'dungeon' would have been much less tolerable. Thanks also to Ryburn and Nancy who will hopefully now see much more of me.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

There is a long standing and firmly entrenched axiom in Canadian thought that holds that Indian reservations are culturally confused, economically emaciated, physically isolated 'islands' of poverty.¹ While some Native reserves fit this description the predisposition to accept such a judgment is, in part, informed by the pseudo-scientific theories that were in vogue at the turn of the century¹ and

¹ Helen Buckley believes that the process of moving to reserves resulted in the Indians "taking up a new life, but never becoming part of the larger society or regaining their independence." Helen Buckley, From Wooden Ploughs To Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), P. 3. In a reference to both physical isolation and special status she also notes that "The isolation of the reserve is the very essence of its being" and "So it is that the reserves remain as tiny islands in a sea of white culture, terra incognita to all but their own people." Buckley, Wooden Ploughs, pp. 11-12. Emphasis in the original. Cam Mackie states that "In a sense, economic development on Indian reserves both ended and began with the establishment of reserves...Some attempts were made to establish an agricultural base, but for the most part up until the early 1960s little of substance occurred that would lead to any form of economic self-sufficiency." Cam Mackie, "Some Reflections on Indian Economic Development," in J. Rick Ponting (ed.) Arduous Journey: Canadian Indians and Decolonization (Toronto: McClelland And Stewart, 1986), p. 214. Likewise Menno Boldt, Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 235. Heather Robertson concludes that for the 1960s "Most Indian Reserves produce nothing-nothing, that is except people." Heather Robertson, Reservations are for Indians (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1970), p. 27.

² Angus McLaren, Our Own Master Race: Eugenics in

results which issued from the theory cum policy embodied in the Indian Act. The aims and the inherent contradictions of the Act were best summed up by Duncan C. Scott, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1913-1932. Scott, arguably the most influential individual to hold that post stated:

This system was designed to protect them from encroachment and to establish for them a sort of sanctuary where they could develop unmolested, until advancement had rendered possible their absorption with the general citizenship. The Reserve System was intended to ensure the continuation of the tribal life and the life of the individual as an Indian, as well as to render possible a continuous and consistent administrative policy directed toward civilization.³

Ultimately, of course, 'civilization' as envisioned by Scott and the government, was incompatible with the continuation of Native economic and social traditions. The plains Indians' loss of the buffalo by 1880 was, for the government of Canada, a fortuitous circumstance. The loss of ancient economic and cultural patterns created significant confusion in Native life; thus assisting the government's assimilationist war aimed at erasing Native identity through

Canada, 1885-1945 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), Chapter 1; Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), Chapters 8 & 9; Robert F. Berkhofer, The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 55-61.

³ Duncan C. Scott, "The Aboriginal Races", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. CVII (May 1923), pp. 63-64.

re-education⁴ and the curbing of social and religious practices.⁵

The policy of isolation was vigorously promoted and zealously inflicted on Canada's aboriginal peoples by an army of Indian agents and other government servants. Both the policy and its repressive application, however, were challenged by the Indians from day to day and generation after generation. The Act intended to protect and assimilate,⁶ while at the same time it severed Native homelands from the social, political and economic milieu

⁴ The attempts to re-educate Natives in White run schools are among the most painful remembered experiences of Indians. Linda Pelly-Landrie, "First Nations Cultures, Now and In the Future", in Henry Epp (ed.), Three Hundred Prairie Years: Henry Kelsey's 'Inland Country of Good Report' (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1993), p. 178. On a negative view of the education system as it was and is for Indians see Kateri Akiwenzie-Damm, "We Belong To This Land: A View of 'Cultural Difference'", Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Fall 1996), pp. 24-25; Celia Haig-Brown, Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School (Vancouver: Tillacum, 1989), pp. 76-79. See also the reminiscence of Ojibwa, Basil Johnston in Basil H. Johnston, Indian School Days (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1938).

⁵ For the efforts to stamp out plains Indian religious practices see Katherine Pettipas, Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994); especially chapters 4 and 5. Similarly see Douglas Cole and Ira Chaikin, An Iron Hand Upon The People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990), chapter 6.

⁶ John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization,

which surrounded them and to which they were attached. This view has, to a large degree, been uncritically accepted by Canadian historians, both Native and non-Native alike. Thus the 'fact' of Native exclusion and isolation, with all the attendant disadvantages that this circumstance entails, has been sustained. The consequence of Canada's hegemony over Indians has been the assumption of a less than marginal existence for Native people, the ultimate victory being 'survival' itself.⁷

Native Canadians have been presented as culturally primitive with an unsustainable population base and therefore dependent on Canadian government beneficence. The belief that Indian societies had lost their vibrancy and were a people headed for extinction has helped perpetuate the view of an unimportance which is reflected in Canadian history and literature, especially that dealing with the period subsequent to World War I.⁸ Discussion of Native interactions

Assimilation: An Outline History Of Canada's Indian Policy," Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology, Vol. VI, No. 2 (1976), p. 13.

⁷ George Manuel and Michael Posluns, "The Fourth World in Canada", in Jean Leonard Elliot (ed.), Two Nations, Many Cultures: Ethnic Groups in Canada (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1983), p. 15.

⁸ Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian In Canadian Culture (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), pp. 53-57.

with Whites is generally cast in a negative mold⁹ because they were perceived as irrelevant to Canadian economic and social development.¹⁰ Historian James St. G. Walker has noted that Indians have made little impression on how historians write Canadian history. In fact, Native peoples are denied a historic role except for that which the dominant society chooses to give them.¹¹ Clearly the Indians did not matter, notably so after the failed 1885 North West Rebellion.¹²

The denial of significant Native participation in Canada's modern history, so difficult to overcome, was set by an earlier generation of scholars the most influential being,

⁹ Toby Morantz, "Recent Literature on Native Peoples: A Measure of Canada's Values and Goals", Acadiensis, 18 (1988), P. 237.

¹⁰ James W. St. G. Walker, "The Indian In Canadian Historical Writing." The Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers (Ottawa, 1971), pp. 38-40; James W. St. G. Walker, "The Indian In Canadian Historical Writing, 1971-1981." in Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (ed.), As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), pp. 348 ff.; Heidi Tiedemann, "The Representation Of Native Culture From Duncan Campbell Scott To Margaret Laurence." Canadian Studies Program, University College, University of Toronto (Vol. 3, No. 1), p. 1.

¹¹ Walker, "The Indian In Canadian Historical Writing," p. 38.

¹² It is argued that the Natives were reluctant and minor participants in the Rebellion being drawn in by the force of circumstance. See Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, Loyal till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 1997), pp. 1-4, 238-241.

arguably, G.F.G. Stanley. In his work The Birth of Western Canada, first published in 1936, Stanley established the premise of a dichotomy between 'civilized' and primitive peoples and cast the latter or aboriginal peoples at a predictable disadvantage. How could it be otherwise for societies described as 'simple' and 'inflexible'? In essence he proposed that on the Canadian plains Native culture, in the face of Euro-Canadian advancement, was economically, socially, and politically not viable.¹³ There were essentially then, for the Indians, only two possible ends. Native society would have to adjust, such adjustment requiring total cultural reorientation. Fortune and disease would dictate whether or not they would physically succumb as a race.

Stanley also firmly established the myth of the permanent disaster to plains Indian culture of the loss of the buffalo, "the complete destruction of their livelihood and morale".¹⁴ The consequences of this event are believed by historians to be a cultural and economic de-stabilization from which the Indians have never recovered. Inherent in Stanley's outlook is the supposition that Anglo-Canadian

¹³ George F.G. Stanley, The Birth of Western Canada: A History Of The Riel Rebellions (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), pp. 196-197; 217.

¹⁴ Stanley, Birth, p. 219.

individualism in both social behaviour and economic enterprise is superior to both individual Native initiative and to Native communities acting in social and economic concert. Though surrounded on their reserves by an immigrant culture there was apparently nothing they could contribute to or gain from this association. Thus the stage was set for Indians to fade to the back of both the real and perceptual landscape. In the interim Stanley has not lacked supporters who have adopted and championed his theme.¹⁵

Ramsay Cook's call, in 1967, to explain Canadian identity in terms of ethnicity and class¹⁶ went largely

¹⁵ Hugh Dempsey's work, for example, has focused on the valiant if vain efforts of individual Native leaders to lead their people into a modern age after the disappearance of the buffalo and the move to reserves. His work is a calendar of cultural turmoil and the struggle to remain culturally relevant. Hugh A. Dempsey, Crowfoot: Chief of the Blackfoot (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972); Hugh A. Dempsey, Red Crow: Warrior Chief (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980); Hugh A. Dempsey, Big Bear: The End of Freedom (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984); John W. Bennett, Northern Plainsmen: Adaptive Strategy and Agrarian Life (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 148-49; A.D. Fisher, "Indian Land Policy and the Settler State in Colonial Western Canada", in David Leadbeater, Essays On The Political Economy of Alberta (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1984), p. 85. Hana Samek concludes that the failure of the Blackfoot economy was due to cultural differences. Hana Samek, The Blackfoot Confederacy 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and U.S. Indian Policy (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), pp. 55, 183.

¹⁶ As discussed by J.M.S. Careless, "'Limited Identities' in Canada", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. L, No. 1, March 1969, p. 1.

unheeded especially with regard to viewing Native Canadians as ethnically significant. Consequently, comprehensive accounts of Canada's national history of the twentieth century have ignored the importance of the Native presence and participation in both local developments and extended nation building strategies. Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, in their ambitious contribution to the Canadian Centenary Series Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed, make no mention of Canada's Indians.¹⁷ Thompson and Seager, in their much-praised Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord, make only a two sentence reference to Native population growth between 1871 and 1921. They concluded that the sorry state of the Canada's Indian population was the result of their having been 'abandoned' by the dominant society.¹⁸ Donald Creighton in The Forked Road entirely neglected any discussion of Canada's Native population¹⁹ and J.L. Granatstein noted, in his introduction to Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation, that the Native

¹⁷ Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, Canada 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974).

¹⁸ John Herd Thompson, with Allen Seager, Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985).

¹⁹ Donald Creighton, The Forked Road: Canada 1939-1957 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976).

population, despite their serious economic and social problems, have largely been ignored by Canadian society. Regrettably, they suffered much the same fate in Granatstein's book.²⁰ The writers of a general survey, Canada Since 1945, made more mention of Canada's aboriginal peoples; but only to reinforce the well-worn adages of Natives as discriminated against and disadvantaged.²¹

Regional histories of the west have been, marginally, more faithful in their depiction of the Native's place in the evolving community and economy. Howard Palmer, in his more recent Alberta A New History, though devoting more attention to Indian concerns, set the tone for much of his discussion by noting they were "outsiders in the land that had once been theirs."²² John G. Reid, in an essay "Writing About Regions", although acknowledging the "flowering of Native and ethnic studies" in the 1970s and 1980s, makes only passing, and inadequate references that tie Native history to regional

²⁰ J.L. Granatstein, Canada 1957-1967: The Years of Uncertainty and Innovation (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), p. 8.

²¹ Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, John English, Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), pp. 5, 33, 109, 313.

²² Howard Palmer with Tamara Palmer, Alberta A New History (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1990), p. 103.

discussions.²³

Gerald Friesen's The Canadian Prairies: A History, is perhaps the best example of what can be done to properly reflect the shared history of Native and non-Native through the fur trade and post fur trade contact experience. He concludes, however, that the relationship has largely been a frustrating and 'unhappy' experience.²⁴ A recent work that is admirable for its sophistication and the breadth and depth of its analysis is Frank Tough's 'As Their Natural Resources Fail'. This work analyzes the participation of Natives in the economy of northern Manitoba. Tough concluded that the part they played was a significant contribution to the development of that region, even through the first three decades of the twentieth century.²⁵ Similarly a recent study of the Manitoba Metis determined that they were not primitives dispersed from the Red River region by forces

²³ John G. Reid, "Writing About Regions", in John Schultz (ed.), Writing About Canada: A Handbook for Modern Canadian History (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1990), pp. 76-77.

²⁴ Gerald Friesen, The Prairies: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 129-161,

²⁵ Frank Tough, 'As Their Natural Resources Fail': Native Peoples And The Economic History Of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996).

beyond their control. Rather they made deliberate and, at times, successful choices that suited their emergent economic circumstances.²⁶ J.R. Miller's Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, though a general history, contains a significant chapter that discusses the Native place in the western regional experience.²⁷ Admittedly though, his view of that experience is bleak, believing as he does that Canada's Natives existed in a limbo of 'irrelevance' until the post World War II period.²⁸ Generally speaking Miller may well be correct. The extent to which Natives and Whites co-participated in the economic development of a limited area, however, has yet to be investigated.

Intellectual history has also failed to accord Canada's Indians recognition. Doug Owram's Promise of Eden pays scant attention to Indians, viewing them only as a negative aspect of a land to be conquered.²⁹ Significantly, Douglas

²⁶ Gerhard J. Ens, Homeland To Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 172-173.

²⁷ J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 189-210.

²⁸ Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, p. 221.

²⁹ Doug Owram, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Ideal of the West 1856-1900

Francis, in his study, Images Of The West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960, failed either to note or to find evidence that Indians were part of the mental landscape for the period after the late nineteenth century.³⁰ The social, political, and economic culture of the west tends to be viewed strictly in terms of a transplanting and melding of Euro-Canadian influences.³¹ This is an important consideration when one realizes that Indians were, though often in a negative way, so much a part of what was perceived as the western setting. Much about Indian life and mythology also permeates both our cultural and literary heritage.³² Why

(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 16-17, 24-25, 50-51, 131-132.

³⁰ R. Douglas Francis, Images Of The West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960 (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), see especially pp. 107-173.

³¹ R. Douglas Francis, "In Search of a Prairie Myth: A Survey of the Intellectual and Cultural Historiography of Prairie Canada," Journal of Canadian Studies, Journal of Canadian Studies, 24, No. 3 (Fall 1989), pp. 46-56.

³² There are detailed historical and literary discussions of positive and negative views of Indians in relation to the west and Canada as a whole. On the Indian image in early history of the west see; Francis, Images, pp. 10, 39-40, 79; R. Douglas Francis, "From Wasteland To Utopia: Changing Images Of The Canadian West In The Nineteenth Century," Great Plains Quarterly, (Summer 1987, Vol.7 No. 3), p. 184 -186. For general literary discussion see; Leslie Monkman, A Native Heritage: Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), chap. 4, pp. 65-95; Terry Goldie, Fear And Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand Literature (Montreal: McGill-

Natives have apparently made no lasting impression on Anglo-Canadian interpretations of the 'image' or of the history of the region is an important consideration. This may, in part, explain why efforts to study non-Native and Native economic history as a regional integrated whole have been slow to occur.³³

Recently, Hana Samek, in The Blackfoot Confederacy, scrutinized the similarities and differences in the administration of Canadian and American Indian policy by focusing on the reserves of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Her study, however, ends in 1920 and her discussion of the most recent years is brief and thus unsatisfactory.³⁴ E. Brian Titley's, A Narrow Vision, explained government Indian policy and viewed its imposition on the Indians. Titley, however, does not take his study to the community level, and so the reader gets little feel for community reaction or the depth of feeling behind it.³⁵ Sarah Carter's excellent work, Lost

Queen's University Press, 1989), Chap. 5 and Chap. 8; Gaile McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Langscape (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985). pp. 216-229. On stereotyping in art see Ronald Rees, "Images Of The Prairie: Landscape Painting And Perception In The Western Interior Of Canada" Canadian Geographer, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1976), p. 261.

³³ A notable exception to this is Friesen, The Canadian Prairies.

³⁴ Samek, The Blackfoot Confederacy.

³⁵ E. Brian Titley, A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell

Harvests, is centered on the strategies of Treaty Four Natives in Saskatchewan for coping with new and ever changing conditions. Although touching on the non-Native response to the Native presence in the market place, Carter presents no detailed analysis of this economic association.³⁶ This work, specific to Saskatchewan experience, should not be generalized to all prairie Indians. J.R. Miller's, Skyscrapers Hide The Heavens³⁷ and Gerald Friesen's, The Canadian Prairies³⁸ are survey texts and, though admirable for their integration and analysis, lack the depth of local discussion characteristic of this approach. Regardless, it is clear that Indians have not been viewed as integral to local or national economic processes and generally have not been presented as a part of Canada's twentieth century collective experience.

Both pioneering ethnographic works in the 1940s and 1950s, and current styles of historical investigation, however, have established the basis for focused regional and community research. Emphasis on the mutual geographic

Scott And The Administration Of Indian Affairs In Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986).

³⁶ Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers And Government Policy (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), pp. 184-190.

³⁷ Miller, Skyscrapers Hide The Heavens.

³⁸ Friesen, The Canadian Prairies.

cohabitation of an area and the resulting shared experiences is especially pertinent. Lucien and Jane Hanks and Esther Goldfrank, for example, detailed the acculturation process among the Blackfoot and the Bloods in the 1920s and 1930s.³⁹ But these works are based primarily on field research supplemented with the little official documentation then available, most notably the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) Annual Reports. The voluminous archival collections of private, business, and government documents now available, the existence of more published monographs, and the more sophisticated approaches to analysis, make a re-evaluation both possible and necessary.

Robin Fisher noted, in a bibliographical piece in 1982, that there was a need for study of the effect of prairie settlement on Native peoples.⁴⁰ He could well have made the point about the impact of Natives on prairie settlement. A recent bibliographical essay by J.R. Miller clearly

³⁹ Esther S. Goldfrank, Changing Configurations In The Social Organization Of A Blackfoot Tribe During The Reserve Period: The Blood Of Alberta Canada (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1945); Lucien M. Hanks, Jr., and Jane Richardson Hanks, Tribe under Trust: A Study Of The Blackfoot Reserve Of Alberta. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950); Esther S. Goldfrank, "Administrative Programs And Changes In Blood Society During The Reserve Period," Applied Anthropology (Vol. 2 No. 2, January-March 1943), pp. 18-23.

⁴⁰ Robin Fisher, "Historical Writing on Native People in Canada," The History and Social Science Teacher (Vol. 17, No. 2, winter 1982), p. 69.

illustrates that Natives are no longer in the background of Canadian historical literature but he failed to detect any studies of a regional or local nature that depict the Indians as influencing rather than influenced.⁺¹ Historian Ken Coates concluded that anthropological and ethnographic works, because they focus mainly on aspects of Native culture and society, deal unsatisfactorily with Native-white contact.⁺² This conclusion is, I believe, equally applicable to southern Alberta. There is much about the nature of relationships between non-Native settlers and Native people for this time and place yet to be detailed.

There are scholarly works which support the arguments in favour of integrated non-Native/Native studies and of a limited geographic scope. These works are dismissive of the injunctions laid down by ethnohistorians, such as Calvin Martin. Martin argues that cultural differences and ethnocentric biases are such as to practically make impossible any accuracy in reconstructing the collective contact and post contact experience of culturally diverse

⁺¹ J.R. Miller, "Native History", in Doug Oram (ed.), Canadian History: A Reader's Guide; Volume 2: Confederation to the Present (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp. 179-201.

⁺² Ken S. Coates, Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations In The Yukon Territory, 1840-1973 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), p. xvii.

groups.⁴³ Two notable works that have looked at reciprocal social and gender relationships in the fur trade economy are Sylvia Van Kirk's "Many Tender Ties"⁴⁴ and Jennifer S.H. Brown's Strangers in Blood.⁴⁵ Both of these works determined that Native women were essential to the functioning of fur trade activities as conducted both by the Hudson's Bay Company and its chief rival the North West Company.

⁴³ See for example Calvin Martin, "The Metaphysics Of Writing Indian-White History", Ethnohistory, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring 1979), p. 153; Calvin Martin, "An Introduction Aboard the Fidele," Calvin Martin (ed.), The American Indian and the Problem of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 6-7. For criticism of this view see James Axtell, After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 10-11; Bruce G. Trigger, "Evolutionism, Relativism and Putting native People into Historical Context," Culture, Vol. VI, No. 2 (1986), p. 66; Wilcomb E. Washburn, "Distinguishing History from Moral Philosophy and Public Advocacy," Calvin Martin (ed.), The American Indian and the Problem of History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 95; Peter Novik, That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 470; Bruce G. Trigger, "Ethnohistory: The Unfinished Edifice," Ethnohistory, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Summer 1986), p. 263. Though not entirely negative about the potential for cross cultural studies Georges Sioui does admit to limitations in the scholarship to date. George E. Sioui, For An Amerindian Autohistory (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), pp. 98-102.

⁴⁴ Sylvia Van Kirk, 'Many Tender Ties': Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., n.d.).

⁴⁵ Jennifer S.H. Brown, Strangers In Blood: Fur Trade Company Families In Indian Country (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980).

Similarly the economic interactions of the fur trade have been expertly detailed by Arthur J. Ray in Indians In The Fur Trade⁴⁶ and Ray and Donald Freeman in 'Give Us Good Measure'.⁴⁷ Peter Elias in The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest, made a respectable effort at locating and explaining the Native experience and adjustment to emergent local economic circumstance in southern Manitoba.⁴⁸ Jennifer Reid rationalized her recent study of British and Mi'kmaq religious interaction in eighteenth and nineteenth century Acadia by accepting the continuing 'alienation' of Native from non-Native.⁴⁹ One of the most narrowly focused and yet revealingly original works of the past decade was W.H. Graham's history of four farms on the outskirts of the small Ontario town of Greenbank. Despite the limited geographic

⁴⁶ Arthur J. Ray, Indians In The Fur Trade: their role as hunters, trappers and middlemen in the lands southwest of Hudson Bay 1660-1870 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974).

⁴⁷ Arthur J. Ray and Donald Freeman, 'Give Us Good Measure': An Economic Analysis Of Relations Between The Indians And The Hudson's Bay Company Before 1763 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).

⁴⁸ Peter Douglas Elias, The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988).

⁴⁹ Jennifer Reid, Myth, Symbol, And Colonial Encounter: British And Mi'kmaq In Acadia, 1700-1867 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), p. 1.

focus of the study, Graham believes that the life histories of these people and their farms mirrored "the fortunes of the province and the world."⁵⁰ Clearly, there is equal justification for a study of southern Alberta that challenges the predominant perception of Native economic failure and exclusion.

Hana Samek, for example, accepts 'the failure of reservation economies' among the Blackfoot, including the Bloods.⁵¹ Helen Buckley's study is a chronicle of the long despairing descent by prairie Indians into welfare.⁵² John W. Bennett does attempt to explain the economic fit between Cree Indians and the Saskatchewan plains community of 'Jasper' * for the 1960s. But he ignores the relations between Natives and Whites in the post 1880s and concludes that for the period beginning in the 1960s both the Indians' economic behaviour and interaction was intermittent, marginal and negative.⁵³ Niels W. Braroe's social psychological study of the

⁵⁰ W.H. Graham, Greenbank: Country Matters In 19th Century Ontario (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1988), p. 1.

⁵¹ Samek, Blackfoot, Chapter 4, pp. 70-105.

⁵² Buckley, Wooden Ploughs.

* 'Jasper' is a fictitious name for a community that the author did not wish recognized.

⁵³ Bennett, Northern Plainsmen, pp. 162-165, 168.

Saskatchewan community of 'Short Grass'^{**} discovered a mutual racial antipathy and economic co-dependency. Natives, however, occupied the subservient role in that relationship.⁵⁴ In her recent study of hired hands, Cecilia Danysk accords Native Canadians no place in the development of prairie agriculture despite significant space devoted to ethnicity.⁵⁵ Steven High, however, in a recent detailed critique has commented on the perceived 'irrelevance' of Native wage labour from the decline of the fur trade to the post World War II period. He argues that this assumption is largely erroneous.⁵⁶ Clearly, scholarship which tends largely to the view of the Native experience in the post fur trade and treaty era as stagnating culturally and economically, and

****** 'Short Grass' is a fictitious name for a community that the author did not want recognized.

⁵⁴ Niels Winther Braroe, Indian & White: Self-Image and Interaction in a Canadian Plains Community (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 79-82.

⁵⁵ Cecilia Danysk, Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), pp. 76-81. See also entries for various groups such as Asian, pp. 78, 79; Austrian, 78, 104; black, 66, 78, 79, Danish, 42, 142-143; etc.

⁵⁶ Steven High, "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance'", Labour/Le Travail, Vol. 37 (Spring, 1996), p. 243-244.

unimportant to the local or extended economy, is inadequate and in need of reassessment.⁵⁷

Although the nature of Indian participation has yet, in large measure, to be determined,⁵⁸ there is little doubt that, in the case of the Blood tribe of Southern Alberta, its partial integration into the economy was deliberate, sustained and an important contribution to the local economic activities in which it was involved. Willingness to look at the southern Alberta area as an organic whole leads to other possible conclusions with regard to the extent of the Indian detachment from, or conversely attachment to, the physical and economic environment in which the Blood reserve existed. Accepting the above in no way excludes accepting differing, perhaps divergent, experiences for other Native and non-Native communities sharing physical and economic neighbourhoods. Even a heritage of sometimes uneasy cohabitation of a region need not, however, result in completely or exclusively divergent experiences when there is clearly a 'conjunction of interests'.

⁵⁷ See for example Peter S. Schmalz, The Ojibwa of Southern Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 213-215, 220-221; Bruce W. Hodgins and Jamie Benidickson, The Temagami Experience: Recreation, Resources, and Aboriginal Rights in the Northern Ontario Wilderness (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 65, 86.

⁵⁸ High, "Native Wage Labour," (Vol. 37, Spring, 1996), pp. 243, 263-64.

Why this study? A case study to assess the fit of the Bloods and their reserve into the economic development of the local region can add a dimension to the knowledge of events which have not, as yet, been explored. Historian Paul Voisey assumes that "everything about a new community in an area lacking a Native host culture can ultimately be traced to environment, tradition, frontier, and metropolis."⁵⁹ In this proposed study, allowance must be made for modification and formation through interaction with a host Native community; in this case the Bloods. The intent then will be to analyze the impact of some of the economic points of intersection of non-Native and Native in the process of forming a community. Though governments at various times attempted to isolate the Bloods and their affairs from the emerging surrounding communities, it failed to prevent the Natives' interaction with the newcomers.

In their study of the settlement process, John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, despite the presence of Natives in their study area, noted no significant influence by Natives on the 'pioneer adaptation and community building' process.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Paul Voisey, Vulcan: the Making of a Prairie Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 7.

⁶⁰ Though noting the strong ties of American businesses with southern Alberta Bennett and Kohl failed to mention that much of this business was in supplying the Native wards of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs. John W. Bennett

In his study of frontier economic development, Jeremy Adleman noted only the failure of prairie Natives "to make the transition to commercial agriculture based on private property." Although Adleman commented that when farmers were pressed for labour they looked to their neighbours⁶¹ he failed to recognize that often those neighbours were Native. In their study of small town Alberta, Donald Wetherell and Irene Kmet give only incidental attention to Indian influence on Fort Macleod and Cardston, thereby seemingly accepting "the assumption that they were not a legitimate part of the community..."⁶² Similarly, in his incisive study of Abernethy District, Saskatchewan, for example, Lyle Dyck accords to the Natives of the Abernethy area minimal influence in the development of the non-Native community there. Shunted to reserves, they were expected to adapt to the new order

and Seena B. Kohl, Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915: Pioneer Adaptation and Community Building, An Anthropological History (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 13-14. They do recognize a minor physical influence of Indians in determining roads. pp. 131-132.

⁶¹ Jeremy Adleman, Frontier Development: Land, Labour, And Capital On The Wheatlands Of Argentina And Canada, 1890-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 147-148.

⁶² Donald G. Wetherell and Irene R.A. Kmet, Town Life: Main Street and the Evolution of Small Town Alberta, 1880-1947 (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1995), pp. 244-245.

without effectively becoming part of it.⁶³

The Native presence in southern Alberta, however, defies the rigid application of formulae to predict a pattern of relationships as the community developed from pioneering beginnings to the more permanent structures of the 1930s. The Bloods' presence, with their land base, likely complicated formal and informal group and economic relations so that simple dichotomies did not exist. The economic development of southern Alberta occurred in response to both on and off-reserve conditions that prevailed from the pioneer period through the Great Depression. Clearly, any attempts to economically and physically isolate the Bloods were bound to be frustrated by the demands and needs of the non-Native community and the governments and agencies that worked on their behalf.⁶⁴

⁶³ Lyle Dick, Farmers 'Making Good': The Development of the Abernethy District, Saskatchewan, 1880-1920 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Service, 1989), pp. 20-21. See also Lyle Dick, "Factors Affecting Prairie Settlement: A Case Study of Abernethy, Saskatchewan, in the 1880s", Canadian Historical Association, (Historical Papers, 1985), pp. 11-28.

⁶⁴ In a telling comment Fred White, N.W.M.P. Comptroller wrote "Townspeople encourage the redman when he has money to spend, and it frequently happens that settlers are glad to have an Indian family or two camped near them so that they may get the benefits of their labour; and unfortunately, white men have on more than one occasion taken up the defense of the Indians and their legal right to be off their Reserves if they behave themselves." NAC, RG 18, vol. 218, file 469, Fred White to Mr. [James] Smart, August 30, 1901.

The entire southern Alberta community suffered great privation during the decades of the 1920s and 1930s. Hugh Dempsey concluded that: "the Bloods fared as most Westerners did, except that those who already were poverty-stricken did not notice the difference. In fact, some Bloods were to say in later years that they didn't even realize that there was a Depression outside the reserve."⁶⁵ A.D. Fisher believes that the reserve economy during the 1920s and 1930s was not self sustaining and that government interference left 'profound' effects.⁶⁶ These are commonly accepted notions. What is lacking, to date, however, is the empirical evidence that will best determine the extent of Blood and non-Native interaction and whether such beliefs about dire long term consequences are sustainable. Success or failure cannot be assumed, they must be qualified.

What should be analyzed is the relationship of the peoples to each other as they experienced many of the same environmental and economic forces. Generally, historians and critics are adamant in their view of the government's responsibility for events that befell the Bloods, implying

⁶⁵ Hugh A. Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader: A Biography of James Gladstone, Indian Senator (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986), p. 78.

⁶⁶ A.D. Fisher "Introducing 'Our Betrayed Wards,' By R.N. Wilson", Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology (January 1974), p. 24.

that without a diversified economy, the Bloods were captive to influences beyond their control.⁶⁷ Nowhere, in these views, is there any recognition of the potential for the efforts of White and Native Albertans to serve each other's interests in their efforts to prosper.

Although Natives were often economically and socially marginalized the Bloods did not exist outside the regional southern Alberta environment and economy. Both non-Native and Native had overlapping interests and merging concerns bringing with them both tensions and rapport. My research will be directed towards answering these questions - What was the economic relationship between the non-Natives and their neighbours the Bloods? How were aspects of this association initially determined by the presence of the Blood reserve and subsequently by conditions on the reserve and in the non-Native community during the study period? This relationship was much too complex and substantial to be left to all-embracing generalizations based on long held popular and generally unsubstantiated notions. Even in occupying niches at the margins we may assume that Natives were a visible and effective presence.

⁶⁷ The 'destruction' of the Blood cattle herd during the winter of 1919-20 has been so depicted. R.N. Wilson, Our Betrayed Wards: A story of 'Chicanery, Infidelity and the Prostitution of Trust (Ottawa, 1921), pp. 16-19.

Standard historical models used to explain Canadian development, frontier, metropolitanism, geographic and economic determinism, are generally unsatisfactory for the post fur trade period. All are prefaced by the implicit assumption that Whites arrived and directed the forces that molded the 'character' of land, economy and culture, irrespective of and with little recognition of a 'host' Native culture. Attempting to apply any one theory to explain Native influences on non-Native community formation is folly at best. Relations over time are determined and influenced by forces both complex and transitory. Success or failure in the recreation of tradition is not nearly so important as the fact that the physical environment and Native peoples had to be experienced as found and relationships worked out as required. Traditions were more likely adapted to new environs rather than transplanted whole - a view implicit in Paul Voisey's statement that some pioneers "struggled to recreate the life they left."⁶⁸ Influence is rarely, if ever, a one way street.

Clearly, historical analysis of the post fur trade era has led to a stilted view of the reality and extent of Canadian Indian integration into local economies. The government policy of reserve isolation, with the assumed result that there was no movement of people and materials to

⁶⁸ Voisey, Vulcan, p. 5.

and from Native reserves is unrealistic. Equally, the potential for a distinct Native population and its reserve land base to influence developments among an immigrant population have not been recognized. How, for example, does the White population determine its economic and social agenda, execute its economic functions, and otherwise express itself in consideration of the Native presence? What is the nature of the attempts to draw the reserve and its inhabitants into the newly imported economic strategies? Are, in this case, the Bloods considered as liabilities or, when needed, a resource upon which to draw?

Peter Carstens has properly observed that though Native reserves are defined spaces they are nevertheless politically and economically tied to the broader community.⁶⁹ My aim is to move beyond the view of the Natives as passive receivers, and the notion of plains Indians, and their neighbours (homogeneously grouped as pioneers on the frontier) as having, despite their diversity, separately felt homogeneous experiences. It is my view that change and accommodation accompanied the realization by both Natives and Whites that they shared neighbourhoods.

⁶⁹ Peter Carstens, The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation among the Okanagan of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 103.

The Government of Canada viewed the Bloods, and Natives generally, as obstacles to 'civilization', as did certain other elements of the local community. Many locals, however, recruited the Indians to help create and amass wealth for themselves. Robin Fisher has determined that in British Columbia the government's policy "reflected the fact that the Indians had become largely irrelevant to the development of the province by white settlers."⁷⁰ The experience in southern Alberta, however, was that the government's policies aimed at creating and sustaining that irrelevance were much diffused in transmission from the Department of Indian Affairs officials in Ottawa to the citizen in Fort Macleod or Cardston, the ranchers and farmers in the surrounding countryside and the reserve agent. This study will present evidence that the Bloods aggressively and sensibly participated in local economic activities because they chose not to remain on the periphery. Often circumstances beyond the Bloods' control; such as depletion of resources, drought, depression, national economic policies, dictated that they should retreat to the confines of their reserve. However, in some ways and at some times, their integration into the local economy was so complete that their disengagement was resisted. Indeed, the extent to which they withdrew their

⁷⁰ Robin Fisher, Contact And Conflict: Indian-European Relations In British Columbia, 1774-1890 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), p. xv.

labour, and access to their land and their capital, precipitated significant discomfiture among the local business interests which in many instances found their very survival compromised.

Historian Deborah Doxtator has charged that "the act of building Canada involved asserting a nation literally over the top of Native cultures."⁷¹ Hence the historian's tendency to fit aboriginal Canadians into Eurocentric history rather than to see certain strands of Canada's development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a common shared heritage. By studying a small region of southern Alberta it is hoped that detail will emerge to more sharply focus the non-Native and Native partnership in the development of a given locality. It will be made clear that in the period of supposed Indian 'irrelevance' the Bloods, at least, forged a relevant meaningful association with their non-Native neighbours in the period between the establishment of the reserve and the onset of World War II.

It is certain that the Bloods' relations with the surrounding community were not determined by an economic agenda alone and that social, political, legal and other

⁷¹ Deborah Doxtator, "The Implications of Canadian Nationalism for Aboriginal Cultural Autonomy." Canadian Museum of Civilization, Curatorship: Indigenous Perspectives In Post-Colonial Societies (Mercury Series: Paper 8, 1996), p. 61.

cultural factors were equally important. Why then were these not addressed? Although it was earlier intended to study several of these factors it quickly became clear that to do so would make the project unmanageable. The economic aspect was isolated because the body of primary documents consulted favoured this approach. It may equally be asked why the city of Lethbridge was not formally included in the study area. Again the official documents contained very little mention of Lethbridge in regards to an economic association. Indian agents tended to direct official reserve business to merchants located in Fort Macleod and Cardston. It was also determined that the communities of Fort Macleod and Cardston provided good illustration of the Bloods' economic associations with urban communities.

Comment is also needed on the irrevocable "whiteness" of the sources and the apparent dominant influence of the Indian agents. The bulk of the documents consulted, however, were either generated by the agents or were in response to them. The agents were also the chief facilitators of much of the interaction between Indians and Whites. Treating the Bloods as homogeneous also presents a difficulty not easily resolved. Although an attempt has been made to differentiate groups the fact remains that a Blood who harvested hay one month could be a freighter or a beet worker in subsequent occupations and in quick succession.

The shape of this work was determined as much by what was not consulted as by what was. One collection of documents in Record Group 10, National Archives, was denied me because it contained information on the financial affairs of the Bloods. This material could only be viewed with the tribe's consent. One request by letter to the Tribal Council went unanswered. Another effort to have a member of the tribe intercede with the Tribal Council on my behalf similarly brought no results.

With regard to structure, this dissertation consists of five chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. Chapter Two maps the study area and provides detail with regard to the inhabitants, their locations, and the natural and other resources of the area. Chapter Three examines the use of the Blood reservation land by the non-Native community. The study begins with the period of the large ranches in the 1880's, considers changes during the homestead period through the Great Depression and describes both the Blood and non-Native attitudes towards the economic use of the land. Chapter Four details the Blood's integration into the local economic system through the provision of coal, hay and freighting services. These made the Bloods competitors with Whites in local supply and service industries. Chapter Five offers an analysis of Blood Indian labour in the sugar beet fields of Raymond, located just to the east of the reserve. The importance of the Bloods to the functioning of

this industry in the period from 1903 to 1915 will be discussed. The documents consulted suggest that after this period Blood participation in the sugar beet industry was sporadic and individualized. This work was, therefore, not as important to the Bloods or to the industry as initially. Chapter Six analyzes Blood relations with merchant houses in the area of the reserve and especially at Cardston. The primary purpose is to reveal the importance and influence of both individual Blood and official reserve spending habits on local businesses. Taken together the subjects of the above chapters will reveal the form and extent of economic integration of an Indian reserve and the surrounding community.

These thematic subjects reconstruct the basic economic links between the Bloods and the non-Native community of southern Alberta. These associations formed over time and this approach presents more opportunity to analyze their structure as the economic circumstances of the reserve, the local community, the province and the nation changed. The pattern of change reveals a Native side to the economic development of southern Alberta, to date, largely unappreciated. Analyzing the economic force the Bloods generated in association with Whites is the most appropriate way to reveal Blood economic influences on the shared neighbourhood. It is also the most satisfactory way to approach new evidence and avoid established fallacies of

Native insignificance to economic developments in the reserve period and thus reveal patterns of change over time. The time period selected for this study is, arguably, when the most significant economic changes for all the inhabitants of the study region occurred and adjustment was demanded. The Bloods' responses to these changes at this time were sophisticated, enduring and well thought out.

Chapter 2

Place and People

The primary focus of this work is people and place, more specifically people in a place. The main study area is roughly the shape of a parallelogram bounded on the north with an axis connecting Lethbridge and Fort Macleod and on the south with an axis connecting Cardston with Hill Spring just west of the Blood reserve. The bulk of this territory is 541 square miles of reserve land, centered around Twps. 3 to 9, Rge. 21 to 28, West of the fourth meridian. The reserve has natural borders bounded as it is on the east by the St. Mary's River, on the north by the Oldman River and in the west by the Belly River. Its southern extent is an east to west line determined by the township survey system. (Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.)

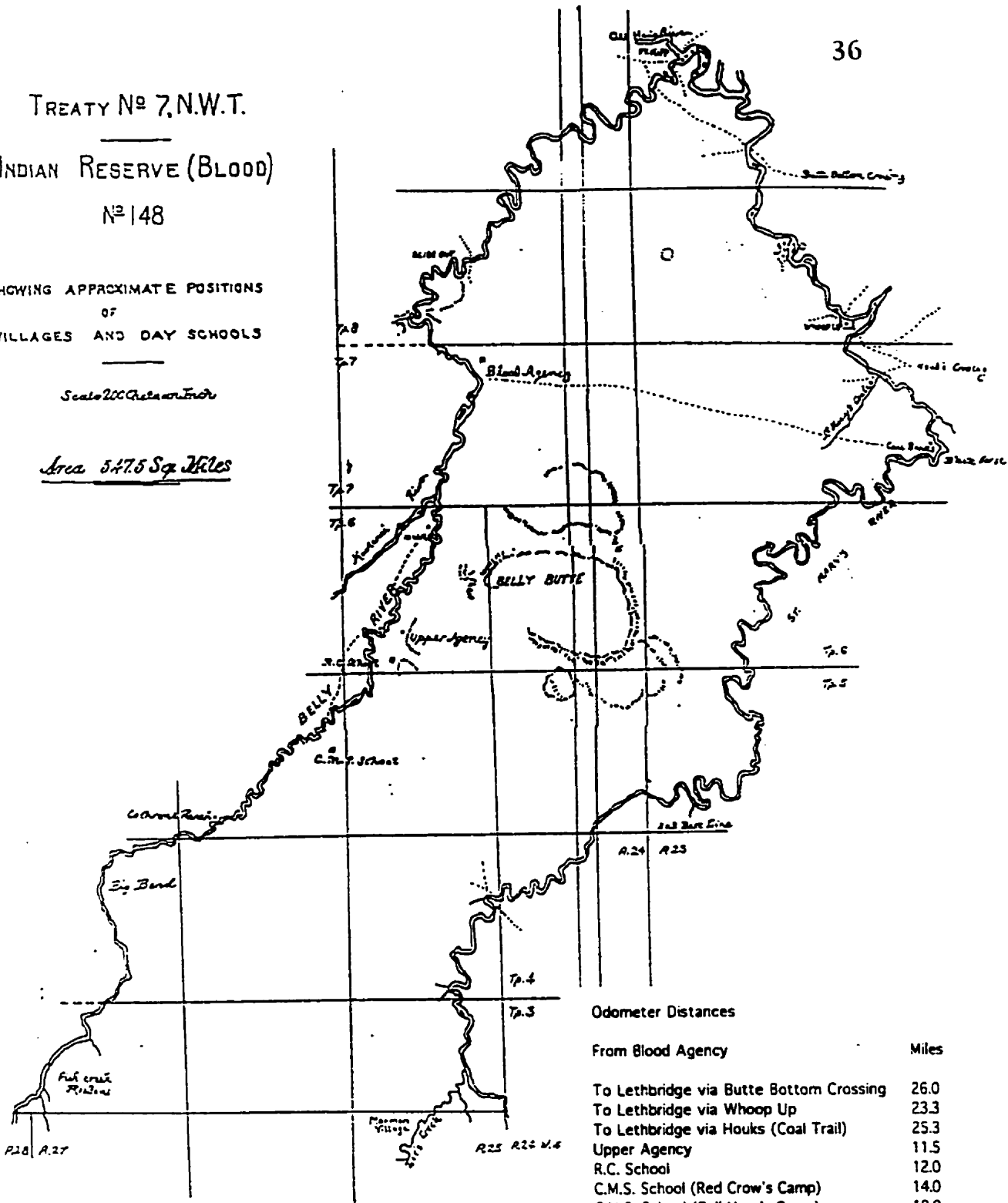
During the 1880s the Bloods settled their reserve mindful of established historical communications patterns and ties to the surrounding area. They tended to concentrate along the western border; that is along the eastern bank of the Belly River. Townships 5 north through Township 8 had the heaviest concentration of settlement. The south and the eastern length of the reserve along the St. Mary's River were relatively empty of settlers. This tendency to group in the west can, perhaps, be explained by the presence of Fort

TREATY No 7, N.W.T.
 INDIAN RESERVE (BLOOD)
 No 148

SHOWING APPROXIMATE POSITIONS
 OF
 VILLAGES AND DAY SCHOOLS

Scale 200 Chains to Inch

Area 547.6 Sq Miles



Odometer Distances

From Blood Agency	Miles
To Lethbridge via Butte Bottom Crossing	26.0
To Lethbridge via Whoop Up	23.3
To Lethbridge via Houks (Coal Trail)	25.3
Upper Agency	11.5
R.C. School	12.0
C.M.S. School (Red Crow's Camp)	14.0
C.M.S. School (Bull Horn's Camp)	19.0
Cochrane Ranche	21.0
Fish Creek Meadows	34.0
Police Detachment	37.0
Council Bluff (Timber Limit A)	57.0
Blood Indian Coal Mine	19.5
Piegan Agency (Across Country)	20.0
Fort Macleod (Across Country)	12.0

Figure 2.1 - Adapted by Melanie Patterson, Jolene James and Irene Naidu from a map in RG 10, vol. 3851. file 75988.

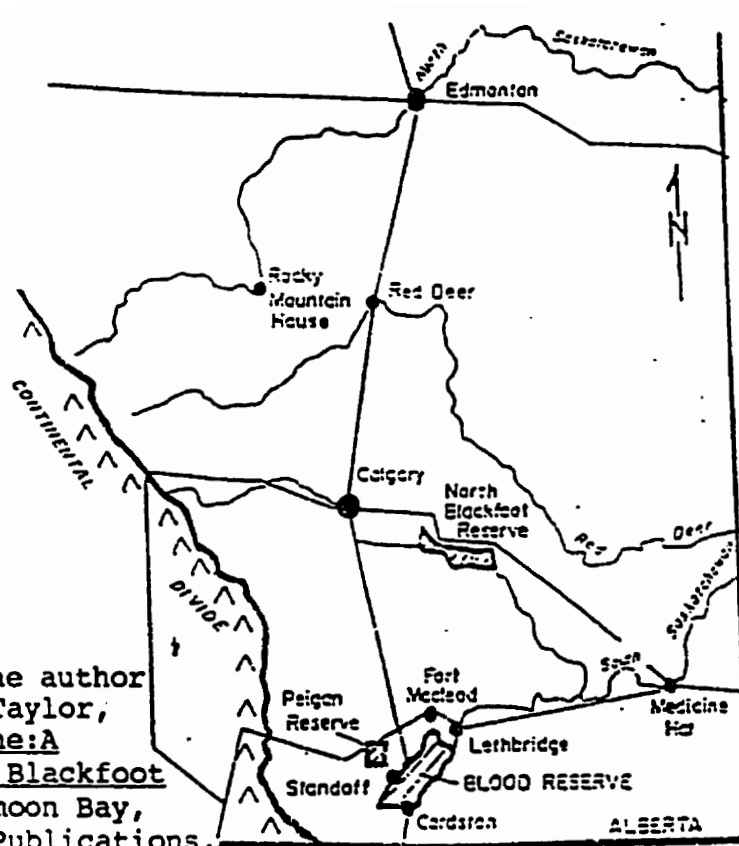


Figure 2.2

Adapted by the author
from Fraser Taylor,
Standing Alone: A
Contemporary Blackfoot
Indian (Halfmoon Bay,
Arbutus Bay Publications,
1989), p. 11.



Figure 2.3

Adapted by the author from
Dominion Bureau of Statistics,
Agriculture, Climate and
Population of the Prairie
Provinces of Canada (Ottawa,
F.A. Acland, 1931), p. 8.

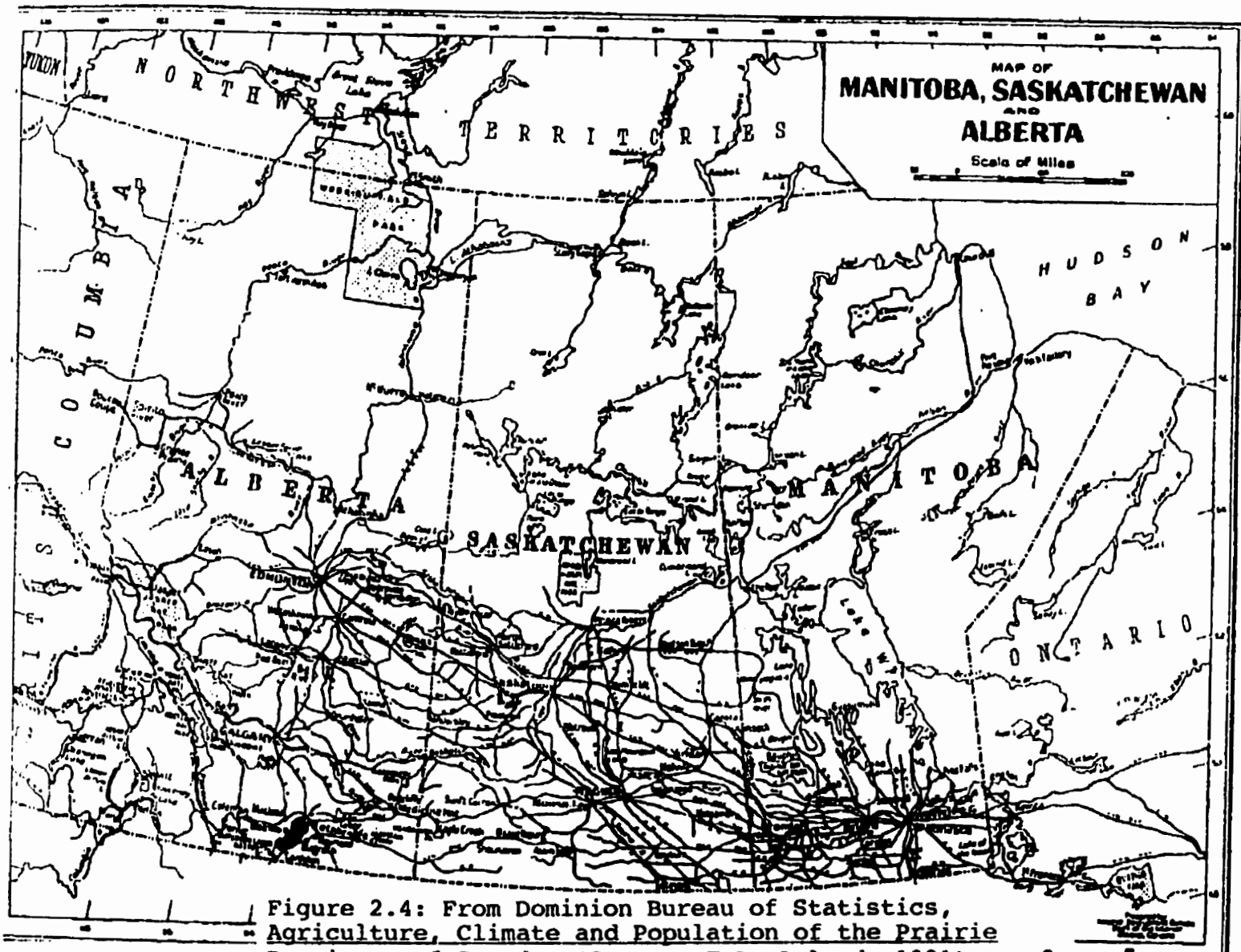


Figure 2.4: From Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Agriculture, Climate and Population of the Prairie Provinces of Canada (Ottawa, F.A. Acland, 1931), p. 8.

Macleod to the west and north of the reserve. The Blood agency buildings in the northern portion of Township 7 were only 12 miles from Fort Macleod where many Bloods shopped and where much official agency business was conducted. The presence of a Mounted Police post near the confluence of the Belly and Kootenai Rivers, the location of the Bloods' timber limit in the mountains to the west, and Cochrane Ranche lands to the immediate west of the reserve in this area likely influenced reserve settlement patterns. Bands and family groupings also naturally concentrated to the north and south of the agency occupying available space. Eventually ties to Cardston became important drawing settlement into the reserve's southern portions.

Trails also tended to cross and exit the reserve in relation to important sites such as the old Fort Slide Out and the old Fort Whoop-Up located in the western and southeast portions of Township 9 respectively. A trail from the area of the agency buildings crossed the reserve to Coal Banks, on the St. Mary's River, where Black Horse operated his mine. Another trail crossed the northern tip of the reserve in the vicinity of Fort Kipp (Kipp), continued to Butte Bottom Crossing and carried on east to Lethbridge. Trails exiting the reserve at Fort Whoop-Up and Houk's Crossing were similarly used. These trails were so placed as to eventually tie in with developed communications and transportation routes. Thus contact with Fort Macleod and

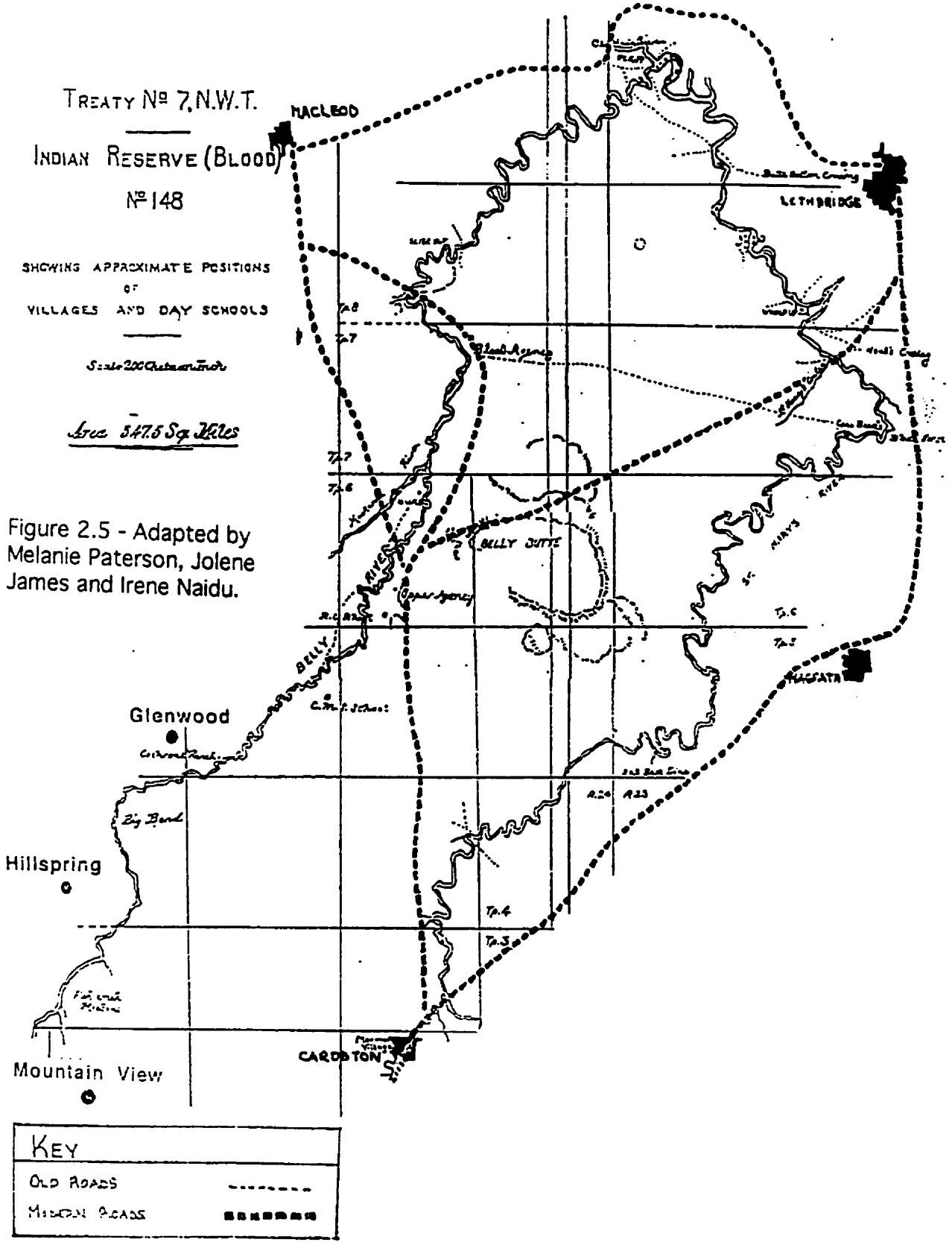
Lethbridge and eventually with Cardston, Raymond and small communities was maintained. (Figure 2.5)

Physiographic and Ecological Characteristics

This region of Alberta is physically and ecologically diverse, but the purpose here is to give a general overview of its most prominent characteristics. The prairies or plains are divided into three distinct regions based on elevation. Southern Alberta is in the third level, at elevations ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 feet.¹ The Blood reserve occupies an area in the lower ranges of these elevations.² The area is undulating-to-flat cut in places by rivers, coulees and ravines. At the approximate centre of the Blood reserve in Township 6 there is a sandstone formation known as the Belly Buttes. The soil in this region is very dark brown soil and prairie plain dark brown soil. These soils are generally high in mineral content and are very fertile except where poorly drained. Thus native

¹ Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Agriculture, Climate and Population of the Prairie Provinces of Canada (Ottawa, F.A. Acland, 1931), p. 22.

² R.W. Murchie, Agricultural Progress On The Prairie (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1936), p. 52.



grasses thrive and cereal crops do well with irrigation.³

The eastern portion of the study area lies within Palliser's Triangle, whose western extent is sometimes placed at a divide that joins Calgary in the north to Cardston in the south and is drier than the territory immediately to the west. A major influence on climate and weather is the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains which contributes to strong winds, the "rainshadow" effect and "Chinooks". Air masses moving onto the region from the north, northeast and east are cool and dry while those from the southwest are similarly dry. Air masses in southern Alberta in the summer tend to originate in the southwest and these are dry and sufficiently warm to scorch standing grass.⁴ Drought which "burned" the natural grass cover was often a concern for ranchers and farmers.

Sparse rainfall resulting from the "rainshadow" effect of the mountains, along with the seasonal extremes in weather, in particular high summer temperatures in combination with the dryness,⁵ characterize the area and

³ W. A. Mackintosh, Prairie Settlement: The Geographic Setting (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1934), p. 23; Agriculture, Climate and Population of the Prairie Provinces of Canada, p. 22 and Figure 23 p. 24.

⁴ Agriculture, Climate and Population of the Prairie Provinces of Canada, p. 11.

⁵ Ray Jackson Fletcher, "The Climate of Southern

result in short summers and a short growing season. The reserve is in an area where the precipitation ranges from 50 cm. in the south to 40 cm. in the north but only about half of this annual precipitation falls during the summer growing season.⁶ The reserve area generally experiences less aridity than the mean for the region.⁷

Late spring and early fall frosts can also affect agricultural potential in the region. The last killing frost of spring usually occurs between days 130 and 135⁸ while the first killing frost of fall usually occurs between days 260 and 265.⁹ However, because of the mountains' extremes of temperatures, wind velocity and precipitation can cause "unusual climate conditions in any season."¹⁰ This weather pattern, especially complicated by mild thawing Chinook

Alberta," in F. Jankunis (ed.), Southern Alberta: A Regional Perspective (Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge, 1972), p. 20.

⁶ Fraser Taylor, Standing Alone: A Contemporary Blackfoot Indian (Halfmoon Bay, Arbutus Bay Publications, 1989), p. 38.

⁷ Agriculture, Climate and Population of the Prairie Provinces of Canada, Figure 20, p. 21.

⁸ Agriculture, Climate and Population of the Prairie Provinces of Canada, Figure 16, p. 19.

⁹ Agriculture, Climate and Population of the Prairie Provinces of Canada, Figure 15, p. 18.

¹⁰ Taylor, Standing Alone, p. 38.

occurrences in the winter, led settlers to a false impression of the overall appropriateness to cattle raising and to 'civilizing' the region through certain kinds of crop agriculture. Though blessed with adequate sunshine, crop yields are restricted by inadequate moisture which must be supplemented by irrigation.¹¹

Southern Alberta has a great variety of animal and plant life. The fauna of the region was dominated by the plains bison which no longer exist outside of parks and privately owned herds. Mule deer and white-tailed deer are now the most numerous of the ungulates. A variety of bird species inhabit the area; crows, gulls, magpies, ducks and geese being the most recognizable. Smaller mammals are also numerous, particularly the Richardson ground squirrel or 'gopher'. The lakes and streams are inhabited by a variety of amphibians and fishes¹² but none of these were extensively utilized by the plains Indians as a food source.

The surface covering of the flatland is largely made up of mixed grass prairie. In the river valleys and coulees, however, more moisture and protection from wind make for greater diversity in plant life and supports a variety of

¹¹ Fletcher, "The Climate of Southern Alberta," p. 29.

¹² For a full discussion of the fauna of the region see William H. Sharp, "Flora and Fauna of Southern Alberta," in F. Jankunis (ed.), Southern Alberta: A Regional Perspective (Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge, 1972), pp. 35-47.

trees, such as poplar, pine, spruce, juniper and willow, which cannot be found on the prairie flat lands. Common to these areas also are a variety of berry bushes such as saskatoon and chokecherry.¹³

Commercially exploitable resources in southern Alberta consist of two types, agricultural and non-agricultural. The agricultural consists of grass cover for grazing animals or land for crop agriculture, chiefly grain cereals. Non-agricultural are oil, gas, and coal resources with the latter being historically the most important in the study region. Research has identified more than 1,700 coal mines in the Alberta plains regions, more than half of these in the south of the province. Though some of these are simple 'prospect pits' the numbers do indicate a resource of some commercial importance.¹⁴

The physical and biological diversity was an attraction which drew the Blackfoot Confederacy, including the Bloods. Sparse White settlement meant that the Natives' presence and influence were considerable following Treaty 7 and the

¹³ Sharp, "Flora and Fauna of Southern Alberta," pp. 35-38.

¹⁴ C.B. Beaty, "Geomorphology, Geology, and Non-Agricultural Resources," in F. Jankunis (ed.), Southern Alberta: A Regional Perspective (Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge, 1972), p. 18.

establishment of the Blood reserve in 1880.¹⁵ Whites quickly gained an appreciation for the potential of the grasslands to support grazing herds of cattle and it was not until the first decade of the Twentieth Century that an immigrant influx dedicated to crop agriculture brought a more dense population which rivaled the influence of both the Indians and the ranchers.¹⁶ With immigrants in place the region had both the resources and people necessary to become an integrated economic unit.

People

The population of the study area is composed of Natives, chiefly the Bloods, and non-Native ranchers, farmers and settlers residing in rural and urban settings. Towns have a centralized social, political and economic infrastructure directed towards attracting resources and people from the periphery. From the start the Bloods, by dint of numbers were poised to be significant players in the local economy, helping to both generate and sustain growth. Most of the Bloods' commercial intercourse was in trading and purchasing

¹⁵ Hugh A Dempsey, "Story of the Blood Reserve," The Pioneer West (No. 2), p. 1.

¹⁶ Many townships around the reserve remained unoccupied in 1891. R. Louis Gentilcore, (ed.), Historical Atlas of Canada: Volume II, The Land Transformed 1800-1891 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), Plate 42.

in both Fort Macleod and Cardston and in selling their labour in Raymond. Donald Wetherell and Irene Kmet surmise that phases in the growth of newly established towns in southern Alberta likely mirrored developments in the region as a whole, towns focused both population and trade and trade in particular "...remained a force in knitting together a patchwork of local concerns and policies." Before World War I there was high growth and expectations while the inter-war period through World War II saw a struggle to maintain the status quo.¹⁷

Comparing the population figures for these towns and the Bloods, it is possible to get some perspective on the Bloods' relative position. In 1882 the Blood population was reckoned by the government at 2,589.¹⁸ Thereafter it declined but in 1901 the Blood population was 1,253 or 87% of that of Fort Macleod and Cardston combined. Given that the reserve was established in 1880, there were two decades in which the Bloods likely had a significant impact on the economic well-being of one or both of these places. The relative weight of

¹⁷ Donald G. Wetherell and Irene R.A. Kmet, Town Life: Main Street and the Evolution of Small Town Alberta, 1880-1947 (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1995), p. xvii.

¹⁸ The Bloods claim a larger number of 3,542. Lethbridge Herald, March 26, 1994, p. A5. The government's figure is down from the 2,892 that were paid annuities in 1881. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1549, p. 4, Indian Agent to E. Dewdney, August 29, 1881.

the Blood population sharply declined to 1,168 or 31.5% of Fort Macleod, Cardston and Raymond in 1906 and by 1911 was at 1,128 or 25%. Thereafter it appears to have hit a low of approximately 20% in the mid 1920s.* (Table 1) But even at this minimal ratio the number of Bloods represented an attractive and significant market to local businesses, some of which specialized in retailing to Native peoples.¹⁹⁾

The population for these communities peaked in 1926, declined during the early Depression, and recovered again in 1936. The Bloods' economic value was likely greater during this period of non-Native population decline. The Blood population maintained its levels and in fact began a slow but perceptible increase. An indication of that value is illustrated by the heightened desire for Native patronage and the frantic demands for the settlement of credit accounts as discussed in chapter 5 below.

Towns were the focus of commercial activities and the attractions they offered lured the Bloods to frequent them. However, the rural setting was not insignificant. The nature of land use, and government regulations, during the ranching

* The low is achieved by comparing the Bloods' 1924 population of 1,158 with the total of Cardston, Fort Macleod, and Raymond for the 1926 census. The Blood population for 1926 is not available.

¹⁹⁾ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, see p. 234.

era encouraged sparse populations.²⁰ The ranchers and few farmers, however, incorporated the Indians into their economy by hiring them as ranch labour, renting their land and purchasing from the Natives fuel and fodder supplies. These commercial bonds increased as the area became more settled and as Blood labourers and entrepreneurs became more adept at marketing their resources.

The Reserve

The Blood (Kainai) Tribe is a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy and like other tribes is usually divided into a number of bands. There was no single leader for the tribe but each band had its own chief. Leaders usually assumed one of two separate mantles, warrior or political leader. Tribal members tended to support a respected leader of their choice. Decision making was collective with consensus being achieved through mediation.²¹ Important matters, such as the

²⁰ Paul Voisey points out that in the decade between 1881-1891 population increase for all of the prairies was only 118,000 with the majority of this growth in southern Manitoba. Paul Voisey, "The Urbanization of the Canadian Prairies, 1871-1916," Histoire Sociale-Social History, 8 (1975), p. 82.

²¹ Hugh A. Dempsey, Red Crow: Warrior Chief (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), pp. 49 and 71. Hugh A. Dempsey, Tribal Honors: A History of the Kainai Chieftainship (Calgary: Kainai Chieftainship, 1997). pp. 13-16.

negotiation of treaties, had to be decided in a council of all chiefs in the immediate vicinity. Band chiefs, however, could mediate disputes among band members.²²

By the mid 1870s, Chief Red Crow held sway over his band the Fish Eaters. When the Bloods joined the other Blackfoot tribes at Blackfoot Crossing for Treaty 7 negotiations in 1877, Red Crow used his considerable political skill to solidify his position of prestige and power.²³ The Bloods saw the treaty as something more than adherence to a document that expressed the will of Whites. They regarded the treaty as a cementing of a "good and lasting relationship" between both sides.²⁴ Completely at odds with White interpretations of Treaty 7 as a land surrender, generations of Blood elders have argued that such a concept was foreign to them and that they were agreeing to share, not surrender their territory.²⁵

Thus the Bloods perceived an obligation on the part of the Canadian government to protect their interests and views

²² Dempsey, Red Crow, pp. 71-72, 85.

²³ Dempsey, Red Crow, pp. 99-100.

²⁴ Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, Dorothy First Rider and Sarah Carter, The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), p. 68.

²⁵ Treaty 7 Elders et. al., The True Spirit, pp. 114, 125-127.

of treaty obligations. The realization that the government was lax in this regard spurred Red Crow and later chiefs to protest. They had accepted the promises made at Blackfoot Crossing at face value; "The Government said they would be good to us. We took what the Government offered us." There was some regret among the Bloods at having been seduced away from their initial reluctance to make treaty. This reluctance was heightened by the Bloods' feelings of betrayal at the hands of the government representatives, especially Colonel James F. Macleod.²⁶ In 1899, for example, Red Crow protested interference with the reserve and the Bloods' independence.²⁷ These were charges that would be much repeated.

Red Crow's successors, Crop Eared Wolf and Shot Both Sides, exercised similar influence and in many ways dominated the affairs of the tribe during the reserve period. In doing so they, on many occasions, frustrated the ambitions and designs of agents, Indian Commissioners and the Department of Indian Affairs.

²⁶ NAC, RG 18, vol. 19, file 249, Notes of an interview between the Chiefs of the Bloods and North Peigans, and Messrs. Pocklington and Springett of the Indian Department and Supt. P.R. Neale, Comanding N.W.M. Police in the Macleod District, February 2, 1888.

²⁷ William M. Baker (ed.), Pioneer Policing In Southern Alberta: Deane of the Mounties 1888-1914 (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1993), pp. 96-98.

Because it was a political entity the Blood reserve was not independent of Canadian law or political influences. A common thread affecting both the well-being of the Bloods and their relations with their non-Native neighbours was both the infrastructure of the DIA and its policy, as embodied in the Indian Act. The reach of the Department was extensive and was, as far as the Native peoples were concerned, a smothering embrace. Other than the often expressed and significant Native resistance, the only protection that the Indians had from the Department's grasp was the presence on the reserve of a concerned agent who placed the well-being of his charges before blind obedience to Ottawa. As for policy, it was nativist informed²⁸ and was based on the ultimate goal of assimilating the Natives on the one hand, and making them economically self-sufficient by turning them into subsistence farmers, rancher or entrepreneurs on the other.

The reserve was subject to decisions made by a host of government bureaucrats, chiefly those in the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. The main purpose of policies emanating from Ottawa was to isolate and control the Indians on their reserves while encouraging them to adopt White ideals of advancement and eventually assimilate with the non-Native population. Hence, it was hoped that Native peoples

²⁸ Howard Palmer, Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 6-7.

as a distinct segment of the Canadian population, and their reserves as distinct political units, would ultimately disappear.²⁹

The move to a reserve-based Indian policy began in Upper Canada in the 1830's, when the Indians had lost their usefulness as military allies. The primary motive was to 'civilize' them by providing them with the skills needed for self-support and thereby absolve the Crown of the cost.³⁰ But as in the Canadian west in later decades, the initial reserve

²⁹ There are several sources which offer excellent overviews of the administrative setup and intent of Canadian Indian policy. John Leonard Taylor, "Canada's North-West Indian Policy in the 1870s: Traditional Premises and Necessary Innovations," in J.R. Miller (ed.), Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 207-211; John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History Of Canada's Indian Policy," Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology, Vol. VI, No. 2 (1976), pp. 13-30; Allan G. Harper, "Canada's Indian Administration: The 'Indian Act'," America Indigena, Vol. 6, No. 4 (October 1946), pp. 297-314; Douglas Leighton, "A Victorian Civil Servant at Work: Lawrence Vankoughnet and the Canadian Indian Department, 1874-1893," in Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (eds.), As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), pp. 104-119; David J. Hall, "Clifford Sifton and Canadian Indian Administration 1896-1905," Prairie Forum, Vol. 2, No. 2 (November 1977), pp. 127-151; E. Brian Titley, A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott And The Administration Of Indian Affairs In Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), Chapters 1 and 3.

³⁰ J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide The Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), pp. 99-100.

experiments did not fulfill expectations, largely because Anglo-Canadians demanded radical cultural change from the Natives. The government's efforts to divert the Natives away from their traditional economic activities³¹ and to destroy their social cohesion and assimilate them into the larger society, were unsuccessful.³² Unfortunately this forceful and ill-advised policy continued when Canada assumed responsibility for Indian affairs after Confederation in 1867. Canada's annexation of Rupert's Land in 1869 meant that whole new Indian populations were to experience the application of policies that had already failed elsewhere.

In the newly confederated Canada, Indian affairs were handled by the Secretary of State but were transferred to the Minister of the Department of the Interior in 1873. A board of Indian Commissioners was created in 1873 to oversee matters and relations with Indians in the west and in 1876 superintendents and agents were appointed in order to maintain closer field supervision. The Indian Commissioner became the most important regional official in the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) as he was responsible for overseeing government policy in his geographic jurisdiction. Indian

³¹ Miller, Skyscrapers Hide The Heavens, p. 102.

³² Donald B. Smith, Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaguonaby) & the Mississauga Indians (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 238-239.

agents and inspectors were appointed to carry out the Commissioner's instructions at the local level. Information gathered at the Commissioner's behest was eventually communicated to headquarters in Ottawa. In 1880 the Indian Branch was transformed into its own separate department, the DIA, under the direction of the Department of the Interior, with a Deputy Superintendent General to head it. As a cost cutting measure the office of Commissioner was eventually abolished in 1909;³³ thus making it possible to maintain more direct communication between agents, inspectors and Ottawa.

The DIA was organized into an inside and outside service. The inside service was composed of the personnel at Ottawa which included divisions for a deputy superintendent general, chief clerk, accountant and unskilled positions. The outside service was made up of the workers in the field who dealt with the Indians on a daily basis. The most important of these was the reserve Indian agent, the ultimate government authority on the reserve. His main responsibility was the implementation of DIA directives and the Indian Act. Because of his intimate daily contact with the Indians under his charge he was in a position to influence decision making among the Indians. The agent's powers were increased in 1881 when an amendment to the Indian Act made him a justice of the peace with powers to effect an arrest, conduct trials and

³³ Titley, A Narrow Vision, pp. 10-13.

pass sentence.³⁴ Other reserve personnel, such as farm instructors, worked under the agent's supervision and direction.

When the Laurier Liberals came to power in 1896, Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton instituted cost saving reforms which ultimately resulted in more centralized decision making. Consequently more power was concentrated in the hands of J.D. McLean, Secretary and eventually Assistant Deputy Superintendent, and accountant Duncan Campbell Scott. Scott became the Deputy Superintendent General in 1913, a post he held until 1932. McLean and Scott were the major influences and powers in Indian Affairs during their tenure in office. Scott was succeeded by Harold W. McGill.

Canada made its most significant contribution to the management of Indians and their affairs with the passing of the Indian Act in 1876, an act so comprehensive in scope that it regulated practically every aspect of Native life.³⁵ The passage of this repressive and extensive legislation was justified on the basis that it would turn Indians into

³⁴ Titley, A Narrow Vision, pp. 13-14. The powers of the agents were debated in the House of Commons in 1905 and concerns were expressed about the possibility of agents being prejudiced against Whites in cases where they were involved with Indians. House of Commons Debates, Vol. IV, May 25, 1905, 6545-6546.

³⁵ Treaties and Historical Research Centre, The Historical Development Of The Indian Act (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs, 1978), p. 52 ff.

'civilized' and productive citizens of Canada. Thereafter the matter of most concern to the government bureaucracy was the implementation of the agenda as outlined in the Act. As part of that plan Indians were given some responsibility for their own local affairs as the act made provision for the election of chiefs and councilors. The powers of intrusion reserved to the Department, reserve inspectors and the agent, however, were so extensive³⁶ as to make the decision making authority of the band and council somewhat of a legal fiction. An amendment to the Act in 1895 allowed the minister to depose chiefs, an amendment necessary, according to one historian, "because the band leaders in the West were found to be resisting the innovations of the reserve system..."³⁷

This official and legal position, however, does not truly reflect the status of the Bloods and their chiefs and band council. The chiefs and council wielded a great deal of authority with regard to band and reserve matters. Though some agents were repressive the Bloods and their leaders were determined not to surrender total control of their affairs to officials, they believed, ought to advance their cause and

³⁶ J. McKenna, "The Indian Laws of Canada," Catholic World, Vol. 54 (Oct. 1891), p. 66-67; Titley, A Narrow Vision, p. 12.

³⁷ Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation", p. 20.

protect their rights. In such cases the Bloods appealed to other authorities. When Agent James Wilson attempted to prohibit the holding of a sun dance in 1898, Red Crow appealed to the North West Mounted Police at Fort Macleod to use their influence to permit the holding of the event.³⁸ One notable attempt to coerce the Bloods into a surrender of a portion of their reserve failed in the face of the determined opposition of Chief Crop Eared Wolf. Crop Eared Wolf both cultivated and mustered his people's resistance to the alienation of the land.³⁹ Agents often sided with the Bloods against DIA policies regarding reserve land leasing and considered both the wishes and needs of the Bloods in their decisions and petitions to reserve inspectors and headquarters. It is clear that the Bloods were active agents on behalf of their own interests.

Red Crow's selection of the area between the Belly and Kootenai Rivers for the Blood reserve precipitated the first of many disputes between the Bloods and their neighbours as the selected land was disentangled from the surrounding Crown land, private farms and ranches. For example, land belonging

³⁸ W. Keith Regular, "'Red Backs And White Burdens': A Study Of White Attitudes Towards Indians In Southern Alberta 1896-1911," (Calgary: University of Calgary, M.A., 1985), pp. 86-88. See Dempsey, Red Crow, pp. 208-210.

³⁹ Hugh A. Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader: A Biography Of James Gladstone, Indian Senator (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986), pp. 32-33.

to long-time settler David Akers, in the vicinity of old Fort Whoop-Up was included in the Blood reserve through a clerical error⁴⁰ and it became necessary to amend the treaty, in 1886, to recognize Aker's claim.⁴¹ In another case D.J. Cochrane already resident on a portion of the land that the Bloods claimed had to be compensated for being forced to abandon his home for another location.⁴² When the Bloods became belligerent at what they considered unseemly delays, Cochrane was paid \$3.00 an acre because of improvements which would accrue to the benefit of the Bloods.⁴³

In 1887, Red Crow laid claim to the land between the western border of the reserve and the Rocky Mountains, a claim disputed by the reserve surveyor John C. Nelson. It was Nelson's view that Red Crow was attempting a peremptory action because he was "alarmed" at the establishment of Mormon settlers at Lee Creek on the reserve's southern

⁴⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3622, file 4948, J.C. Nelson to E. Dewdney, April 30, 1886.

⁴¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3622, file 4948, Hayter Reed to J. Macleod, May 10, 1886.

⁴² NAC, RG 10, vol. 3577, file 421, L. Vankoughnet to E. Dewdney, June 14, 1883.

⁴³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3577, file 421, L. Vankoughnet to E. Dewdney, May 29, 1885; also see appraisal signed by W.C. McCord, August 2, 1883; L. Vankoughnet to E. Dewdney, January 26, 1884; C.C. McCord to E. Dewdney, March 29, 1884; W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, March 16, 1885; L. Vankoughnet to E. Dewdney, April. 4, 1885.

boundary. But as the Department of the Interior had already subdivided the area in anticipation of the arrival of more settlers⁴⁴ it was unlikely that it would recognize such a claim. Red Crow's confusion relative to the limits of his reserve was likely due to his absence when the boundary was initially surveyed.⁴⁵ William Pocklington, the first agent of the Blood reserve, reported that when the boundary was reviewed with Red Crow and other minor chiefs they expressed satisfaction with its extent.⁴⁶ But in August, 1888, Red Crow reiterated his claim to "all the land between the two rivers back to the Mountains",⁴⁷ a sure sign that, in his mind, the extent of land to which the Bloods were entitled was far from settled.

⁴⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3793, file 45,995, John C. Nelson to Hayter Reed, December 2, 1887.

⁴⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3793, file 45,995, Hayter Reed to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, February 8, 1888.

⁴⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3793, file 45,995, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 30, 1888.

⁴⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1556, pp. 645-646, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 30, 1888. There is ongoing negotiations between the Bloods and the Government of Canada over an extra almost 200 square miles of land south of the reserve's current border the Bloods believe they are entitled to because the government counted their population incorrectly for the purposes of determining their reserve. Lethbridge Herald, February 24, 1976; March 23 and March 26, 1994.

Once the reserve was established, defending its integrity from the encroachment of Whites determined on achieving access to its resources was a constant concern of both the Bloods and the Department of Indian Affairs.⁴⁸ After some initial growing pains, the boundaries of the reserve were established and its integrity was, in the main, successfully defended; though defending its resources was considerably more difficult.

The Rural Community

As the Blood reserve was being occupied the area was quickly coming under the dominance of the large cattle ranching interests. Scattered settlers, such as Dave Akers⁴⁹ and D.J. Cochrane⁵⁰, were harbingers of the formal occupation of the land that was to follow as the large ranches gave way to smaller ranches. Eventually cereal farmers and mixed farmers predominated.

⁴⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, p. 117, James Wilson to Amos Rae, April 28, 1894; pp. 126-128, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, May 7, 1894; pp. 199-200, James Wilson to A. McNab, June 5, 1894.

⁴⁹ John D. Higinbotham, When the West Was Young (Lethbridge: the Herald Printers, 1978), 188, 264-65.

⁵⁰ See for example NAC, RG 10, vol. 3577, file 421, L. Vankoughnet to E. Dewdney, June 14, 1883.

It can be assumed, but not without qualification, that the region experienced much the same cycle of growth as described by Paul Voisey for the Vulcan area. Here there occurred quick settlement, followed by continual growth and the realization that a quarter section of land was inadequate for prosperity. Subsequently there was a forced exodus of surplus population and the redistribution of the land among those left.⁵¹ During the various phases of settlement and growth the rancher and farmer/settlers worked out an accommodation with the Bloods and their reserve as required. The demands most often placed on the Bloods were for direct use of the reserve land, labour, and supplies such as coal and hay.

Fort Macleod

The erection of the North West Mounted Police post, Fort Macleod, in 1874, predated the establishment of the Blood Reserve by a decade. The fort was first built on an island in the Old Man River for defensive reasons but this island proved too small for a town site. Soon businesses and residents began moving to the mainland followed by the police post in 1884. As a result the town experienced rapid growth. By 1887 it had most of the services usually associated with

⁵¹ Voisey, Vulcan, pp. 33 and 128.

small towns including general stores, hotels, blacksmiths, bank⁵² and newspaper.

By 1892, with a population of about 350, it was the regional centre for the NWMP and the ranching industry.⁵³ Further rapid growth eluded Fort Macleod, however, because both the Calgary and Edmonton Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway refused to locate their stations directly in the town creating considerable uncertainty.⁵⁴ Despite this initial setback the railways did bring continental integration and seemed to ensure that Fort Macleod, even if it did not experience the full measure of expected prosperity, could look to a promising future.

Such hopes, however, proved elusive. Fort Macleod's ambition, like that of every other western town, to become the main economic force for a region by controlling the immediate hinterland proved difficult to realize. The transportation and communication systems not only brought customers in, but also allowed them to escape.⁵⁵ Worse it

⁵² Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 115.

⁵³ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁴ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, pp. 8-11.

⁵⁵ For discussion of local variations of these ideas see Theodore Binnema, "'A Feudal Chain of Vassalage': Limited Identities in the Prairie West, 1870-1896," Prairie Forum, (Vol. 20, No. 1), Spring 1995, p. 3; Wetherell and Kmet,

brought in competition. The town merchants would become greatly concerned over mail order businesses, such as Eaton's of Toronto, which became aggressive competitors early in the century,⁵⁶ thanks to the train and the post office.

Fort Macleod never became as commercially important as its most ardent boosters hoped. The development of Cardston and Lethbridge blunted its commercial expansion and absorbed its much sought after hinterland. Though starting out with much promise it failed to thrive as its population and commercial growth peaked during the second decade of this century. (Table 1)

The Fort Macleod Gazette may have inadvertently contributed to the town's declining fortunes when it encouraged the shift towards mixed farming and predicted the decline of ranching which was the mainstay of the town.⁵⁷ Mixed farming never fulfilled the Gazette's hopes. Although ranching did decline, farmers never really adopted mixed farming and by 1911 were abandoning the area as they found it unsuitable for farming in general.⁵⁸ Having ceased to be a

Town Life, p. 129.

⁵⁶ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 126 ff.

⁵⁷ David H. Breen, The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier 1874-1924 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp. 70-71; Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 93.

⁵⁸ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 93-94.




distribution centre for the ranching industry Fort Macleod lost its economic base as it had neither mining nor industry to fall back on.

The relationship between Fort Macleod and the Blood Indians began with the arrival of the police in 1874. The forces of integration were at play even before the reserve land base was established and the incidence of conflict was never severe enough to significantly impede this process. Fort Macleod, situated northwest of the chosen reserve site, was a focal point for an economy based on the import of consumer goods and export of raw materials along the Whoop-Up Trail. (Figure 2.6) Its selection as a NWMP post, and the later establishment of the town, were largely determined by the presence of the Blackfoot Indians among whom the Bloods figured prominently. The supply of the Indians with food and other goods following the 1877 treaty, in large part, drove the economy of the region, creating wealth and attracting permanent non-Native settlement.⁵⁹

Mercantile firms such as I.G. Baker and T.C. Power and Bro. had been established in Fort Macleod by the time the

⁵⁹ R.C. Macleod, The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement 1873-1905 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 25; Breen, Ranching Frontier, p. 15; John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 13-14.

PATTERNS OF CIRCULATION IN THE CANADIAN WEST

-  Study Region
-  Input (goods, people)
-  Output (resources)

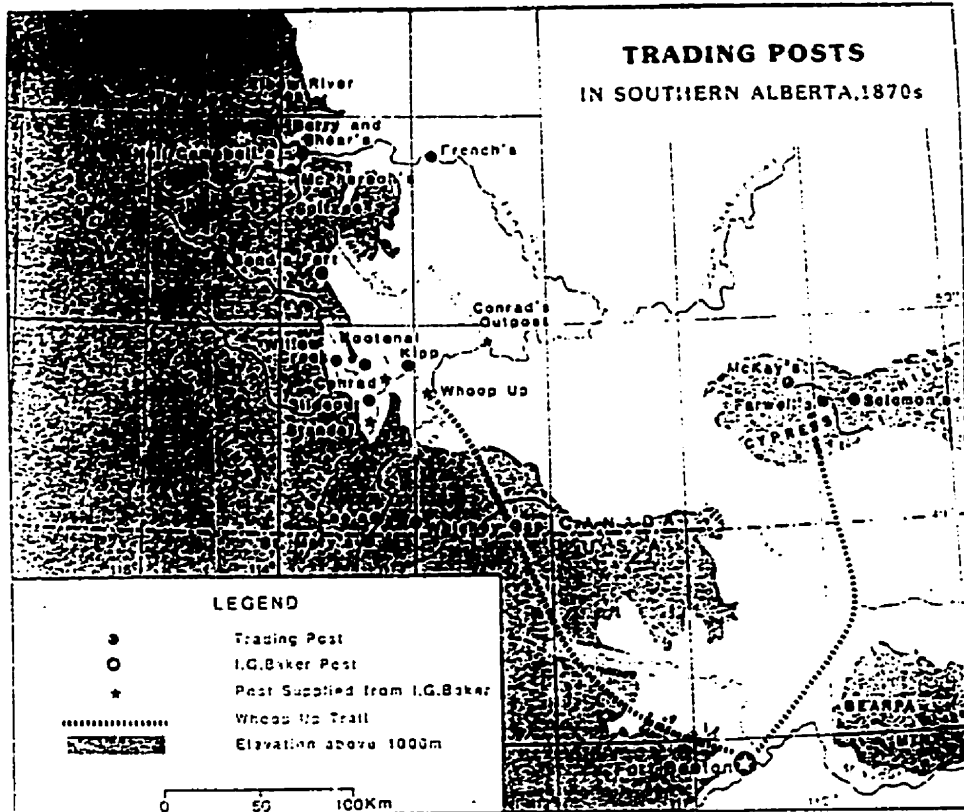
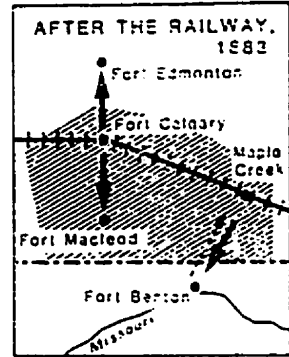
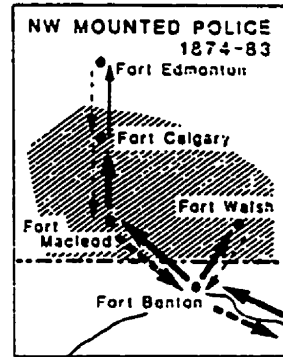
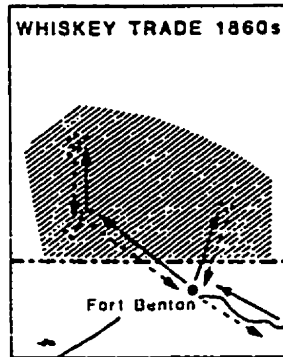


Figure 2.6 - From Peter Darby, "From River Boat To Rail Lines: Circulation Patterns in the Canadian West during the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century", in L.A. Rosenvall and S.M. Evans (eds.) Essays on the Historical Geography of the Canadian West (Calgary, University of Calgary, 1987), pp. 9 and 15.

police post was finished in December, 1874.⁶⁰ Newly arrived merchants likely drew lessons from the example of John J. Healey and Alfred B. Hamilton who, realizing the advantage of the trade in buffalo hides, established a post in the Bloods' territory which grossed \$50,000 in the first winter of trading.⁶¹ Meanwhile providing beef to feed the Indians, much of it to the Bloods, garnered \$500,000 a year for the I.G. Baker Company in the late 1870s.⁶² The Macleod Gazette commented on the transfer of I.G. Baker and Co.'s business in the North West Territories to the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1891, by observing that in the days before the NWMP "the Indians were about the only customers and it was more a case of the traders going to the customers, rather than the reverse".⁶³ The Indians in general, and the Bloods in particular, were the focus of the regional economy at this early point, their presence a boon for I.G. Baker Co. just as

⁶⁰ James G. MacGregor, A History Of Alberta (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1972), p. 123. Policeman R.B. Nevitt mentions a visit to Conrad's store in January 1875. R.B. Nevitt, A Winter at Fort Macleod, Hugh A. Dempsey, ed. (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Insititute, 1974). p. 30.

⁶¹ Alex Johnston and Andy den Otter, Lethbridge: A Centennial History (Lethbridge: City of Lethbridge, 1985), pp. 27-33.

⁶² Breen, Ranching Frontier p. 15.

⁶³ Macleod Gazette, February 12, 1891.

it would be for other national and local businesses as the changing economic patterns severed the all-embracing influences from south of the 49th parallel⁶⁴.

Although Paul Sharp correctly emphasizes Fort Macleod's commercial dependence on American trading companies out of Fort Benton, Montana,⁶⁵ he sees this history as exclusive, with Fort Macleod as the meeting of "the two great streams of Anglo-Saxon pioneering."⁶⁶ The Natives are, therefore, ignored or relegated to the position of displaced hangers-on, reminders of a once 'noble' primordial past. This perception is common to the historiography of the formation of non-Native communities in aboriginal territory, and the subsequent associations of Natives with non-Native communities is generally viewed by historians as negative. David Hammer has argued that the establishment of towns "involved the obliteration of, attractive aspects of the natural landscape...of all indications of the original,

⁶⁴ Peter Darby, "From River Boat To Rail Lines: Circulation Patterns in the Canadian West During the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century," in L.A. Rosenvall and S.M. Evans (eds.), Essays on the Historical Geography of the Canadian West: Regional Perspectives on the Settlement Process (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1987), pp. 7-10.

⁶⁵ Paul F. Sharp, Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), p. 7.

⁶⁶ Sharp, Whoop-Up, p.8.

'primitive' condition of the site. Included in this were the indigenous peoples of the territories being settled." The result was banishment to the hinterland and "their presence in towns became more and more marginal and ghostly."⁶⁷ But this view was/is more ideal than real and the banishment, no matter how much desired, never became totally effective or complete. In fact, the Bloods were drawn to the area reassured by the Mounties' presence.⁶⁸ The selection of the reserve with Macleod located to the north west, therefore, only cemented an already established tie.

Cardston

The town of Cardston was founded in 1887 near the St. Mary's River by refugee Mormons from Utah led by Charles Ora Card. Their move to Canada was made in a bid to preserve religious tenets and culture under attack in the United

⁶⁷ David Hammer, New Towns in the New World: Images and Perceptions of the Nineteenth-Century Urban Frontier (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 11-12. This seems to have been very much universal wherever Europeans and their descendants have encroached on territory occupied by Native people. See Hammer, New Towns, pages 214-223; Robert G. Athearn, Westward The Briton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953), p. 126 ff.; Robert Hughes, The Fatal Shore: The epic of Australia's founding (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), pp. 280-281.

⁶⁸ Ronald Atkin, Maintain The Right: The Early History of the North West Mounted Police, 1873-1900 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1973), p. 85.

States. Their practice of polygamy⁶⁹ also came under attack in Canada⁷⁰ though the Mormons protested their innocence.⁷¹

Card and his followers chose to settle at Lee Creek, close to the Blood Reserve's southern border and from the very beginning relations between the Bloods and the Mormon settlers were based on mutual mistrust and disagreement. Initially the ill will stemmed from the belief that deception had been used to gain Blood acquiescence to Mormon settlement in the area. Blood Elder Camoose Bottle claimed that the Mormons acquired the land at Lee Creek by getting Red Crow drunk. This, and the fact that the subsequent agreement between the Bloods and Mormons was not sanctioned by the tribe, led to some Bloods questioning its legitimacy.⁷² Eventually, however, Red Crow accepted the official survey,

⁶⁹ L.A. Rosenvall, "The Transfer of Mormon Culture To Alberta," in L.A. Rosenvall and S.M. Evans (eds.) Essays on the Historical Geography of the Canadian West: Regional Perspectives on the Settlement Process (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1987), pp. 122-133.

⁷⁰ A.A. den Otter, Civilizing the West: The Galts and the Development of Western Canada (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982), p. 202.

⁷¹ See for example: NAC, RG 18, Vol. 41, File 250 (1890), Charles O. Card to A.M. Burgess, February 22, 1890; John A. Wolf, to A.M. Burgess, February 7, 1890.

⁷² Hickey, Lynn; Lightning, Richard L.; Lee, Gordon, "T.A.R.R. Interview with Elders Program," in Richard Price (ed.) The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, n.d.), p. 134.

which placed Cardston to the south of the reserve, but some continued to feel that the Bloods were somehow tricked or that Red Crow betrayed them. Hugh Dempsey, however, contends that Red Crow simply accepted the evidence presented to him and a situation he was powerless to change.⁷³

It was clear from the beginning that the Mormons at Cardston saw themselves as a people apart, sharing little with their Native neighbours except the land which both claimed as their own. A clear indication of that separateness was the manner in which the Cardston Record chose to locate the community within the western setting. In 1898 the paper described Cardston's location in relation to the broader western community, as "nearly 800 miles due west of Winnipeg, forty-eight miles south-west from Lethbridge, and twenty miles north of the international boundary or the 49th parallel. A semi-weekly stage plies between Cardston and Lethbridge our most convenient railway station." The same article also noted that Cardston had more than one thousand residents and was close to the settlements of Aetna, Leavitt and Mountain View.⁷⁴ Interestingly, no mention was made of the Blood reserve which in 1897 had a population of

⁷³ Hugh Dempsey, Red Crow, pp. 183 ff.

⁷⁴ Cardston Record, August 6, 1898, p. 1.

1,300⁷⁵ making it the largest community in the vicinity next to Lethbridge.⁷⁶

Unlike Fort Macleod, the town of Cardston did increase its commercial influence in southern Alberta and became the dominant trading centre in the area around the Blood Reserve. The Blood and Peigan reserves to the north and west of Cardston separated the town from Euro-Canadian settlement to the west creating a 'sub-region' which Cardston dominated. Spared from competition and stimulated by railways, irrigation, sugar beet growing and chosen as the religious centre of Mormonism, Cardston grew apace.⁷⁷

Like other western towns Cardston was infected by boosterism, and businessmen demanded support from townspeople and government alike in their drive for growth and development. The local press and boards of trade were the foremost boosters of town progress as they identified community and business interests as one. This was reflected in their opposition to the mail order business and their support of "shop local" campaigns. At the same time their activities flew in the face of the need to acquire a

⁷⁵ House of Commons Debates, vol. 1, 1909, col. 1005.

⁷⁶ Lethbridge's population in 1901 was 2,072. Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 305.

⁷⁷ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 81-82.

hinterland and attract business from the periphery. This in turn was reflected in the establishment of chain stores⁷⁸ and in Cardston's bid for unimpeded access across the Blood Reserve in order to access communities to the west. As urbanization increased in the 1930s and the trend to fewer towns emerged⁷⁹ it became more important to be efficient and accessible in order to attract commerce. The lobbying efforts made by Macleod and Cardston to have the Blood and Peigan reserves sold and turned into homesteads reflected this emphasis on growth and development.⁸⁰

Raymond

Unlike Fort Macleod and Cardston, Raymond, to the west of the Blood reserve was, from the very beginning, planned as a one industry town. It was the centre of a sugar beet industry that would be the mainstay of the community and provide an export commodity to supply the sugar needs of the immediate area and beyond.⁸¹ The industry, however, held its

⁷⁸ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 124-125.

⁷⁹ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 87.

⁸⁰ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 91.

⁸¹ L.A. Rosenvall, "The Transfer Of Mormon Culture," pp. 142-143.

brightest promise only in its planning stages, sustaining it proved to be a frustrating and in the end bitter experience.⁸²

Initially, however, sugar beet cultivation brought Raymond stable and sustained growth. By 1906 it was the largest Mormon town in southern Alberta with a population of 1,500⁸³ and it soon began to rival Cardston as the centre of the Mormon religion in Canada. But lacking Cardston's history, it also lacked its influence, and when Cardston was chosen as the site of the Mormon temple, Raymond's secondary status was confirmed.⁸⁴

Interaction between Raymond and the Blood reserve revolved primarily around the need of the sugar beet industry for a stable labour supply to work the beet fields, especially during the fall harvest. Large groups of Bloods made the trip to Raymond to engage in wage labour during the period of 1903-1915. It is reasonable to assume that there would have been commercial interaction between the Bloods and Raymond businesses during times of Blood presence in the town, but this is by no means certain. Little evidence

⁸² Town of Raymond, Settlers, Sugar And Stampedes: Raymond Remembered (Raymond: Town of Raymond, 1993), p. 4-37.

⁸³ Brigham Y. Card, "The Canadian Mormon Settlements, 1886-1925: A North-American Perspective," Canadian Ethnic Studies, XXVI, No. 1 (1994), p. 25.

⁸⁴ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 82.

appears in either the local press or government documents to shed much light on the subject.

Lethbridge

Lethbridge, although occasionally mentioned in this work, has not figured prominently in any formal economic relationship with the Blood reserve. Both agency and Native business activities were concentrated in Fort Macleod and Cardston, especially the latter.

Conclusion

Ranchers and later settlers entered this region with pre-conceived notions about its climate and about how the environment could best be made to serve their various interests. The Bloods too were forced to rethink their strategies regarding the utility of the land. Precipitation, temperatures, water resources and soil ultimately determined that without artificial assistance such as irrigation, the area was best suited to ranching. How many cattle to how much land, however, remained problematic even while providing the Bloods with employment and income opportunities. The abundant coal of the region also did much to determine the economy of the region and the Bloods' place in it. Reserve, ranch and farm, town and village, were adaptations to a common environment that required and encouraged cooperation.

Chapter 3

"Free Range Or Private Property": Integrating Blood Reserve Land into the Community

Introduction

Once established there was considerable pressure on the Bloods to lease their reserve land to the non-Native community. This pressure was tied to the perception that the Bloods possessed land in excess of their needs and more than they were entitled to hold. The Bloods and their leaders, however, refused to recognize these views. They also refused to recognize arbitrary attempts by the Department of Indian Affairs to unilaterally determine the disposition of Blood property. Consequently there was conflict between the Bloods and the DIA. The Bloods and their agents were determined to guide the reserve's economic development while the DIA was set on its course of 'civilization' for the Bloods. However, one fact remains clear, during the development of the economy of the region between 1880 and 1939, there was little, if any, decline in demands by Whites for access to the reserve and its resources. Under such circumstances the guardianship responsibility of the DIA for the Bloods and their property was put to the test.

This chapter has two interrelated themes. The first is a discussion of changing perceptions of the economic value

and utility of land use in southern Alberta.¹ Integral to this analysis is how increased demands for more land resulted from these changes. Consequently the Blood reserve was integrated into the non-Natives' land use schemes. Although the focus here is on a small region of southern Alberta these changes were but a microcosm of larger trends in land use affecting the great plains region of the continent.² The second theme is centered on the decision making procedures employed by the Bloods and the DIA to determine the role the reserve played in local land use schemes.

An important and largely unexplored aspect of this economic agenda for Native reserves is the management of land and resources. The reserves were central to the overall policy of having Natives pay their own way. Why then was the use of the Bloods' land so often manipulated to suit the needs or demands of their White neighbours despite their protests? The Blood people clearly understood Whites' desires and the government's intentions and only their staunch defense of their rights prevented more interference in reserve affairs. They were not reluctant to enlist the

¹ For a detailed discussion of these developments see A.A. den Otter, "Adapting The Environment: Ranching, Irrigation, And Dry Land Farming In Southern Alberta, 1880-1914," Great Plains Quarterly, 6 (Summer, 1986), pp. 171-189.

² For one aspect of this see Lawrence B. Lee, "The Canadian-American Irrigation Frontier, 1884-1914," Agricultural History, 40 (October, 1966).

aid of their agent in attempts to repeal or soften the DIA's determination to adhere to its set agenda. In conjunction with their agent, the Blood chiefs, headmen and concerned individuals achieved some limited success in influencing the policies that were to affect them. Their efforts ensured that their will could not be entirely ignored and that they had influence.

Pressures resulting from competition for space, initially among ranchers, and subsequently caused by increasing population and environmental factors, brought about the first attempts to gain access to the resources of the Blood reserve. The onset of farming and mixed farming in turn increased the demand for the land of the reserve. Competition from settlers and towns near the reserve placed additional pressure on the reserve's borders. By the first decade of the Twentieth Century the reserve faced demands not only from non-Natives but also from the Bloods' own economic development objectives. The Bloods' awareness of the reserve's economic value also influenced their development of access policies. These contending forces, in one form or another, carried through to the end of the Great Depression.

Properly the Bloods may be seen as important players in the local industries into which their land base was integrated. The non-Native view of the Bloods and their reserve was as resources which could be used either to relieve the growing need for more land or exploited for the

benefits of the White community. The Bloods' decisions, and those of the Department of Indian Affairs on their behalf, to a large degree determined the character of the ranching industry and later the mixed farming enterprise in the southern Alberta locale surrounding the Blood reserve. Eventually the Blood tribe, by renting their land to those in need of extra grazing or hay range and through attempts to forestall illegal access, helped determine the nature of the resultant economic association.

The second theme regards decision-making by the Bloods. Such decisions, often communicated through their reserve agent and the DIA, also determined the role the reserve played in unfolding local circumstances. The main economic objective for administering Indians was to make them economically self-sufficient.³ The government believed that the best way to achieve this end was to encourage the Indians to become 'peasant farmers' on forty acre lots⁴ and thus to

³ For a discussion of overall policy see E. Brian Titley, A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott And The Administration Of Indian Affairs In Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), pp. 37-59.

⁴ The best discussion of this policy to date is Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers And Government Policy (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), especially chapters 3, 5, and 6; Sara Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow: Peasant Farming for the Indians of the North-west, 1889-1897," Canadian Historical Review 70, No. 1 (1989), pp. 27-52. E. Brian Titley also discusses this policy. E. Brian Titley, "Hayter Reed and Indian

make more appropriate 'civilized' use of their land. The DIA imposed paternalistic regulations on the Bloods, and their land, which were often beyond the Indians' efforts to modify or control.

Initial Arrangements: The Ranching Era

Indians, and in the case of the Bloods, their extensive land holdings, have not been credited with any positive formative or lasting influences on ranching commerce. One historian remarked that the Blood Indians were, because of their poverty following the decimation of the plains bison, "probably the greatest potential danger" to early cattle interests.⁵ During the initial phase of the ranching frontier, prairie Indians were regarded by the ranchers and their supporters as the bane of the ranching industry, on par with destructive and severe weather conditions. It matters, of course, that this danger was never realized and historians have generally rescued the Natives from the negative

Administration in the West," in R.C. Macleod (ed), Swords and Ploughshares: War And Agriculture In Western Canada (Edmonton, University of Alberta Press, 1993), pp. 121-123.

⁵ Sheilagh S. Jameson, "The Ranching Industry of Western Canada: Its Initial Epoch, 1873-1910," Prairie Forum 11, No. 2 (Fall 1986), p. 233. On this theme see also Edward Brado, Cattle Kingdom: Early Ranching In Alberta (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984), pp. 43, 171-175; Paul F. Sharp, Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), pp. 242-243.

impression left by often groundless complaints of a small minority of ranching interests.⁶

Among the first of the large Canadian ranching concerns was the Cochrane Rancho Company, headed by Senator Matthew H. Cochrane, who successfully convinced Prime Minister John A. Macdonald of the utility of his cattle raising proposals for the prairie grasslands. Indeed early lease regulations were redesigned, in 1881, around Senator Cochrane's request for legislation favouring ranching ventures. This legislation established a lease period of 21 years, with public lands closed to settlement except at the discretion of the government. Leases were set at a maximum of 100,000 acres, a stipulation which could be circumvented by registering in several names or through subsidiary companies.⁷ These lease arrangements reflected the mid-1880's belief, based on

⁶ David H. Breen, "The Turner Thesis and the Canadian West: A Closer Look at the Ranching Frontier," in Lewis H. Thomas (ed.), Essays on Western History, (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1976), p. 149; David H. Breen, The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier 1874-1924 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 85; John Jennings, "Policemen And Poachers: Indian Relations On The Ranching Frontier," in A.W. Rasporich and Henry Klassen (eds.), Frontier Calgary: Town, City, and Region 1875-1914 (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), pp. 88-90; John Nelson Jennings, "The North West Mounted Police And Indian Policy, 1874-96," (Ph.D., University of Toronto: 1979), pp. 196-201.

⁷ Simon M. Evans, "The Passing Of A Frontier: Ranching In the Canadian West, 1882-1912," (Calgary: Ph.D. Thesis, 1976), pp. 79-80.

previous plains exploration, that the region was fit only for a grazing economy.⁸

As significant parcels of public land in the North West Territories were taken in leasehold demand for grazing space grew. The Macleod Gazette, April 28, 1893, revealed that 1,680,964 acres was given over to grazing on the prairies. The numbers of stock on these lands were given at 139,283 cattle, 20,579 horses and 86,087 sheep.⁹ In fact, during their peak the four largest ranching enterprises leased nearly one-third of land in the southwestern prairies, practically all the foothills region from Cochrane south being held in lease or homestead.¹⁰

The western plains, however, were a lure to many others who saw their economic salvation and prosperity in the vast open spaces. It was certain, therefore, that the cattlemen could not long protect their leases from the challenges of farmers. It was equally certain that government policies would have to change in response to differing circumstances. Indeed a 'bitter struggle' between ranchers and homesteaders

⁸ Evans, The Passing Of A Frontier, pp. 73-76.

⁹ The major lease holders for the prairies were given as; D. McEachran, 16,391 acres; Cochrane 73,000, 60,000 and 33,000; New Oxley Canada Ranch Co., 80,000, 62,934, 7,000, 100,000; Waldron Rancho Co. 100,000. Macleod Gazette, April 28, 1893.

¹⁰ Jameson, "The Ranching Industry," pp. 234-235.

for control of the public lands ensued and resulted in the leases being opened to settlement in 1892.¹¹

By the 1890s ranchers needed no convincing that the increased demand for land threatened the survival of their operations. The hostility of farmer settlers and the public alike had resulted in the announcement in 1891, of the planned termination of all closed leases by the end of 1896.¹² Land grants to the Calgary and Edmonton Railway, in 1892, both reduced and disrupted the leases¹³ driving the tenants to seek other outlets. The election of the Liberals in 1896 saw the formation of a government sympathetic to both the wishes of farmers and the ideals of agrarian life. The Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, actively supported the establishment of irrigation projects to increase settlement and prairie agricultural potential.¹⁴ Only the creation of stock water reserves around crucial bodies of water and the

¹¹ den Otter, "Adapting The Environment," p. 173.

¹² David H. Breen, "The Canadian Prairie West And The 'Harmonious' Settlement Interpretation," Agricultural History XLVII No. 1 (January 1973), p. 72.

¹³ Jameson, "The Ranching Industry," p. 239; Evans, "Spatial Aspects," p. 52.

¹⁴ A.A. Den Otter, "Adapting The Environment," pp. 175, 178.

prohibition of settlement ensured the continued viability of ranching enterprises in many areas.

Encouraged by favourable Canadian Government legislation Cochrane cattle on the Bow River in late 1881.¹⁵ This heralded the arrival of large cattle interests, businesses that leased tens of thousands of acres of land and ran herds of cattle numbering in the tens of thousands. These large concerns directly competed with the small stock holders, many of whom engaged in mixed farming and ran small herds of up to forty cattle. They now found their positions considerably weakened.¹⁶ The large Blood Reserve bordering the Cochrane lease grant on the east, but separated by the Belly River, must certainly have looked inviting in the face of competitive pressure. As a result, the reserve soon figured prominently in the Cochrane Company's operational planning.

¹⁵ Breen, Ranching Frontier, pp. 16-19. On the regulations see Chester Martin, "Dominion Lands" Policy (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973), p. 179.

¹⁶ Breen, Ranching Frontier, pp. 19-20. There is no clear delineation between 'large' and 'small' ranching. The above is taken from discussion in W.M. Elofson, "Not Just a Cowboy: the Practice of Ranching in Southern Alberta, 1881-1914," in Donald Akenson (ed.) Canadian Papers In Rural History, Volume X (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1996), pp. 206-212; Philip S. Long, The Great Canadian Range (Calgary: Bonanza Books Ltd., 1970), p. 4. On the era of the big ranches dominated by the 'big four' see Sheilagh S. Jameson, "The CPR and the Ranching Industry of the West," in Hugh A. Dempsey (ed.), The CPR West: The Iron Road And The Making Of A Nation (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984), pp. 76-77.

Cochrane Ranche cattle, driven by the need for more land, were already grazing the Blood Reserve in 1885 after an informal contract was initiated with the Bloods.¹⁷ As early as 1884, only three years after the arrival of the Cochrane herd, grazing land was at a premium as the big four carved out large leases and numerous other companies and individuals rushed to seize title to what was left.¹⁸ The Cochrane Ranche, at this time the only large company with unimpeded access to the Bloods' land, regarded the reserve as a natural extension of their own grazing lease.¹⁹ This approach was later taken by many settlers bordering the reserve. The company was also driven to extend its competitive edge in the

¹⁷ Glenbow Alberta Institute (GAI), file 2, Diary of W.F. Cochrane, Cochrane Ranch, entries for January 20, 22, and 23, 1885. Informal for the Cochrane Ranche as there is no indication of written agreement. The Bloods, however, likely considered the agreement legal and binding.

¹⁸ Simon Evans has expertly detailed these developments. Simon Evans, "Spatial Aspects Of The Cattle Kingdom: The First Decade, 1882-1892," in Rasporich and Klassen (eds.), Frontier Calgary, pp. 41-50. On American incursions see Simon M. Evans, "American Cattlemen on the Canadian Range, 1874-1914," Prairie Forum, 4, no. 1 (Spring 1979), pp. 123-126; Jameson, "The CPR," p. 77.

¹⁹ In fact by 1885 all land bordering the reserve on the north and west was leased and by 1886 significant blocks to the east of the reserve were taken. Evans, "Spatial Aspects," pp. 44-51. Jameson says that government policy and encroachment from settlers were the main factors at work in killing off the Cochrane's major sheep ranching operations under the guise of the British American Ranche Company. Jameson, "The Ranching Industry," pp. 232-233.

face of severe setbacks in the first years of operation brought on by poor management decisions worsened by bad weather.²⁰

The first lessons were brutal and clear; the apparently limitless land was indeed limited and so was its cattle sustaining capacity. The same range could not be used for summer and winter foraging and it could not be used at all during extended dry periods or if ravaged by fire. It was an immediate circumstance that necessitated the initial arrangement with the Blood tribe namely the need to graze Cochrane cattle on the south end of the reserve because of the burned ground on the north end of the Cochrane lease. From the Bloods' perspective the agreement was essential because their attempts to keep Cochrane cattle from invading the unfenced reserve had been futile.²¹ After some difficulty

²⁰ Sharp, Whoop-Up Country, p. 238; Jameson, "The CPR," p. 76; Sheilagh S. Jameson, "Era of the Big Ranches," in Hugh A. Dempsey (ed.), The Best From Alberta History (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1981), p. 56. Denny says that during the winter of 1882-83 Cochrane lost about 8,000 cattle to adverse weather conditions and that by 1884 there were 40,000 range animals in southern Alberta. By May, 1885 that number had increased to 60,000. Sir Cecil Denny, March of the Mounties (Surrey: Heritage House Publishing Co. Ltd., 1994), pp. 132, 152. American historian William T. Hagan has discovered that some American Indian reservations were similarly invaded by large and small cattle interests determined to avail of the grazing resources the reserves offered. William T. Hagan, United States-Comanche Relations: The Reservation Years (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), pp. 150-53, 175-76, 236-40.

²¹ GAI, File 2, Cochrane Ranche Letterbook, W.F.

caused by the absence of Chief Red Crow, one of the most influential chiefs, from the initial negotiations, a deal was struck.²² The benefits were soon apparent, Cochrane later reporting that the cattle were doing well on the reserve's good feed.²³ This arrangement eventually soured when Cochrane voiced suspicion that some Bloods were killing range cattle.²⁴

These setbacks did not become a permanent barrier to arrangements between the Cochrane Rancho and the Blood reserve. Cochrane cattle needed the grazing space and the Bloods needed the beef rations. In February, 1890, Blood Agent William Pocklington, initiated a meeting between Red Crow and W.F. Cochrane regarding an accommodation. Red Crow voiced no opposition to grazing Cochrane cattle on reserve land, and even expressed a willingness to forgo payment. He cited as his reason the fact that Cochrane cattle were used

Cochrane to J.M. Browning, February 15, 1885.

²² GAI, File 2, Diary of W.F. Cochrane, Cochrane Ranch, entry for January 21, 25 and 27.

²³ GAI, File 2, Cochrane Ranch Letterbook, W.F. Cochrane to J.M. Browning, February 7, 1885.

²⁴ GAI, File 2, Cochrane Ranch Letterbook, W.F. Cochrane to J.M. Browning, August 18, 1885; Diary of W.F. Cochrane, Cochrane Ranch, entries for March 26, May 11. In these cases the Indians were never identified but the Bloods are likely suspects. Relations with and attitudes towards the Natives varied, the Cochrane personnel being among the most frequent complainers. See Brado, Cattle Kingdom, pp. 171-175; Breen, Ranching Frontier, p. 85; Sharp, Whoop-Up Country, pp. 241-243.

to supply the Blood beef rations.²⁵ Red Crow's understanding of the relationship between his people and the Cochrane Ranche Company, vis a vis the Department of Indian Affairs, is unclear. It is possible that Red Crow incorrectly felt that the source of the Bloods' rations came with obligations to the company. If Agent William Pocklington let any such misunderstanding influence the negotiations with the Cochrane Ranche, the agent was remiss in his obligations to protect the Bloods' interests. A similar arrangement for the placement of two hundred cattle on the reserve was concluded in August of 1890, but this time the company agreed to purchase all the hay Blood farmers and harvesters could provide.²⁶ By December relations with the Bloods had again soured and Agent James Wilson requested that the company remove its cattle from the reserve or face "less agreeable" means of encouragement to do so.²⁷

The value of the Blood Reserve's vast open spaces were, by 1891, recognized by other ranchers and illegal incursions onto the reserve land became frequent. When Indian

²⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1557, pp. 444-446, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, February 18, 1890.

²⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 406, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 3, 1891.

²⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 643, Indian Agent to Manager, Cochrane Ranche Co., December 30, 1891.

Commissioner Hayter Reed visited the reserve Blood representatives complained about cattle improperly placed on their reservation and demanded removal. Agent Pocklington duly wrote the Maunsell Brothers, Macleod, to remove their stock,²⁸ and similar requests were made of at least eleven others who the agent believed to be the offenders including the Cochrane Ranche Company.²⁹ Agent Pocklington reported that responses were favourable.³⁰

Such incursions were not easily prevented despite the assurances of the offending parties to remedy the problem. In the case of small stockmen and homesteaders these offenses, at least in the view of the offenders, were necessary. David H. Breen points out that, after the advent of the commercial ranching ventures with their large areas of lease, small ranchers with little capital were left with no option except speculative ranging on increasingly limited free space.³¹ Homesteaders and townsfolk, in the search of

²⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 380, W. Pocklington to Maunsell Bros., July 23, 1891.

²⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558 p. 381, W. Pocklington to James McNab, July 23, 1891; pp. 382-390, W. Pocklington to Browning Brothers, July 23, 1891.

³⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, pp. 449-451, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 31, 1891.

³¹ Breen, Ranching Frontier, p. 20; Jameson, "The Ranching Industry," pp. 234-235.

subsistence and profits therefore lacked adequate 'free space' to increase the scale of their operations. Sitting on the borders of, in their view, the underutilized Blood reserve it was natural for settlers to regard the area as part of their sphere of exploitation.

This certainly appears to be the rationale in the case of two settlers, identified only by the surname Arnold, who sometime in 1893, moved into the area of Boundary Creek and leased one hundred and ten acres. They owned about five hundred head of horses and cattle and, according to a complaint from Blood Indian Day Chief, were making unauthorized use of the reserve for grazing. When challenged by Agent James Wilson the Arnolds responded that access to their land could only be had across the reserve as a consequence of their being hemmed in by other settlers' fences and a cut-bank.³² What is not clear is whether or not the Arnolds selected their land knowing that they would be forced in the direction of the reserve or simply hoped to make the best of the opportunities that proximity to the reserve afforded. Wilson detected some prevarication on the part of the Arnolds believing that despite their protested need of right of way "There is not the slightest doubt that

³² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, pp. 498-499, James Wilson to Hayter Reed, October 2, 1893.

these men mean to hold their stock on the Reserve..."³³

Similarly agent Wilson had to order T. Curry, Lethbridge, to remove his 'large' number of cattle from the reserve or face having the Bloods drive them out at their convenience.³⁴

Little wonder that, by 1893, Agent Wilson believed the area in the vicinity of the reserve was "over[run] with cattle."³⁵ Trespass frustrated many of the reserve's residents and they resorted to expelling cattle from the reserve, straining relations with ranchers and settlers still further and inevitably receiving the blame for cattle losses that could be ascribed to other factors.³⁶ In March, 1893, the Gazette railed against Indians roaming the countryside killing cattle, and called for the implementation of a pass system. The Gazette was willing to see the establishment of

³³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, pp. 498-499, James Wilson to Hayter Reed, October 2, 1893.

³⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, pp. 88-89, James Wilson to T. Curry, January 20, 1893.

³⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, pp. 546-547, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, November 13, 1893.

³⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3894, file 97,443, Hayter Reed to T. Mayne Dayly, January 6, 1893. MacInnes says that the Indians killed cattle in protest because they strayed onto the reserves. I found no evidence that this was the case with the Bloods. C.M. MacInnes, In The Shadow Of The Rockies (London: Rivingtons, 1930), p. 163. On trespass see also NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, pp. 502-503, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, Sept. 18, 1894; p. 549, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, October 9, 1894.

a punitive system that restricted Native rights and liberties and opined that "any Indian found off his reserve without a pass, ... should be promptly arrested; ..." ³⁷ Needless to say, such restrictive laws were not intended to be applied to White settlers. Charges of large-scale Native cattle killing went unproved. According to Agent Wilson there was only one case of cattle killing by Bloods reported in the month previous to March 16, 1893. ³⁸ In August, however, eighteen Indians were committed to stand trial at Macleod for cattle killing. ³⁹ Strangely Wilson reversed his position and came to believe that the Indians killed three hundred and fifty head

³⁷ Macleod Gazette, March 24, 1893. F. Laurie Barron argues that the pass system had its origins in Hayter Reed's desire to curb the movements of the Natives. If so he struck on a policy that many in the ranching community agreed with. F. Laurie Barron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935," Prairie Forum, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring, 1988), pp. 27-29.

³⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3894, file 97,443, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, March 16, 1893. Interestingly a report in the Calgary Herald on the formation of an association of stockmen for "mutual protection" did not list Indians as a factor in cattle losses. Clipping in RG 10, vol. 3894, file 97,443. See also; RG 10, vol. 3894, file 97,443, A.E. Forget to Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, June 16, 1894; S.B. Steele to Commissioner, North West Mounted Police, June 9, 1894.

³⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3894, file, 97,443, A.E. Forget to Hayter Reed, August 8, 1894. See also Hugh A. Dempsey, The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt: And Other Blackfoot Stories (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishing, 1994), pp. 115-116. Of the 18, 16 were convicted and two were released in return for evidence against the others. John Nelson Jennings, "The North West Mounted Police And Indian Policy, 1874-96,"

each year.⁴⁰ There seems to be no evidence to support this belief and the case mentioned above was an exception to the fact that the Indians were not large-scale rustlers.

At times adverse environmental conditions affected the reserve, as in a severe dry spell in the fall of 1894 which heightened Bloods ranchers' concern for their substantial horse herds and their rudimentary cattle interests.⁴¹ Not only could the Blood ranchers not offer relief to others but they were themselves forced to seek off-reserve grazing; thereby bringing them into direct competition with settlers and ranchers looking for assistance from Dominion lands. The non-Native community's reluctance to accept that Native ranchers had equal access to non-leased Dominion lands between the Belly and Kootenai Rivers brought Agent Wilson to their defense. Wilson cited hardship and expected loss of

(University of Toronto, Ph.D., 1979), p. 304.

⁴⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3894, file, 97,443, James Wilson to DIA, August 4, 1894.

⁴¹ Esther Goldfrank sets 1894 as the year three "influential men" exchanged ponies for twenty three head of cattle. Esther S. Goldfrank, "Administrative Programs And Changes In Blood Society During The Reserve Period," Applied Anthropology, Vol. 2 (January-March, 1943), p. 19. See also Esther S. Goldfrank, Changing Configuration in the Social Organization of a Blackfoot Tribe during the Reserve Period. The Bloods of Alberta, Canada (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), p. 22; Dempsey, Red Crow, p. 201. The horse herds were substantial enough to lose 250 head in a winter storm in 1892. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 863, A.G. Irvine to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, July 29, 1892.

stock if Dominion lands were denied the Bloods. He reminded critics that in similar circumstances in previous years, the Blood tribe had generously permitted stricken Whites access to the reserve. Consequently the Indians could not be expected to forsake the only free range. In conclusion he summed up the Bloods' view: "the Indians all very truly say it will be time enough for the white people to kick after they have taken their cattle off the reserve..."⁺²

Within the area around the Blood reserve both co-operation and competition forged an economic relationship based on land use and need. From its inception, the Bloods had seen their reserve drawn into the pool of grazing land to which ranchers and settlers expected access. The treaty rights of the Bloods to sole utilization had been ignored, even under protest, as circumstances beyond the reserve required. Contractual arrangements, when resorted to, were of a nature deemed by Whites as informal, and in many cases no such arrangements were attempted. The Bloods complained and the agents, within the limits of their capacity, or will, acted. Attitudes and exigencies, however, mitigated against easy or permanent solutions. No man-made physical structure set the Blood reserve apart. Furthermore, non-Natives did not regard the Belly and St. Mary's Rivers as borders

⁺² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, pp. 620-623, James Wilson to Superintendent, N.W.M. Police, Macleod, November 24, 1894.

delineating absolute separation of the reserve from grazing leases and the commons or land that was an open exploitable resource.

Taking Control

The first decade and a half resulted in the reserve's ready accommodation of the grazing needs of non-Natives. The results were, however, far from satisfactory, and resulted, in June 1895, in a shift in policy formulated by Agent James Wilson. The new approach attempted to deal with the aggravating, and sometimes serious, problem of livestock trespass onto the reserve. The pressure exerted on reserve lands by its location in a "grazing district" and the inability to stop encroachments, dictated that a readjustment in the relationship between the Bloods and their neighbours be attempted.⁴³ At the limits of their endurance, and likely concerned about the well-being of their own small cattle herd established the previous year,⁴⁴ Blood leaders and ranchers were determined to forge a more formal and financially rewarding relationship with those companies or individuals wishing to use reserve land and resources.

⁴³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, pp. 948-954, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, June 10, 1895.

⁴⁴ Fraser Taylor, Standing Alone: A Contemporary Blackfoot Indian (Halfmoon Bay: Arbutus Bay Publications, 1989), p. 31.

Agent Wilson identified two classes of trespass; 1. those invading the reserve in search of feed, 2. those unable to confine their stock to their own lands. The former posed the greatest threat and chief among the villains, in Wilson's opinion, were the Mormon settlers at Cardston. To counter the problems Wilson intended charging grazing dues for summer and winter grazing. The levying of dues would, he anticipated, make owners more cautious about the whereabouts of their stock and substantially reduce the first kind of trespass. Wilson assumed that as the Bloods acquired more cattle of their own they would take more interest in keeping the stock of others off the reserve.⁴⁵ Wilson had little trouble convincing Red Crow and his followers of the soundness of the plan.⁴⁶ He also approached the surrounding settlers with the proposed policy change.⁴⁷

The response was much as Wilson had anticipated and indicated a determined reluctance among ranchers and settlers to pay for that which they had previously acquired for free.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, pp. 948-954, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, June 10, 1895.

⁴⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1561, pp. 395-397, James Wilson to The Indian Commissioner, Winnipeg, January 11, 1896.

⁴⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1561, pp. 395-397, James Wilson to The Indian Commissioner, Winnipeg, January 11, 1896.

⁴⁸ To one settler on the Upper St. Mary's he wrote; "Red Crow says...he never gave you any authority to put your

Cardston's residents proved to be the most difficult. Initially they agreed to pay but only after striking a committee to meet with Wilson to discuss terms.⁴⁹ In January 1897, Charles O. Card, the leader of the Cardston settlers, wrote Wilson requesting an exemption from grazing dues for the previous season.⁵⁰ This reluctance to pay was based on the argument that they owned mostly dairy cattle which grazed only during the day and therefore consumed less feed than range cattle. As a result the settlers believed they were not getting good value for their grazing dollar. Wilson, knowing that some of the settlers were poor, recommended to the Commissioner that those who could afford it be charged at 15 cents per head for half a year, while the others would be

cattle on [the reserve] and does not see why payment should be refused." NAC, RG 10, vol. 1561, pp. 501-502, James Wilson to Mr. Pat Masson[?], March 2, 1896. See also RG 10, vol. 3894, file, 97,443, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, January 11, 1896; RG 10, vol. 1561, pp. 527-31, Conrad Brothers also expressed reluctance to pay rents. James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, March 10, 1896.

⁴⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1561, pp. 527-31, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, March 10, 1896.

⁵⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1562, p. 316, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, February 24, 1897. Wilson may have, in part, been responsible for this situation with the Mormons as a result of a non-verbal agreement reached with them in February of the previous year when, after a meeting with C.O. Card and a committee, he agreed to "be as lenient as his superiors would let him" and agreed to accept fifty cents per head per annum for grazing. D.G. Godfrey and Brigham Y. Card (eds.), The Diaries Of Charles Ora Card: The Canadian Years 1886-1903 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), p. 329.

given free grazing.⁵¹ While awaiting approval, Wilson requested from the settlers the full dues levy, of fifty cents per head per annum, and cautioned Cardston residents against putting cattle on the reserve without a license.⁵²

There was also other potential for loss of grazing revenue. Wilson warned a resident of Kipp that since he did not wish to officially avail himself of the privilege of grazing his "large number of cattle" on the reserve he must remove them or have them seized under Section 22 of the Indian Act.⁵³ And there were other reluctant ranchers.⁵⁴ The files reveal that 17 individuals owned 51 cattle which had been paid for but there were 130 cattle still to be collected on for a total of 181.⁵⁵ This accounting did not include

⁵¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1562, pp. 387-389, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, March 17, 1897. Wilson did not indicate how he planned to determine who could and could not afford to pay.

⁵² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1572, pp. 480-481, James Wilson to Sterling Williams, April 27, 1897. C.O. Card wrote Wilson regarding the matter but the nature of the response is unknown. Godfrey and Card (eds.), Charles Ora Card, p. 405.

⁵³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1562, pp. 332-333, James Wilson to [?], Kipp, Alberta, March 2, 1897.

⁵⁴ NAC, RG 10, Vol. 1562, pp. 335 - 337, James Wilson to Mr. Smith, March 2, 1897; James Wilson to Mr. Whitney, March 2, 1897; p. 493, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, April 30, 1897; p. 379, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, March 15, 1897.

⁵⁵ See information in NAC, RG 10, vol. 1562, p. 482.

those owned by larger concerns such as the Oxley Ranche which brought the total to 968 head.⁵⁶ The easily breached reserve boundaries, the termination of the no settlement leases⁵⁷ and the election of Wilfrid Laurier's Liberal government with its settler friendly policies in 1896,⁵⁸ gave added impetus to the assault on the reserve's integrity.

The Bloods, however, were battling more than reluctant pocket books when they attempted to collect grazing dues. They often fell victim to the bottom line and to the attitudes many Anglo-Canadian settlers held towards Native peoples at this time. In July, 1897, Wilson successfully collected dues from A.R. Springett, New Oxley Ranche Company "under protest."⁵⁹ In Agent Wilson's opinion, Springett believed that because the reserve was unfenced the Bloods could not legally claim grazing dues for cattle wandering onto it or placed within its borders. Despite several

⁵⁶ For particulars see NAC, RG 10, vol. 1563, p. 29, Indian Agent to H.R. Springett, May 12, 1897; p. 30, Indian Agent to Glengarry Ranche, May 12, 1897. See letters from agent to various companies in RG 10, vol. 1563, pp. 31-34. The quality of the microfilm reproduction makes it difficult to read the names.

⁵⁷ Kirk N. Lambrecht, The Administration of Dominion Lands, 1870-1930 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991), p. 39.

⁵⁸ Jameson, "The Ranching Industry," p. 239.

⁵⁹ NAC, RG 10 vol. 1563, p. 168, James Wilson to Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, July 19, 1897.

conversations, Agent Wilson was unable to convince Springett of the legitimacy of the Bloods' request.⁶⁰ While he conceded that the lack of reserve fence contributed to the problem Wilson argued that Indians, unlike other settlers, were under no obligation to fence their land. Why he took this view is unclear but he was likely referring to the logistics and cost of fencing over five hundred square miles of land. He also pointed out that the Indian Act contained a section that protected reserves against trespass. He observed that the rules pertaining to stock districts contained in the North West Territories Ordinances did not apply to Native reserves. In conclusion Wilson pointed out:

If exception were made in Mr. Springett's case where would the matter end?...The Reserve is surrounded by settlers and if an exception is made in one case then it must very soon apply to all and our Reserve would soon be over run...

Wilson added that others in similar position to the Oxley Ranche preferred to pay dues to having their cattle classed as strays and driven from the reserve to starve somewhere unknown to their owners. He noted that "Mr. Springett must allow our right to remove cattle from the Reserve - fence or no fence - at any time and it is then surely a question of what is best for his own cattle and I have no doubt what his

⁶⁰ NAC, RG 10 vol. 1563, p. 169, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, July 19, 1897.

answer would be."⁶¹

Blood leaders were unwillingly forced into the strategy of renting pasture to Whites who refused to respect the reserve boundaries and surreptitiously grazed their horses and cattle there. The annual grazing levy of fifty cents per head was a defensive strategy intended to make settlers keep their cattle on their own range or pay for the use of the reserve. However, Messers. Maunsell and Browning, Macleod, were of the opinion that living in a stock range country entitled them to certain privileges. Wilson refuted this argument claiming that "the Indians['] Reserve is not free range but private property" for which use payment was required and threatened to have their cattle dispersed.⁶²

The frequency with which the Blood agency had difficulty collecting legitimate grazing dues⁶³ suggests forces at work

⁶¹ NAC, RG 10 vol. 1563, pp. 210-213, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, August 10, 1897. For a similar case also see pp. 257-258, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, September 4, 1897.

⁶² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, pp. 187-188, James Wilson to Messers Maunsell and Browning, December 27, 1898. See also pp. 197-198, James Wilson to E.A. Maunsell, January 13, 1899. On the inability to collect dues see; p. 193, Statement of Account with Alex McNab; p. 343, James Wilson to C.O. Card, June 20, 1899.

⁶³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1563; pp. 371-374, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, October 26, 1897. See for example pp. 408-410, James Wilson to R. Urch[?], November 10, 1897; James Wilson to Alexander McNabb, November 10, 1897; James Wilson to John [?], November 10, 1897.

other than the mere inability to pay. Attempts to collect resulted in evasion and denial of obligation. One possible explanation is that ranchers faced with the sodbuster invasion, and the attendant shrinkage of accessible Dominion lands, were driven to seek out alternate space and to protect grazing land through the setting aside of stock water reserves; that is land with accessible water reserved for the use of cattle.

Ultimately, however, the security promised by such reserves proved transitory. The combination of irrigation technology and the science of dry land farming brought a "consensus among politicians, businessmen, and settlers... that the rangelands were suitable for cultivation."⁶⁴ Government policies reinforcing this belief had been put into place and when dry land techniques failed to meet expectations in years of drought, mixed farming came to be touted as an even better way to successfully cultivate the prairie.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ den Otter, "Adapting The Environment," p. 182.

⁶⁵ Paul Voisey has detailed the misplaced faith in mixed farming as a panacea for sure success in all areas. Paul Voisey, "A Mix-Up Over Mixed Farming: The Curious History Of The Agricultural Diversification Movement In A Single Crop Area Of Southern Alberta," in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson, Building Beyond the Homestead: Rural History On The Prairies (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 179-206.

The rapidly growing population and surging economy in the period 1896-1913⁶⁶ were, in part, due to Clifford Sifton. Sifton, as Minister of the Interior between 1896 and 1905, envisioned western agricultural development based on an expanding immigrant population that would eventually people the prairies with 15 to 20 million new citizens.⁶⁷ The trickle that began in the 1890s became a deluge by the first decade of the twentieth century.⁶⁸ Americans, though not universally welcomed by those dedicated to the preservation of Canada's British characteristics,⁶⁹ figured prominently in

⁶⁶ The shifting demographics are nicely illustrated by R. Louis Gentilcore (ed.), Historical Atlas Of Canada: Vol. II, The Land Transformed 1800-1891 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), Plate 35; Donald Kerr and Deryck W. Holdsworth (eds.), The Historical Atlas of Canada: Vol. III, Addressing the Twentieth Century 1891-1961 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), Plates 17 and 18. The Annual Mounted Police Report for Fort Macleod reported for 1904 reported 329 entries for homesteads at the Fort Macleod land office from January 1 to November 30 and further observed that "In the Pincher Creek district, within a radius of twenty miles from the town, there is no land available for homesteading, some 200 settlers having taken up land there during the year." CSP 28, No. 12, 1905, p. 49.

⁶⁷ Clifford Sifton, "The Needs Of The Northwest," Canadian Magazine (Vol. XX, No. 5, March 1903), p. 426.

⁶⁸ Clara Middleton remembers greeting trainloads of settlers at the station in Crossfield Alberta. Clara and J.E. Middleton, Green Fields Afar: Memories Of Alberta Days (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1947), p. 59.

⁶⁹ See for example Rev. Martin Holdom's concerns about American immigration to the area around Castor Alberta. Paul

the quest for land. They, like hundreds of thousands of others, were lured by government advertising that promised "fat black land, cheap or even free, in the region of sufficient rainfall."⁷⁰ Though such promises were largely illusory in southwestern Alberta, immigration was a driving force that further threatened to displace ranchers.⁷¹ Little wonder that hard pressed ranchers in the vicinity of the Blood reserve looked to the reserve to alleviate some of their growing concerns over inadequate pasture.

Sifton's successor, Frank Oliver, removed any doubt about the government's vision of the future economic orientation of the Northwest. On assuming office in 1905 he took steps to cancel stock water reserves, "a complete reversal of departmental land policy in the grazing country."⁷² Oliver placed new emphasis on land for agricultural purposes as his restoration of pre-emption and second homestead privileges indicated.⁷³ These policies

Voisey (ed.), A Preacher's Frontier: The Castor, Alberta Letters of Rev. Martin W. Holdom, 1909-1912 (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1996), pp. 26, 29, 31.

⁷⁰ Theodore M. Knappen, "Winning The Canadian West," Worlds Work (Vol. 10, 1905), p. 6598.

⁷¹ W. McD Tait, "The New Canadian West," Canadian Magazine (Vol. 43, No. 4, 1914), pp. 349, 353.

⁷² Breen, Ranching Frontier, p. 139.

⁷³ D.J. Hall, Clifford Sifton: Volume 2, The Lonely

apparently succeeded, as Alberta experienced a 412.6% increase in population in the decade between 1901 and 1911.⁷⁴

Thus the reserve came to be regarded as open territory to which settlers had a right without obligation. The view that the open expanse of the reserve was thus available reduced some of the anxiety and pressure caused by increasing settlement⁷⁵ and reinforced the notion of boundless space. This position was possible, however, only by the denial of the Blood's equality as people, and equality in possession of property. In this the settlers were buoyed by their own sense of superiority, and the Indian Act, which had established the legal wardship status of the Indians. Clearly some ranchers and settlers were determined to frustrate the Bloods' decision to set the agenda for reserve grazing privileges. They believed that the Blood tribe's claim to the land was not inviolate, and that they were underutilizing it, and therefore stood in the way of progress and the settlers' own pressing needs.

Eminence 1901-1929 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), p. 192.

⁷⁴ W. Peter Ward, "Population Growth in Western Canada, 1901-71," in John E. Foster (ed.) The Developing West (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983) p. 159.

⁷⁵ John Craig says that anxiety in the face of settlement led ranchers to purchase lands. John R. Craig, Ranching With Lords And Commons (New York: AMS Press, 1971), p.236.

The ranchers' fear and loathing of the newly developing agrarian frontier and its farmers illustrated the absolute necessity of the Blood reserve for grazing land. This was highlighted by the Cardston Record which observed in August, 1898, that over 100 homestead entries had been made at the Cardston land office during the summer. The result was that once abundant grazing land was "converted into prosperous farms and ranches. Hundreds of miles of fence have been erected; hundreds of houses have been built and thousands of head of cattle and horses now subsist upon grass..."⁷⁶

Now the cattle and horses of the homesteader, as well as the rancher, became a matter of concern for the Blood ranchers, farmers, haymakers and residents in general. Wilson warned local cattle owners that they would be forced to keep their stock off reserve land.⁷⁷ There were, of course, occasions when horses or cattle strayed onto the reserve but the numbers that were continually brought to Wilson's attention could not simply be attributed to accidental straying.⁷⁸ Likely the expansive size of the

⁷⁶ Cardston Record, August 13, 1898, p. 1.

⁷⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, pp. 177-178, James Wilson to Walter Gleuse[?], December 20, 1898. For similar occurrences see p. 149, James Wilson to Messers Brigham and Wellman, November 11, 1898; pp. 179-180, James Wilson to Geo. Hauks, December 20, 1898.

⁷⁸ On December 24, 1898, Wilson wrote to R. Fuller of

reserve led some to believe that they could acquire free grazing either without being discovered, or before being eventually discovered. Homesteaders, while making the agrarian ethos a reality, themselves demanded land use beyond the boundaries of their 160 acre quarter section.⁷⁹⁾

By 1899 the pressure on public land caused by the declining acreage of open range was clear⁸⁰⁾, as was the belief among non-Natives of their pre-eminent right to what little remained. The attitude of one rancher/settler named Hillier

Browning, Montana, about the possibility of Indian Department cattle or Blood Indian cattle which may have strayed across the border. In fairness, however, references of this kind were exceedingly rare in the DIA files. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p.98, James Wilson to R. Fuller, December 24, 1898; p. 184, James Wilson to Jack Miller, December 23, 1898.

⁷⁹⁾ That this was expected to be the case was recognized by the pre-emption clauses, though later rescinded, of the Dominion Lands Act. Lambrecht, The Administration of Dominion Lands, pp. 22-27. Paul Voisey notes "But even a half-section proved inadequate in the more arid southern parts of the prairies, and aided by mechanization, farmers began buying out their struggling neighbours." One must also consider the part played by speculation in the demand for land as discussed by Voisey. Paul Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 128, 33-52. The trend towards enlargement was also noted by Lyle Dick in his study of the Abernethy District of Saskatchewan. Lyle Dick, "Factors Affecting Prairie Settlement: A Case Study of Abernethy, Saskatchewan, in the 1880s," Canadian Historical Association (Historical Papers, 1985), pp. 23-24.

⁸⁰⁾ R.W. Murchie, Agricultural Progress On The Prairie Frontier (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1936), p. 58. The Rev. Martin Holdom noted the settlement process and the edging out of ranchers in the area of Stettler, Alberta, in 1910. Voisey (ed.), A Preachers Frontier, pp. 55-56.

put the issue in sharp relief. Hillier complained that Indians grazed their horses off the reserve, consuming grass essential to ranchers while keeping the reserve closed to non-Native owned cattle. In Hillier's view the Indians' stock should be confined to the limits of the reserve or "ranchers should have equal privileges on the Reserve, that the Indians have off it."⁸¹ Not surprisingly Hillier did not see any reciprocal obligation for non-Natives to also keep their cattle on their own land. DIA Secretary J.D. McLean agreed with Hillier instructing Agent James Wilson to restrict Blood stock to the reserve.⁸² In the interests of the Whites the Bloods were to be denied the use of the commons.

Wilson believed, however, that the Blood right to equal use of public domain was protected by treaty. In a letter to McLean he indignantly questioned the settlers' claim to preferential treatment.⁸³ Wilson's query struck a sensitive nerve and the resultant legal opinion bore out Wilson's observation that Indians had the same rights as others, but

⁸¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3992, file 185,143, [Frank Oliver] to James Smart, June 3, 1899.

⁸² NAC, RG 10, vol. 3992, file 185,143, J.D. McLean to James Wilson, June 7, 1899.

⁸³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3992, file 185,143, James Wilson to Secretary, Dept. of Indian Affairs, June 7, 1889.

that both Indians and ranchers required a permit if they wished to graze their stock on government lands. "Though the practice of using Dominion lands be prevalent with white men in the Territories," Law Clerk Reginald Rimmer observed, "they can have no ground of complaint against the Indians while they themselves are wrong doers."⁸⁴

Implementing a dues structure proved to be no panacea for controlling the use or abuse of the reserve. In a further effort to reduce conflict between the Bloods and their neighbours and to curb illegal cattle trespass, a barbed wire fence was constructed along the reserve's southern boundary with Cardston in 1899. The easy destruction of the fence,⁸⁵ along with the difficulty in getting the Cardston settlers to pay their grazing dues, led to Wilson's advice to discontinue the settlers' grazing privileges.⁸⁶ The fence, in Wilson's view, had been deliberately cut to permit "stock to pass of[f] and on the reserve at pleasure."⁸⁷

⁸⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3992, file 185,143, Memorandum signed by Law Clerk Reginald Rimmer, June 28, 1899.

⁸⁵ Hugh A. Dempsey, "Story of the Blood Reserve," The Pioneer West No. 2 (1970) pp. 5-6.

⁸⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1723, pp. 364-365, James Wilson to James P. Low, April 10, 1900; pp. 370-373, James Wilson to James P. Low, April 23, 1900.

⁸⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1723, p. 371, James Wilson to James

The letterbook for 1902 reveals that numerous people or groups had reserve grazing privileges. A report on the leases for 1903 shows the following arrangement.

<u>Company</u>	<u>No. of Cattle</u>	<u>Years Running</u>
Cochrane Ranche Co.	3,000 cattle	7 years
Mormons, Cardston	250	0
Patterson et.al.	1,000	7
Wallace	150	3
McNab	75	5
Hassen	125	2
Hauks	75	3
Wallace and Brown	1,000	2
Sergt. Hilliard	75	[?]
McMurphy	300	-
Johnston	500	-
Short	200	-
	Total	
	6,750	

Wilson further observed that of these lessees Wallace and Hauks had not paid dues, Sergeant Hilliard had no grazing permit and although Wilson allowed Hilliard's cattle on the reserve he could not convince him to pay his dues.⁸⁸

Considering Wilson's concern over the lessees' "habit" of removing stock from the reserve in contravention of the Indian Act,⁸⁹ and their continued evasion of the

P. Low, April 23, 1900; RG 18, vol. 1546, file 76, D. Laird to Col. Herchmer, Dec. 15, 1899.

⁸⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1535, p.247. Unsigned and undated hand written account, likely by James Wilson, of cattle on reserve.

⁸⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1721, p. 273, J. Wilson to Post Master, Spring Coulee, December 12, 1902; p. 275, J. Wilson to Post Master, Magrath, December 12, 1902; RG 10, vol. 1725, pp. 8-9, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, February 24, 1903; pp. 30-33, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, March 11, 1903.

understandings contained in grazing agreements and permits⁹⁰ the outcome could be predicted.

Changing Circumstances

Once again, in response to growing problems, the Blood leadership changed their reserve lease policies. In 1903 they canceled grazing permits to local homesteaders and ranchers, preferring instead to lease excess reserve grazing capacity to one or two large companies. The easier supervision of the land and prevention of illegal trespass and theft were necessary given the Bloods' own substantial cattle and horse interests.⁹¹ Although clearly warranted, the new policy was likely to receive a poor reception from homesteaders bordering the reserve.

For more correspondence on these problems see p. 387, James Wilson to Robert Patterson, February 28, 1903; p. 402, James Wilson to Alberta Ranch Co., Pincher Creek, March 12, 1903; RG 10, Vol. 1721, pp. 415-417, J. Wilson to H.S. Allen, March 21, 1903; p. 311, J. Wilson to [?], Cardston, January 19, 1903.

⁹⁰ NAC, RG 10, Vol. 1721, p. 350, J. Wilson to Al. Whitney, February 12, 1903; pp. 11-14, Indian Agent to Messers Wallace and Co., April 8, 1902; Indian Agent to H. Williams, April 8, 1902; Indian Agent to W.B. Whitney, April 8, 1902; Indian Agent to R. Urch, April 8, 1902.

⁹¹ Dempsey counts 2,000 head of cattle by 1900. Dempsey, Red Crow, p. 201. Agent James Wilson reported that the Bloods had 3,000 horses in 1902. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1724, p. 497, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, April 3, 1902. On theft see RG 10, vol. 1725, pp. 8-9, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, February 24, 1903. On horses and cattle for this period see Goldfrank, Social Organization, pp. 23-25.

Such encouragement of large leaseholders was in fact a return to the practices of the pre-homestead days. The Bloods were flying in the face of the agrarian development which had already taken place and were attempting to reverse the trend which helped bring about the end of the large lease era.⁹² The result was inevitably to threaten, or stifle, the ambitions of settlers with small holdings who desired to engage in mixed farming and to expand their cattle operations. The Bloods, for their part, simply wished to halt the plundering of their property. Anticipating approval of his decision to cancel grazing permits Wilson requested those individuals with leases to remove their stock by June 30.⁹³

The first agreement under the new leasing arrangement was with the Donald McEwan Company of Brandon. The lease restricted the company cattle to the east and south areas of the reserve and committed the company to graze a maximum of 7,000 cattle for ten years for \$5,000 a year. The lease also

⁹² It was the decade after 1896 that cattlemen faced the full effects of homesteads. Breen, Ranching Frontier, p. 101. A.A. Lupton says that ranching on the range in Fort Macleod area finished in 1903, and Lethbridge followed suit in 1905. A.A. Lupton, "Cattle Ranching In Alberta 1874-1910: its evolution and migration," The Alberta Geographer (No. 3, 1967), p. 57. Craig briefly mentions this contest for land. Craig, Lords And Commons, p. 236.

⁹³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1725, pp. 30-33, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, March 11, 1903.

contracted the company to purchase seven hundred tons of hay from Blood farmers, should they decide to supply it, and required that fences be kept in good repair to keep company and Indian stock apart. Blood cattle owners were free to graze their own stock as desired. This arrangement was exclusive to the company under the condition that it could not sublet.⁹⁴ This contract, if effectively enforced, would shut others off from the legal use of the reserve and sever the reserve from the surrounding grazing environment for a ten year period. The only possible avenue open to those still demanding access to the reserve was an illegal invasion.⁹⁵ The new arrangement was also eminently more profitable for the Bloods than the old arrangements,⁹⁶ if for no other reason than there was unlikely to be a default on lease payments.

The impact on other potential users of such an exclusive arrangement with the McEwan Co. was immediately evident and

⁹⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3571, file 130, pt. 19. See Memorandum of Agreement, dated May 16, 1903.

⁹⁵ This may explain the destruction of some reserve fencing. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1721, pp. 680-682, James Wilson to Supt. Irwin, September 25, 1903.

⁹⁶ Dempsey does argue that the going rate for Indian Department lease at this time was two cents per acre while the Blood lease was closer to one and one quarter cents per acre. Hugh A. Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader: A Biography Of James Gladstone, Indian Senator (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986), p. 26.

it drove some in Cardston to attempt a lease acquisition of three thousand acres in Townships 3 and 4, Range 24 and 25, West of the 4th meridian, through an appeal to the Honourable Clifford Sifton.⁹⁷ The Blood tribe "absolutely opposed" approval of this arrangement.⁹⁸ Despite the Bloods' clearly expressed wishes to the contrary the Department's intention was to grant the Cardston settlers grazing privileges⁹⁹ without further reference to the Bloods.¹⁰⁰ The Bloods were not pleased believing that Cardston's residents had enjoyed years of free grazing despite Agent Wilson's repeated efforts to collect monies owed.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3571, file 130, pt. 19, J.G. Turriff to Clifford Sifton, November 19, 1903.

⁹⁸ NAC, RG. 10, vol. 3571, file 130, pt. 19, J.A.J. McKenna to Clifford Sifton, January 5, 1904.

⁹⁹ NAC, RG. 10, vol. 3571, file 130, pt. 19, J.D. McLean to J.A.J. McKenna, July 18, 1904.

¹⁰⁰ NAC, RG. 10, vol. 3571, file 130, pt. 19, J.A.J. McKenna to Secretary, DIA, July 22, 1904; Frank Pedley to Assistant Indian Commissioner, July 27, 1904.

¹⁰¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1725, pp. 99-104, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, April 22, 1903. Even though not paying their dues the Mormons were at the same time petitioning for a closed lease "excluding Indians as well as others from making use of the land," and were even looking to the possibility of acquiring some reserve land through purchase. NAC, RG. 10, vol. 3571, file 130, pt. 19, J.A.J. McKenna to Secretary, DIA, September 7, 1904.

Dissenting voices among the Bloods "complained of being annoyed by white men seeking to secure possession or the use of the land..." Indeed, the legitimacy of the McEwan lease itself was questioned,¹⁰² especially by the "self-supporting squad"¹⁰³ as the financially independent residents of the reserve were called, who apparently saw their own interests compromised by the influx of 7,000 lease cattle which would further tax the reserve's resources. Their fears were substantiated. The McEwan company was soon interpreting its lease agreement liberally and with callous disregard permitted its cattle to roam the reservation and threaten the Bloods' much needed hay supplies.¹⁰⁴

In 1903 the Blood reserve sustained cattle in numbers that met or exceeded Agent Wilson's estimate of capacity at eight to ten thousand head. The Blood cattle owners themselves grazed 3,000 head of horses and 3,000 head of

¹⁰² J.A.J. McKenna hinted that Chief Crop Eared Wolf was bribed to consent to the lease. NAC, RG. 10, vol. 3571, file 130, pt. 19, J.A.J. McKenna to Superintendent General, January 5, 1904. For machinations involved in granting the lease see Dempsey, Gentle Persuader, p. 26.

¹⁰³ NAC, RG. 10, vol. 3571, file 130, pt. 19, R.N. Wilson to J.A.J. McKenna, March 25, 1904.

¹⁰⁴ NAC, RG. 10, Vol. 1722, pp. 279-281, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, August 4, 1904. It appears that the reserve may have been overstocked. Taylor says that because of the large numbers "that almost the entire reserve was needed for pasture." Taylor, Standing Alone, p. 62.

cattle.¹⁰⁵ Others grazed 6,750 head. Of this total the Cochrane Ranche had 3,000 head and the Mormons 250.¹⁰⁶ Wilson's capacity estimate was put to the test when on May 5, 1904, Donald McEwan & Company began placing cattle from Mexico on the reserve.¹⁰⁷ Taking Wilson's upper estimate as a reasonable number, the reserve was, even before the arrival of the McEwan herd, overstocked by 22.5% or 2,750 animals. When one considers that illegal trespass was constant and sometimes considerable¹⁰⁸ it is almost certain that, except for short periods around roundup and sale, the reserve was continually overstocked.¹⁰⁹ Grazing regulations for the west, issued by the Department of the Interior in 1905, stipulated

¹⁰⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1725, p. 103, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, April 22, 1903.

¹⁰⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1725, p. 105, a listing of owners of cattle grazing on Blood Reserve.

¹⁰⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1725, p. 670, Indian Agent to Indian Commissioner, May 19, 1904.

¹⁰⁸ Rancher E.F. Hagell makes several references to apparently intentional and illegal trespass of stock on the Blood reserve. E. F. Hagell, When the Grass Was Free (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1954), pp. 13-14, 64, 74-77.

¹⁰⁹ Even if we conclude that with the arrival of McEwan cattle other stock would have been removed from the reserve the reserve would still be overgrazed if McEwan stocked the reserve to the lease limit of 7,000 and the Bloods still retained their complement of 6,000. The reserve would then be overstocked by 23 percent.

a ratio of one cow or five sheep per 20 acres.¹¹⁰ Should McEwan stock the lease to the 7,000 allowable limit, the approximate acreage required to hold all the stock was 395,000 acres, more than the reserve's total of approximately 350,000 acres.

The Bloods' move to consolidate their grazing leases coincided with public recognition of a shift in land use to mixed farming. This trend placed added pressure on declining grazing space and signified that the ranching era had peaked.¹¹¹ Touted by government, business, press and public alike conventional wisdom at this time held that the diversification in the use of a homestead's limited acreage, offered by mixed farming, was the key to farmer prosperity and the cure for the dangerous reliance on a one crop system.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Rocky Mountain Echo, August 29, 1905.

¹¹¹ Lupton, The Alberta Geographer (No. 3, 1967), p. 57.

¹¹² As Paul Voisey has pointed out although perhaps universally promoted mixed farming was not universally adopted. Paul Voisey, "A Mix-Up Over Mixed Farming: The Curious History Of The Agricultural Diversification Movement In A Single Crop Area Of Southern Alberta," in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (eds.) Building Beyond The Homestead: Rural History On The Prairies (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 179-180. See also Voisey, Vulcan, pp. 77-81, 96-97. Interestingly W.M. Elofson has argued that except for the initial period of ranching in the west, ranchers engaged in mixed farming to maximize benefits and to fulfill their needs. Elofson, "Not Just a Cowboy," pp. 205-216.

Mixed Farming Interlude

Despite the Bloods' recent lease to the McEwan company in the view of the press the 'dark years' for ranching were imminent. The farms and fences that dotted the stockmen's former grazing range were a clear indication of the ranchers' declining importance. Helpless in the face of the advance of the fence, ranchers offered an unheeded note of caution about the suitability of the region for farming. They pointed out that "If this land is homesteaded and farming is not a success, there is not only the one industry crippled, but two."¹¹³ The limitations that were to restrict the anticipated agricultural potential of south western Alberta, however, were yet to occur. No amount of warning, especially from ranching interests, could dampen the heady expectation that agricultural diversification could bring the unlimited prosperity that wheat growing had so far denied.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Rocky Mountain Echo, May, 1906. The stockmen had an argument as Gerald Friesen calls the opening of this region to farming settlement "a great error in Canadian domestic policy." Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 328. Similar views were expressed by ranchers in the Palliser's Triangle. See Barry Potyondi, In Palliser's Triangle: Living in the Grasslands 1850-1930 (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1995), p. 102.

¹¹⁴ The Rev. Martin Holdom noted that in the area of Castor, Alberta, in 1910 the farmers were ruined by an early drought and in 1911 by early frost. The lesson to farmers, he said was clear; engage in mixed farming, grow an early

In November 1912, the Macleod Spectator expressed its perception of the local situation. There was a need, in the paper's view, for mixed farming to supplant single crop agriculture such as wheat, which was now passé. Large scale ranching was believed by the Spectator at an end and it accepted the idea that the success of mixed farming and ranching were dependent on access to the Blood reserve. This eventuality the local press both promoted and anticipated.¹¹⁵ The Macleod Advertiser reported that farmers of Cardston, Magrath, Raymond, Spring Coulee and Lethbridge districts wanted big cattle leases stopped and the reserve land made available to all interested parties through lease. This agitation was driven by the belief that the 350,000 acres of reserve was a suitable inducement to the expansion of local mixed farming enterprises.¹¹⁶

The local press described the changed social order while envisioning a new and enduring economy that ultimately proved as illusory as ranching had been.¹¹⁷ For the Spectator mixed

variety of grain and do not borrow against the crop. Voisey, A Preacher's Frontier, pp. 114-15.

¹¹⁵ Macleod Spectator, November 5, 1912, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ Macleod Advertiser, May 29, 1913, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Settlers experiencing the devastating conditions of the dry belt in the early 1920s recalled with disdain the false hopes placed in mixed farming. David C. Jones, "We'll all be buried down here": The Prairie Dryland Disaster 1917-1926 (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1986), pp. 86-

farming was the answer to the conundrum of ever elusive prosperity in 'next year country', especially now that the big ranches were "being cut up." According to the Spectator the ranching era, though grand, was waning and ranchers, those "exiled aristocrats", were now "few and far between." It was now the farmer's day.¹¹⁸ Ranching should be revived, the Spectator believed; but in a fashion that promoted mixed farming on a small diversified scale, not the large commercial interests of the past. The hope for prosperity in the future lay in a "few cows and chickens,"¹¹⁹ and the alienation of Blood land.

It was, therefore, with considerable shock and apprehension that the Macleod Advertiser greeted the news in June, 1912, that the Winnipeg-based company of Gordon, Ironsides & Fares was to take a 10 year lease on the available reserve land and stock it with 17,000 cattle. The company was a major western beef producer and packing company that ran tens of thousands of cattle in Alberta and Saskatchewan on hundreds of thousands of acres of leased

87. The CPR encouraged mixed farming because the west imported large quantities of vegetables which could be grown locally. Ralph H. Estey, "Helping Hands in the West," The Beaver, vol. 77, no. 3 (June-July, 1997), p. 33.

¹¹⁸ Macleod Spectator, June 4, 1912, p. 7.

¹¹⁹ Cardston Globe, May 8, 1914, p. 1.

Crown land.¹²⁰ The exclusive control of the extensive lease area required, the Macleod Advertiser predicted, would seriously harm Fort Macleod's potential for growth. The lease to Gordon, Ironsides & Fares pre-empted, for at least a decade, any possibility of acquiring the reserve through a surrender. Hence the town would remain hemmed in from the east by the Blood reserve and by the Peigan reserve to the south west.¹²¹

Ignoring any benefits accruing to the Bloods from the lease, the Advertiser denigrated the cattle trade which they saw as serving eastern markets,¹²² while the Spectator trumpeted both the 'need' for mixed farming and for the "many thousands of [wasted] fat acres" of the Blood reserve. Admitting Blood opposition to the proposed surrender, and

¹²⁰ See for example Long, The Great Canadian Range, p. 4. In 1902 the company ran 30,000 head of cattle and was considered a giant in the cattle industry. Ed Gould, Ranching In Western Canada (Saanichton: Hancock House Publishers Ltd., 1978), pp. 103-104. Hugh Dempsey says that one local firm, that of Knight and Watson, was also given a lease at this time. See Hugh A. Dempsey, Tom Three Persons: Legend Of An Indian Cowboy (Saskatoon: Purich Publishers, 1997), p. 67.

¹²¹ Macleod Advertiser, June 6, 1912, p. 1. Success in alienating reserve land "would mean the breaking of the restrictive bond which has hampered the development of the district to the south and east for so long." May 29, 1913, p. 4.

¹²² Macleod Advertiser, June 6, 1912, p.1. The Cardston Globe echoed these sentiments by reprinting the same article. The Cardston Globe, June 13, 1912, p. 1.

expressing the prevalent attitude that Indians were doomed to extinction, the Spectator suggested leasing the reserve for a 99 year period. In the interim disease would destroy the Bloods as a people and thus the most substantial stumbling-block to Fort Macleod's growth would be resolved.¹²³

The Spectator admonished readers that the government's efforts to encourage mixed farming style ranching deserved support as a suitable antidote to the 'folly of putting all our eggs in one basket and depending exclusively on wheat mining...' ¹²⁴ However, the anti large lease sentiment developed not only in response to the lease policy on the Blood reserve. It was also a backlash against cattle barons like Pat Burns who had cornered the Alberta beef market. His large leases, the paper believed, restricted the ability of others to get into the cattle business.¹²⁵

There appears to have been great local demand for leased portions of the Blood reserve with reported applications for

¹²³ Macleod Spectator, June 4, 1912, p. 7. For more on this debate see, Macleod Spectator, October 1, 1912, p. 6; October 8, 1912, p. 7; October 29, 1912, pp. 4, 7; November 5, p.3; December 31, p. 4; January 7, 1913, p. 4; January 14, 1913, p. 7; January 21, 1913, p. 1.

¹²⁴ Macleod Spectator, November 12, 1912, p. 4.

¹²⁵ Macleod Spectator, November 19, 1912, p. 1. On this idea see Macleod Advertiser, June 5, 1913, p. 7.

126,000 acres of reserve land.¹²⁶ One farmer in Magrath, for example, wanted 15,000 acres of reserve land, just two miles west of his farm, to go with the 320 acres of his homestead. If granted a 20 year lease he planned to stock it with cattle, horses and sheep. The Advertiser said that Government officials, including Dr. W. Roche, Minister of the Interior, were in favour of leases being granted to local farmers,¹²⁷ a contention not borne out by subsequent debate in the House of Commons.¹²⁸

The agitation was, however, out of step with the desires of Blood leadership and band members. By 1913 they had accepted the fact that the large leases were preferable to general subletting, both for animal control and income, and so they rejected bids from local ranchers and the Cardston Agricultural Association to lease reserve land.¹²⁹ The tribe

¹²⁶ Macleod Advertiser, July 3, 1913, p. 7. See also the Family Herald, July 2, 1913.

¹²⁷ Macleod Advertiser, July 3, 1913, p. 7. If this was the case by 1915 Roche had changed his mind and was more inclined to follow the wishes of the Bloods in this matter.

¹²⁸ House of Commons Debates, March 22, 1915, 1323-1324.

¹²⁹ GAI, Blood Indian Agency Correspondence (BIAC), file 62, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, June 13, 1913. The Cardston application was rejected in part because of the continued trespass and destruction of the reserve fence. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1547, p. 43, Indian Agent to the Secretary, DIA, July 10, 1913; BIAC, GAI, file 62, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, June 25, 1913. The Bloods also blamed

voted instead "to give all the grazing privileges possible on the Reserve to Gordon Ironsides and Fares."¹³⁰ Though not willing to lease to homesteaders bordering the reserve the Gordon Ironsides and Fares lease was unanimously renewed, with some discussion about the rents to be charged and the minimum number of cattle to be placed.¹³¹

Both suspicion and reality strained the Bloods' relations with their neighbours and thus affected the way in which local people could conduct their daily activities and business affairs. The relation between homesteader William Blackmore and the Bloods is illustrative of this point. Blackmore owned land adjacent to the reserve at a location "where the Reserve fence is practically all down" thus permitting his cattle to wander onto the reserve. The Bloods, angry at the trespass, on one occasion prevented an

Cardston residents for the deaths of Single Rider and his wife who died after drinking Florida Water purchased at Cardston, though no conviction was made. The agent reported that "the Indians imagine that...it is a job on the Mormons' part to poison them all off to get the Reserve..." On trespass see GAI, BIAC, file 62 Indian Agent to W. Caldwell, November 13, 1913; Indian Agent to W. Blackmore, November 13, 1913.

¹³⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1547, p. 43, Indian Agent to the Secretary, DIA, July 10, 1913. Emphasis added. There was some discussion on whether the rental should be \$2.50 or \$3.00 per head and the Bloods wanted a minimum number places so that the rental was never less than \$10 000 pr year. GAI, BIAC, file 62, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, June 13, 1913.

¹³¹ GAI, BIAC, file 62, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, June 13, 1913.

attempt to recover the strays. Blackmore was forced to have a lawyer intervene on his behalf and requested a permit broad enough to allow him to visit the reserve as necessary to round up his stray cattle.¹³² It is unclear whether the permit was granted. In the meantime the agent warned Blackmore to keep his cattle off the reserve or face prosecution.¹³³ In the end, following charge and countercharge, Agent W.J. Dilworth was forced to defend his actions. Although not wishing to contribute to the hostility between the Bloods and their neighbours, he wrote, because of "the reputation these people bear I propose to hold them strictly within reasonable bounds."¹³⁴

The Bloods, however, had their own objectives, and in 1913 selected Shot-Both-Sides as chief. The new leader was a staunch defender of Blood traditions and of the reserve's territorial integrity¹³⁵ and his election was attributed, as

¹³² GAI, BIAC, file 62, W. Laurie to Indian Agent, November 12, 1913.

¹³³ GAI, BIAC, file 62, Indian Agent to W. Caldwell, November 13, 1913, Indian Agent to W. Blackmore, November 13, 1913.

¹³⁴ GAI, BIAC, file 62, Indian Agent to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, DIA, December 29, 1913. For more correspondence on this issue see; W.M. Blackmore to W.J. Dilworth, November 19, 1913; J.D. McLean to W.J. Dilworth, December 19, 1913.

¹³⁵ Dempsey, Red Crow, p. 216; Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader, p. 51.

the Macleod Advertiser correctly concluded, to the fact that the Bloods' were determined to resist any attempts to alienate portions of their reserve.¹³⁶ In the face of this continuing Blood resistance, one local hopeful suggested making the reserve into a general herding ground with the Bloods in charge as caretakers. The added grazing capacity would, undoubtedly, create hundreds of jobs in the marketing of cattle.¹³⁷

Though the Cardston Globe hoped that preaching would bring converts to the support of mixed farming, denial and castigation were no sure means of expelling the cattle barons.¹³⁸ On May 30, 1913, the Globe demanded that the lease held by Gordon, Ironsides & Co. be canceled and the land be made available for general leasing. Resolutions to this effect came from farmers in the communities of Cardston, Magrath, Raymond, Spring Coulee, Lethbridge and Orton, and the Bloods were said to be in favour.¹³⁹ This was wishful

¹³⁶ Macleod Advertiser, June 19, 1913, p. 7; July 3, 1913, p. 1.

¹³⁷ Macleod Advertiser, April 24, 1913, p. 7.

¹³⁸ The Globe expressed the belief that Minister of the Interior, William J. Roche, was being influenced by big business interests, specifically meat packing plants in Winnipeg. See; Cardston Globe, September 5, 1913, p. 1.

¹³⁹ Cardston Globe, May 30, 1913, p. 1; Macleod Advertiser, June 19, 1913, p. 1.

thinking given the Bloods' past experience with rent collection and illegal trespass. Ignored and thwarted the locals eventually blamed their failure on the power of mammon: "the chiefs have been having a lot of long green bills of late and their attitude in opposition to the leasing of their lands to the small mixed farming may be explained thereby." In desperation the Globe predicted that the lessees, because of their corruption, would not carry the day.¹⁴⁰ The paper, buoyed by predictions of an estimated 72 percent increase in the stock industry in the area surrounding the reserve, hoped that Roche would throw open the reserve.¹⁴¹

Despite the predictions the Bloods renewed the lease to Gordon, Ironsides and Fares. Dismayed, the Spectator reported that "not a single member of the tribe was in favor of the policy" of granting leases to small ranchers.¹⁴² Given the previous press coverage of this matter one might expect the press to announce the death knell of mixed farming and small scale ranching. Glen Campbell, Superintendent of Indian Agencies, told the Spectator that the Bloods opposed leases to small interests because it led to endless

¹⁴⁰ Cardston Globe, July 25, 1913, p. 1.

¹⁴¹ Cardston Globe, October 3, 1913, p. 4.

¹⁴² Macleod Spectator, June 17, 1913, p. 1.

confusion. The tribe also appreciated the increasing value of their grazing and in the future, Campbell predicted, the rental would rise.¹⁴³

The local press, however, continued to promote a different reality from that encouraged by the Bloods through large lease grants. The impression was now that the west was full and space was at a premium.¹⁴⁴ The bounds of the homestead no longer sufficed to sustain a settler's financial ambitions and thus caused a movement towards expansion. Settlers on the Blood reserve's boundaries cast a covetous eye on its seemingly open, and neglected spaces. Just as the reserve had alleviated pressure on overextended cattle herds in the past it could now relieve the pressure on homesteads which were too small. The solution was for the government to open the Blood reserve to lease and rescue stockmen "forced to sell their cows and cut down their herds on account of the

¹⁴³ Macleod Spectator, September 9, 1913, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ Macleod Advertiser, October 24, 1912, p. 2. A summary of this idea, along with the implications for large scale ranching, was given in the Raymond Leader, 1915; "The west has settled back on its haunches so to speak, and a wild, untamed, limitless area, with boundless prairie to run at will on, has become a home for a home-building people...The homesteader and the settler, the men who dig post holes, string barbed wire and follow the plough are, of course, responsible for the change." Raymond Leader, March 26, 1915, p. 2.

diminishing of the range."¹⁴⁵ To expect such a solution, however, was a denial of the history of relations with the Bloods and their intention not to surrender but to defend their own considerable interests. The Bloods' decision, in March 1915, to renew the Gordon Ironsides and Fares lease, "if they meet our terms," reminded the locals of their inability to influence the status quo.¹⁴⁶

Continued Assaults and Blood Resistance

The closure of the reserve to the outside community through restricted lease only became apparent as settlers determined to get through stealth what had been denied them by decision. By far the largest illegal breach of the reserve's integrity was the constant invasion of stray animals, especially horses. The problem with strays dated back to at least 1904. Agent Dilworth reported in December, 1914, that "With the coming of winter those ranchers living adjacent to the reserve on the north and east ...as has been

¹⁴⁵ Raymond Leader, September 12, 1913, p. 1. On how to distribute the land should the reserve be opened see the Raymond Leader, July 4, 1913, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ Cardston Globe, June 30, 1914, p. 4. NAC, R.G. 10, vol. 4024, file 290, 240-2A. A letter by Agent Dilworth, April 14, 1916, gave the terms of the lease as for \$10,000 per year for not more than 5,000 head of cattle on the reserves subject to a \$2.00 per head penalty. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1537, p. 105, Indian Agent to D.C. Scott, January 25, 1918.

their custom for 10 years past, have turned their horses onto the reserve for winter grazing..."¹⁴⁷ The practice had apparently gone on unchecked for years and in 1913 Dilworth found sufficient strays to compromise the Bloods' interests.¹⁴⁸ Again in 1914, 234 strays were rounded up with between 40 and 50 being eventually claimed by owners.¹⁴⁹ The Cardston Globe's report, May 1916, of numbers of strays bearing the same brand suggests that some individuals were intentionally and illegally running their stock on the reserve. On this occasion the roundup netted 94 horses.¹⁵⁰ In January 1918 195 horses were captured with at least 17 bearing the same brand.¹⁵¹ Agent Dilworth caused a momentary outcry when he impounded both stray horses and cattle, and claimed a grazing fee of three dollars per head. On this occasion the numbers posed no apparent threat to the reserve's resources so Dilworth proposed accepting the

¹⁴⁷ NAC, RG 10, Vol. 1547, p. 238, Indian Agent to Assistant Deputy and Sec'y, DIA, December 2, 1914.

¹⁴⁸ Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA), Accession No. 70.414/81, W.J. Dilworth to Provincial Live Stock Commissioner, December 29, 1913.

¹⁴⁹ Macleod Spectator, March 19, 1914, p. 1; May 28, 1914, p. 1

¹⁵⁰ Cardston Globe, May 18, 1916, p. 1.

¹⁵¹ Cardston Globe, January 17, 1918, p. 5.

animals for a grazing fee.¹⁵² The offenders, meanwhile, had managed to acquire free grazing for their animals from the Bloods. The cost to the tribe and savings to the owners is difficult to evaluate, as there is no way to accurately determine how long some animals were on the reserve.¹⁵³

In August, 1920, 102 animals were impounded on the reserve.¹⁵⁴ The Alberta Provincial Police constable W.W. Henderson, Cardston, reported that some individuals went to great lengths to surreptitiously graze their cattle on the Blood reserve. Although an offense under the Indian Act some attempted to evade detection by resorting to the use of a hair brand.* Henderson declared that this tactic so incensed the Bloods that they killed the strays. He reported that

¹⁵² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1537, p. 105, Indian Agent to D.C. Scott, January 25, 1918. Dilworth estimated the reserve capacity at 20,000 head. The criteria he used to arrive at this estimation are unknown.

¹⁵³ There were occasions when offenders were ordered to remove their animals. Some contractors abusing their rights, such as E.H. Maunsell, were ordered to remove their stock. See for example GAI, Cross Family Papers (CFP), file 893, [?] to A.E. Cross, May 8, 1919; NAC, RG 10, vol. 1546, p. 48, Indian Agent to O.J. Stoddard, February 26, 1919.

¹⁵⁴ Cardston Globe, August 21, 1920, p. 4.

*A hair brand singes the outer hairs for temporary identification of stock. When the hair grows back the brand is gone. It was generally used on cattle drives when owners wanted to temporarily identify animals. This information was provided by Hank Pallister and passed along by Douglas E. Cass, Senior Archivist, Glenbow.

three Indians were awaiting trial charged with this offense.¹⁵⁵ Meanwhile, the belief that reserve access was "essential to successful stock-raising in this district" continued, even though continually thwarted by the Bloods.¹⁵⁶

A 1922 report to R.H. Campbell, Director of Forestry, Department of the Interior, suggests that grazing land continued to be at a premium and that large blocks of land, such as the Blood Reserve, could be critical in determining success or failure for ventures in mixed farming and stock ranching. Though the report focused on the use of forest ranges for grazing, the conclusions were equally applicable to the area around the Blood Reserve. In his report Campbell discussed several classes of 'ranchers': those with large economically viable acreages purchased when land was cheap, 'local' ranchers who mostly leased Dominion lands and who therefore had to live with the specter of cancellation, those who farmed and ranched with about two hundred head of stock and limited pasture, and finally farmers who kept a few head

¹⁵⁵ GAI, Western Stock Grazing Association Papers, 1896-1972, file 48.

¹⁵⁶ Macleod Times, April 20, 1922, p. 3. The roundup of strays continued on practically a yearly basis. See the Macleod Times, July 13, 1922, p. 7; June 28, 1923, p. 1; July 21, 1927, p. 3; June 14, 1928, p. 1; Cardston News, June 14, 1928, p. 6. The July roundup for 1927 netted approximately five hundred and eighty animals. Cardston News, July 14, 1927, pp. 2 & 7. For 1929 see the Cardston News, June 27, 1929, p. 2; July 4, 1929, p. 5.

of stock for home consumption. The general conclusion reached was that they all needed grazing land in addition to their holdings. The depressed markets, in conjunction with acute grazing shortages, led to intense pressure on forest reserves and other government lease lands.¹⁵⁷

If one were to substitute the term "Blood reserve" for "forest reserve" one immediately realizes that the same arguments had been made by all manner of ranchers and homesteaders living next to the Blood reserve since its inception. Though the report blamed the current depressed state of the industry on the drought beginning in 1917 and peaking in the winter of 1919-20,¹⁵⁸ these were problems produced by nature, not by a perceived need or a claim to the right to utilization. Thus Agent J.T. Faunt summed up the apparent attitude of one homesteader, McGovern, charged with the abuse of reserve land. "He has some land just across the river from the Reserve & is running a herd of horses & cattle away out of proportion to his land holdings," Faunt wrote,

¹⁵⁷ GAI, CFP, file 952, Report to R.H. Campbell, Director of Forestry, Department of the Interior, October 24, 1922; CFP, file 895, has substantial correspondence on the shortage of feed for cattle during this period.

¹⁵⁸ GAI, CFP, file 952, Report to R.H. Campbell, Director of Forestry, Department of the Interior, October 24, 1922. Breen attributes other factors such as depressed prices and market access. Breen, Ranching Frontier, p. 215 ff.

"with the result that for years his stock have been running on the Reserve & in fact they were practically all raised on the Reserve & won't stay off."¹⁵⁹

According to Indian Commissioner W.M. Graham, in 1922 there were 16 leases on the Blood reserve, not counting the grazing leases and three other farming leases "of which you are aware." Because of Graham's wording only six of these can be determined to have been paid up, four did not respond to inquiries and three had rent deferred or some owing.¹⁶⁰ Some lessees, such as J.E. Neilson, sought longer leases but Agent Faunt suspected that they wanted to graze until the feed was gone and then abandon the lease, a fear not supported by Graham.¹⁶¹ Most of these leases were likely holdovers granted without Blood consent as a consequence of the amendment to Section 90 of the Indian Act in 1918. This amendment permitted the Government to implement its Greater Production Campaign, during World War I, by conscripting 'idle' land and resources on Native reserves. The Bloods

¹⁵⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1546, p. 273, Indian Agent to Duncan C. Scott, July 3, 1922. Dempsey recounts an incident between James Gladstone and the cattle of Knight and Watson. Dempsey, Gentle Persuader, p. 66.

¹⁶⁰ GAI, BIAC, file 131, W.M. Graham to J.T. Faunt, April 20, 1923.

¹⁶¹ GAI, BIAC, file 131, W.M. Graham to J.T. Faunt, May 2, 1923.

were involuntarily inducted into this program.¹⁶² Hugh Dempsey suggests that the amendment was partly precipitated by the Blood refusal of a land surrender.¹⁶³ Locally, however, the Macleod Times still viewed securing grazing as "one of the vital problems of our farmers."¹⁶⁴

A First Nations convention held at Macleod, in November 1924, brought the matter of grazing leases to a head. The Indians themselves had decided, according to the Lethbridge Herald, that some leasing policies were an infringement of Treaty 7,¹⁶⁵ a view upheld by local M.P. George Coote.¹⁶⁶ The

¹⁶² John Leonard Taylor, Canadian Indian Policy During The Inter-War Years, 1918-1939 (Ottawa: Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1984), pp. 15-19.

¹⁶³ Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader, pp. 51-52.

¹⁶⁴ Macleod Times, March 8, 1923, p. 3. The Times saw a glimmer of hope in a federal government decision to "grant grazing leases of vacant Dominion lands unfit for agricultural purposes in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and which are encumbered by seed grain and relief indebtedness." The Macleod Times, March 22, 1923, p. 1. Indian farmer James Gladstone quit his efforts in 1923 when for three years running cattle from nearby ranches invaded his fields and ruined his crops. Dempsey, Gentle Persuader, p. 67. On the competition for limited space see, Jones, Prairie Dryland Disaster, pp. 13-15, 90.

¹⁶⁵ To my knowledge there are no records or minutes of this convention extant. Lethbridge Herald, November 13, 14, 15, 1924 in NAC, RG 10, vol. 4093, file 600,107; Mike Mountain Horse to J.T. Faunt, November 22, 1924.

¹⁶⁶ Calgary Herald, November 14, 1924 in NAC, RG 10, vol. 4093, file 600,107.

troublesome flash point was a Blood reserve lease to the Hon. A.J. McLean. McLean had trouble stocking the lease to the maximum allowable 5,000 head of cattle and wanted the cost adjusted accordingly, a proposal rejected by Agent Faunt who demanded the full \$10,000 payment. McLean also wanted to fence his lease, to which Blood ranchers objected because their own cattle tended to drift along the fence and over the river banks to their deaths.¹⁶⁷ These concerns, communicated to Superintendent General Charles Stewart, were dismissed as possibly "imaginary,"¹⁶⁸ rather than legitimate grievances resulting from the still unrepealed Section 90.¹⁶⁹

While the records are generally mute on the issue of grazing in the mid and latter 1920s, Dempsey points to the

¹⁶⁷ GAI, George Gibson Coote Papers, 1907-1956 (GGCP), file 137, J.T. Faunt to Duncan C. Scott, May 31, 1923. McLean also had a lease on the Peigan Reserve and was said to be of the opinion that the Indians consent to a lease was not necessary. Coote charged that McLean got the Peigan lease for the "ridiculously low" price of six cents per acre for ten years, while at the same time some lease land brought thirty cents per acre. McLean politically well connected was described by Coote as "a member of the late Stewart administration..." GAI, GGCP, file 137, G.G. Coote to the [Lethbridge?] Herald, n.d. (circa 1924); J.C. Caldwell to Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, April 17, 1924. See also the Lethbridge Herald, November 14, 1924; Calgary Herald, November 15, 1924 in NAC, RG 10, vol. 4093, file 600,107.

¹⁶⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 4093, file 600,107, A.F. Grady to C. Stewart, November 18, 1924; C. Stewart to A.G. Grady, November 24, 1924.

¹⁶⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 4093, file 600,107, Joseph Mountain Horse to Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King, February 7, 1925.

general prosperity of farmers on the reserve in 1927.¹⁷⁰ This suggests that reserve grazing remained good and so demand remained high. The reserve could accommodate some export demand because many of the reserve residents were employed outside of the reserve¹⁷¹ and only some of the reserve land was suitable for farming. By 1933, in the midst of the Depression the reserve was deemed, by a Department of Agriculture Report, to be "without a doubt, the best stock raising land in Western Canada" and supported more sheep per acre than any other part of Alberta. Still lessees tried to force a fee reduction from 10 to eight cents an acre on their leases by submitting payments based on the reduced rate. Though Blood leadership and the DIA determined not to give in¹⁷² eight different leaseholders were in arrears by August, 1933.¹⁷³ As the leaseholders changed, or encountered economic

¹⁷⁰ Dempsey, Gentle Persuader, p. 71.

¹⁷¹ Dempsey, Gentle Persuader, p. 62.

¹⁷² NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), M. Christianson to Secretary, DIA, May 29, 1933; Harold W. McGill, June, 1933; A.F. MacKenzie to M. Christianson, June 17, 1933.

¹⁷³ See itemized statement in NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1) Arrears totaled \$3,353.56. The total lease amount was for \$4,973.28 so payments were 67% in arrears.

difficulty the problem with collecting rents was compounded.¹⁷⁴

Historical experience, reserve politics and environmental conditions combined, in 1933, to cause official hesitation to accommodate the needs of the non-Native community. In November the DIA was approached by the Jenkins Brothers, Fishburn, Alberta, for a lease of 10 years on a southern portion of the reserve in order to ensure winter range: "it makes it very hard for us to carry on with our cattle if we are not sure of winter range for them." To this point, the Jenkins Brothers indicated, their arrangement with the Indians had been both cordial and satisfactory.¹⁷⁵ Inspector of Indian Agencies M. Christianson's response regarding the 6,000 acre lease was not encouraging. Although several ranchers had been given leases to winter cattle on the reserve in 1932, in the interim environmental conditions on the reserve had deteriorated. Agent J.E. Pugh thus reported that the chief and headmen were "absolutely opposed" to further leases in the southern portion of the reserve

¹⁷⁴ On the inherent confusion see; NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), M. Christianson to J.E. Pugh, February 28, 19[33]; J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, March 4, 1933.

¹⁷⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), Harold W. McGill to J.E. Pugh, November 8, 1933.

which was the tribe's essential grazing range and hay land.¹⁷⁶ Although the reserve was a significant factor in determining the stock policy of off-reserve individuals, or groups, the Bloods were unwilling to compromise future grass reserves.

Agent Pugh summed up his view of the basic economic conflict that existed in the demands placed on the reserve by the white community. "Are we as a reserve," queried Pugh, "to be more or less tentatively responsible for the carrying of outside ranchers, who wish to protect their range in winter for summer, at the expense of the Indians" while he, as agent, was obliged to protect the Blood's interests for the same reason.¹⁷⁷ It was clear that reserve land was regarded by local stock raisers as critical to their success. Stock raising in the area adjoining to the reserve could not thrive without access to more grazing land than was available outside the reserve's borders.

Beginning in 1933 there was an apparent attempt by some Bloods and cattle owners to circumvent the power of the agent and the DIA. Becoming entrepreneurs in their own right some Bloods engaged in personal leasing contracts with White stock

¹⁷⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), M. Christianson to Harold W. McGill, November 13, 1933; J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, November 14, 1933. At this time there were twelve separate applications for grazing leases in the area.

¹⁷⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, November 14, 1933.

owners to graze outside stock on individually fenced land.¹⁷⁸ Christianson thought this policy wrong as it would encourage others to follow suit. He predicted that such actions would result in a reserve overrun with stock "and the whole management of the agency will simply 'go up in smoke.'"¹⁷⁹ Despite such reservations twelve such agreements were eventually concluded.¹⁸⁰

Christianson was aware that the survivability of the reserve was at stake if overgrazing occurred. He was equally aware that this new direction in managing grazing on an individual contract basis posed a severe challenge to DIA authority. Certainly there was potential for serious management confusion but Christianson was flying in the face of reserve and regional economic history when he speculated that "The only system that we can adopt is to keep the Indians from trucking and trading with outsiders."¹⁸¹ In attempting to stifle such commercial exchange Christianson

¹⁷⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, November 14, 1933.

¹⁷⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), M. Christianson to J. E. Pugh, November 16, 1933.

¹⁸⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, November 14, 1933.

¹⁸¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), M. Christianson to J. E. Pugh, November 16, 1933.

was advocating an impractical policy that had existed only in the overzealous minds of Department bureaucrats. Although official government policy had at least ideally been aimed in this direction, the history of grazing contracts, and the demands and expectations of the Bloods' neighbours, had mitigated against such a policy ever becoming reality.

Depression and Drought

Through deliberate arrangements and enforcement of policy in the past the Bloods and their agents had managed to keep control over the reserve's grazing land and hay. The onset of the Depression, however, along with the devastating environmental crisis increased both the settlers' need for land and their determination to have it. As a result, the DIA became more responsive to the needs of non-Natives living in the area of the reserve and attempted to improve the crisis at hand. Ultimately what control the Bloods had been able to gain during the previous decades was slowly eroded away.¹⁸²

Economic and financial conditions in the Great Depression played a significant part in the desire for the use of Blood reserve land and determined the attitudes

¹⁸² Perhaps the best illustration of this is the difficulty collecting lease rents. NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, October 24, 1933. (Table 2).

lessees exhibited once the land was leased to them. The main point of contention was whether or not the lease terms granted the lessee right of exclusive use. The case of W.T. McCaugherty, Lethbridge, illustrates this point. In November, 1935, this man complained to Agent Pugh about certain Indians camped on his lease. Pugh reminded him that a clause in the lease provided for removal of land from a lease if desired by "those Indians living on the lands leased."¹⁸³ This McCaugherty could not, or would not, accept and he threatened the Indians with "criminal action...for trespassing..."¹⁸⁴

The McCaugherty problem came to a head in January, 1936, with his assault on an Indian and resulted in Agent Pugh raising serious questions about leasing technicalities and procedures. He particularly questioned the consequences for the Bloods of the omission of reserved portions from leases. Despite the fact a lease was a "conditional surrender" Pugh recognized that ejecting the Indians from leased land in favour of the lessee would result in much bitterness and

¹⁸³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to W.T. McCaugherty, November 12, 1935. The matter was further complicated by the fact that some Bloods were pressing for 600 acres to be withdrawn from the lease although they had not been living on the leased portion of the land when the lease had been granted. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, November 22, 1935.

¹⁸⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, W.T. McCaugherty to J.E. Pugh, November 20, 1935.

disaffection among them.¹⁸⁵ McCaugherty, however, was unmoved and furthermore believed that legally the lease permitted him to treat the Bloods as "trespassers" on his leased land.¹⁸⁶ Pugh's attempts at mediation failed¹⁸⁷ leading the Department to conclude that McCaugherty was "unreasonable" in his assumptions.¹⁸⁸ Tribal members, of course, did not accept Pugh's explanation that by not being resident on the leased portion of the reserve prior to the granting of the lease they had "forfeited all rights to the lease lands."¹⁸⁹

The abuse of individual Blood property and individual rights, at times, went to such provocative extremes as

¹⁸⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, January 13, 1936.

¹⁸⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, W.S. McCaugherty to J.E. Pugh, November 23, 1934.

¹⁸⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, January 13, 1936.

¹⁸⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, A.F. Mackenzie to J.E. Pugh, January 23, 1936.

¹⁸⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2, (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, January 13, 1936. The problems here, in part, stem from a lease transfer. This original lease had been with the now defunct Cardston Grazing Co. and had stipulated that "The leasing of the above land will not interfere with the rights of the Indians at present residing within the limits of the proposed lease, nor will it interfere with the going to and from of the Indians of the reserve." For similar problems see; J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, June 24, 1937; J.E. Pugh to Messers. Smith & Kearn, July 14, 1937. See also J.E. Pugh to Secretary DIA, May 16, 1938; J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA., July 14, 1937.

permitting sheep to invade Indian homes during their absence. In another case an Indian was lassoed and dragged around by a lessee. Such incidents, Christianson said, were "too numerous to mention..."¹⁹⁰ The attitudes engendered by such behaviour magnified the already negative aspects of the leasing system. The behaviour of lessees such as McCaugherty dictated that such leasing arrangements should have properly been discontinued.¹⁹¹

By 1935 conditions on the reserve suggested an environmental catastrophe of major proportions, and sound management practices dictated that leasing be ended, or at least temporarily delayed. According to Pugh 145,000 acres of range (approximately 41% of the reserve) on the north end

¹⁹⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), M. Christianson to J.C. Caldwell, January 21, 1936.

¹⁹¹ A similar situation, also in 1935, occurred when the Town of Cardston raised objections to a portion of its desired lease being removed at the behest of Blood Indian Joe Devine who wished to live on the land. For details see correspondence in NAC, RG 10, vol. 12649, file 103/32-1-2, (pt. 2). At least one scholar seems to suggest that the Bloods' behaviour with regard to lease land was suspect. Lawrence E. Kindt, "The Sheep Ranching Industry of Canada," (Ph.D., The American University, Washington, D.C., 1939), p. 106. Indeed the agreement between the Bloods and the DIA stipulated that the lease agreements expire in 1934, but in 1935 they were still in effect. The extension was made necessary because of rent arrears in 1931 and that new contracts expired in 1937. Pugh observed that the latest contracts had to be reviewed by the Bloods in 1936 to allow for the mandatory one year notice to lessees before cancellation. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, December 16, 1935.

of the reserve was in serious condition from soil erosion due to drought and overgrazing. Land to a depth of four miles from the rivers was 'beyond restoration' unless grazing was halted. The effects of stress on the land are indicated by the fact that one lease of 4,627 acres, with a stocking capacity of 250, had in excess of 500 cattle.¹⁹² The inevitable consequence of such conditions was intense competition for grass with the result that lessees had resorted to the illegal and chaotic practice of invading each other's ranges.¹⁹³

This inevitably resulted in a great deal of dissatisfaction among the lessees and also among the Bloods. Blood ranchers and farmers found their movement and access to their own land continually restricted as lessees, driven by harsh environmental conditions, neglected the spirit of their leases and interpreted the letter of the lease to their own benefit. The Bloods, at the end of their patience, wanted the leases ended. Pugh supported that sentiment when he recommended that, based on grass conditions, the leases be canceled.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, March 14, 1936.

¹⁹³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, December 16, 1935.

¹⁹⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson,

Despite the informed opposition of the Bloods and Agent Pugh,¹⁹⁵ the Department chose to ignore the weight of evidence and opinion and proceeded to implement its own agenda. The Bloods' cancellation of the Town of Cardston lease, in 1936, for example, was based on environmental concerns and "economics", while Whites needed the land to expand their operations.¹⁹⁶ The DIA, however, decided to renew Cardston's lease for another year.¹⁹⁷ The rationale for the renewal, as explained to Pugh, was that in the Department's estimation "the Town of Cardston will continue to require these pasturage privileges."¹⁹⁸ The only remedial action taken by the Department was to remind the town to be more appreciative of the use of the Bloods' property.¹⁹⁹ One might assume that the Department believed that the financial benefits accruing to the Bloods from the lease took precedence over the Bloods'

December 16, 1935.

¹⁹⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, A.D. Wymbs to J.E. Pugh, January 20, 1936.

¹⁹⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, April 27, 1936.

¹⁹⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, A.F. MacKenzie to J.E. Pugh, April 28, 1936.

¹⁹⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, A.F. MacKenzie to J.E. Pugh, May 27, 1936.

¹⁹⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, H.W. McGill to Secretary-Treasurer, Town of Cardston, April 30, 1936.

desires to use the land themselves and preserve its integrity. Such a view assumes that the Department's bureaucrats were well meaning and selfless, a generous perception indeed given the circumstances.

The Bloods, however, saw nothing magnanimous in the Department's gesture. This became abundantly clear when, in a vote taken on May 26, 1936, "on the question of renewal of Grazing lease granted by the Blood Band of Indians in 1924" they voted 186 to four for cancellation.²⁰⁰

Environmental conditions, however, continued to deteriorate and although the DIA often ignored the wishes of the Bloods, it could not ignore the condition of the land. In June Agent Pugh estimated that 60,000 acres of the reserve were affected by drought and grasshoppers, threatening both current lease use and winter grazing prospects.²⁰¹ Lessees, of course, did not want to pay for land ravaged by grasshoppers. As a consequence some lessees were both unwilling and unable to carry on with their agreements. In

²⁰⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, Copy of vote; J.E. Pugh to Harold W. McGill, May 29, 1936. Pugh also noted that "the voters list carries 340 names, of these 322 were entitled to vote, 4 were incarcerated in jail, 14 were resident away from the reserve. A number of those who for sickness etc. were unable to attend sent in notes to express their vote, this was not allowed..."

²⁰¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to Harold W. McGill, July 7, 1936; NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to Harold W. McGill, July 7, 1936.

September, for example, Agent Pugh reported that Christian Jensen and W.T. Passey, Magrath, holders of lease No. 133 and 131 respectively, wished to relinquish their holdings. "The reason for vacating in the Jensen case," Pugh wrote "is because of shortage of grazing, due to drouth [sic] and this lease being very heavily hit by locusts. In the case of Passey, I think it is a matter of inability to carry such a large acreage."²⁰² It is highly likely that Passey's ability to carry his "large acreage" was adversely affected by climatic conditions. At least one lessee, the Pitcher Sheep Co. went out of business.²⁰³

When Pugh received petitions for the continuation of leases in August he advised the Department against it because conditions had worsened to such an extent that the reserve could not sustain the stock. In fairness, and because of the Indians' decision in the recent vote, Pugh recommended that the leases be ended and that lessees be given final notification.²⁰⁴ Christianson was noncommittal,²⁰⁵ agreeing

²⁰² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, September 18, 1936.

²⁰³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, J.E. Pugh to Representative of the Treasury, DIA, September 23, 1936. See also J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, September 30, 1936.

²⁰⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to H.W. McGill, August 3, 1936.

²⁰⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538, M. Christianson to J.E. Pugh,

only to cancel one troublesome lease which had no grass and from which the owner drove his cattle onto Indian pasture ruining it.²⁰⁶

The problems faced by the local homesteaders, and their impressions of how to best gain relief, were well illustrated by M. E. Ririe, Magrath, and his accomplices who inquired about lease land in August 1935 to Lethbridge M.P., J.S. Stewart. They told Stewart that the lessees were in dire straits and they resented having to purchase hay outside of their leases from the Indians. Ririe was set straight when told that the money from haying was practically the only income for some Bloods and that hay land could therefore not be leased.²⁰⁷ It is hard to escape the conclusion, however, that Ririe felt that he had a right to the wealth and convenience of the reserve as if it were public domain. He was likely encouraged in this view by the increasingly

December 3, 1936.

²⁰⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), Billy Heavy Runner to Dr. McGill, September 21, 1936; J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, October 15, 1936; J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, November 18, 1936; L.E. Fairbairn to J.E. Pugh, November 30, 1936, RG 10, Vol. 1538. In 1938 a request for a sheep lease was turned down on the basis of the poor condition of the grazing land and the constant "encroaching upon the Indians in one way or another" and "the Agent is very nearly run off his feet at times trying to adjust disputes between the lessees and Indians." See N.E. Tanner to Agent Pugh, April 26, 1938; J.E. Pugh to N.E. Tanner, May 3, 1938; M. Christianson to Secretary, DIA, May 10, 1934.

²⁰⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), M. Christianson to General J. S. Stewart, August 23, 1935.

difficult circumstances which, historian James Gray says, would have driven ranchers out of southern Alberta could they but have extricated themselves.²⁰⁸

At the end of 1935 the Department acknowledged the Indians' frustration with the leases and their desire to cancel the lease agreements about to expire in 1936 and 1937. The matter was urgent in that the lessees had to be given proper notification. The existing arrangements meant that some 145,000 acres of the north end of the reserve were alienated in lease contracts. Admittedly the income from the leases had been uncertain and now there was the issue of environmental damage that further reduced the value and use of the land to the Bloods.²⁰⁹

Despite this, in December 1936, the Department contemplated leasing 70,000 acres of Blood reserve land.²¹⁰ The only consideration given to the Bloods' feelings was to stipulate ten basic provisions for the lease. Among the most important were that the land could be used only for grazing, wood or timber could not be cut, and that the lease could not

²⁰⁸ James H. Gray, The Winter Years (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1966), p. 109.

²⁰⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, December 16, 1935; J.C. Caldwell to M. Christianson, January 17, 1936.

²¹⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to M. Christianson, December 8, 1936.

be sublet. The lease further stipulated a stock limit of one sheep to 10 acres, one cow to 24 acres, and one horse to 20 acres. Lessees were also prohibited from working private business deals with individual Indians without the express permission of the Bloods. Given previous experiences the most important provision was likely number 10: "That if in the lessee's area Indians reside thereon, their property shall at all times be protected from the lessee's stock, and that the Indians shall be permitted to retain their live stock holdings on the undefined reservation within his lease."²¹¹

The Department's determination to lease was probably triggered by the desire to reduce growing relief bills. The problem of relief expenditures bolstered the perception that the Indians had large unproductive land holdings which should be more aggressively used by Natives in the furtherance of self-support. Inspector of Agencies C. Schmidt believed that the benefit of an increase in cattle and grain production accrued only to the small minority who had cattle or who farmed, while at the same time relief costs increased. The Department's response was to encourage the Inspector to convince the Indians to lease their 'idle' lands.²¹²

²¹¹ See NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1).

²¹² NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), C. Pant. Schmidt, December 17, 1937; C. Pant. Schmidt to John E.

By late 1938, however, it appears that leases were being closed out and related issues were being wound up.²¹³ Despite new requests for leasing the DIA determined that given the condition of the land, and considering the needs of "our Special Welfare I[ndian] D[epartment] Herd" the granting of new leases was inadvisable.²¹⁴ The Department's perception of the well-being of the Bloods and their land, if not the Bloods' wishes, now appeared to be uppermost in determining the new policy.²¹⁵

Conclusion

One can only conclude that the absolute defining motivation for the leasing system was the general view that

Pugh, December 17, 1937. For similar details and concerns see NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 205/32-1, M. Christianson to C.P. Schmidt, November 26, 1937.

²¹³ There was no correspondence in this file regarding leases for the year 1939.

²¹⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), C. Pant. Schmidt to Secretary, D.I.A., March 25, 1941.

²¹⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), Anthony McMillan to C. Pant. Schmidt, September 24, 1942; C. Pant. Schmidt to J. E. Pugh, August 23, 1944; A. McMillan to Harold W. McGill, March 27, 1942; NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), J.E. Pugh to C. Pant Schmidt, February 8, 1940; NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), T.R.L. MacInnes, to C. Pant. Schmidt, February 20, 1940; NAC, RG 10, vol. 12648, file 103/32-1-2 (pt. 1), T.R.L. MacInnes to C. Pant. Schmidt, March 3, 1941.

unleased Indian land was wasted land.²¹⁶ Perhaps there was no uniform approach that could cater to the variety of conflicting agendas that emerged over time. The Bloods based their decisions on their perceived needs for use of their land and for income and their desire to control their own affairs. The agent, caught in a difficult situation, had to take into account the Bloods' desires, his duty to protect their interests and the application of the Department's dictums. The Department, an arm of the government of White Canada, held the Bloods in legal and paternalistic wardship and was generally responsible to the direction of the non-Native population. Riled ranchers and homesteaders petitioning Frank Oliver, circa 1902, summed up the enduring economic and political reality of the west: that the Indians were wards of the government and the government "servant of the people" and the Indians were, therefore, in a position to be coerced according to the will of the White man.²¹⁷

The unpredictable environment and the demands of local ranchers and homesteaders further militated against the

²¹⁶ Helen Buckley, From Wooden Ploughs To Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 57.

²¹⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1535, pp. 188-89, Petition for the keeping of Indian Horses on their own reserve, E. Hillzer, G. Pearson, E.J. Muldoon, Alf. H. Anderston, Geo. Anderton, John Smith, J.R. Allan, R.O. Sykes, John George Brown to Hon. Frank Oliver, nd.

smooth functioning of the bureaucratic machine. Little wonder that the Bloods' needs were often placed last on the agenda. It was generally the case that those in charge of administering the Bloods' affairs felt that they knew best what the Bloods wanted and needed. One historian has stated that protecting the integrity of Indian land "is perhaps the principal purpose of the Indian Act."²¹⁸ In the case of the Blood reserve and the lease system, both the Act and the government failed to fulfill that mandate.

Many agents, however, took their guardianship of the Bloods seriously and did their utmost to protect Native interests, even to the point of disagreement with officials in Ottawa. This behaviour is very much at odds with the stereotype of corrupt and dictatorial Indian agents lording it over their wards. The Bloods, in conjunction with these agents were, at times, able to set and control the reserve land agenda. They deliberately chose to integrate their reserve into a larger community land base. It was not, however, always easy to enforce the limits of this integration as they defined them or wished them to be. Too often the White clients of the Bloods sought to evade their legitimate responsibilities.

²¹⁸ Allan G. Harper, "Canada's Indian Administration: The 'Indian Act'," America Indigena (Vol. 6, No. 4, October, 1946), p. 307.

The Department of Indian Affairs brokered the relationship between the Bloods and their neighbours and in the end satisfied neither. But business carried on driven by the need for a scarce commodity of much value and in great demand, accessible land. By an ironic twist the Bloods, though dispossessed of their vast traditional land holdings by treaty in 1877, now possessed a large area of reserve land which had become a most valued commodity in the agrarian-based culture of southern Alberta. It was this inheritance that both encouraged and determined the nature of the economic dynamic between them and their neighbours. The Bloods possessed land for which their neighbours had a real and imagined need. However, because the Bloods' powers to protect the reserve's integrity were limited, an economic cooperation developed between the Bloods and their neighbours. For those individuals driven to, or inclined to, the use of the Blood reserve, its availability was a critical factor in their future planning for which no suitable alternative existed. Treaty 7, by taking Indian land surrenders, had laid the basis for the establishment of the ranching and agricultural frontiers. But by setting out the principles for institutionalizing the Blood reserve, the treaty had determined there would be economic interplay between White and Native in the locale surrounding that reserve.

Chapter 4

'Selling to Outsiders': Marketing Coal, Hay and Freighting Services

Introduction

Many historians have accepted the premise that Native Canadians have participated little in the national economy and thus their activities in local economic environments have been largely ignored as an area of study.¹ Where attention has been directed to examine the inclusion of Indians in the work place, the conclusion has been that, hamstrung by bureaucratic indifference to their needs and interference in their plans, they have not been able to overcome Anglo-Canadian competition for available resources.² There is,

¹ Walter Hildebrandt has observed that "for Native people, inclusion in the national and international economy had not been carefully planned at all." Walter Hildebrandt, Views from Fort Battleford: Constructed Visions of an Anglo-Canadian West (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994), p. 49. Hildebrandt gave little attention to the Cree around Battleford. Hana Samek paid scant attention to Canadian Blackfoot economic interaction with the communities surrounding the various reserves generally viewing the reserves in isolation. Hana Samek, The Blackfoot Confederacy 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and U.S. Indian Policy (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), pp. 70-86.

² See for example Anthony G. Gulig, "Sizing up the Catch: Native-Newcomer Resource Competition and the Early Years of Saskatchewan's Northern Commercial Fishery," Saskatchewan History (Fall, 1995), pp. 3-12. Complaints about native competition in the market place led to the

however, an emerging consensus among social scientists that Native peoples were participants in, and contributors to, the capitalist economy, even in an era of perceived 'irrelevance'.³ This finding should not be surprising,

imposition of the permit system restricting off-reserve sales of Native produce. Sarah Carter, "Two Acres And A Cow: 'Peasant' Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-97," Canadian Historical Review Vol. LXX, No. 1 (March, 1989), pp. 36-37; Sarah Carter, Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers And Government Policy (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), pp. 156-157; Samek, The Blackfoot, p. 77; Robin Fisher, Contact And Conflict: Indian-European Relations In British Columbia, 1774-1890 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), pp. 109-111; Jane Gibson, "Native Responses To Bureaucratic Farm Management In Western Canadian Indian Reserves, 1880-1920," The Western Canadian Anthropologist, Vol. 7, Nos. 1 and 2 (1990), p. 77.

³ Steven High, "Native Wage Labour," pp. 243-44. The 'era of irrelevance' is the period from the end of the fur trade in the mid nineteenth century to World War II. For a recent and detailed analysis of Native participation in local and extended economies see Frank Tough, 'As Their natural Resources Fail': Native Peoples And The Economic History Of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996); John Lutz argues that natives "were the main labour force of the early settlement era, essential to the capitalist development of British Columbia." John Lutz, "After the fur trade: the aboriginal labouring class of British Columbia 1849-1890," Journal of the CHA, 1992, p. 70. See also Frank Tough, "Buying Out The Bay: Aboriginal Rights and the Economic Policies of the Department of Indian Affairs after 1870," in David R. Miller et. al. (eds.), The First Ones: Readings In Indian/Native Studies (Piapot Indian Reserve #75: Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Press, 1992), p. 405; Notable exceptions to the above are Stuart Jamieson, "Native Indians and the Trade Union Movement in British Columbia," Human Organization, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Winter 1961-2), pp. 219-225 and Rolf Knight, Indians At Work: An Informal History Of Native Indian Labour in British Columbia 1858-1930 (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978). None of these studies emphasize circumstances in

especially for the southern Alberta region. The close proximity of Native groups to Anglo-Canadian settlements and the destruction or altering of the pre-White settlement environment occurred to such an extent that traditional economic behaviours were practically rendered obsolete. The Bloods, like their non-Native neighbours, faced basic problems of survival. The search for solutions dictated participation in the local economies to which various Native groups found themselves attached. For many, the only means of acquiring credit, currency and merchandise was through providing a market commodity in the form of goods or services, the latter often in the form of labour depending on the season. From the 1890s to the 1930s, especially during the early decades, some Bloods immersed themselves in economic activities in response to local economic needs.

The western Canadian economy was laid on a foundation of agriculture and basic extractive industries such as coal mining. Both of these were labour-intensive, mining requiring a continual supply of labour and agriculture requiring seasonal workers especially during the fall harvests. From the beginning the west was plagued by labour shortages which drew immigrants to work the coal fields and harvest crops in southern Alberta and British Columbia. Indeed, harvest excursions encouraged by the government and

southern Alberta.

railways witnessed yearly migrations of workers from eastern Canada, the United States and Europe to labour in the fields were a response to perennial labour problems.⁴

This situation increased market opportunities for the Blood entrepreneurs and labourers. The growing population of immigrants determined to make their homes on the prairies combined with seasonal floods of itinerant workers created demand for the Bloods' products and labour. Thus they became participants in the market economy offering the commodities they produced and competing with others engaged in coal mining, haying and freighting. Through their efforts the Bloods provided both commercially viable products and labour service which lessened the market impact of competitors.

By the early 1890's most Bloods had come to grips with changed circumstance such as the loss of the buffalo and the

⁴ John Herd Thompson, "Bringing in the Sheaves: The Harvest Excursionists, 1890-1929," The Canadian Historical Review (Vol. LIX, No. 4, December 1978), p. 468; W.J.C. Cherwinski, "A Miniature Coxey's Army: The British Harvesters' Toronto-to-Ottawa Trek of 1924," Labour/Le Travail (Volume 32, Fall 1993), pp. 140-141; W.J.C. Cherwinski, "Wooden Horses and Rubber Cows: Training British Agricultural Labour for the Canadian Prairies, 1890-1930," Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers 1980, p. 133; For particulars on the 1908 harvest season see W.J.C. Cherwinski, "The Incredible Harvest Excursion of 1908," Labour/Le Travailleur (Vol. 5, Spring 1980), pp. 57-80; Danysk, Hired Hands, pp. 24, 85; John Herd Thompson, The Harvests Of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (Toronto: McClelland And Stewart Ltd., 1978), pp. 62-63; R. Bruce Shepard, "The Mechanized Agricultural Frontier of the Canadian Plains," Material History Bulletin, 7 (Spring, 1979), p. 15.

restrictions imposed by reserve life. Realizing that their reserve could not immediately provide a livelihood for all, many Bloods adopted strategies suitable for survival in the new economic setting. Agents, responsive to the DIA's dual goals to both economize and to make Natives self-supporting citizens, actively tried to place Bloods in off-reserve occupations. Although the program was never fully realized some 292 individuals of approximately 1,200 people left the Blood reserve for work in 1899-1900. The work opportunities were varied: logging, freighting, mail cartage, scouting for the police, day labour and seasonal participation in fairs and exhibitions.⁵ It is not clear who these individuals were or the length of their absence. If this is a reference only

⁵ Fraser Taylor, Standing Alone: A Contemporary Blackfoot Indian (Halfmoon Bay: Arbutus Bay Publications, 1989), p. 31-32. Commentary on Indian involvement in fairs and exhibitions tends to focus on social and cultural aspects of the events. Little information is contained in the public record of the financial or economic arrangements. On fairs and exhibitions see E. Brian Titley, A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott And The Administration Of Indian Affairs In Canada (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), Chapter 9; Keith Regular, "On Public Display," Alberta History, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Winter, 1986), p. 1; Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), pp. 97-108; Donald G. Wetherell with Irene Kmet, Useful Pleasures: The Shaping of Leisure in Alberta 1896-1945 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1990), p. 328. Blood Indian Mike Mountain Horse, among others did scout work for the Mounted Police. He also spent considerable time off the reserve living among White society. Mike Mountain Horse, My People The Bloods (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1979), pp.v-xi.

to working males then a substantial percentage of the male working population of the reserve worked away during this brief period and is a clear indication of the Bloods' economic significance. It is likely that some of these men were accompanied by family which added to the percentage of reserve absentees.

For those wishing to stay on the reserve coal mining, haying, cattle ranching and agriculture, some in support of White entrepreneurial initiatives, were the occupations of choice.⁶ The focus of this chapter will be on the economic interaction of the Bloods with the local community. Emphasis will be placed on their roles as coal and hay merchants and as freighters because these were significant points of interaction between the Bloods and their neighbours. These offered, for the Bloods, the greatest opportunities for both employment and the sale of reserve resources. This work was encouraged by the agents and the DIA as training in the ways of 'civilization' that would ultimately lead to the Bloods' economic independence. It will become clear, however, that as the non-Native economy developed, the Bloods' attachment to and participation in the local economy was deliberate and considerable and changed with time and circumstance.

⁶ Taylor, Standing Alone, p. 31-32.

Market Activities

Coal

One of the first commodities offered for sale by the Bloods was coal which they began mining in 1890. The first coal mine was small. The coal was dug initially with pick and shovel from a coal seam, likely of a non-coking bituminous or sub-bituminous variety,⁷ located in a cutbank about twenty miles from the agency. Afterwards the assistance of two or three men was all that was required to work the seam. However, the operator, Heavy Gun was ambitious and opened a tunnel and laid rails for a car in which to bring coal to the surface.⁸ Eventually two rooms were opened with an air course, shoot and screen for cleaning the coal and a loading bank.⁹

As a commercial venture mining was hampered by lack of quality and inconsistency of output. Though limited the operation was in part driven by the prospect of "selling to

⁷ C.B. Beaty, "Geomorphology, Geology and Non-Agricultural Resources," in F. Jankunis, (ed.), Southern Alberta: A Regional Perspective (Lethbridge: The University of Lethbridge, 1972), p. 18.

⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, July 20, 1894.

⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Extract from copy of letter dated Blood Agency Macleod, December 6, 1895.

outsiders," that is "marketed by the Indians themselves."¹⁰ Agent James Wilson, however, believed that opportunities for off-reserve sales were limited by low quality and competition. The coal seam, he reported, was divided into three layers with slate between each. Mixed with the coal was also a large amount of white mineral "which causes a large accumulation of ashes and keeps the coal from burning." This condition made it both expensive to mine and reduced its value. However, Wilson did believe that the mine could supply reserve needs for the hospital, mission and agency.¹¹

Though experiencing some initial success the mine operated with difficulty and Wilson felt that some of the problems were due to the absence of 'white' expertise.¹² The work remained generally unsupervised, except for the

¹⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, A.E. Forget to Deputy of the Supt. Gen'l of Indian Affairs, June 21, 1890. For other commentary see RG 10, vol. 1557, pp. 575-576, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, June 12, 1890. See letter dated June 30, 1890; A.E. Forget to Deputy of the Supt. Gen'. of Indian Affairs, January 21, 1892; RG 10, vol. 1557, pp. 721-722, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 30, 1890. See also pp. 694-696, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 12, 1890; RG 10, vol. 1558, pp. 92-94, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, December 1, 1890; Hugh A. Dempsey, Red Crow: Warrior Chief (Saskatoon: Western Prairie Producer Books, 1980), pp. 198-199.

¹¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, August 22, 1893, pp. 422-425.

¹² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, December 24, 1896.

involvement of the agent, until the accidental death of Mistaken Chief at the mine in 1930, and thereafter operations were more closely supervised by "a coal mining expert."¹³ Generally while it operated, however, the Blood reserve coal mine was solely a Native operation, jealously guarded by the Bloods and the only White participation was in an advisory capacity.

Despite its limitations the Blood reserve mine intermittently produced marketable coal, though in small quantities. Having their own transportation and being closely situated to Fort Macleod and the surrounding area made the Blood coal mine competitive. In February, 1894, the Macleod Gazette announced the arrival of Blood reserve coal in the town but dismissed the rumor that the coal was superior to that produced by the Galt mines at Lethbridge.¹⁴ Regardless of the Gazette's disclaimer the mine produced 200 tons of coal in 1894, 130 for use of the agency, 50 for the boarding school and 20 tons for White settlers in Macleod and district.¹⁵ Hugh Dempsey reports that an additional 100 tons

¹³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Deputy Superintendent General to J.E. Pugh, December 18, 1933.

¹⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, News clipping, Macleod Gazette, February 16, 1894.

¹⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, pp. 321-325, James Wilson to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, August 1, 1894.

of reserve coal were sold to the Galt mining company.¹⁶ Though perhaps not significant enough to affect the supply or price of coal on the local market there was at least a market presence. Black Horse, who had taken over the mine operations by 1894, approached the business with enthusiasm producing approximately 260 tons in the following year, for both reserve and public needs.¹⁷

Though production from the reserve mine was spotty its significance is perhaps suggested by the fact that local entrepreneurs expressed occasional interest in acquiring the mine operations or commercial mining rights on the reserve. However, periodic inquiries about coal rights evinced no interest from the Department or from Blood leadership.¹⁸ One

¹⁶ Dempsey, Red Crow, p. 199. I have been unable to determine why the Galt Company would need to purchase this coal. The need to fill a small contract during a temporarily coal shortage is, perhaps, an explanation.

¹⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Extract from copy of letter dated December 6, 1895, signed by Jas. Wilson. Because of the quality of the coal eventually the Mounted Police refused to accept it for use at their posts. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, A.E. Forget to Deputy of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, February, 17, 1896; James Wilson to Hayter Reed, Sept. 17, 1896.

¹⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, R.N. Wilson to Secretary, DIA, June 30, 1909; John Harvie to Secretary, DIA, January 17, 1907; J.D. McLean to John Harvie, January 30, 1907; GAI, BIAC, file 63, Indian Agent to A.G. McGuire, July 15, 1911; Agent to A.G. McGuire July 31, 1911.

inquiry made in 1911 was based on a predicted increased need¹⁹ likely tied to an ongoing coal strike in southern Alberta since April of that year.²⁰ By January, 1913, this prediction had come to pass and the Raymond Leader reported shortages in Raymond because Lethbridge's Galt mine could not keep up with local demand.²¹ Agent S. Swinford recognized the potential for Blood coal sales in light of the rapidly expanding local economy when he reported, "To have coal there would be worth a lot and be a tremendous advantage not only to those on the Reserve but it could be sold to all the settlers across the Belly River and would give those Indians who cares to work a chance to make a good living all winter long."²² However, with too many 'domestic' coal producers and with the seasonal nature of the demand for fuel, such expressions of hope were misplaced.²³

Fuel shortages occurred intermittently during the next several years increasing the value of potentially productive

¹⁹ GAI, BIAC, file 63, A. G. McGuire[?] to William Hyde, July 27, 1911.

²⁰ Lethbridge Herald, June 15, 1911, p. 1.

²¹ Raymond Leader, January 23, 1913, p. 4.

²² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1547, pp. 153-154, S. Swinford to Secretary, DIA, October 3, 1913.

²³ David J. Bercuson (ed.), Alberta's Coal Industry 1919 (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1978), pp. viii, x.

coal seams on the Blood reserve. This was particularly so during World War I when demand was high and labour was in short supply. For example, the desire by local individuals to open and operate coal seams led to a minor squabble in 1917 when Frank Bruce and N.X. Hansen, Hill Spring "entered into a contract with some Indian residing in the Blood Reserve". They subsequently opened a vein with the intention of supplying their own community and Glenwoodville (Glenwood) with coal. When the small mine became productive, however, the Bloods refused permission to mine causing the men to seek legal advice. Their attorney, Z.W. Jacobs, Cardston, attempted to persuade the Honorable C.A. Magrath, Fuel Controller, Ottawa, that as a result of the thwarted coal production "the people in that locality are experiencing considerable difficulty in obtaining fuel..."²⁴ The Fuel Controller's Office pointed out that as the greatest possible coal production was important in wartime the matter should be looked into with a view to allowing mining to resume.²⁵ Permission was granted only "on the distinct understanding, however, that this is not to form a precedent," the

²⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Z.W. Jacobs to C.A. Magrath, January 3, 1918.

²⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, C.W. Peterson to D.C. Scott, January 10, 1918; Duncan C. Scott to W.J. Dilworth, January 12, 1918.

Department in this instance considering only "the existing exceptional circumstances."²⁶

Although some elected politicians might express regret that Natives competed with White enterprise,²⁷ senior Department officials were faced with the agent's plans for the Indians and the need to balance the books.²⁸ As a result, the desire to have Indians pay their own way overcame reservations about market place competition. For example, Agent J.T. Faunt, in the face of complaints from local producers, affirmed his belief in the Bloods' right to market coal and indicated that they were certainly competitive locally. He estimated that the Bloods sold at least 200 tons in December 1920. Faunt further observed that the mine had been in operation for over three decades and that in 1921 "more coal has been taken out than usual, as I have been encouraging the Indians in this work, as on account of the

²⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Deputy Superintendent General to W.J. Dilworth, January 21, 1918. Dilworth subsequently noted his belief that there was no coal shortage in the area.

²⁷ Frank Oliver, an independent Liberal from Alberta, was of the opinion that "educating these Indians to compete industrially with our own people" was a "very undesirable use of public money..." House of Commons Debates, 1899, Cols. 5725-26, June 22, 1899.

²⁸ D.J. Hall, "Clifford Sifton And Canadian Indian Administration 1896-1905," Prairie Forum, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1977), p. 130.

crop failure at the North end of the Reserve, this appeared to me as a means of putting some of them through the winter with no expense to the Department."²⁹ D.C. Scott reinforced Faunt's position and stressed that Blood coal producers were not to be interfered with in their usual practice of selling their coal on the open market.³⁰

In this case the DIA justified Blood competition in the market place because of the savings it produced for the Department. This was certainly the case in 1934 when Inspector M. Christianson reported:

...as long as the Indians of this band had nothing to work at during the winter we would be called on from time to time to issue rations to them...In 1919 we had a total crop failure on this reserve: everything was burned off - even the grass. We lost about 40% of our cattle herds during the winter of 1919-1920...on the Blood Reserve, if we have not grain or livestock to sell the Indians are not able to make a living and we simply have to call upon the Department for assistance. That is why I have been so anxious to get a coal mine going as that seems to be the only natural resource on this reserve that there is any chance of developing.³¹

²⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, J.T. Faunt to Secretary, DIA, February 25, 1921. The coal was being sold at \$8.50 per ton.

³⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Duncan C. Scott to C.S. Finnie, March 14, 1921.

³¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, M. Christianson to Doctor McGill, January 29, 1934.

On at least one occasion, however, when the Bloods were not able to supply sufficient product to meet local demands permission was given to Whites to enter and remove resources from the reserve. Despite the fact that Blood miners were already working a coal area in 1934 Agent Pugh issued over 200 passes for farmers from Glenwoodville and Hill Spring to enter the reserve and take coal from the river bottom. There is no indication what charge, if any, was made for this coal. Christianson did believe that demand was such that a new Blood mining operation could be profitable during the winter as farmers, temporarily idle, had the resources and time to purchase and haul coal provided they could acquire the fuel at a reasonable price.³² Clearly, there were times when the official policy and the aims it envisioned were not applicable to local circumstances. The policy was then modified to suit local situations.

The coal venture on the reserve, though having occasional market influence, never established a definitive market presence. Operations continued sporadically during the 1920s and 1930s. In November 1933, Blood miners and freighters were hauling coal to the Raymond sugar factory and the factory had been given permission to haul from the reserve. Prospecting for coal on the reserve also

³² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, M. Christianson to Doctor McGill, January 29, 1934.

continued.³³ It is likely that Blood reserve coal mining became unprofitable over time due to poor quality,³⁴ inadequate capacity, competition and shifts in market demand.

Hay

Like coal, the cutting, sale and hauling of hay afforded Blood hay producers opportunities to compete in the local market. It is difficult to determine how much of the reserve acreage was dedicated to hay at any one time. Production, as with other crops, was determined both by climatic conditions, especially rainfall, and natural disasters such as fire. Yield per acre, therefore, varied. In 1876 one settler in the Red River area estimated that each acre of prairie could yield three to four tons of hay.³⁵ The yields on the Blood reserve varied from year to year and such variations were caused by changes in the numbers of acres given to hay as

³³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Extract from a letter by J.E. Pugh, November 30, 1933.

³⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, J.E. Pugh to H.W. McGill, December 22, 1933; F.W. Steel to H.W. McGill, January 12, 1934; H.W. McGill to The Superintendent General, January 16, 1934.

³⁵ Barry Kaye, "'The Settlers' Grand Difficulty'": Haying in the Economy of the Red River Settlement," Prairie Forum, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 7.

well as to the impact of climatic conditions.*

Haying was done in summer and employed both men and machinery. Initially the haying crews utilized basic tools such as scythes, mowers and forks. From about 1900 the introduction of hay loaders eased the toil of loading wagons and the development of overhead horseforks and slings simplified stacking. Eventually mechanical mowers, side delivery rakes and hay tedders increased both capacity and efficiency but these also required more expert personnel.³⁶ When machinery was used a crew was required to run and maintain the equipment through to the end of the haying.³⁷

With hay production, just as with coal, the Bloods' own needs took priority over market sales. In 1890, for example, although Agent Pocklington encouraged Blood producers to supply the NWMP detachments of Big Bend and Stand Off he declined to contract 250 tons for Lethbridge, claiming a

*If the maximum four tons is taken as an average then 2,500 acres of land were needed to grow the 10,000 tons of hay harvested in 1914.

³⁶ Tony Ward, "Farming Technology and Crop Area on Early Prairie Farms," Prairie Forum, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring 1995), p. 25.

³⁷ With grain, for example, fifteen or twenty men were needed for a harvesting crew. Ernest B. Ingles, "The Custom Threshermen In Western Canada 1890-1925," in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (eds.), Building Beyond The Homestead: Rural History On The Prairies (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 138-140.

shortage of hay on the reserve and in the district.³⁸

Therefore, in seasons of scarcity considerable effort was required to fill contracts. Chief Moon, for example, had to haul hay 20 miles to fill the terms of his contract with the North West Mounted Police.³⁹ When the season was over agent Pocklington concluded that, in future, such contracts should be declined unless the Indians received more transport and more machines with which to do the work.⁴⁰

In July, 1891, Pocklington succeeded in securing the contract to supply 40 tons of hay to the Stand Off Police Detachment and, despite the poor season, fulfilled the contract in October. Other reserve residents entered into other arrangements such as cutting hay on a share basis with local White settlers adjacent to the reserve. These agreements, as described by Agent Pocklington, had Whites supplying the machinery and horses and the Bloods the labour. The Bloods then sold their share of the hay to the Whites. An added bonus to this arrangement, in the eyes of the agent,

³⁸ The price for the hay was at fifteen dollars per ton. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1557, pp. 631-33, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, July 10, 1890.

³⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1557, pp. 723-25, J. Wilson, farmer, to W. Pocklington, August 27, 1890. On hay shortages see also pp. 680-682, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, July 31, 1890.

⁴⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1557, pp. 730-33, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, September 4, 1890.

was that Blood farmers had become familiar with the operation of agricultural machinery which the Department was so anxious to deny them.⁺¹

At the same time Heavy Gun, who had overcome departmental resistance and acquired his own machinery, was cutting for himself and two others and was putting up hay for a beef contractor,⁺² likely the Cochrane Ranche. According to Pocklington the Indians put up 68 tons of hay for the contractor for which they were paid \$3.00 per ton.⁺³ The agricultural tabular statement of December, 1891, shows that the Bloods harvested 168 tons of hay both individually and on share agreements with Whites.⁺⁴ It is likely that the Indians' sale of their portion of the harvest was an agreed upon part of the share arrangement. It is not clear whether or not they could withhold their hay for their own needs in the event of hay shortages. There was, for example, a hay shortage in July, 1892, and on this occasion the agent, on

⁺¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 370-71, W. Pocklington to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, July 22, 1891; p. 405, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 3, 1891.

⁺² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 370-71, p. 405-06, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 3, 1891.

⁺³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, pp. 449-51, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, August 31, 1891.

⁺⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 650, S. Swinfords to Indian Commissioner, December 29, 1891.

behalf of Blood farmers, declined a contract to supply the police.⁺⁵

In another case during the 1893 season Agent James Wilson thought it advisable not to attempt to fill a hay contract for the St. Mary's Detachment, citing the difficulty in securing the quality and quantity desired by the police because of a very poor growing season.⁺⁶ Wilson did feel that he could supply 15 tons to the Big Bend Detachment, and the same for the Kootenai Detachment "as hay in the neighbourhood of these places is good and plentiful." Wilson wanted six dollars per ton and he pointed out to Inspector Sam Steele that a White man would oversee the work to ensure that the quality of the hay was satisfactory.⁺⁷ Eventually Wilson agreed to provide 135 tons of hay to all the various detachments ⁺⁸ At the same time other Bloods were contracting

⁺⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 370-71, p. 842, S. Swinfords to Inspector Begin, July 20, 1892.

⁺⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, p. 373, James Wilson to R. Burton Deane, July 13, 1893.

⁺⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, pp. 387-88, James Wilson to S.B. Steele, July 25, 1893.

⁺⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, p. 390, James Wilson to S.B. Steele, July 27, 1893. The contract for Big Bend and Kootenai would bring \$5.50 per ton of 600 cub. feet. See p. 394, James Wilson to S.B. Steele, August 2, 1893.

with White settlers.⁴⁹ Wilson also actively sought a contract to supply hay to the New Oxley Ranche Company.⁵⁰

Wilson, however, did not always calculate the needs of the reserve correctly and in his enthusiasm to find employment for some Bloods may have, in 1893, oversold the reserve's hay. When approached by Father Legal for 10 tons of hay to see the two hospital cows through the winter Wilson refused and confessed to the likelihood of a winter shortage. He requested departmental permission to purchase hay from any Indians who had extra for sale.⁵¹

During times of shortage the agent's permission to sell reserve hay to outsiders was refused and unauthorized sales discouraged. In 1899, for example, Agent Wilson requested police assistance to stop hay sales in Lethbridge. In cases where individuals were caught attempting such sales the police were requested to seize the Indians' hay and sell it, remitting the proceeds to Wilson. With reserve farmers complaining that much needed hay was being spirited away at

⁴⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, p. 400, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, August 3, 1893.

⁵⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, p. 407, James Wilson to A.R. Springett, August 18, 1893.

⁵¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, pp. 495-97, James Wilson to [Indian Commissioner], October 2, 1893.

night Wilson's concern was for winter shortage.⁵²

There were some legitimate hay sales to locals,⁵³ however, as Wilson, guided by circumstances, continued his efforts to gain market advantage for Blood farmers in securing contracts to supply the Mounted Police with hay. In June 1899, he inquired as to whether his tender to deliver hay for the police would be accepted without a deposit as in the past, even though others were required to do so.⁵⁴ The tender that Wilson eventually submitted was for hay delivered to the Kootenai, Stand Off, and Kipp Detachments.⁵⁵ Wilson also secured a contract for the delivery of oats to the Stand Off, St. Mary's, Kootenai, Big Bend, and Cardston

⁵² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 437, James Wilson to Commanding Officer, NWMP, Lethbridge, Sept. 21, 1899.

⁵³ On October 18, 1899, Wilson billed W.S. Anderton of Macleod for \$250.96 for hay delivered. It is unclear whether or not this hay originated with the reserve or was just freighted under contract from some other source. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 470, James Wilson to W.S. Anderton, October 18, 1899. See also pages 471 and 473.

⁵⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 336, James Wilson to R. Burton Deane, June 12, 1899.

⁵⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 347, James Wilson to Superintendent Commanding, NWMP, Macleod, June 27, 1899. For 1899 the Bloods put up 2,269 tons of hay of which 1,186 tons were sold to the NWMP, Cochrane Ranche and settlers bringing approximately \$5,900. See CSP No. 27, 1900, p. 138.

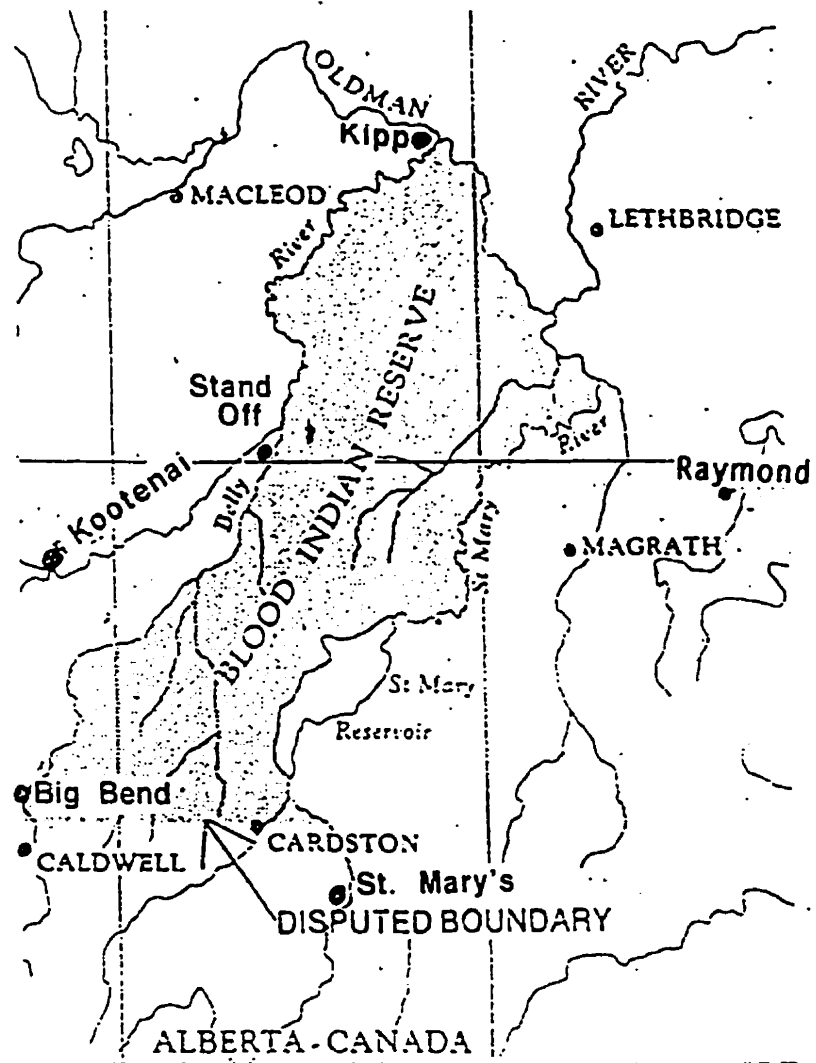


Figure 4.1 - Adapted by author from the Lethbridge Herald February 24, 1976

Detachments.⁵⁶ (Figure 4.1) What special consideration, if any, was given to Wilson to secure this contract is unclear but special favours from one government Department to another is a likely explanation. It is also possible that Wilson managed to underbid others because Blood producers were willing to contract their produce and services for less.

Whatever the circumstances, nonetheless, the Bloods' presence in this market did affect supply and price. In 1901 the Lethbridge News reported that the reserve sold over 1,000 tons of hay "in filling police and ranchers' contracts, to livery stables and citizens of Macleod and Lethbridge."⁵⁷

P.C.H. Primrose, Mounted Police, reported from Macleod that hay was very expensive in 1903 because the Indians were not selling as much as before.⁵⁸ By 1906 Blood producers were so

⁵⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 474, James Wilson to R. Burton Deane, October 25, 1899.

⁵⁷ Lethbridge News, March 7, 1901, p. 7. The agent's report for 1901 notes that "Situated as the reserve is, near to Macleod, Lethbridge, and Cardston, a good demand is always had for hay in these places, and at fairly remunerative prices, while the larger ranches along the rivers and boundary lines also look to the Indians to put up their supply." CSP, No. 27, 1902, p. 128. See also NAC, RG 18, vol. 218, file 469, H.S. Casey to Officer Commanding 'K' Division, N.W.M.P., August 8, 1901; Joseph Howe to Commissioner, N.W.M.P., August 30, 1901.

⁵⁸ CSP, 28, No. 11, 1904, p. 73. It is difficult to determine the accuracy of this statement. The agent's report for 1903 states that the Bloods put up a total of 3,500 tons of hay and sold 1,200 tons to the police and local settlers for prices ranging from \$4.50 and \$7.50 per ton. This range

prominent with their hay sales that the Macleod Gazette called them the "hay maker[s] of southern Alberta." The Gazette reported the Bloods were taking large contracts to supply livery stables and local ranchers "usually filling the contracts in short order."⁵⁹

The making of hay both for on and off-reserve continued to be an important source of income for Blood farmers. Agent W.J. Dilworth reported in 1914 that "nearly every adult puts up every year a large quantity of hay for sale."⁶⁰ During August, 1914, the Bloods put up more hay than ever before providing 1,353 tons for agency consumption plus 4,000 tons for their own use. They had also provided 300 of a 1,500 ton lessee contract as well as contracts to provide 242 tons to various Mounted Police posts, and additional contracts for 500 tons. The agent reported that "No difficulty has been experienced in getting them to do this work."⁶¹

in prices suggests that the Bloods may have been withholding hay from the market or from the police, because of unhappiness with the price. The Bloods harvested approximately the same amount of hay in 1901, at 3,451 tons. See CSP, No. 27, 1904, p. 141 and CSP, No. 27, 1902, p. 128.

⁵⁹ Macleod Gazette, February 27, 1906, p. 2.

⁶⁰ CSP, No. 27, 1914, p. 70.

⁶¹ The previous year total contracts called for only 170 tons and haying was not completed until Oct. 1st 1913. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1547, p. 222, Unsigned letter, August 22, 1914. Agent Dilworth's report for 1914-15 stipulates that the Bloods harvested 10,000 tons of hay for which they realized \$30,000. CSP, No. 27, 1915, p. 77.

Blood hay makers were certainly a market presence and it is only sensible to conclude that besides being competitive in pricing labour, they did good work and delivered a high quality product which helped them to sustain their market share. A copy of a 1915 hay contract between the NWMP and Agent Dilworth indicates that the police were exacting in their specifications. The contract called for 108 tons of hay delivered to Barracks at Macleod between October 1914 and June 1915 with the specification being "That the hay shall be Upland Bunch Grass Hay No. 1 quality of this year's crop, well cured, free from weeds, dirt and old bottom that it shall be subject to inspection and rejection as delivered..." The Bloods were to be paid \$12.00 per ton. Interestingly, section four of the contract requiring the bidder to deposit five percent of the value of the contract was deleted. Should the Indians fail in their contract with regard to quality or quantity the contract stipulated that other sources would be sought to make up the remainder, with the Bloods liable for the difference in price.⁶² When it became clear in May that they would default on their contract, 74 tons of more expensive hay had to be purchased elsewhere at a

⁶² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7595, file 10103, pt. 2; Contract between RNWM Police, Macleod and W.J. Dilworth, Blood Reserve, August 21, 1914.

loss to the government of \$131.10. The Police comptroller deducted this from the amount due the Indians.⁶³

There is little comment on the haying activities of the Bloods in later years, but one suspects that some hay sales continued, much as they did for the Blackfoot, for example, in subsequent decades.⁶⁴ Leasing to Whites continued on the reserve well beyond the period of study and it is likely that the Bloods continued to supply hay on at least an occasional basis, if not more often. Grazing lands also continued to be leased, offering a different approach to the sale of hay.

Freighting

Freighting also brought for some Bloods lucrative market involvement. It provided opportunities for employment off the reserve and was also required to transport the reserve's

⁶³ There is no indication why, in this instance, the Bloods could not furnish the contract. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7595, file 10103, pt. 2, Laurence Fortescue to Duncan C. Scott, May 12, 1915; J.D. McLean to Laurence Fortescue, May 15, 1915. The Bloods themselves, however, could also be demanding in their contract specifications. Their 1915 hay contract with Gordon Ironsides and Fares, under the terms of the company's lease with the Indians, stipulated that the company purchase from the Bloods not less than 700 tons at the rate of \$5.00 per ton. The Bloods, however, were under no obligation to supply that amount. When the company wanted to break or alter the terms of this agreement the agent responded that he was determined to "see that these Indians get a square deal." See GAI, BIAC, file 36, Indian Agent to Messers. Gordon Ironsides and Fares, August 24, 1915.

⁶⁴ Valerie K. Jobson, "The Blackfoot Farming Experiment 1880-1945," (Calgary: M.A. Thesis, 1990), p. 104.

resources to market. This work likely appealed to the Bloods because of their involvement with horses, which many of them owned. Freighting also offered some flexibility as one could accept work when needed or desired. The basic requirements were simple; a man needed a wagon and horses, usually consisting of two or four horse teams, the latter appearing to have been most common. During the appropriate seasons the haulage teams could be very busy with as many as fifty three freighters operating at any one time.⁶⁵ This was a substantial commitment of men, wagons and horses.

Freighting for the Bloods took place along well traveled routes. Generally the Indians were engaged in hauling reserve coal to the various locations needed on the reserve as well as into towns such as Fort Macleod. Among the more traveled routes were those connecting the various mines, especially at Lethbridge, with the Mounted Police posts in southern Alberta. (See Figure 2.5) Also important were the routes connecting the reserve and area haylands with the local farmers and the ranches, such as the Cochrane Ranche. There were also lesser routes taken when Blood freighters were engaged in incidental freighting for businesses or worked on construction projects such as the irrigation works around Cardston. Clearly there was significant opportunity

⁶⁵ See list in NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1.

for the utilization of the Blood reserve's resources and people in the local economy.

In the case of freighting, the Blood freighters' invasion of the market place was based on two simple strategies, competitive pricing and influence. They were often willing to freight commodities from the various mines to the customer at the cheapest rate. Under these circumstances they were self-employed with Agent Wilson arranging contracts for their services. In 1893 Wilson reported that the Galt Coal Company would provide him coal for the police contract, at the mine for \$3.25 per ton. It was Wilson's opinion that the district market would support a price of \$7.50 a ton and he was hoping for a 100 ton delivery at that price to the various Mounted Police posts.⁶⁶ The \$3.25 per ton difference would be clear profit for the individuals engaged in this work.

October of that year proved to be a very busy time for coal hauling as preparations were made for getting in a winter supply. Agent Wilson reported 20, four horse teams and one, two horse team hauling coal to the various police posts. The 100 ton contract for the police was completed inside of two weeks. Wilson anticipated that this prompt delivery

⁶⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, p. 372, James Wilson to Hayter Reed, July 13, 1893.

would result in a larger share of future police contracts.⁶⁷ Clearly Wilson counted on Blood freighters winning contracts away from local non-Native haulage contractors.

In February 1898 the Indians were busy filling their coal contract with the NWMP having delivered 280 tons of a 600 ton contract.⁶⁸ Wilson also reported that "A number of Indians were also engaged [in] purchasing coal on their own account and taking it to Macleod for sale" for 11 dollars per load.⁶⁹ He noted in January, 1897, that 49 Bloods earned \$1,895.96 freighting coal⁷⁰ which compares favourably with the \$7,510.11 of total earnings declared for 1896.⁷¹ The Bloods delivered 115 tons of coal to the police at Macleod in late 1898 and earned \$650.00. In requesting speedy payment Wilson

⁶⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1559, pp. 535-37, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, November 3, 1893.

⁶⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1563, pp. 625-26, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, February 11, 1898; RG 10, vol. 1562, pp. 175-76, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, December 31, 1896.

⁶⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1563, pp. 617-19, James Wilson to Commissioner, February 10, 1898.

⁷⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1562, p. 258, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, January 27, 1897. See also statements of payment on pages 256-57.

⁷¹ Esther S. Goldfrank, Changing Configurations In The Social Organization Of A Blackfoot Tribe During The Reserve Period: The Blood of Alberta, Canada (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), p. 21.

pointed out that the "Indians are hard up for money at present to purchase winter clothing, extra food, etc..."⁷²

By 1898 Wilson had abandoned any prospect of the Blood coal mine being able to produce commercial quality or quantities of coal but he continued to obtain delivery contracts. In September he gave the police quotations for coal delivered to the various southern Alberta detachments.⁷³ His plan was to purchase the coal from other companies and resell it, adding a delivery charge. Although police Inspector R. Burton Deane tried to drive a hard bargain Wilson was inflexible and pointed out to Deane that; besides increased coal prices, a shortage of labour in the freighting business placed upward pressure on value.⁷⁴ Wilson, as the Bloods' representative, was intent on exploiting prevailing market conditions and maximizing returns to Blood freighters for the services they provided.

⁷² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, January 12, 1899. With regard to the delivery of coal to the police see also James Wilson to secretary, DIA, February 15, 1898; Fred White to J.D. McLean, April 15, 1898; Fred White to J.D. McLean, April 28, 1898; Fred White to J.D. McLean, May 13, 1898; James Wilson to Secretary, DIA, June 1, 1898.

⁷³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 79, James Wilson to Ross Cuthbert, Sept. 19, 1898; p. 430, James Wilson to R. Burton Deane, Sept. 12, 1899.

⁷⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 457, James Wilson to R. Burton Deane, October 6, 1899.

The fact that the Mounted Police was the Blood reserve's biggest non-agency customer came to the attention of the Lethbridge News, which reported, in March 1901, that the Bloods in an obviously efficient operation, had delivered 120 tons of coal to the police in just three days. As well "a large quantity of coal" was delivered to the Cochrane Ranche, and to a variety of Agency institutions.⁷⁵

The News observed that Blood freighters were significant players in the freighter-for-hire marketplace:

The Indians are very eager to get freighting, but although the agent never misses a chance to procure it, either in single loads or in large contracts, he [the agent] cannot keep them regularly employed. This, however, is not surprising: they can turn out one hundred and thirty four-horse teams, instantly, upon receiving notice that they are wanted.⁷⁶

Such communal effort was a significant factor in the Bloods' ability to secure freighting contracts and caused White freighters and suppliers some concern over the loss of work.

When shortages of freighting services occurred the Bloods were sought out by businesses needing haulage teams. The agent noted in his yearly report for 1898 that freighting was a principal occupation of the Bloods, including freighting for the agency, the NWMP, local ranchers, local merchant houses as well as on one occasion freighting lumber

⁷⁵ Lethbridge News, March 7, 1901, p. 7.

⁷⁶ Lethbridge News, March 7, 1901, p. 7.

for the construction of an irrigation canal undertaken by the Mormons at Cardston.⁷⁷

After 1901, little detail of the freighting activities of the Bloods is available. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the Bloods continued to take advantage of freighting opportunities offered by local farmers, businesses and works projects. In 1914, for example, they were reported doing "a large amount of freighting" for local farmers⁷⁸ and during the 1916 harvest season "Some 150 teams and 200 men availed themselves of the labour at remunerative wages and with satisfaction to their employers."⁷⁹ It is likely that Blood freighters were involved in the large irrigation projects going on in southern Alberta at this time. As the Bloods acquired motor vehicles they could take advantage of opportunities farther from the reserve.⁸⁰ Though treaty promises to protect the traditional economy were seldom honoured, the Bloods, through their own and their agents' initiatives, secured alternative sources of income.

⁷⁷ CSP, NO. 14, 1899, p. 133.

⁷⁸ CSP, No. 27, 1915, p. 70.

⁷⁹ CSP, No. 27, 1917, pp. 73-74.

⁸⁰ Hugh A. Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader: A Biography of James Gladstone, Indian Senator (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986), p. 85.

The Special efforts of Agent Wilson

When Hayter Reed became Indian Commissioner in 1888, he took advantage of existing legislation⁸¹ to control or regulate Native participation in local economies by isolating Indians on reserves and turning them into 'peasant farmers'. This was to be accomplished through the use of the 'pass' and 'permit' systems. A pass gave an Indian the agent's official permission to be away from the reserve. The permit granted Indians the legal right to dispose of their goods or produce in the market place. Evidence shows that some agents were very rigid in applying the policy in an attempt to restrict, as much as possible, Indian involvement in the market place on the one hand, and to encourage the husbanding of the reserve's resources on the other.⁸² In the case of the Bloods

⁸¹ The pass system originated with the 1885 rebellion and was intended as a temporary measure to monitor the movement of Natives leaving their reserves. It was likely maintained following the rebellion because the Department of Indian Affairs recognized it as an expedient method of control over many aspects of Native cultural life and other activities. See Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, Loyal till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 1997), pp. 216, 250-253.

⁸² Commentary on the efficacy of the pass and permit systems is mixed. For the Indian view of this system see Treaty Seven Elders and Tribal Council, et. al., The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), pp. 136-7, 146-7, 150-1, 152, 155. For other commentary about its intent and scope see: J.R. Miller, "Owen Glendower, Hotspur, and Canadian Indian Policy," in David R. Miller, et. al., The First Ones: Readings In Indian/Native Studies (Piapot Reserve #75:

the pass and permit systems failed to meet the Department's expectations for two basic reasons. The first was the complicity of reserve and departmental officials in undermining the legislation by generally encouraging and permitting the Bloods to leave the reserve to work. The second was the obvious need and/or desire of the Bloods to work off the reserve.

By the 1890s Blood farmers, in keeping with advancing trends in farm mechanization, had become acutely aware of the value of machines as labour saving devices⁸³ and sought to acquire them in order to be more productive. Efforts in this

Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Press, 1992), pp. 253-254; F. Laurie Baron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935," Prairie Forum, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 1988), pp. 34-37, on permits see pages 38-39; Rebecca B. Bateman, "Talking With The Plow: Agricultural Policy And Indian Farming In The Canadian And U.S. Prairies," The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, XVI, 2 (1996), pp. 217, 220. On the Indians as peasant farmers see Sarah Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow: 'Peasant' Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-97," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXX, No. 1 (March 1989), p. 27; Arthur J. Ray, I Have Lived Here Since The World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1996), p. 256.

⁸³ Tony Ward, "Farming Technology and Crop Area on Early Prairie Farms," Prairie Forum, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Spring, 1995), p. 25. Shepard says that the awareness of mechanization was such that "The early development of the Canadian Plains... could be called a mechanized agricultural frontier." R. Bruce Shepard, "Tractors and Combines in the Second Stage of Agricultural Mechanization on the Canadian Plains," Prairie Forum, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall 1986), p. 254. Machinery came increasingly into use with the advancing settlement of the west. Ernest B. Ingles, "The Custom Threshermen In Western Canada 1890-1925," in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (eds.), Building Beyond The Homestead: Rural History On The

direction were met with little sympathy from the Department as they ran counter to Commissioner Hayter Reed's desire to tie Canada's western Native 'peasant farmers' to the soil.⁸⁴ As expected, Reed's response was that reserve farmers were "not to be assisted in the purchase of labour saving machines." At the same time Agent William Pocklington noted that non-Natives were not to be permitted to cut hay on the reserve, instead the Bloods were to be encouraged to cut and market the hay themselves.⁸⁵ The Department appeared to ignore the contradiction of wishing the Blood farmers to market a commodity in an increasingly mechanized agricultural setting without mechanical assistance.⁸⁶ It is unclear whether Pocklington was advising or simply reiterating the point made by the Department. But with the Bloods desperate for both money and work it is inconceivable that Pocklington would grant permits to outsiders to cut reserve hay, in any case.

Prairies (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 136-137.

⁸⁴ Sarah Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow: Peasant Farming for the Indians of the North-west, 1889-1897," Canadian Historical Review 70, No. 1 (1989), p.1 256.

⁸⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 208, W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, March 18, 1891.

⁸⁶ R. Bruce Shepard, "The Mechanical Agricultural Frontier of the Canadian Plains," Material History Bulletin, 7 (Spring, 1979), pp. 2-3.

But even during Reed's tenure local circumstance and cost considerations sometimes took precedence over "official" policy. Before 1894, for example, the Blood hay producers had enjoyed special consideration with regards to the granting of government contracts in that the usual 10 percent deposit was dispensed with in favour of the Indians. The rules for government contracts, however, were altered in that year, and not in favour of the Bloods.⁸⁷ In June, agent James Wilson wrote Superintendent Sam Steele, NWMP, that he could put up the hay at the Stand Off Detachment for eight dollars per ton instead of the earlier agreed nine.⁸⁸ The reason for this reduction he made clear in a subsequent letter. The granting of DIA contracts to Indians was to be placed on the same footing as others: to be awarded to the contractors with the lowest bids. Wilson petitioned the Indian Commissioner to approach the Police Commissioner to secure an agreement that 25 percent of the police contracts be held for the Indians as was previously the custom. In the meantime he was

⁸⁷ It is not immediately clear why the method of letting contracts was changed. It could have been in response to public pressures or may simply have been a part of efficiency measures. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1557, p. 635, W. Pocklington to Inspector Steele, July 14, 1890.

⁸⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, p. 243, James Wilson to S.B. Steele, June 29, 1894.

forced to lower his bid to secure work.⁸⁹

The Bloods' impact on market conditions often depended on the agent working on their behalf. In this respect Agent James Wilson stood out for his unceasing and untiring efforts. In July 1894, for example, the ever aggressive Wilson agreed to have the Bloods deliver coal to NWMP detachments at Macleod, Kipp and Stand Off from any of the Galt, Sharon or Hauk's mines for \$7.00, \$6.50 and \$6.00 per ton respectively.⁹⁰ On this occasion, however, Wilson's bid to secure the Police contract for Macleod failed and he approached W.D. Barclay, Lethbridge, who held the contract, with the idea of sub-contracting about 200 tons of the contracted amount. If this were not possible he wished to have the Bloods hauling coal to Barclay's agents in Fort Macleod. Wilson was ostensibly driven by his desire to have "some work for these Indians to do during the next month or two."⁹¹

⁸⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, pp. 244-45, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, June 29, 1894; p. 313, James Wilson to S.B. Steele.

⁹⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, pp. 416-17, James Wilson to Superintendent in command, Macleod, August 31, 1894; p. 316, James Wilson to W. Stafford, July 30, 1894; p. 317, James Wilson to Manager, Galt Mines, July 30, 1894.

⁹¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 446, James Wilson to W.D. Barclay, September 5, 1894.

Success for the Bloods, as for the remainder of the community, also depended upon the vitality of the local economy. In January, 1895, Wilson reported that during the previous month little outside work was done except for minimal freighting of hay and coal. With regard to the latter, "sales are hard to make at any price in Macleod at present..."⁹²

As a result of Wilson's efforts, however, and their willingness to accept whatever contracts were available, a number of Blood freighters remained busy. Wilson reported in October, 1895:

The freighting of lumber etc. is quite a serious affair at the present moment and I have just completed arrangements with Major Steele to haul other [sic] 75 tons of coal to Stand Off detachment before the middle of the next month and I have also made a contract with the Cochrane Ranche Company to deliver 40 tons of coal and 4000 bricks. All this coal and brick must be hauled from Lethbridge which is distant from Stand Off 35 miles and 47 from the Cochrane Ranche.⁹³

Similarly, Wilson's request that departmental officials use their influence to secure work for the Bloods bore fruit.

⁹² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 691, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, January 4, 1895. Wilson did not explain the difficult circumstances but it may have been due to the ample supply of coal in the region. See A.A. den Otter, Civilizing the West: The Galts and the Development of Western Canada (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982), p. 320.

⁹³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1561, pp. 187-89, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, October 7, 1895.

Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed wired agent Wilson that "If you can freight six hundred tons coal police require at Macleod at five ninety five I shall get contract for you..."⁹⁴ Reed also wanted the reserve mine to supply various other police outposts.⁹⁵ The Bloods said they could deliver on the request.⁹⁶ Although they secured the police contract⁹⁷ the arrangement collapsed. The police, complaining of the quality, refused to accept coal from the Indian mine.⁹⁸ The Blood teamsters then turned to delivering coal from Lethbridge under contract. Although, in this case, contracting their haulage equipment to deliver a competitors'

⁹⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Hayter Reed to Indian Agent Wilson, August 29, 1896.

⁹⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Hayter Reed to Indian Agent Wilson, Sept. 15, 1896.

⁹⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Dean Freeman to Deputy Supt. Genl. Indians Affairs, Sept. 5, 1896.

⁹⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, James Wilson to Hayter Reed, Sept. 8, 1896.

⁹⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, James Wilson to Hayter Reed, Sept. 17, 1896; A.E. Forget to Deputy of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, February, 17, 1896. This same source indicates that there was also a fall off in demand for Blood coal from the locals at Macleod because of problems with quality.

coal left the reserve mine without delivery capacity⁹⁹ it was a sensible alternative and secured both work and income.

What is most interesting about Hayter Reed's involvement in acquiring off-reserve employment for the Bloods is that it was, as he knew, in direct contradiction to both the spirit and letter of "official" departmental policy.¹⁰⁰ Why then did he acquire work for the Bloods that was so likely to bring them to public notice? As a DIA official Reed was certainly aware that the pass system had no legal basis and that the North West Mounted Police were reluctant to enforce it.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, Extract from Agents Wilson's October Report, November 24, 1896.

¹⁰⁰ On the pass system see; E. Brian Titley, "Hayter Reed and Indian Administration in the West," in R.C. Macleod (ed.), Swords And Ploughshares: War And Agriculture In Western Canada (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1993), pp. 117-118; F. Laurie Barron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935," Prairie Forum, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 1988), pp. 27-30; John Jennings, "The North West Mounted Police and Indian Policy after the 1885 Rebellion," F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram (eds.), 1885 And After: Native Society in Transition (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1886), pp. 228-230; Katherine Pettipas, Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), pp. 111-112. On permits see Barron, Prairie Forum, p. 39; Carter, Lost Harvests, pp. 156-158; Peter Douglas Elias, The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), pp. 88-89, 94.

¹⁰¹ Katherine Pettipas, Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), pp. 111-112; J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A

Making the pass system work, therefore, was both a difficult and legally dicey business. A possible explanation is that the policy was, in part, a public relations ploy for the benefit of local settlers and never envisioned as absolute. One also suspects that the policy was very idealistic and thus easily forsaken in the face of financial considerations. It was, therefore, a way to pay lip service to those occasional complaints of unfair Native competition which were inevitably followed by public demands that the Indians have only restricted access to local economic opportunities. If the policy, however, could be circumvented without too much public outcry, and such evasion presented the promise of reduced departmental expenditure, then Native involvement in the marketplace was encouraged.

Complaints

The Department's, and especially the agent's, aggressive activity on behalf of the Blood freighters and producers was bound to lead to resentment from locals intent on protecting their livelihood. When Agent James Wilson tendered for the delivery of 400 tons of coal to the police barracks at Fort Macleod and other detachments, in August 1895, he warned the Commissioner:

History of Indian-White Relations in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 191-192.

as there is a considerable amount of feeling among the white people in this district about Indians doing such work I would ask you to kindly see the Commissioner of the Police on this matter and do what you can to obtain a share of this work for the Indians. I am afraid a good deal of pressure may be put upon the Commissioner to try and prevent us getting any.¹⁰²

Clearly Wilson expected a backlash against the Bloods' freighting activities and wished to pre-empt any attempt to cut them out of the lucrative work.

Wilson also wished to reduce the uncertainty of winning freighting contracts during the yearly bidding competition. He suggested to the Indian Commissioner that perhaps in future it could be "arranged that a certain part (say one half) of the coal supply should be held back for the Indians to deliver without putting it to open tenders...If this was done it might tend to lessen the feeling that the Indians were taking away the living of the white men."¹⁰³ It is difficult to see how the removal of one half of the business opportunities afforded by these important contracts would lessen White resentment against the Bloods, unless it was a case that half a loaf was considered better than none. Wilson's action not only reveals concern for the well-being of his charges but suggests that, through the auspices of the

¹⁰² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1561, pp. 93-94, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, August 14, 1895.

¹⁰³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1561, pp. 93-94, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, August 14, 1895.

agency, the Bloods had considerable influence in tendering on contracts.

Clearly the Bloods were not reluctant participants in the marketplace. Nor was the pass and permit systems were designed to prevent market access and the squandering of reserve resources, an unqualified success. Inevitably competition from the Bloods, and other Indians, led to complaints. A letter to the editor of the Macleod Gazette from "Freighter" bluntly stated the case against Indian competition. It criticized those perceived as "not only permitting, but assisting the Blood Reserve Indians to compete with the White settlers and laborers in the putting 'up' and sale of hay." The basis of the complaint was that the Bloods had secured large contracts through underbidding the Whites. "It is bad enough to allow these Indians to put up hay on outside contracts," the writer observed "but when it comes to their bringing it into town for sale in large quantities, as they are doing now, it is carrying the thing a little too far." The crux of the matter, as this particular complaintant saw it, was that all the material and resources placed at the Indians' disposal was supplied by the government giving them a competitive edge. "Because their machines, wagons, grub and every other thing necessary for the business are provided for them," the writer protested, "and because, in order that these things may be provided, the very men with whom they compete pay dollar for dollar the

same money as others in Canada into the fund, out of which the machines, wagons, etc., used by these Indians are purchased" it was hardly fair.¹⁰⁴ Competition was no problem, as long as equity prevailed.

The Gazette supported this complaint and observed that "The only apparent argument that can be used in favor of the present system seems to be that the Indians have not been very successful in their other pursuits, and that putting up hay seems to be one of the very few things that they can do." The Gazette railed against the government's expensive and futile effort at making Indians self-sufficient. The paper also charged a certain unfairness in that the peoples' wards were being financed in undercutting their beneficiaries:

It is submitted that these Indians are earning a certain amount of money by putting up hay with implements supplied by the government; by hauling supplies with wagons obtained from the same source, and by getting out (under a white man) and hauling coal, in all of which occupations they compete with hard working white men, does not indicate any advance toward independent self-support.¹⁰⁵

Blood producers, however, were simply availing themselves of market opportunities presented by Whites

¹⁰⁴ Macleod Gazette, July 26, 1895. For complaints against Indian competition see Carter, C.H.R. (March, 1989), p. 36; Carter, Lost Harvests, pp. 184-190; J.R. Miller, Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens, p. 201; Anthony G. Gulig, Saskatchewan History (Fall, 1995), pp. 6-7.

¹⁰⁵ Macleod Gazette, August 2, 1895.

looking for a bargain. There were bargains to be had as the Bloods, among other things, freighted supplies, hauled coal, hunted wolves and cut logs and did herding and other work for settlers.¹⁰⁶ They were especially successful with the production and sale of hay, and in 1896 exceeded the agent's "most sanguine expectations"¹⁰⁷ and again in 1898 they sold a considerable amount of hay in Fort Macleod.¹⁰⁸ Indeed prices were so good, and the market so brisk, that Agent Wilson was concerned about the possibility of Blood farmers selling hay that they needed for their own cattle. In July he requested that the police at Lethbridge warn the public that the purchase of hay from Bloods not possessing a duly authorized permit to sell left the purchaser open to prosecution.¹⁰⁹ He

¹⁰⁶ CSP, 14, Vol. XXXI, No. 11, 1897, p. 135.

¹⁰⁷ CSP, 14, 1897, p. 155. The bulk of this hay was supplied to the Cochrane Ranche Company, North West Mounted Police and for Agency needs. Interestingly the agent noted that the 109 tons required for the agency farmers' horses and cattle, for the agency horses and cattle and for the hospital cows was hauled free of charge as it had been done in the two previous years. CSP, 14, 1897, p. 156.

¹⁰⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1563, pp. 875-76, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, May 16, 1898. The hay brought ten to twelve dollars per ton. The amount sold was not given. The agent's report contained in the Sessional Papers states that 1139 tons was sold for approximately \$5,695. At the minimum of ten dollars per ton this should have netted \$11,390. See CSP, No. 14, 1899, p. 133.

¹⁰⁹ The license system was not in place to protect whites but to enable the agent to properly protect the property and

did note that "A great deal of talk had been going on among the White men [freighters] in Macleod district about the Indians doing freighting work and if I am to put in tenders for police hay and coal then I will require to cut down low to secure them and that will cause them [freighters] to kick more than ever." Consequently Wilson did succeed in getting the contracts for the Stand Off and Big Bend detachments, because the Bloods had the competitive edge.¹¹⁰

Complaints against the Bloods fluctuated with time and economic conditions. The 'exceptional circumstances' created by World War I and a 1917 coal strike, for example, shut down most of the coal mines in western Canada.¹¹¹ By 1921, however, market conditions had returned to normal so complaints were received about Blood reserve coal competing in a restricted market environment. G. Finnie, the Chief Inspector of Mines for Alberta, notified the Department of Indian Affairs of complaints from operators in Magrath and

resources of the Indians. RG 10, vol. 1564, pp. 39-40. James Wilson to Corporal in Charge Town Patrole, Lethbridge, July 23, 1898. Indians were not legally permitted to sell reserve resources without the permission of the agent. For a discussion of the permit system see Helen Buckley, From Wooden Ploughs To Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), pp. 53-54.

¹¹⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, pp. 244-45, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, June 29, 1894; p. 313, James Wilson to S.B. Steele, July 28, 1894.

¹¹¹ Bercuson (ed.), Alberta's Coal Industry 1919, p. x.

Raymond in particular. Local producers expressed dissatisfaction because the Blood sales presented unfair competition because Blood miners did not have to pay leasing dues and royalties. Thus the right of the Bloods to sell coal on the open market was challenged but without effect. In an open market situation complaints from competitors who believed themselves at a disadvantage were bound to occur.¹¹²

Conclusions

The Bloods participated in the local market place as volunteers with the assistance and encouragement of the local agent and often the Department of Indian Affairs. Coal mining occurred because some Bloods saw it as profitable and because the agents encouraged this activity despite, at times, some misgivings about its viability. This activity fitted nicely into the local economic infrastructure. There was a constant demand on the reserve for coal and often from those in the vicinity. Both the Bloods and the DIA were cautious with regard to the management of this resource and so it was never allowed to come under the control of Whites, outside of occasional advisory services.

Haying illustrates the interactive exploitation of a Blood reserve resource. The share-crop agreements regarding

¹¹² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7632, file 18103-1, G. Finnie to D.C. Scott, February 13, 1921.

the harvesting and sale of hay is indicative of mutually beneficial resource use, the reserve provided a product for which there was much demand in the surrounding community. Farmers, ranchers, the Mounted Police and the Bloods themselves placed great reliance on hay in this particular period when horses were a major source of agricultural power and transportation, and cattle were a chief source of food.

Freighting or shipping activities brought the Bloods into most direct conflict with non-Native economic agencies. This work was separated, in the public mind, from other activities which originated on the reserve. The perception was that, whereas the Bloods owned the coal and hay, they did not own the freighting and there was great concern that the livelihoods of non-Natives be protected through assured equal access. Non-Natives were well aware of the Bloods' special status as wards of the state and saw any advantages accruing to them as a result of that status as unfair competition. Despite public perceptions, however, there is no evidence that the government made any attempts to curb the Bloods' participation in freighting activities.

The willingness to exploit on and off-reserve opportunities likely made the difference between marginal survival and abject poverty, a fate that faced many of the Bloods' contemporaries, both Native and non-Native. The Macleod Times, of July 21, 1920, reported that both Bloods and Peigans were digging bones from the south bank of the

Oldman River, and selling them for fertilizer, one endeavour that the Times estimated earned the Indians several thousand dollars.¹¹³ In his memoir, amateur historian Bud Spencer reported Blood teams engaged in hauling wheat some twenty miles to Cardston for local farmers.¹¹⁴ In 1927, the Bloods shipped over 2,000 "canner" horses to Great Falls, Montana, for 40 to 50 cents per hundred weight.¹¹⁵ By 1928 the Bloods were granting oil leases on the reserve.¹¹⁶

Some individuals like James Gladstone, the future senator, sought economic security for his family, wherever opportunity presented itself. Gladstone shared in the "general prosperity" of the 186 Blood reserve farmers during the latter years of the 1920s,¹¹⁷ and in the unexpected and devastating collapse of grain prices in 1929.¹¹⁸ Despite the economic hardships of the 1930s he established a small

¹¹³ Macleod Times, July 21, 1920, p. 1. Amateur historian Bud Spencer also recalled this activity. Bud Spencer, Go North, Young Man, Go North!: My Life's Story (nd.), p. 14.

¹¹⁴ Spencer, Go North, p. 14.

¹¹⁵ Cardston News, March 3, 1927, p. 1.

¹¹⁶ Cardston News, August 23, 1928, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Dempsey, Gentle Persuader, pp. 70-71. On Gladstone and others leaving the reserve for work see pp. 78-80.

¹¹⁸ Dempsey, Gentle Persuader, pp. 73-76.

trucking outfit on the reserve and secured contracts hauling wheat, coal, and cattle, eventually acquiring contracts from the Department of Indian affairs. As business developed the tiny company was able to expand and provide Gladstone and his family with some financial security.¹¹⁹

Despite the sometimes overwhelming management control of the agent and DIA the Bloods' economic activities were self-motivated. They opened and worked the mines and sought out contracts. They instigated the share-crop arrangements with local farmers and ranchers and they mustered their horses and wagons to ensure efficient delivery of coal, hay and other commodities under contract. It was the Bloods who laboured to ensure their own livelihoods. Their evident motivation, perhaps, ensured the willingness of the DIA to, at times, adjust its policies to local circumstances. It also ensured the behind-the-scenes work of the various agents currying favour from one government agency or another. This was sufficient to secure for the Bloods a periodic, profitable, and sometimes influential market presence, especially in the supply of coal, hay and freighting services. Criticism from the non-Native public seems to have had little impact on curbing the Bloods' desire for some economic independence.

¹¹⁹ Dempsey, Gentle Persuader, p. 85.

Chapter 5

'All the Indians have gone to the Beet': Blood Labour in the Raymond Sugar Beet Fields

Introduction

The local industry that offered the Bloods the greatest opportunity for the sale of their labour was the sugar beet industry at Raymond. However one rationalizes the Bloods' presence, it is clear that in their case Blood labourers were vital to sustaining the industrial process during the first phase of its operations from 1903 to 1915. They appear to have played a minor part in the industry after that. Though studies of the Bloods have paid little or no attention to their participation in the sugar beet fields this work was, in many ways, central to both the industry and the Blood's livelihood for more than a decade.¹

¹ Hana Samek in her study, The Blackfoot Confederacy, has taken a unidimensional view of the Blood Reservation economy as based solely on agriculture, both crop agriculture and cattle raising. True, the sugar beet industry was not reserve driven, but it was important enough to the Bloods to merit attention. The work could be seen as an extension of the reserve economy when one considers that the Bloods left the reserve in large numbers and the work was often arranged under contract by the reserve agent. For discussion of the reserve economy see, Hana Samek, The Blackfoot Confederacy 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and U.S. Indian Policy (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), chap. 4, pp. 70-104. John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager briefly mention Indian involvement in the sugar beet industry. See John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, "Workers, Growers and Monopolists: the 'Labour Problem' in the Alberta

The Industry: Local Evolution

Sometime around 1900 Jesse Knight, a Mormon from Provo, Utah, with some encouragement from Elliot Galt, chose a site east of the Blood reserve, at Raymond, to establish a sugar beet processing plant.² The site was regarded by local settlers as fit only for hay land but Knight believed it had great potential for the cultivation of sugar beet. The Raymond Rustler later defined the sugar beet business as: "an industry requiring a great amount of labor and the investment of a large sum of money." Interestingly it pointed out that the two main requirements of money and manpower "were not obstacles but incentives." It was so attractive that Knight hastily put down a \$50,000 deposit as security in an

Beet Sugar Industry During the 1930s," in Michiel Horn, (ed.), The Depression In Canada: Responses to Economic Crisis (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988), p. 32. Curiously Ronald F. Laliberte states that from the beginning of the industry in the early 1900s "most of the hand labour" in the fields was done by immigrants from Europe and this was the situation up until the Second World War when that supply of labour was cut off. He does not recognize that the Bloods had any place in this industry. Ronald F. Laliberte, "The Canadian State And Native Migrant Labour In Southern Alberta's Sugar Beet Industry," (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, MA Thesis, 1994), p. 66.

² A.A. den Otter, Civilizing the West: The Galts and the Development of Western Canada (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982), pp. 229-230. See also Edward Brado, Cattle Kingdom: Early Ranching In Alberta (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984), p. 138. The plant itself was not of new manufacture but was a plant at Sunnyside, Washington that was dismantled and moved to the Raymond site. See Fred G. Taylor, A Saga of Sugar: Being a story of the romance and development of Beet Sugar in th Rocky Mountain West (Salt Lake City: Desert News Press, 1944), p. 175.

agreement with the North West Irrigation Company and The Alberta Railway and Coal Company, to purchase the 52,000 acres of land needed for his enterprise.³ Knight believed that, with suitable land and plenty of available labour, the outlook was exceedingly promising for an industry that could fill an insatiable consumer demand for a product entirely imported from outside the region.⁴ The Raymond area stood to reap great benefits as an estimated one hundred and fifty people would have continuous employment in the factory and others would be "employed continuously by the company in their own fields, as experts[,] managers and office hands",⁵ to say nothing of the farmers and workers who would be needed to grow beets.

Initially the company hoped to cultivate enough of its beets to meet its needs. This failed and by 1904 the company's production methods changed with the enlistment of local farmers to grow beets under contract,⁶ an arrangement

³ Raymond Rustler, May 31, 1911, p. 7.

⁴ On the growing importance of sugar in western society see Ken Cruikshank, "Taking the Bitter with the Sweet: Sugar Refiners and the Canadian Regulatory State, 1904-20," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXXIV, No. 3 (September 1993), pp. 369-371.

⁵ Raymond Rustler, May 31, 1911, p. 7.

⁶ Dawson says that the company "was never able to secure more than 22,000 tons of beets a year, and in some years the

which was to be continued. The Cardston Alberta Star revealed that the company planned to have 4,000 acres in beets, 3,000 cultivated by the company directly, with local farmers cultivating 1,000 acres. The new arrangements promised to pay farmers \$5.00 per ton and divided with the farmers the government bounty on sugar manufactured bringing the price paid to the farmer to \$5.35 per ton.⁷ Although appearing lucrative, contract beet growing never solved the company's perennial beet shortages.

Shortages became so severe that by 1913 J.W. Evans, Agricultural Superintendent of the Knight Sugar Co., tried to induce more local farmers to plant sugar beet by promoting both the agricultural and financial benefits of beet culture. Beet cultivation, he argued, brought a number of benefits including the encouragement of crop rotation and an increased yield for other crops. The industry also created a demand for labour thus making possible the employment of children who otherwise, in his opinion, provided no economic benefit. Beet cultivation also offered price stability, since growers knew the price of their product before planting. The fact that beets could be grown by farmers of small means was also

tonnage dropped as low as 8,000." C.A. Dawson, Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities In Western Canada (Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1936), p. 233.

⁷ Alberta Star, Cardston, April 2, 1909, p. 8.

touted as an attraction.⁸ Instructions were given in the Leader on how to prepare the land for planting in 1914.⁹ In a last ditch attempt at persuasion Evans waxed poetic, "Then let us raise the SUGAR BEET, No question bout the pay 'Cause if we work the balance sheet Will show a better day.'"¹⁰

In case there were still skeptics Evans went on to argue "A comparison of a ten ton crop of sugar beets with a forty bushel crop of wheat assumed to be grown on summer fallowed land" yielded a net profit per acre of \$18.70 for beets compared with \$14.05 for wheat or a difference of \$4.65 in favour of beet growing, and "In addition to this the beet tops are worth from \$5.00 to \$10.00 for feed."¹¹ He also admonished the local population to support this native industry, "If it is true,...that ten pounds of imported sugar are used in Lethbridge to one of Raymond, we as citizens ought to be heartily ashamed of ourselves...Lethbridge coal is good enough for us. So is Raymond Sugar."¹² The reported payroll of over \$10,000 during the run was money kept in the

⁸ Raymond Leader, July 25, 1913, p. 1.

⁹ Raymond Leader, June 17, 1913, p. 4.

¹⁰ Raymond Leader, January 23, 1914, p. 1.

¹¹ Raymond Leader, July 31, 1913, p. 4.

¹² Raymond Leader, July 31, 1913, p. 4.

community, and the employment of about three hundred men when other work was scarce¹³ was also calculated to tie the Knight Sugar Company fortunes to the general well-being of the community.

By December, 1914, it was evident that the appeal to local loyalty, and the highlighting of benefits for the local economy, were not enough. In December 1914 the Leader reported that the Knight Sugar factory was planning to move its operation close to Great Falls, Montana.¹⁴ With relocation imminent, the locals marshaled their influence and enthusiasm with a public meeting on December 20, 1914, to protest the move and attempt to secure "a guarantee of 2,000 acres of beets next year," the minimum required to bring about a reconsideration of the proposed move.¹⁵ It was too late and by January 8, 1915 the Leader had to admit that, "Beets talk and 1,800 acres isn't very strong language."¹⁶ Consequently, on January 15 the paper announced the loss of

¹³ Raymond Leader, October 17, 1913, p. 1.

¹⁴ Raymond Leader, December 18, 1914, p. 1.

¹⁵ Raymond Leader, December 24, 1914, p. 1.

¹⁶ Raymond Leader, January 8, 1915, p. 1. See also The Raymond Leader, December 24, 1914, p. 1.

the sugar plant to Layton, Utah.¹⁷ It was an ignominious end to an enterprise which had seemingly held out such promise.

The Bloods' Significance

There is no direct evidence that Jesse Knight had the Bloods in mind when he chose the site for his sugar factory. However, they quickly became so important to the sugar company's operations that it is inconceivable that Knight was not aware of the benefits of tapping the potential labour pool of the Blood reserve and its 1,200 inhabitants¹⁸ directly to the west of the factory site. In its early stages of development sugar beet agriculture was labour-intensive and a readily available source of dependable cheap labour was essential.

In southern Alberta the sugar beet season generally began in April with seeding, with the all important thinning occurring in June. Throughout the growing season hand cultivating and weeding were essential. Weather permitting,

¹⁷ On local developments immediately following this see; Raymond Leader, January 15, 1915, p. 1; January 22, 1915, pp. and 4; February 26, 1915, p. 1; March 5, 1915, p. 4; March 12, 1915, p. 1; March 26, 1915, p. 1; Cardston Globe, January 7, 1915, p. 4; January 14, 1915, p. 1; March 11, 1915, p. 1; Leonard J. Arrington, Beet Sugar In The West: A History of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1891-1966 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), p. 188.

¹⁸ CSP, vol. XXIX (No. 11, 1905), p. 203.

the beets were ready to harvest by the end of October. Harvesting required the pulling and topping of the beets, with sugar making beginning when the beets were delivered to the factory. Thinning and harvesting both required back-breaking intensive labour. Thinning in particular forced the worker to crawl on hands and knees through the field. The weather, especially during the fall harvest season, was often cold and wet and this added to the physical discomfort of working in the fields.

The Bloods, permanently resident in the area were an ideal source and, perhaps, Knight had them in mind when he claimed that acquiring sufficient labour was no hindrance.¹⁹ One fact is clear, there was no other identifiable body of potential labour in such close proximity. Where else could one hope to find hundreds of workers available at a moment's notice? When the opportunity was available and the conditions suitable many Bloods left the reserve each fall to labour in the Raymond beet fields.

In anticipation of a smooth start up for the 1903 processing season, Knight began arranging for labour to work the fields and the first place he apparently turned to was the Blood Reserve. In November, 1902, well before the first beet planting, company representative, H.S. Allen, wrote Blood Indian Agent, James Wilson, of the company's need for

¹⁹ Raymond Rustler, May 31, 1911, p. 7.

"A great number of hands...to weed and thin beets." Allen hoped Blood labourers could be hired for this work. In an effort to get good value for the company's dollar, Allen attempted to give Wilson a lesson in Native work habits pointing out that, in his opinion, women and children would do work as good as or better than "bucks" and should they prove willing "large numbers" would be employed.²⁰

In January, 1903, company manager, E.P. Ellison, approached Wilson once again to arrange for the Bloods' assistance with the fall harvest. Although Wilson promised Ellison help in any way possible he refused to guarantee any specific number of Bloods for the work because he feared that they might not be able to perform this new and specialized labour.²¹ By March, however, Wilson again promised, keeping Allen's reservations about male labour in mind, to encourage the employment of women and children in the beet fields.²² By late October, however, any labour shortage had been resolved. For example, Agent Wilson was unable to find teams to deliver hay to Lethbridge owing to the fact that "all the Indians

²⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1535, document 214, H.S. Allen to Wilson, Nov. 28, 1902.

²¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1724, pp. 947-48, James Wilson to E.P. Ellison, January 30, 1903.

²² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1721, p. 399, James Wilson to E.P. Ellison, March 10, 1903.

have gone to the Beet [sic] cutting and hauling at Raymond,..."²³ This arrangement with the Bloods was so rewarding that the company expressed a desire to contract Blood labourers, by the acre or on a daily basis, to thin, hoe, dig and top six hundred acres of beets from May to October of the following year. However, still lacking confidence in the Bloods' abilities, Wilson advised that they be restricted to thinning activities and that Whites be employed for the other tasks.²⁴ The company was so impressed with the Bloods' work that it hoped to use Blood labourers to also put up hay.²⁵

Initially the use of Blood labour was beneficial for all concerned, and in the opinion of the new Blood Agent, R.N. Wilson, the business relationship of the Blood reserve with Knight Sugar and the Raymond citizenry was worth encouraging. The new agent was also more aggressive on the part of the Bloods, and more confident of their suitability for beet work. Responding to a Department inquiry about Indian labour in the beet fields Wilson wrote:

²³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1721, p. 707, J. Wilson to Geo. Houks, October 22, 1903.

²⁴ GAI, BIAC, file 18, E.P Ellison to James Wilson, Jan. 20, 1903; H.S. Allen to James Wilson, September 28, 1903.

²⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1535, p. 254, E.P. Ellison to J. Wilson, May 15, 1903.

there is nothing in connection with the growing of beets that may not be learned by our Indians, and as the work appears to be profitable enough I am of the opinion that we should encourage some of them to go to Raymond when required by the Sugar Company. Other points in favor of the scheme are the fact that women and children can materially assist in the occupation...²⁶

Wilson also noted that the nature and timing of the work in the beet fields did not interfere with the Bloods' yearly round of activities on the reserve.²⁷ In the one case where they conflicted with the issuance of treaty annuities, the Department was willing to consider an adjustment of the payment schedule, so as not to interfere with the beet harvest or with the Bloods' opportunity to earn extra income. This was an important consideration in the Department's desire to turn Natives into self-supporting independent workers on the theoretical White model.²⁸

The increased sugar beet acreage resulted in greater demand for Blood labour at various critical times during the

²⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1725, p. 716, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, July 6, 1904.

²⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1725, p. 716, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, July 6, 1904.

²⁸ D.J. Hall, Clifford Sifton: The Young Napoleon, 1861-1900, Volume I (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981), pp. 269-270; D.J. Hall, Clifford Sifton: The Lonely Eminence 1901-1929, Volume II (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), p. 43; D.J. Hall, "Clifford Sifton And Canadian Indian Administration 1896-1905," Prairie Forum, Vol. 2 No. 2 (1977), pp. 128-129.

growing season. A query from the Home-Seekers Association, Cardston District, wondered whether the organization was at liberty to hire Blood labour "as we wish."²⁹ The DIA officials, however, were not about to let the Bloods be hired on an individual basis, perhaps to ensure that fair hiring practices were followed and that pay equity prevailed. Indian Affairs official, Frank Pedley, stipulated that Native labour be paid at the same rate as Whites, in cash, and that accommodation be provided to workers if they were not expected to provide their own.³⁰

By the 1905 growing season it was evident that Knight Sugar had come to rely on the Bloods as the main labour source for their beet production. That fall manager Ellison once again asked for Bloods at Raymond and reminded the agent that they would be paid "what it is worth."³¹ Blood workers, in turn, began to count on the employment at Raymond as an

²⁹ GAI, BIAC, file 17, J.P. Jardine to R.N. Wilson March 19, 1904; Home-Seekers Association to R.N. Wilson, March 31, 1904.

³⁰ Both Pedley, and earlier, Wilson expressed a preference that the Bloods be hired for certain tasks only, and these generally were outside activities. Perhaps this has to do with the Darwinistic belief that Indians needed the outdoor freedom. As for wages; "It is stated that from \$1.00 to \$1.75 per day can be made..." NAC, RG 10, vol. 1147, p. 87, Frank Pedley to J.H. Gooderham, April 29, 1904; also GAI, BIAC, file 17.

³¹ GAI, BIAC, file 17, E.P. Ellison to John W. Jowett, May 12, 1905.

important source of yearly income. Depending on the numbers employed, the sugar beet work was profitable.³² In fact this work became so profitable that the Bloods avoided less remunerative work. For example, they delayed the delivery of 25 tons of hay requested by George Skelding of Macleod because most of the Bloods and their teams were in the Raymond beet fields.³³

In 1906, the Calgary Herald recognized both the Bloods' capacity for work and the skill acquired after three years of experience with all aspects of sugar beet cultivation. The writer noted: "One likes best to watch the Indians at work; they make their long, rapid strokes with inimitable grace and the utmost nonchalance. When the whites are listlessly and laboriously getting in the last hours of a long, hot day, [the Indians] seem quite as unexhausted as in early dewy

³² The Department reported that "Some of the Blood Indians...earned over \$2,000 in topping and hauling beets . . ." CSP, 27, No. 11, 1905, Vol. XXIX, page 203. Dempsey says that the Bloods earned \$2,182.25 for the 1905 season. Hugh A. Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader: A Biography of James Gladstone, Indian Senator (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986), p. 26.

³³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1548, p. 561, Acting Indian Agent to Geo. Skelding, October 7, 1905. In fact the exodus of the reserve was so complete that on October 23, the agent was not even able to arrange delivery of a load of sawdust because of a lack of freighters and equipment. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1548, p. 580, Acting Agent to Peter McLaren, October 23, 1905; NAC, RG 10, vol. 1548, p. 595, Indian Agent to Peter McLaren, October 30, 1905.

morning."³⁴ The acquired skill and dedicated labour did indeed bring its rewards. The company estimated that about \$12,000 was paid out to Natives in wages in 1905. Although the company had to estimate what was paid by local farmers and did not know if all the labourers were Bloods,³⁵ it is fairly certain the vast majority of workers were Bloods from the reserve.

In the fall of 1906, with a fourth harvest imminent, the importance of the Bloods' contribution to the Raymond sugar beet industry was obvious. One local farmer using Blood labour wrote Agent Wilson in the hope that the coming annuity payments could be delayed so as not to interfere with the harvest. To impress upon Wilson the urgency of his request he added: "If you can arrange this for them it will be a great favor to the Knight Sugar Co. and us as we are

³⁴ Calgary Herald, January 6, 1906, p. 8. The above description and the preceding evidence does not entirely support the contention that one of the main dissatisfactions with Indian labour was that they damaged beets during the thinning stage. John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, "Workers, Growers, And Monopolists: The 'Labour Problem' In The Alberta Beet Sugar Industry During The 1930s," in Michiel Horn (ed.) The Depression In Canada: Responses to Economic Crisis (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1988), p.32.

³⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1536, p. 105, E.P. Ellison to R.N. Wilson, August 5, 1906. The agent's report for the year ending March 31, 1907 gave a total income of \$37,373.38 for the Bloods of which \$9,000.00 was earned from work at the Raymond sugar beet fields. CSP, No. 27, 1907, p. 161.

depending on them to harvest the crop."³⁶

On October 24 E.P. Ellison made the case for Knight Sugar with the same urgency. He pointed out that Blood workers had employment until December 1, and requested a deferment of annuities for 30 days.³⁷ The request was accommodated but this was later found to be a mistake as the poor weather cut the harvest short. Wilson wrote, with some irritation and concern, that the delay in treaty payments had left many of the Bloods short of funds to purchase necessary winter clothing. When weather or culture did not dictate otherwise the Bloods were dedicated workers. Agent Wilson's report for 1908 observed that during the previous spring "several hundreds" of the Bloods secured a month's employment thinning beets "and in the month of October practically the whole population of the reservation was busy harvesting beets in the same fields."³⁸

An apparent exception to the general practice of Bloods as workers, Prairie Chicken, driven by the entrepreneurial spirit, grew beets for Knight Sugar on contract. The factory rented him 10 acres, ploughed it for 20 dollars, disced and

³⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1539, p. 145, J.T. Smellie to R. Wilson, October 16, 1906. Emphasis added.

³⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1539, p. 146, E.P. Ellison to R. Wilson, October 24, 1906.

³⁸ CSP, No. 27, 1908, p. 168.

leveled it for 10, furnished seed and planted it for 18, supplied needed water for six, and charged him 35 dollars for rent, for a total investment of 89 dollars. The company agreed to purchase his beets at five dollars a ton delivered to the factory (a distance of one and one half miles) and speculated that, "with good care he should get from 8 to 10 tons per acre from the land."³⁹ The ever cautious Agent Wilson sanctioned this contract on the understanding that the payments were to be deducted from the sale of the beet crop and that the Department would in no way be responsible should the joint venture fail.⁴⁰ Prairie Chicken experienced some initial success as he was reportedly thinning his 10 acres of beets in July.⁴¹ However, the results of his efforts remain a mystery.⁴²

³⁹ GAI, BIAC, file 16, T.J. O'Brien to James Wilson, March 8, 1906. These rates seem to be in keeping with rates charged in 1907 as indicated in a contract between Knight Sugar Company and Thos. Bennett. In fact Prairie Chicken may have had a better deal considering that the contract with Bennett stipulated that he was to pay one dollar per acre rent and two dollars per acre ploughing. Bennett was to be paid \$4.50 per ton for the beets but was to pay the company \$2.35 per acre for the haulage of beets to the factory. GAI, Knight Sugar Company Papers (KSCP), labour contract between Knight Sugar Company and Thos. Bennett, May 18, 1907.

⁴⁰ GAI, BIAC. file 16, Indian Agent to T.J. O'Brien, March 31, 1906.

⁴¹ GAI, BIAC, file 21, T.J. O'Brien to R.N. Wilson, July 7, 1906.

⁴² Given the minimum estimated harvest above Prairie

En masse or individually, the Bloods' contribution to the sugar beet industry was significant. Royal North West Mounted Police Commissioner, A.B. Perry believed the Bloods' participation critical due to the large numbers involved, and because of the scarcity of White labour. Officer J.O. Wilson, Lethbridge, felt it was impossible to carry on the beet industry except for the Indians.⁴³ This work was so difficult that it was considered "too tedious for the white man, the yellow labor was tried, but without success. The work was then given to the Indians, who, with their stolid natures, have proved to be the most successful."⁴⁴ Given prevailing attitudes about the nature of the work, and the belief that it was unsuited to Whites, Natives were especially desired for both the thinning and harvesting phases of the operation.

Sporadic attempts to import labour for the beet fields had no permanent impact on the industry, and in the fall of 1911 Knight Sugar once again anticipated the Bloods entering into their employ. Clearly Blood labourers were needed and Raymond Knight implored agent Julius Hyde, "we would like if

Chicken stood to gross \$400.00 on the sale of his beets for an initial outlay of \$89.00.

⁴³ CSP 28, Vol. XLII, 1907-8, p. 65, 82.

⁴⁴ Raymond Rustler, May 31, 1911, p. 7. This was referred to as 'stoop labor' and in the U.S. was given to Chinese and Japanese Labourers because white farmers refused to do it. Arrington, Beet Sugar In The West, p.23.

possible for you to let all the Indians come that you can spare, thinking that it will both benefit ourselves and the Indians also."⁴⁵ Almost a month later Knight Sugar urgently requested a deferral of treaty payments so as not to hinder harvesting and immediately stated the crux of the company's problem. The Bloods' presence at Raymond was essential "as we are very short of help, and will likely lose a lot of our beets unless the Indians remain to help us."⁴⁶

Industry Problems

Although the Bloods were critical to the industry they did not view sugar beet harvest labour as essential to their own survival. Sometimes they had an aversion to the taxing work and found other income opportunities more appealing while on other occasions they were indifferent to the benefits of the income earned. These attitudes proved a source of great frustration to Knight Sugar. According to Agent James Wilson in October 1903 about one hundred and fifty Bloods were engaged in filling hay contracts and were therefore not available for sugar beet labour. He sensibly enough concluded that the trip to Raymond was too difficult

⁴⁵ GAI, BIAC, file 41, Ray Knight to W. Julius Hyde, September 22, 1911.

⁴⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1539, p. 273, J.W. Crane? to Mr. Hyde, October 19, 1911;

for the aged who were available.⁴⁷ It was only several weeks later, with their other work completed, that the harvest at Raymond received their attention.⁴⁸

Many Bloods were willing to work in the beet fields; but only if the times they were required meshed with their own needs, in other words, when obligations did not dictate their presence elsewhere. They were certainly unwilling to become a captive labour pool.

The company had difficulty accepting that the Bloods were unwilling to adapt themselves to the company's seasonal needs. J.W. Woolf, a company manager, wrote Agent Wilson in apparent frustration, in September 1903, that the sugar factory was prepared to hire up to 400 Bloods at the White labour rate of eight dollars per acre for topping and throwing the beets into a collection wagon. There was a warning, however, that should Wilson fail to convince the Bloods to appear at Raymond, he, Woolf would be "compelled to bring in foreign labour."⁴⁹ Here, perhaps, is an indication of the White attitude to the labour-intensive work. Woolf's

⁴⁷ NAC RG 10, vol. 1721, pp. 685-86, J. Wilson to E. Ellison, Oct. 2, 1903.

⁴⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1721, p. 707, J. Wilson to Geo. Houks, October 22, 1903.

⁴⁹ GAI, BIAC, file 18, J.W. Woolf to James Wilson September 29, 1903. Likely Woolf's threat of foreign labour was a reference to Japanese labour from B.C.

promise to pay at the White labour rate suggests that initially, the Bloods had been paid less.

In 1904 Knight Sugar wanted about 50 Bloods to work its fields, but stipulated that they needed a guarantee that their contract would be fulfilled.⁵⁰ This proviso grew out of an unhappy experience in the fall of 1903 when "a large number" of Blood workers, not unexpectedly, abandoned the beet harvest to receive their treaty payment. Aware of the problem the Department expressed the desire that arrangements be made so that, in future, the one activity might not interfere with the other.⁵¹

That said, however, Agent Wilson was unwilling to offer the guarantees that Knight Sugar wanted: that the Bloods perform stated amounts of work. His argument was that the beet work was "'new to them and they must acquire considerably more familiarity with it than they now possess before being in a position to sign contracts.'" Wilson added for good measure "Our Indians are not Chinamen to be farmed out by boess [sic]." ⁵²

⁵⁰ GAI, BIAC, file 17, E.P. Ellison to James Wilson, June 11, 1904.

⁵¹ GAI, BIAC, file 17, J.D. McLean to R.N. Wilson, June 29, 1904.

⁵² NAC, RG 10, vol., 1725, p. 716, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, July 6, 1904.

He also took the opportunity to comment on what he perceived as the double standard applied by the Company in the employment of Indian labour: "When harvesting beets in the fall the hauling in, one of the most profitable jobs, is done by White men, Mormons, and as our Indians have lots of wagons and horses we should insist upon the Indians being permitted to haul in all the roots 'lifted' by themselves."⁵³ Wilson's observation may in part explain the Bloods' willingness to abandon the backbreaking labour in the fields at treaty payment time. Free money certainly had more allure, especially when one recognized, as Blood beet workers surely did, that the least physically demanding and best paying work was reserved for Whites.

It is also possible that the avoidance of work in the beet fields by some Bloods was an effort on their part to break the agent's control over their economic decisions. The agency's attempt, in 1904, to have Knight Sugar garnishee the wages of Bloods in debt to the Department succeeded only in finding one of those on the list working for the company. Manager E.P. Ellison speculated that the remainder worked for local farmers and at any rate he doubted if the agent's

⁵³ NAC, RG 10, vol., 1725, p. 717, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, July 6, 1904. To my knowledge nothing came of this idea.

request could be granted.⁵⁴

The 1906 growing season brought strain to relations between the Blood labourers and individual contractors at Raymond, the result of an apparent bid by contractors to force down the costs of Blood field labour. By late November the sugar beet crop still remained unharvested resulting in an urgent request from one contractor, J.T. Smellie, to Wilson for some 200 Bloods to work his 70 acres, and 300 acres belonging to Knight Sugar as soon as the weather proved favourable. Agent Wilson's response, however, contradicted Smellie's view that only inclement weather was responsible for the delay. Although the weather was, at the time, too cold and wet to allow for outside work Wilson stated:

Should such a thing occur as a warm spell I will be glad to send over any Indians who can be found that are willing to go but I have serious doubts of your being able to get any further material assistance from here this year. Those to whom I have mentioned the matter ridicule the idea of returning and blame the beet farmers for the present situation. They say that they were at Raymond quite long enough to lift the whole crop had they not been delayed by attempts to force down the price and other vexations. If a period of mild weather does come such as to encourage an attempt to dig beets you had better come over and see what you can do yourself with the Indians.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ GAI, BIAC, file 17, E.P. Ellison to John W. Jowett, October 7, 1904.

⁵⁵ GAI, BIAC, file 16, Response to above letter dated Blood Agency Dec. 5, 1906.

The Bloods' abandonment of the harvest was frustrating for the industry and there was likely some temptation to criticize their work habits. But there were none more interested than the Department and Agent Wilson in having the Bloods perform productive labour for which they received cold hard cash. Wilson's comments and concern leaves no doubt that, on this occasion, the beet harvest, with its exposure to the elements, was beyond sensible human endurance. Suitable and comfortable housing was needed for shelter and warmth and warm clothing were required against the chill of the fall damp and snow. It is difficult to blame the Bloods for abandoning the beet work when common sense dictated such a course of action.

The Bloods also brought with them to the beet fields particular habits that frustrated their employers. When J.S. Smellie was approached by two Bloods for work in February of 1907 he indicated a willingness to employ one, provided he "would consent to stay steady during the season...but they [Indians] must make up their minds to stay with it and only go to town Saturday afternoons." For this they would be paid 20 cents an acre with the expectation of making three or four dollars per day if they were dedicated.⁵⁶ Similarly Ellison wrote the reserve agent hoping to recruit 15 teamsters

⁵⁶ GAI, BIAC, file 16, J.S. Smellie to R.N. Wilson, February 20, 1907.

willing to work, not for days, but for months, at 40 dollars a month without board. Getting along with the Bloods was not easy and Ellison queried Wilson on "how we can best handle the Indian labor in the Beet fields."⁵⁷ The labour-intensive nature of the work, employee and employer relations, and the weather all contributed to produce a less than ideal experience for the Bloods. Few of them showed up in the fields for the thinning operations in June, 1907, because Fourth of July celebrations in Montana were more attractive than thinning beets at Raymond.⁵⁸ Regarding the Bloods' attitude towards the beet harvest he observed: "the Indians will drop it and come home as soon as the weather gets too cold for such work no matter what quantity happens to be still in the ground."⁵⁹

Some problems encountered with Blood labourers, however, were rooted in the nature of the industry and were more the making of the employer. For example, the Bloods were often affected by the restrictive and demanding agreements between contractors and Knight Sugar. A contract between Knight

⁵⁷ GAI, BIAC, file 16, E.P. Ellison to R.N. Wilson February 25, 1907.

⁵⁸ GAI, BIAC, file 60, Indian Agent to J.O. Wilson, June 27, 1907.

⁵⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1539, p. 195, Indian agent to Indian Commissioner, Sept. 16, 1907.

Sugar Company and Thos. Bennett, for example, indicates that Bennett tied himself to specific obligations that included the requirement that his beets test at 12 percent saccharine and 80 percent purity.⁶⁰ Bennett also had to rent and keep in good repair the company boarding house.⁶¹ Little wonder that contractors such as Bennett felt themselves squeezed between Knight and their hired labour. They had to agree initially to costs and wages based on a sugar beet whose quality and quantity they could not guarantee or predict.

The 1907 season brought the first public admission that the industry was not achieving its expected potential and that the whole venture was in trouble. The Raymond Chronicle reported in May that beet seeding had begun late and that beet acreage was down from the previous year because of fewer contracts. The paper attributed this shortfall to 'labour scarcity' and stated that "although Indian labor will be

⁶⁰ Among the conditions of the contract was that Bennett tied himself to a specified tonnage of beets, accepted the expense for the preparation of the land including rental of \$1.00 per acre, ploughing at \$2.00 per acre, \$0.85 per acre for smoothing, seed at a rate of \$1.35 per acre, planting at \$0.40 per acre, \$0.80 per acre for cultivating twice, ploughing up the beets at \$1.25 per acre, and \$2.35 per acre for the haulage of beets to the factory. GAI, KSCP, Labour Contract between Knight Sugar Company and Thos. Bennett, May 18, 1907.

⁶¹ GAI, KSCP, agreement between Knight Sugar Company and Thomas Bennett, May, 1907.

available as far as it can be made to go, the drawback being that there is not enough of it."⁶²

The accuracy of the Chronicle's assumption about the shortage of labour is difficult to gauge. Farmers have always planted their crop without assurance of harvest labour and fluctuations in availability, including shortages, are common to the history of agriculture in the west.⁶³ One never knew how this situation would change from one season to the next. Perhaps in this period of increasing harvest costs contractors unwilling to accept the risks as being worth the effort turned their fields to crops that were less labour intensive and therefore cheaper to harvest.⁶⁴

⁶² Raymond Chronicle, May 10, 1907, p. 1.

⁶³ John Herd Thompson, "Bringing in the Sheaves: The Harvest Excursionists, 1890-1929," The Canadian Historical Review (Vol. LIX, No. 4, December 1978), p. 468; W.J.C. Cherwinski, "A Miniature Coxey's Army: The British Harvesters' Toronto-to-Ottawa Trek of 1924," Labour/Le Travail (Volume 32, Fall 1993), pp. 140-141; W.J.C. Cherwinski, "Wooden Horses and Rubber Cows: Training British Agricultural Labour for the Canadian Prairies, 1890-1930," Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers 1980, p. 133; For particulars on the 1908 harvest season see W.J.C. Cherwinski, "The Incredible Harvest Excursion of 1908," Labour/Le Travailleur (Vol. 5, Spring 1980), pp. 57-80; Danysk, Hired Hands, pp. 24, 85; John Herd Thompson, The Harvests Of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (Toronto: McClelland And Stewart Ltd., 1978), pp. 62-63.

⁶⁴ Adelman says that a period of increased harvest wages began in 1907 and that "Wages rose by almost 60 percent between 1907 and 1912." Jeremy Adelman, Frontier Development: Land, labour, And Capital On The Wheatlands of

There is no doubt, however, that Knight Sugar believed labour to be the main problem as later in the month the Chronicle reported that Manager Ellison had returned from a business trip east in which he had made arrangements to ensure adequate workers for the approaching season. According to the Chronicle "Labors [sic] agencies and emigration bureaus were brought into requisition and we are assured labor will be shot in here in such quantities that a scarcity will not again occur."⁶⁵ This new source of labour was likely calculated to arrive for the fall harvest as the Chronicle reported an "Indian Influx" completing the June thinning activity. "These nimble fingered 'bloods' are hailed" the Chronicle said "as the salt of the situation who will save the crop."⁶⁶ Without the Bloods the beet industry would indeed have been in dire straits, its very survival doubtful.⁶⁷

In 1908 another solution to the labour shortage appeared with the report that Knight Sugar had entered into contract

Argentina And Canada, 1890-1914 (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1994), p. 165.

⁶⁵ Raymond Chronicle, May 17, 1907, P. 1.

⁶⁶ Raymond Chronicle, June 14, 1907, p. 1.

⁶⁷ For their efforts in the 1907 season they earned \$9,000. Esther S. Goldfrank, Changing Configurations In The Social Organization Of A Blackfoot Tribe During The Reserve Period: The Blood Of Alberta Canada (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1945), p. 24.

to have its lands operated by a Japanese "syndicate". This new arrangement, along with the importation of labourers from B.C., were, the Alberta Star said, essential to the survival of the beet business at the present time.⁶⁸ On October 9, the Star reported the Raymond beet harvest to be on in earnest with the best crop in some years. No report was made of Japanese or Indian labourers at work on the 1908 beet harvest.⁶⁹

The continual preoccupation with the need to import labour was based on the view that the Blood labourers were undependable. In the fall of 1911, for example, there was concern that looming treaty payments, an occasion for which the Indians were not willing to be absent from the reserve, would leave the beet fields short of essential labour. On October 12, agent Hyde warned Raymond Knight to expect an exodus of Bloods from the area for treaty payment. Hyde agreed, however, even in the face of the Bloods' objections, to arrange treaty payments at an earlier date so as not to

⁶⁸ Cardston Alberta Star, April 18, 1908, p. 1. The reports on labour shortage are not in keeping with Agent Wilson's report that practically the whole Blood reservation were engaged in the beet fields during the 1907 season discussed above.

⁶⁹ Cardston Alberta Star, October 9, 1908, p. 5. The respite was brief. Although beet acreage reached a height during the 1908 season of 5,200, it decreased annually thereafter. Thompson and Seager, "Workers, Growers and Monopolists," p. 31.

compromise the company's harvest interests.⁷⁰ Anticipating the beet harvest would be finished by the end of October Hyde set treaty days for November 7 and 8.⁷¹ A fall storm curtailed the harvest and left the company facing the prospect of having to leave half its beet crop in the ground as the planned dates loomed. Hyde was then asked to postpone the new treaty payment date to November 20.⁷² Despite urgent appeals Hyde's hands were tied and only a few Bloods worked the company's fields in the fall harvest of 1911.⁷³ To make matters even more uncomfortable for the company there was a rumor that the agent wanted the Indians to demand "\$8.00 per acre for pulling and topping beets" or they would quit. If true, this would present a serious problem as the industry claimed that this work was only worth \$5.00 an acre.⁷⁴ That

⁷⁰ Roger's Sugar Company Archives (RSCA), Vancouver, B.C., W.J. Hyde to Raymond Knight, October 12, 1911. *I am indebted to Joanne Denton, Museum Co-Ordinator, Roger's Sugar Company Archives, for this and subsequent references from Roger's Sugar.

⁷¹ RSCA, W.J. Hyde to Raymond Knight, October 17, 1911.

⁷² RSCA, Knight Sugar Co. to W. Julius Hyde, October 26, 1911.

⁷³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1539, p. 307, J.W. Crane to Indian Officer, Blood Agency, January 13, 1912.

⁷⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1539, p. 274, J.W. Crane to Mr. Hyde, October 19, 1911; RSCA, W.J. Hyde to Knight Sugar Co., October 23, 1911. Adelman notes that between 1907 and 1912

there were problems with Knight Sugar operations is illustrated by the fact that the company acquired 23 men from Utah to help with sugar manufacturing in October.⁷⁵

Labour shortages were again apparent in the fall of 1912 when the company requested "about fifty Indians...at once" for beet field labour.⁷⁶ The difficulty with recruitment this time, however, was because the Bloods had found more profitable employment elsewhere and so the company faced stiff competition for hands. Although some of the Bloods agreed to go, Hyde advised that because of the demand for "Indian labor" many of the Bloods had already departed the reserve for Lethbridge and so Knight Sugar was directed there in its search for more field hands.⁷⁷

Another aspect of the company's difficulty recruiting sufficient Blood labour may have been of its own doing, its willingness to surrender an individual's wages to the agent at his request. Thus in 1913 the company garnisheed the wages of one Hind Bull sending Agent Hyde \$14.55 for the 10

the cost of Labour rose by nearly 60 percent. It may have been in response to this that Crane was commenting on the farmers' ability to pay. Adelman, Frontier Development, p. 165.

⁷⁵ Raymond Leader, October 27, 1911, p. 4.

⁷⁶ RSCA, Knight Sugar Co. to W.J. Hyde, October 12, 1912.

⁷⁷ RSCA, W.J. Hyde to The Knight Sugar Company, October 17, 1912.

and one half days worked.⁷⁸ The unfortunate Hind Bull had earned only \$15.55 in total of which one dollar went for horse feed.⁷⁹ The end result was that Hind Bull pocketed nothing for his efforts, a result not likely to endear the company to him or to encourage his working in their fields if employment was available elsewhere.

Retrospective And Conclusions

Critics then, and historians since, have attempted to explain the failure of the Knight Sugar Company in 1915. On April 26, 1917, in a retrospective, the Cardston Globe presented its version of this "most unfortunate chapter of Raymond's history," and correctly observed that acrimony between Knight Sugar and local farmers was the problem. "The latter could not understand the attitude of the company," the Globe observed, "while they in turn seemingly would not cater to the wishes of the man on the land. The result was ill feeling, non-cooperation and finally-no beets." The troubles, the Globe believed, began with minor grievances, the farmers wanting concessions - the nature of which the paper did not explain - which the company did not give, so

⁷⁸ GAI, BIAC, file 96, Jas. E. Ellison to W. Julius Hyde, May 31, 1913; Indian Agent to J.E. Ellison, June 6, 1913.

⁷⁹ RSCA, Knight Sugar Co. to W.J. Hyde, May 31, 1913.

farmers abandoned beet cultivation. The company then undertook beet growing on its own account, and "A certain class [Bloods?] of outside labor was imported but it was not a success. Then another race [Japanese?] was brought in but they were unable to grow sufficient beets to make the running of the factory profitable." The Globe stated that the fault was not with the country, which was well suited to the growing of sugar beets, and "not in the ability of the farmers to grow beets but in his ability to overlook the shortcomings of the Sugar company."⁸⁰ Thus the failure of the industry was put to the failings of man, not the land.

John F. Sweeting, Industrial Commissioner for the C.P.R. had, in 1914, investigated the industry at Raymond. In a presentation before the Western Canada Irrigation Congress, which met in Kamloops British Columbia, in July, 1916, Sweeting argued that the history of sugar beet cultivation made its 'unlimited' potential self evident; but it "remains a question of capital and labour to extend production up to market requirements."⁸¹ Sweeting did not give details about labour but his contention was supported by another beet

⁸⁰ Cardston Globe, April 26, 1917, p. 8.

⁸¹ Western Canada Irrigation Association, Reports of the proceedings of the tenth annual convention held at Kamloops, B.C., July 25, 26 and 27, 1916, Ottawa, Gov. Print. Bureau, 1917, p. 141. In a neat twist on achieving 'market requirements' Arthur Dahl suggested the planting of fewer acres more intensely. The Raymond Leader, December 24, 1914,

grower who stressed, "I cannot produce sugar beets at Agassiz [B.C.] and pay twenty cents an hour for ordinary labour and twenty-five cents an hour for a team, and pay interest on \$150 an acre on land. That would be the quickest way for me to starve to death." He concluded that the biggest obstacle to success in the business was 'labour'.⁸² An observer from the Lethbridge Experimental Farm presented the argument that the collapse of Knight Sugar Co. operations was due to the failure of management to "bring in the proper labour" creating dependence "on local labour and Indian labour. There were other reasons, too, but that was the principal reason, ...If the manager does not see to that question of labour; that is, thinning and topping, the factory cannot be operated successfully." Another observer unequivocally stated that "the labour has to be imported..."⁸³ Raymond Knight also believed the latter to be true, and reportedly said that "the sugar industry failed because the proper labor

p. 1. The conference also promoted mixed farming. The Kamloops Standard-Sentinel, July 28, 1916.

⁸² Western Canada Irrigation Association, Reports, p. 144.

⁸³ Western Canada Irrigation Association, Reports, pp. 144-145. Emphasis added. Thompson and Seager also agree that the failure of the enterprise is attributable to the "'labour problem.'" Thompson and Seager, "Workers Growers And Monopolists," p. 31; Dawson, Group Settlement, pp. 233-234.

was not available at the proper time."⁸⁴

Unfortunately, because the critics did not elaborate on the problems with local or Indian labour, it is difficult to evaluate these criticisms. The company had imported labour and that too had failed. Despite evidence to the contrary both critics and supporters of the sugar beet industry regarded labour as the weakest link in the chain of factors that hampered the successful development. Considering the period in which this industry had its rise and fall, one should not find this conclusion, however erroneous, surprising. This was a difficult time for labour/management relations in Canada as workers strove to share in the booming Canadian economy during the pre-World War I period. This was followed by depression and unemployment in 1913 and 1914.⁸⁵ Much of this unrest occurred in Alberta and British Columbia and it is inconceivable that this atmosphere of conflict did not contaminate the view of labour's place in the failure of Knight Sugar.

Labour problems undoubtedly played a role in the operational difficulties experienced by Knight Sugar, but how significant a part is questionable. According to sociologist

⁸⁴ Raymond Leader, October 14, 1916, p. 1. Emphasis added.

⁸⁵ Stuart Marshall Jamieson, Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest And Industrial Conflict In Canada, 1900-66 (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1968), pp. 148-150.

C.A. Dawson it was the combination of weather, supply and labour, that ultimately brought about the failure of Knight Sugar. The problems for the industry were rooted in the initial miscalculations about the Southern Alberta environment. The Mormons had settled in that part of Alberta during a cycle of 'wet years', and so erroneously concluded the area suitable for sugar beet agriculture. The arrival of chinooks that resulted in the thawing of beets, after they had been initially frozen, were, if not common, certainly more than rare occurrences. Consequently, according to Dawson, the company failed to secure sufficient beets, never more than 22,000 tons, sometimes as low as 8,000.⁸⁶ According to one estimate once production began, the Raymond plant required 400 tons of beets for a 24 hour run, and the season lasted for approximately two months.⁸⁷ Indeed both Raymond Knight and J.E. Ellison had criticized the lack of support from local farmers,⁸⁸ in part explained by the farmers' preference for growing grain or raising livestock,⁸⁹ likely

⁸⁶ Dawson, Group Settlement, pp. 233-234.

⁸⁷ The above figures are given in the Raymond Rustler for the 1911 season. Raymond Rustler, May 31, 1911, p. 7.

⁸⁸ Raymond Leader, December 24, 1914, p. 1.

⁸⁹ L.A. Rosenvall, "The Transfer Of Mormon Culture To Alberta," L.A. Rosenvall and S.M. Evans (eds.), Essays on the Historical Geography of the Canadian West: Regional

because such activities were more traditional, familiar and predictable. Industry boosters promoted beet cultivation, and indeed mixed farming in general, on the basis of a false economy; far from being economically profitable, beets required "more than ten times the labour required for an acre of grain."⁹⁰

The concerted efforts of the company in the latter phase of its existence to arrange for a more extensive beet cultivation supports the contention that it was a shortage of sugar beets that was the main reason for the difficulties experienced by Knight Sugar.⁹¹ Increased sugar beet acreage

Perspectives on the Settlement Process (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1987), p.143.

⁹⁰ "About 115 hours of hand labour was required to produce an acre of beets . . ." Thompson and Seager, "Workers, Growers and Monopolists," p. 31. Paul Voisey has convincingly illustrated the misplaced faith in the profitability of mixed farming. Paul Voisey, "A mix-Up Over Mixed Farming: The Curious History Of The Agricultural Diversification Movement In A Single Crop Area Of Southern Alberta," in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson (eds.), Building Beyond The Homestead: Rural History On The Prairies (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 179-206; Paul Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 85-87, 90-92.

⁹¹ Both Dawson and Thompson and Seager on the shortage of crop. See Dawson, Group Settlement, p. 233; Thompson and Seager, "Workers, Growers and Monopolists," p. 31. Production for 1907 fell below that of 1906 "on account of not being able to secure beets. The Farmers are slow to contract for the growing of sugar beets. The people of Cardston have quit altogether, the last season they planting only one half the acreage contracted and delivered no beets." GAI, KSCP, President to Board of Directors, March 31, 1908.

at a time when the industry was experiencing severe labour shortages only compounded the company's financial difficulties. The beet sugar industry should have been no more affected by labour problems than other sectors of agriculture, perhaps less so.⁹² Beet harvesting occurred in October and November, after the harvesting of wheat and other grains had generally concluded,⁹³ and when, therefore, one could anticipate a surplus of harvesters, or at least little competition from other sectors of the agricultural economy. The fact that the plant closed when the government's 12 year tax exemption ended is a good indication that sugar beet cultivation was not a profitable enterprise.⁹⁴

Although more extensive investigation is required to confirm the part they played, other market factors were likely significant in the demise of Knight Sugar. One contract grower complained of being left with a "Hinky Dinky narrow track" when the rail line between Cardston and Raymond

⁹² Jeremy Adelman has argued that "The shortage of labour was the overwhelming constraint on frontier development in Argentina and Canada. Workers had to come from outside the region of settlement." Adelman, Frontier Development, p. 184. On the "absorptive power of the land" with which employers had to compete see; Adelman, Frontier Development, pp. 159-60.

⁹³ Thompson and Seager, "Workers, Growers and Monopolists," p. 33.

⁹⁴ Thompson and Seager, "Workers, Growers and Monopolists," p. 32.

was upgraded to standard gauge and so he contemplated leaving his beets in the ground.⁹⁵

There are also indications that Knight Sugar lacked a certain marketing savvy. The company canceled a sales agreement it had with Nicholson & Bain, Calgary, apparently because of a lack of sales of its product. Nicholson & Bain protested that the problem was not of its making but could instead be attributed to Knight Sugar's failure to meet consumer demand for product in twenty pound sacks.⁹⁶

Furthermore, an Edmonton retailer complained that one of its competitors was receiving Knight Sugar at "jobbers" prices and threatened to "cut out Raymond sugar" unless this matter were rectified.⁹⁷ Indeed only 20 percent of the 46,229 bags of sugar produced in 1906 was sold.⁹⁸ Quality control,⁹⁹ the

⁹⁵ GAI, KSCP, Thos. H. Woolford to William Knight, October 18, 1905.

⁹⁶ GAI, KSCP, H.C. Andrews to Knight Sugar Co. Ltd., July 16, 1906.

⁹⁷ GAI, KSCP, [Bedlington & Fisher] to Knight Sugar Company, July 17, 1906.

⁹⁸ GAI, KSCP, Knight Sugar Company Letterbook, April 2, 1906.

⁹⁹ The company complained to one group of contractors about beets falling to the ground and not being properly cleaned before being loaded. GAI, KSCP, Knight Sugar Co. to Beet Growers of Magrath, October 10, 1907.

importance of government subsidies,¹⁰⁰ transportation costs, competition from non-regional producers and government regulation are other factors worthy of detailed study.

As indicated above, others agree with Dawson's assessment of the failure of the initial enterprise and although these various factors, compounded by labour difficulties, may explain the ultimate failure of the Knight Sugar Company, they do not explain its survival for more than a decade. Clearly Blood labourers were pivotal to sustaining the business. True the relationship between the Bloods on the one hand, and Knight Sugar and its contractors, for whom the Bloods worked on the other, was not without its irritants. And it may well be that the company and local farmers wanted an alternate source of labour. But the simple fact was that no other was available locally, and importing labour proved to be no solution; indeed it was as problematic as it was helpful. Cecilia Danysk has observed that 'hired hands' were notoriously unreliable¹⁰¹ since "Agricultural

¹⁰⁰ GAI, KSCP, Knight Sugar Co. Letterbook, Minutes of Directors Meeting, April 2, 1906, p. 37.

¹⁰¹ Cecilia Danysk, "'A Bachelor's Paradise': Homesteaders, Hired Hands, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1880-1930," in Catherine Cavanaugh and Jeremy Mouat (eds.) Making Western Canada: Essays on European Colonization and Settlement (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996), p. 177. see also the experience of a hired hand in Stettler, Alberta in Paul Voisey (ed.), A Preacher's Frontier: The Castor, Alberta Letters of Rev. Martin W. Holdom, 1909-1912

labourers operated within the framework of capitalism but they pursued their own aims, which were often antithetical to those of capital."¹⁰² The Bloods, however, were locally situated unlike migratory harvesters. Year after year they provided honest, and for the most part, dependable labour in the beet fields. Both Knight Sugar and the contractors admitted the Bloods were essential at all aspects of beet cultivation but particularly at harvest.

Unfortunately for the industry the Bloods, like the hired hands they were, refused to subvert their own interests for the sake of the sugar beet, even though the agent occasionally altered the tribal calendar for the benefit of the company. Blood workers were also aware of the value of their labour and, as any sensible group in a competitive market, sold it to the highest bidder. When the offers were too low they simply withheld their services from the market. But the Bloods, as producers of labour and consumers of goods in the capitalist economy of which they were clearly a part, were willing to work more often than not, and as a consequence Knight Sugar survived as long as it did. The industry had not by 1915-16 reached such a state of mechanization that it could do without much manual labour.

(Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1996), pp. 52-53.

¹⁰² Cecilia Danysk, Hired Hands: Labour and the Development of Prairie Agriculture, 1880-1930 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), p. 11.

An opportunity to break the fetters of the agent's control and to gain additional income and economic independence lured the Bloods into the Raymond beet fields.

The closing of the Knight Sugar Company factory at Raymond ended the initial phase of the sugar beet industry in southern Alberta. The second phase began with the re-opening of a factory, in 1925, by the Canadian Sugar Factory, Ltd., a subsidiary of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company.¹⁰³ It appears that the Bloods played only a minor and sporadic role in the newly reconstituted industry. In the first year of production and harvest, 1925, the company imported Hungarians from British Columbia to do the contract labour of thinning and hoeing for eight dollars a day.¹⁰⁴ With the crop ready to harvest, however, the local press again trumpeted the shortage of labour,¹⁰⁵ a problem that also plagued the 1926 harvest season. For this occasion the labour problem was expected to be solved by settling immigrant families "right on the farms of the growers" thus ending the need to use "transient labour."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Dawson, Group Settlement, p. 234; Arrington, Beet Sugar, p. 108; Laliberte, "The Canadian State," p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ Raymond Recorder, Sept. 7, 1925.

¹⁰⁵ Raymond Recorder, Sept. 25, 1925.

¹⁰⁶ It is unclear whether or not the Bloods were

The industry was by this time in transition. Hill Spring students were given a two week leave from school to assist¹⁰⁷ in the 1927 harvest, which was expected to produce 45-50,000 tons of beets.¹⁰⁸ There was also a new invention in the beet field, an automatic beet loader developed by Frank Leavitt of Glenwood, which could "easily load 400 or 500 lbs. of beets at a single operation." Drawn behind a beet wagon it speeded up collection. The News predicted that this invention would change the nature of beet harvesting giving "promise of eliminating one of the most backbreaking and disagreeable phases of beet-growing, for the loading of beets into the wagon has always been the bug-bear of the be[e]t field."¹⁰⁹

When the sugar factory began its production run in October, 1928, the nature of the work had changed such as to permit the employment of young high school girls for the lighter work¹¹⁰ but there was no clue as to the identity of the remainder of the 200 employees. At the close of the beet

considered part of this 'transient' labour. Cardston News, March 17, 1927, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ U.I.D. News, October 20, 1927, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ U.I.D. News, October 6, 1927, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ U.I.D. News, October 27, 1927, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Cardston News, October 11, 1928, p. 1; U.I.D. News, October 11, 1928, p. 1.

harvest in November the U.I.D. News noted that "A number of foreign laborers left Hill Spring" while others found employment with the local farmers.¹¹¹ It was clear that the sugar beet industry had ceased to depend locally for the bulk of its labour needs.

The references to the Bloods' participation in the sugar beet industry during the 1930s and subsequently are incomplete. There is evidence to suggest that although they may have participated on an individual and family basis¹¹² other groups, such as Hungarian immigrants and Japanese Canadians, dominated labour in the beet fields.¹¹³

Not much has emerged about the Bloods' integrative economic pursuits in the decade of the twenties and thirties but there is no reason to suppose that their energies waned or that their desire to participate in local economic

¹¹¹ U.I.D. News, November 8, 1928, p. 1.

¹¹² Hugh A. Dempsey, Tom Three Persons: Legend Of An Indian Cowboy (Saskatoon: Purich Publishers, 1997), p. 106.

¹¹³ William M. Baker, William J. Lodge and James D. Tagg (eds.), Weddings, Work & War. Lethbridge 1914-1945: A Scrapbook History (Lethbridge: University of Lethbridge, 1994), pp. 77, 107. Curiously Ronald Laliberte noted that an attempt by the sugar beet industry to recruit Blood reserve labour in 1953 was unsuccessful but he does not explain why. Laliberte, "The Canadian State," pp. 67-68. Esther Goldfrank also makes reference to Blood sugar beet labour during the 1930s but offers no indication of the extent of this work. Esther S. Goldfrank, "Administrative Programs And Changes In Blood Society During The Reserve Period," Applied Anthropology, 2 (Jan.-Mar. 1943), p. 21.

activities subsided. The changing economic fortunes of the twenties and the economic collapse of the thirties brought more pressing needs for the Bloods and their neighbours. This period saw the collapse of commodity prices in the post World War I period and the devastation of the Blood cattle herd during the winter of 1919-1920. Those individuals engaged in agriculture experienced some success during the 1920s but their enterprise alone could not wholly sustain the tribe. Such conditions made the search for additional income more pressing.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Esther S. Goldfrank, Changing Configurations In The Social Organization Of A Blackfoot Tribe During the Reserve Period: The Blood of Alberta, Canada (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), p.35. Except to highlights disasters Goldfrank does not discuss the economic activities of the Bloods in the twenties and thirties. See also Hugh A. Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader: A Biography Of James Gladstone, Indian Senator (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986), pp. 54-57. Indian income was reduced by almost one half, from \$2,388,485 to \$1,269,510 between 1929 and 1933. John Leonard Taylor, Canadian Indian Policy During The Inter-War Years, 1918-1939 (Ottawa: Indian And Northern Affairs Canada, 1984), p. 92.

Chapter 6

'A prospective citizen of no mean importance': The Bloods As Consumers

Introduction

Credit and the expenditure of cash on hand was another aspect of the interaction of the local Anglo-European community and the Bloods. The nature of this commercial relationship in the post-buffalo period was largely determined by Treaty 7 which established an undeniable economic partnership between White and Native in the southern Alberta locality.¹ How else could the cash and goods promised

¹ That the Indians saw a 'shared' partnership or reciprocal relationship as opposed to a surrender is now accepted by many non-Native and Native historians. Why the subsequent relations between Natives and non-Natives is not seen in this light is unclear. The latest presentation of this argument is Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, et. al. The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), pp. 112-114, 127; Paul Williams, "The Act: Past, Present and Future," Ontario Indian (Vol. 4, No. 4, April, 1981), p. 18. Hugh A. Dempsey, Crowfoot: Chief Of The Blackfeet (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1973), p. 96, 106; Chief John Snow, These Mountains are our Sacred Places (Toronto: Samuel Stevens, 1977), pp. 28-33; John Leonard Taylor, "Two Views on the Meaning of Treaties Six and Seven," in Richard Price (ed.) The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, nd), pp. 43-45. Lynn Hickey, et. al. "T.A.R.R. Interview with Elders Program," in Richard Price (ed.) The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, nd), pp. 105-106, 132. Ovide Mercredi, National Chief, Assembly of First Nations raised

in the treaty² be redeemed or otherwise provided except through the local economic infrastructure? The Indian Act established the Bands as wards of the Crown and thus ensured that the economic tie would not be free and unencumbered.³ In the words of one official of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), the Indian's "position seems like that of a child for whom the state stands in loco parentis."⁴ Consigning the

this issue recently when arguing for assistance to improve economic conditions on Native reserves; "We were willing to share-but instead they took and took and took, and they took so much that we did not have enough resources left to meet our own basic needs...Had the treaties been honoured, had our people been treated as partners, we would be able to provide for our own needs." Western Native News, September, 1996, Vol. 9, No. 6, p. 2. Some scholars believe that the Natives were a sovereign people who have never been conquered. The treaties are, therefore, "'peace and friendship' treaties, which if anything reinforce the concept of the equal nationhood of First Nations." John Olthuis and Roger Townshend, "The Case for Native Sovereignty", Crosscurrents: Contemporary Political Issues, Mark Charlton and Paul Barker (eds.), (Toronto: Nelson Canada, 1994), pp. 65-66.

² See the text of Treaty 7 in Alexander Morris, The Treaties of Canada With The Indians Of Manitoba And The North-West Territories (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1979), pp. 368-375.

³ L.C. Green views the relationship between the Canadian government as one of trusteeship, Canada having the responsibility to act on behalf of its natives. L.C. Green "Trusteeship and Canada's Indians," Dalhousie Law Journal (Vol. 3, No. 1, May, 1976), p. 104, 114-116. If the Indians are viewed as colonized implications for an economic relationship, though one of subservience, is still the same. L.C. Green, "Legal Significance of Treaties affecting Canada's Indians," Anglo-American Law Review (Vol. 1, 1972), p. 119.

⁴ J.A.J. McKenna, "The Indian Laws Of Canada," Catholic

Native population to legal minority status brought to the Canadian government responsibility to ensure that their basic needs were met and basic rights protected. Cultural isolation on reserves was an ideal, but economically separating the Natives from the remainder of the community was neither practical nor possible.

When the Bloods selected a reserve and a sedentary existence they were forced into the local market economy. They became participants in a macro-economic arrangement externally driven and over which they had little or no control. Initially lacking the means to effectively sustain themselves, not unlike their White neighbours, they played out their consumer role on the promise of tomorrow and a cycle of credit and debt. The next 'harvest' or 'sale' held the key to future prosperity and independence while today's needs required satisfaction. The Bloods' participation in the market place as consumers will therefore be discussed for the period from the 1880s to the 1930s. In the process an analysis of business views of the importance of Native trade and of the Indians as customers will be given. The positions of the agents and DIA as intermediaries between local

World (Vol. 54, Oct. 1891), p. 62. That this is believed to be the case was also recognized by former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau when he observed that "'They're not citizens of the provinces as the rest of us are. They are wards of the federal government.'" Green, Dalhousie Law Journal, p. 118; Allan G. Harper, "Canada's Indian Administration: The 'Indian Act'," America Indigena, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct., 1946), p. 298-299.

businesses and the Bloods will also be revealed. The discussion will shed light on the varying economic fortunes of the Blood reserve and the region.

The Merchant Environment

Merchants' houses such as the U.S. firm of I.G. Baker quickly followed 'official' Anglo-Canadian presence in southern Alberta. I.G. Baker in particular found catering to the needs of the NWMP and the Indians very lucrative.⁵ Merchants appeared in Fort Macleod and Cardston soon after the towns were established. Their intent was to cater to the needs of the police and settlers but they soon appreciated the value of the Bloods as consumers as well. The trails, roads and especially railroads tied the towns to the national economy and brought needed merchandise to the local area.⁶ Travel for individuals was still sufficiently difficult, however, to restrict customers to local businesses for many of their immediate needs and to tie businesses to local customers.

⁵ David H. Breen, The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier 1874-1924 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 15.

⁶ Donald G. Wetherell and Irene R.A. Kmet, Town Life: Main Street and the Evolution of Small Town Alberta (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1995), p. 80.

It was not long before the first businesses established in a town faced competition. Fort Macleod, for example, could boast 26 retail businesses by 1887.⁷ Local town businesses, however, were not the only competition for the customer's dollar. Before the turn of the century T. Eaton Company was mailing its sales catalogue across Canada, including the west.⁸ Itinerant businesses and traveling salesmen were also a presence in small town Alberta.⁹ Those that survived adapted their sales practices to suit local circumstances and served White and Native customers.

The DIA set out that Natives could purchase locally goods that were 'needed' or those which provided basic requirements of daily existence or for individual economic functions. A listing signed by Agent J.T. Faunt, circa 1921, shows orders for hardware implements, blacksmith services, harness, lumber and building supplies, horses, and 'machinery'. More personal purchases were groceries, especially beef and flour, clothing, medical services, and undertaker services.¹⁰ Supplying the reserve hospital proved

⁷ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 115.

⁸ Thelma Dennis, "Eaton's Catalogue: Furnishings for Rural Alberta, 1886-1930," Alberta History (Spring 1989), p. 21.

⁹ Wetherell and Kmet, Town Life, p. 126.

¹⁰ See statement of Indian Indebtedness signed by J.T.

a significant source of revenue for Cardston businesses.¹¹ Such approved purchases became 'legitimate' debt for the Natives and 'legitimate' sales for the merchants.

There were times when local businesses purchased produce from the reserve although the extent and value of these transactions remains unclear. The sale of reserve produce required the agent's consent or it was illegal. However, reserve resident Tom Three Persons was one who surreptitiously engaged in disposing of grain, livestock and meat.¹² There is no indication that such large quantities of goods were sold as to require shipment outside of the region to be disposed off.

There are indications, however, that some merchants, tied to the limited local market, charged their Native customers more because of the risk. One agent reported Indian complaints that merchants, when faced with the prospect of having to wait months for Natives to repay their credit advances, inflated the price of goods. Purchasing at wholesale rates for cash was suggested by the agent as a

Faunt, in NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103.

¹¹ See GAI, BIAC, files 154, 156 and 172. See also Laurie Meijer Drees, "Reserve Hospitals and Medical Officers: Health Care and Indian Peoples in Southern Alberta, 1890s-1930," Prairie Forum (Vol. 21, No. 2 Fall 1996), p. 156.

¹² Hugh A. Dempsey, Tom Three Persons: Legend Of An Indian Cowboy (Saskatoon: Purich Publishers, 1997), pp. 97, 99.

suitable response to any unfair selling practices employed by the local merchants.¹³ During the early years of western Canadian development not only Natives were subjected to this business tactic. Barry Broadfoot has noted that there was a difference in country stores between "the price marked...and the price the customer had in her head, and the real price might be somewhere in between. That's called haggling. You'd haggle."¹⁴

The Department's view was that credit purchasing was not conducive to wholesome Indian economic development, an attitude in keeping with public perceptions at this time. The Macleod Gazette, for example, believed that credit-based business, offered to Indian and homesteader alike, was unacceptable and blamed merchants for both the encouragement

¹³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1722, p. 227, Indian Agent to Secretary, Department of Indians Affairs, July 20, 1904. Hanks noted that the Blackfeet were subjected to this business policy in the 1940s and in fact could not get credit locally. L.M. Hanks Jr. and J.R. Hanks, Tribe under Trust: A Study of the Blackfoot Reserve in Alberta (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p.83. This may have been very much a universal business ethic. Colin Bundy has noted of South African Natives that; "'The Native, particularly in the rural areas, has to pay more for the same article than would a European, while for the same class of goods of the same quality he would receive less than a European.'" Unfortunately South African natives did not enjoy the legal protection of their property possessed by Canadian Indians. Colin Bundy, The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 129-130.

¹⁴ Barry Broadfoot, The Pioneer Years 1895-1914 (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Ltd., 1976), p. 279.

and retention of the practice. The system seemed so solidly entrenched that the paper admitted that it was futile to try to get rid of it. Instead, the Gazette suggested that credit be gradually limited until business on a cash basis only was established. The ending of credit, the paper speculated, would "solve the dead-beat problem" and end an "evil" system.¹⁵ The Gazette, however, failed to give either the number of, or the identity of the "dead-beats".

In its opposition to credit purchases, however, the newspaper opposed the basic economic practice which sustained much of prairie development.¹⁶ Harry Buckwold, the owner of a general store at Admiral, Saskatchewan, indicated that credit was important to all customers to carry them from one harvest or sale to the next. Patrons used this option to run up bills at several stores at once or to play one business

¹⁵ Macleod Gazette, March 15, 1894. The origin of the Gazette's view of the evils of credit is unclear, but it may have been related to the collapse of the speculative land market in Manitoba and the subsequent closure of banks in western Canada. "Between 1880 and 1910, it is estimated that approximately thirty percent of Canadian banks failed," though this setback was but temporary. R. Craig McIvor, Canadian Monetary Banking And Fiscal Development (Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada Ltd., 1961), p.76-77.

¹⁶ See for example, T.D Regehr, "Bankers and Farmers in Western Canada, 1900-1939," in John E. Foster (ed.), The Developing West (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1983), pp. 306, 316; Jeremy Adelman, "Prairie Farm Debt and the Financial Crisis of 1914," Canadian Historical Review (Vol. LXXI, No. 4, December 1990), pp. 494-495.

against the other. In response, merchants kept and shared customer lists of amounts due and habits of payment.¹⁷

In 1907 Cardston's Alberta Star said the credit system was bad for both the merchant and the customer because administrative costs and risk required a 20 percent price increase.¹⁸ The Star reflected the local variation of a region-wide movement to eliminate the credit aspect of business operations. The May 24 edition listed 11 Cardston merchant houses that had declared that as of June 1, goods would be sold on a "cash or produce" basis only. The promised benefit to the consumer was cheaper goods. Among the companies participating in the new policy were H.S. Allen and Co. Ltd., and the Cardston Implement Co. Ltd.¹⁹ both of

¹⁷ Payment could be made with cash or goods. Heather Robertson, Salt of the Earth: The story of the homesteaders in Western Canada (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1974), p. 180.

¹⁸ Cardston Alberta Star, May 10, 1907, p. 9.

¹⁹ Cardston Alberta Star, May 24, 1907, p. 4. Selling for produce was akin to barter or 'trade'. There was, however, very little discussion of this aspect of doing business. If the diary of Wallace Weiss is any indication this aspect of commercial exchange with one's neighbours is deserving of attention. Weiss lived south of Medicine Hat and his diary for January, February and March, 1937 shows he 'traded' with neighbours on twenty different occasions and made several other unsuccessful attempts. Items traded included services, livestock, personal items such as rings and watches and a radio. Diary of Wallace Weiss, January, February, March, 1937. Courtesy of Robert Weiss Family. Copy in possession of author.

which were known to do business with the Blood reserve. Interestingly, during this brief campaign no criticism was directed at Blood customers. Ultimately, however, merchants could not resist the established practice and continued to advance credit to their customers.

As national mail order houses made significant inroads into the prairie communities' purchasing habits, they caused a backlash by local interests. The southern Alberta press began to advocate and practically demand loyalty to home grown businesses.²⁰ The ready extension of credit by local merchants, with its attendant risks of default and capital flow restrictions, was likely a response to the competitive pressure of "the ultimate traveling salesman" the catalogue.²¹ The business community faced the formidable challenge of curbing the demand for credit while at the same time facing down mail order operations and enhancing shopper loyalty. True, mail order houses, such as Eaton's, did not extend credit, but the convenience they offered along with competitive pricing based on volume purchasing, was

²⁰ Rocky Mountain Echo, April, 16, 1906; RG 10, Volume 4035, file 306,458.

²¹ Michael Bliss, Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), p. 292. On Eaton's and its competitiveness see Joy L. Santink, Timothy Eaton and the rise of his department store (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 155-158, 205, 251.

attractive.²² The presence of mail order businesses invited criticism from local boosters well into the decade of the 1920s.²³ Credit, therefore, was an essential risk of doing business.

Such views, criticizing credit and promoting cash transactions, naturally surfaced during times of heavy financing of farm expansion. The Cardston News, February 3, 1927, carried the views of one critic who argued that "unrestricted credit and flaws in the banking system," along with dependence on "'next year's crop'" were responsible for the credit crisis. The writer pointed out that short term personal credit had developed to assist businessmen for periods of 30 to 90 days. Such a system was obviously not suited to agriculture where the time needed to grow and market a crop took from six to 10 months and depended on the

²² Broadfoot, Pioneer Years, pp. 287-282. See also pp. 275-277.

²³ For example, in its effort to boost community enterprise, the Cardston Globe refused to sell advertising space to mail order-houses that, in the paper's view, posed a significant threat to local enterprise. The Globe admonished entrepreneurs to effectively increase their commerce by resorting to the more competitive practices of discounting, smaller markup, and sale on a cash basis only. By eliminating the expense incurred from direct loss and the management of credit accounts local merchants could, said the Globe, drive mail order houses out of business. The Cardston Globe, November 12, 1914, p. 1.

vagaries of both weather and markets.²⁴ The inevitable consequence of rampant credit was the crisis of 1920-21 which left the farmer owing "land vendors, mortgage companies, banks, machine companies, stores, garages, arrear taxes, seed and feed distributing centres, neighbours, friends and enemies."²⁵ Little wonder the Star branded farmers as the most ungrateful beneficiaries of the credit system.²⁶

Businesses, no doubt, accepted the wisdom of a credit free economy. This, however, was a highly unlikely solution to their problems and could prove eminently unprofitable in a local economy largely based on seasonal and sporadic employment. Credit was, therefore, available to the Bloods and to settler/farmers because the market value of their produce was significant enough to invite the risks.

Inevitably, credit transactions with the Bloods came under some scrutiny. Louis F. Hardyman, a resident of the Blood Reserve, praised the fairness of Cardston business practices with the Bloods. He especially noted the one price

²⁴ John S. Smith, "The Question of Credit," The Cardston News, February 3, 1927, p. 7. Historian David Jones has also pointed out the inconsistency in the time element of a short term loan of three to four months when farm operations take twice that long. David C. Jones, "We'll all be buried down here": The Prairie Dryland Disaster 1917-1926 (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1986), p. lxi.

²⁵ Cardston News, January 26, 1928, p. 1.

²⁶ Cardston Alberta Star, May 10, 1907, p. 9.

policy for White and Indian alike and the 10 percent discount for cash purchases. As a result, the Bloods did much business there.²⁷ Cardston entrepreneur Charles Ora Card was pleased with himself over the extent and character of his trade with the Bloods. His diary entry for November 3, 1896 indicates his willingness to bargain, giving the Indians discounts on demand, as well as gifts to the children and chiefs. Card stressed his fairness with the Natives, treating them "with the same consideration as white people..."²⁸

By 1899 the variety and location of the businesses the Bloods patronized suggests that they were discriminating shoppers who shopped where they could get the best return. Agent Wilson's records of the Bloods' accounts for August shows they were indebted to businesses in both Cardston²⁹ and Fort Macleod.³⁰ There was a decided preference in the number

²⁷ Cardston Record, April 7, 1899, p. 1. The discount for cash purchasing was in effect a two price policy to discourage credit purchases.

²⁸ D.G. Godfrey and Brigham Y. Card (eds.), The Diaries Of Charles Ora Card: The Canadian Years 1886-1903 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), p. 369.

²⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 405, James Wilson to Messers. H.S. Allen Co., August 31, 1899.

³⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, p. 406, James Wilson to Messers. Barker and Gardiner, August 31, 1899.

of transactions in favour of Fort Macleod businesses,³¹ probably because most Bloods lived closest to that community.

As a part of its policy of isolating the Natives from the negative consequences of direct association with White society, especially while on shopping sprees, the DIA granted the Hudson's Bay Company permission to establish trading facilities on selected reserves.³² This policy was eventually judged unsatisfactory as, in the Department's opinion, the Indians all too quickly parted with their money. Consequently the Department decided that where reserves were situated close to towns it was just as well to let the Indians visit and trade as necessary.³³ Agent Wilson believed

³¹ See letters addressed to various businesses by Wilson in RG 10, vol. 1564, pp. 404-430.

³² See for example letters granting permission for HBC to trade on reserves: NAC, RG 10, vol. 3582, file 1024, by L. Vankoughnet, January 16, 1891; L. Vankoughnet to Indian Commissioner, January 20, 1891; Letter signed by L. Vankoughnet, May 21, 1891. Also permission granted to George F. Tupper trade on Saddle Lake Reserve, No. 125 and Blue Quill's Reserve, No. 127, L. Vankoughnet, April 20, 1891.

³³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3582, file 1024, F.H.P. to Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, September 10, 1896. However, Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed disagreed with this new approach. He believed that prices were more open to influence by the Indians on the reserve than in the town or village store. NAC, RG 10, vol. 3582, file 1024, Hayter Reed to A.E. Forget, September 17, 1896. Desiring to restrict the Indians to the reserve as much as possible was in keeping with Reed's overall isolationist views. F. Laurie Barron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935," Prairie Forum, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 1988), pp. 27-28.

that the Bloods were so placed on the reserve as to be able to easily and advantageously patronize the business of their choice in Macleod, Cardston and Lethbridge, not to mention the numerous independent traders near the reserve.³⁴

Indeed, the Bloods became such heavy purchasers that in 1897 the DIA decided, as an experiment, to allow those individuals and businesses intent on collecting Native debts to be present on the reserves at treaty payment time. The agents were instructed, however, to prevent Indians being unduly influenced or coerced by the merchants. Providing this arrangement worked it could be continued, but the Department emphasized that it would play no part as intermediary in the collection of debt owed by Indians.³⁵ It can be argued, however, that by virtue of providing access to the Indians at this most opportune time, the DIA was a party to debt collection.

³⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3582, file 1024, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, February 17, 1897. The documents do not reveal who these independent traders were. Though eventually reversed the policy of permitting shopping off the reserve was kept for the Bloods. See RG 10, vol. 3582, file 1024, A.E.F to The Deputy of the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, June 4, 1897.

³⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 3582, file 1024, Circular Letter signed J.D. McLean, April 7, 1897.

The Reserve

The annuities promised in treaty were, initially, very important in enabling the Bloods to provide themselves with daily necessities. Local merchants were certainly aware of the August, 1881, annuity payments of some \$26,000.00 received by 2,892 Bloods.³⁶ By October 3,640 of the tribe were reported settled on the reserve.³⁷ Thus the next year's annuity promised to be even more lucrative to local businesses. In the meantime the Bloods continued to be provisioned with supplies purchased locally.³⁸

Vouchers for Indian supplies issued from the Indian office at Fort Macleod during the month of May, 1885, clearly illustrate the importance to the local economy of government money spent in support of the Indians. Statements show that \$14,656.44 was spent for a variety of purposes such as stage fare, salary, wages and travel allowance. By far the biggest cash outlay, \$13,279.51, was to the I.G. Baker Company for

³⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1549, p. 4, Indian Agent to E. Dewdney, August 29, 1881.

³⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1549, p. 16, N. Macleod, to [?], October 31, 1881.

³⁸ See for example a statement of supplies issued in NAC, RG 10, vol. 1550, pp. 836 ff.; RG 10, vol. 1551, pp. 46-48, Indian Agent to Indian Commissioner, January 13, 1884; p. 172, Statement by C.E. Denny July 7, 1883.

beef, \$8,639.95 of it spent on the Bloods.³⁹ The expenditure for June approached \$12,700.00 with the Bloods receiving the lion's share at \$11,289.67.⁴⁰ Similarly \$6,933.65⁴¹ had been spent on hardware for the reserve and most of this was likely purchased locally. Clearly the spending of so much money raised the profile of the Bloods with the local business community which hungered for cash.

The initial view that local merchants held of Blood purchasing power is unclear. It is evident, however, that the Bloods so successfully promoted their limited means that businesses eagerly sought out Blood patronage when they had money and liberally extended credit when they did not. Agent James Wilson noted that the Bloods went on their usual spending spree in Fort Macleod and Lethbridge after receipt

³⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1552, p. 671 ff., Statement by W. Pocklington, June 6, 1885.

⁴⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1552, p. 728 ff., Statement by W. Pocklington, July 14, 1885. A.B. McCullough has estimated that the value of government beef purchases in the Treaty 7 area between 1886 and 1900 amounted to \$2,097,793.50. A.B. McCullough, "Eastern Capital, Government Purchases and the Development of Canadian Ranching," Prairie Forum (Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall 1997), pp. 230-233.

⁴¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1553, p. 34, Statement by W. Pocklington for July, 1885; p. 324, Statements by W. Pocklington November, 1885; pp. 491-92, W. Pocklington to E. Dewdney, February 9, 1886. See RG 10, Vols. 1552, 1553, 1554 for further inventories of purchases made on behalf of the Bloods. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1553, pp. 35-44, Statements by W. Pocklington June 30, 1885.

of their treaty annuity in the fall of 1893. Wilson admitted that the Bloods were sensible consumers. He had reservations, however, about the growing trend in advancing credit which, he felt, was ultimately not to the benefit of the Indians as they quickly incurred debt.⁺²

Through credit, however, merchants assured themselves a portion of the Bloods' annual treaty payments and other income. The Bloods were not only recipients of government beneficence. Individually-earned incomes were an added incentive for merchants to regard the Bloods as welcome customers. In his report for March, 1895, agent Wilson noted that their earnings for the previous nine months were \$5,989.00, the largest to date.⁺³ Total earnings for 1896 saw yet another increase at \$7,510.11.⁺⁴ Even at this early stage

⁺² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, p. 330, James Wilson to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, August 1, 1894. Though the Department expressed a desire to end the credit system as early as 1904 it did not follow through with concerted action. See GAI, BIAC, file 17, J.D. Mclean to R.N. Wilson, February 13, 1904.

⁺³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1560, p. 858, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, April 4, 1895. A final tally for the income for 1895 could be \$7,500. Fraser Taylor, Standing Alone, p. 31.

⁺⁴ Esther S. Goldfrank, Changing Configurations In The Social Organization Of A Blackfoot Tribe During The Reserve Period: The Blood Of Alberta Canada (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1945), p. 21.

of reserve development the Bloods were a growing economic force.

It is clear that the Blood reserve and its people were too significant an economic force to be ignored or alienated. The Blood Agency report for 1904 gives three major divisions of the Blood population of 1,202. There were 25 self-supporting men with 75 dependents for a total of 100, or slightly more than eight percent of the reserve population. Add to these the 166 men considered partially self-supporting, with their 362 dependents; then slightly under 44 percent of the reserve had some or significant purchasing power. There were 574 persons classed as destitute or infirm. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1904, the 'working' group earned \$36,154.78 from wages, the sale of beef, hay and ponies, freighting coal and supplies and coal mining and other occupations⁴⁵ and income for the reserve was in excess of \$40,000.00.⁴⁶ Moreover, at times when the Department was cutting spending⁴⁷ the trade of Bloods of

⁴⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1722, p. 455, J.W. Jewett to Indian Commissioner, Winnipeg, October 13, 1904.

⁴⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1548, p. 535, R.N. Wilson to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, September 19, 1905; CSP 27, No. 11, 1905, Vol. XXIX, p. 203.

⁴⁷ "The merchants of Macleod, Cardston and Lethbridge can tell you that their business from the Indian Agent's orders-which was considerable in past years-has under my management become insignificant and in many cases (groceries

independent means became even more important. The income reported above is, of course, only 'official' income and does not account for income 'unofficially' earned beyond the reserve boundaries by individual contract agreement. This latter income is practically impossible to determine. The money earned, however, from such sources as cutting hay, freighting coal, and working the Raymond sugar beet fields, was substantial.

Significant also were DIA expenditures on behalf of the destitute and infirm to ensure that they received the necessities of life. The upkeep of the agency itself required yearly spending for maintenance, and sometimes substantial expenditure was required as new projects were undertaken on behalf of the Bloods.

Despite a decade of fluctuating economic growth on the prairies the Bloods experienced substantially increased prosperity beginning in 1911. Total income for that year was \$56,750.00 and by 1920 reached \$254,332.00,⁴⁸ over a four-fold increase. A synopsis of the Department's 1913 report for the Blood reserve contained some revealing facts about Blood income and resources. The population was now 1,140, down 62 from the 1904 figure. Of this population 51 Bloods were

for instance) disappeared entirely. This is a common complaint against me, so great has been the reduction in the issue of orders." NAC, RG 10, vol. 1548, p. 332, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, June 20, 1905.

⁴⁸ Goldfrank, Changing Configurations, p. 32.

grain growers and 305 were engaged in stock raising. Clearly the great majority of working males were officially ranchers or farmers and as such were likely absent from the reserve only when seasonally released from their duties. The reserve was 354,000 acres valued at \$5,306,990.00. Total income was given at \$61,600.00, an increase of approximately \$20,000.00 over the 1904 figure. The total of real and personal property owned by the band was \$5,674,000.00 or about \$5,000.00 per capita.⁴⁹⁾ According to Agent W.J. Dilworth, 124 of the Bloods had incurred an authorized debt of \$9,053.60 as of December 1913⁵⁰⁾ for a per capita debt of 73 dollars for those listed or an average debt of seven dollars and 94 cents per person for the entire tribe. It is little wonder that businesses failed to single out the Bloods as a problem when discussing their discontent with the credit system. The failure to point their fingers at the Bloods suggests that the delinquency rate on debt was not so great as to alienate the Bloods or the agency.

⁴⁹⁾ Macleod Spectator, December 18, 1913, p. 11.

⁵⁰⁾ See NAC, RG 10, vol. 7595, file 10103, pt. 2, Agent Dilworth's statement. We conclude that this was authorized debt as it was entered in the agent's accounts.

Policy

Treaty 7 promised both sustenance and assistance that could only be provided through the non-Native market economy. With the need to replace the buffalo economy the Bloods were driven to the business community as consumers in need of credit and were thus tied to mercantile interests through contracted debt. How familiar they were with the workings and trappings of a frontier capitalist economy is an important point as the Bloods had little difficulty utilizing local businesses to satisfy their basic needs. The result was that the Bloods, a people presumed to have so little in the way of personal wealth, had little difficulty in amassing uninsured credit. The general acceptance of Native credit trade was, by 1891, so extensive, and so contrary to the government's ideal of a self-supporting Native population, that the DIA issued a circular "forbidding" orders on credit.⁵¹

⁵¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1558, p. 592, W. Pocklington to deputy of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, November 18, 1891. Agent J.A. Markle of the Manitoba Dakota was likewise opposed to credit as "detrimental" to the Indians interests. Peter D. Elias, The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), pp. 89-90. An American historian referring to the commercial exchange between Indians and local merchants has noted: "Another group that stood to gain from the opening of reservation lands were merchants and others who did business with either Indians or whites near a reservation. Merchants with an established trade with Indians could expect increased sales after the opening of a reservation," to settlement. Leonard A. Carlson, Indians, Bureaucrats, And

The treaties had saddled the federal government with responsibility for the Indians' economic well-being. Initially this was largely done through the government acting as a welfare agency and doling out sufficient goods to meet their minimal needs. The government was aware, however, of the long term costs of such maintenance. One of the principles of the management of Indian affairs in Canada was, therefore, to direct Indian development towards eventual economic independence or self-sufficiency. The key was to teach Natives a healthy appreciation for the value of amassing wealth through individually owned property. They had to be taught to live within their means today to achieve financial independence tomorrow. The DIA and Indian agents, therefore, initially went to great lengths to keep the Indians from buying on credit.

The Department's policy on credit purchasing was straight-forward. To be legitimate all Indian purchases had to be 'authorized' through the agency office. Once approved the Indian took the official permission to purchase specified goods directly to a merchant who was often pre-determined by the agent. The cost for 'needed' purchases was subsequently collected from that person's individual earnings by the agent and forwarded to the merchant.⁵² Since the agent managed

Land: The Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming
(Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), p. 38.

⁵² NAC, RG 10, vol. 1722, pp. 226-27, Indian Agent to

Indian income earned on the reserve, the DIA's policies were thus fulfilled.

This system of controlling purchases, however, had limitations. Not all individual earnings resulted from reserve employment or sales, and the agent had little or no control over money earned off the reserve. The appropriateness of purchases was then left to individual discretion. With their own money, and not needing a 'guarantee' from the agent, the Indians could exercise more freedom of choice in their purchase of goods and services. Natives also visited pool halls⁵³ when in towns such as Fort Macleod, Cardston or Raymond. In the 1930s, for example, one agent complained that the Bloods had spent a lot of money on cars which now required maintenance.⁵⁴ Such behaviour served to reinforce the belief that Natives were not yet ready for free choice and that without supervision would quickly spend themselves deeper into debt.⁵⁵

Secretary, Department of Indians Affairs, July 20, 1904.

⁵³ Donald G. Wetherell with Irene Kmet, Useful Pleasures: The Shaping of Leisure in Alberta 1896-1945 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1990), p. 359.

⁵⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Statement of J.E. Pugh.

⁵⁵ See for example NAC, RG 10, vol. 1722, pp. 226-27, Indian Agent to Secretary, Department of Indians Affairs, July 20, 1904.

Another significant limitation of the DIA policy was the independence of the merchant. They could voluntarily undermine the Department's goals by extending 'unauthorized' credit to Natives.⁵⁶ Defying the Department's wishes, however, was not without its attendant risks. In 1904, for example, Blood Indian agent James Wilson advised one Magrath business that, instead of calling on him, it should look to the collection of its accounts when the Indians returned to work in that community the following year.⁵⁷ Thus this creditor was forced to carry the accounts on his books for a full year risking the possibility that the individuals concerned were either deeper in debt, had not returned to work or had died.

The collection of debt from Natives was likewise difficult in cases where the debtor was unwilling or unable to pay. The problem was rooted in the Indian Act which established the wardship status of the Indians and in the communal nature of property holding. Land, their most valuable commodity, could be alienated or sold only in right

⁵⁶ The behaviour of Blood rancher Tom Three Persons is a good illustration of the limitations of the DIA to control individuals. He kept a personal bank account, sold goods and produce without permission and spent his own money at his pleasure. Hugh A. Dempsey, Tom Three Persons: Legend Of An Indian Cowboy (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1997), pp. 54, 72, 97, 99.

⁵⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1722, p. 476, Indian Agent to R.W. Fletcher, November 29, 1904.

of the Crown.⁵⁸ Natives were also protected from liens and mortgages against their property, except by another Indian and only against taxable property.⁵⁹ It is unclear how well local entrepreneurs understood the legal position of the Indians when they so readily extended credit. The agent, however, was frequently asked to assist with debt collection, or to render an account of delinquent creditors. Most merchants believed the DIA responsible for legitimate claims against Natives defaulting on accounts.

The Business of Debt

It is clear that although incurring debt was against DIA policy, the Bloods did not take it seriously. The Bloods were offered the convenience of credit by local merchants unwilling to lose their source of revenue. Thus the agent reported in November, 1904, that the Bloods owed \$4,750.40

⁵⁸ McKenna, Catholic World, p. 65. See also Allan G. Harper, "Canada's Indian Administration: The Treaty System," America Indigena, Vol. VII, No. 2 (April, 1947), p. 137. It has been argued that this fact alone severely restricts the Indians' access to credit in the market place; "Because of the legal restrictions on the alienation of reserves, Indians are usually unable to obtain long-term or mortgage loans by pledging land or buildings." H.B. Hawthorn, C.S. Belshaw, S.M. Jamieson, The Indians of British Columbia: A Study of Contemporary Social Adjustment (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), p. 189. See also Elias, Dakota, pp. 120, 125.

⁵⁹ Harper, "The Indian Act," p. 303.

for materials purchased from 13 dealers in Macleod, Cardston and Lethbridge on orders issued under authority of the agency. The merchants in all three communities granted credit, agent James Wilson said, with the knowledge that payment would occur when the agent could collect. To remove some of the uncertainty of re-payment Wilson suggested that the debt be paid by "vouchers against the tribal fund."⁶⁰

In a letter to H.S. Allen & Co., Cardston, Wilson clarified his position with regard to collection of funds due creditors, "I only undertake to pay you (and others) upon the Indians paying me - that is I simply act as your collecting agent using due diligence in effecting collection as quickly as the Indians earn or otherwise acquire money over which my official position gives me control."⁶¹ The collection of debt from the Bloods, though based on the agent's good will, was hampered by the restrictions of his powers. Only if the debtor cooperated could moneys be collected with the agent's assistance. In one case in 1915 the Canadian Credit Men's Association's attempt to collect on a debt owed to E.

⁶⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1722, p. 473, Indian Agent to Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, November 29, 1904. Earlier in the year Secretary J.D. McLean had written R.N. Wilson that the Department wished to abolish the order system of purchasing and encourage Indian purchasing on a cash basis only. GAI, BIAC, file 17, J.D. McLean to R.N. Wilson, February 13, 1904.

⁶¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1723, p. 369, James Wilson to Messers. H.S. Allen & Co., April 9, 1900.

Doberere, Macleod, was turned aside by Agent W.J. Dilworth. Because the account had not been officially authorized, Dilworth said, he could only "advise" the debtor to pay.⁶²

Agents at times foiled merchant attempts to recover debt, especially when Natives pawned their property. Pawning was counter to the DIA's desires to indoctrinate Natives with

⁶² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.J. Dilworth to Canadian Credit Men's Association, January 20, 1915. The Department concurred with Dilworth's decision. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.D. McLean to Canadian Credit Men's Association, July 20, 1915. Indeed Dilworth's advice to creditors was "that the Department will not recognize such orders and will not be responsible for their payment." GAI, BIAC, file 92, Indian Agent to Messers. Macleod and Gray, June 26, 1915. In another case when barristers attempted to collect a debt against Chief Mountain, owed to the Riverside Lumber Company, the agent informed them that he could not assist as his instructions from the Department were to the contrary. GAI, BIAC, file 92, Indian Agent to Messers. Macleod and Gray, June 26, 1915. Interestingly an account submitted by Massey-Harris, September, 1914, listed 72 different orders for a total of \$3,022.12. The amount for individual accounts was \$2,950.81 and for the Agency \$71.31. Clearly individuals were transacting a preponderance of the business. Of these 13 had no order number suggesting that they were unauthorized. Two were for the agency and 11 for individuals. Of the 11 listed to individual Bloods only five were entered in Dilworth's register of debtors, again suggesting unauthorized accounts. With regard to these five, Massey-Harris's statements do not agree with Dilworth's, Dilworth showing more than the company billed in three cases. Though Dilworth's statement is not dated, differing dates in issue and the possibility that individuals had made payments to reduce their debts, may account for this discrepancy. In the case of A.D. Cairncross [Company], Cardston, only two of the eight accounts submitted are entered in Dilworth's ledger. And in the case of George Tanner only one of the 17 account purchases made from him are registered with Dilworth. See George Tanner Statement, October 28, 1914 Blood Indian Agency Correspondence, File [?], Glenbow Alberta Archives, M1788. The total for all of these was \$887.75 or 29.37% of total orders. See GAI, BIAC, file 96, Massey-Harris Statement in Blood Indian Agency Correspondence.

a proper appreciation for personal property and the acquisition of wealth. In these cases James Wilson referred to Section 78 of the Indian Act when reminding individuals that their transactions with the Bloods were illegal and demanded the return of the pawned property.⁶³ The Blood habit of pawning eventually became serious enough for Agent R.N. Wilson to seek advice from the Department only to be informed that the Bloods, like other individuals, were free to dispose of personal property subject to the provisions of the Indian Act.⁶⁴ Wilson was further hampered by the fact that Indians generally failed to see pawning in the same 'evil' light as the agent. They resisted efforts to restrict their right to dispense with their private property in ways they perceived to be for their own benefit.⁶⁵

⁶³ James Wilson to Mr. Brewster, September 22, 1906, GAI, Blood File 11; James Wilson to Mr. Easton, September 29, 1906, GAI, Blood File 11; Agent Wilson to H.S. Allen and Company, August 23, 1906, GAI, Blood File 11. The proper reference was section 79. See Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian Acts And Amendments 1868-1950 (Ottawa: Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1981), p. 42.

⁶⁴ GAI, BIAC, file 60, J.D. McLean to R.N. Wilson, April 22, 1908; BIAC, file 42, Indian Agent to Sup't Primrose, May 11, 1909; BIAC, file 40, F.M Pajet to W.J. Hyde, March 6, 1912.

⁶⁵ GAI, BIAC, file 60, Indian Agent to Secretary, DIA, April 16, 1908.

A further disadvantage to merchants in their dealings with the Bloods was the Department's standing instructions to agents. Wilson was told that, as agent, he was not to assist in the recovery of debts contracted by his wards without departmental approval. Furthermore, agents were to remind merchants that the DIA extended no recognition to claims "against the Indian's annuity or interest moneys..." Indeed, by 1911 agents were cautioned against permitting the presence of collectors on the occasions of the payment of such funds to the Indians.⁶⁶ This was an obvious departure from the arrangements made in the 1890s when debt collectors were permitted on the reserve. In the face of such policies businesses could be left carrying a substantial debt load over an unacceptably long period of time.⁶⁷

The Blood reserve was a microcosm reflection of the economic fortunes of the prairie west in general. Historian T.D. Regehr has noted that in regards to the banks, "During

⁶⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1547, p. 23, J.D. McLean to R.N. Wilson, January 31, 1911.

⁶⁷ James Wilson reported in 1901, that in August 1899, the Bloods had incurred debt to a total of \$6,000.00, an amount which had been reduced to \$1,850.00 by March 1901. Though he felt that this placed the Bloods in a "very good financial position," they had not managed to liquidate the entire debt thus obligating their creditors to absorb the loss and pay the interest. Such circumstances continued for both the Bloods and their creditors. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1724, pp. 116-19, James Wilson to Indian Commissioner, March 20, 1901.

the pioneer period, at least, the West was a debtor region."⁶⁸ But the banks were not the only sources of credit on which a homesteader could call. Credit was universally demanded and generally unreservedly given. In fact, the banks were possibly among the most restrictive credit institutions to grant loans against guarantees of property.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Credit was essential for a farmer/homesteader or Indian to establish operations and to continue them in the face of poor crops, poor prices or both. Farm yields for southern Alberta, for example, plummeted from an average 35 bushels of wheat to the acre in 1915, to 10.7 in 1917, 4.9 in 1918, and 1.4 in 1919.⁷⁰ The Fort Macleod area had a lower average of 31 bushels to the acre in 1915, followed by 24, 13, four, and nil respectively. The 1920 and 1921 season showed only marginal recovery with four and two bushels of wheat to the acre.⁷¹ Although the total bushels marketed from Fort Macleod in 1918-19, some 707,000 bushels, was greater than that from some other regions, it was a substantial reduction from the

⁶⁸ Regehr, "Bankers and Farmers," p. 306.

⁶⁹ Regehr, "Bankers and Farmers," p. 311. See also R. Bruce Shepard, "The Mechanized Agricultural Frontier Of The Canadian Plains," Material History Bulletin (Ottawa: Spring 1979), p. 13.

⁷⁰ Jones, "We'll all be buried down here", p. xxxvi.

⁷¹ Jones, "We'll all be buried down here", p. 27.

amounts marketed in 1915-16, 1916-17 and 1917-18 at 4,244,000, 3,1197,000 and 2,318,000 bushels respectively⁷² and is a good indication of the declining fortunes of the area. The bright light in the disastrous crop failure of 1919 was that the price of No. 1 Northern wheat was \$1.99 per bushel, provided a farmer had wheat of this quality. Beginning in 1918, however, wheat prices declined and never again reached the 1918 levels during the subsequent two decades.⁷³

Comments by Indian Commissioner W.M. Graham in 1927 suggest why, even in the most distressing circumstances, merchants were willing to advance credit to the Bloods. Graham noted that "Considering that there are over 200 farmers on the Blood Reserve and the indebtedness to the merchants is only \$5,000.00 from the two previous years, the amount, when divided amongst the many farmers, is very small." Graham believed that this was not even one-tenth of the total value of business done.⁷⁴

⁷² Jones, "We'll all be buried down here", p. 33.

⁷³ During the early Depression wheat prices collapsed to as low as 34 cents per bushel for 1931-32. David C. Jones, Empire of Dust: Settling and Abandoning the Prairie Dry Belt (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1987), p. 268-269.

⁷⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Secretary, DIA, June 28, 1927. We should not assume that only farmers were in debt.

It is difficult to gauge the accuracy of Graham's statement but it was his opinion that the Agency was a responsible customer, more prompt in the repayment of credit than most. Graham believed that the merchants were well aware of the Department's methods of business and they willingly assumed the risks of the uncertainty of prompt repayment. His conclusion was that, generally speaking, the Cardston merchants "were highly pleased with the treatment that they had received."⁷⁵

Despite Graham's disclaimers merchants often held the agent personally responsible for the difficulty experienced with both authorized and unauthorized debt collection. By 1915, for example, agent W.J. Dilworth's popularity was at such a low ebb that complaints were made about his handling of the agency's business and his influence on the Bloods' patronage of local stores.⁷⁶ Similarly, in 1924 the Bloods

⁷⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Secretary, DIA, June 28, 1927.

⁷⁶ GAI, BIAC, file 92, Indian Agent to Duncan C. Scott, August 14, 1915. Interestingly at the same time Agent Dilworth was blamed for directing business from Fort Macleod to Cardston thereby negatively affecting the economic fortunes of the former. Macleod Spectator, July 8, 1915, p. 2. Business in the previous year had been good. Macleod Spectator, November 12, 1914, p. 1. George Scott complained, through the local Conservative Association, that he did not get a fair share of Blood reserve patronage for his livery stable a complaint rebutted by Dilworth. NAC, RG 10, vol. 1547, p. 248, W.S. Gray to W.J. Dilworth, December 31, 1914; p. 255, Indian Agent to Sec'y, Conservative Executive, January 28, 1915. By 1916 the Bloods were again patronizing

accused Agent T.J. Faunt of directing reserve business to Cardston through his purchasing orders. The result was that the Bloods sometimes paid more for the same article if purchased in Cardston than in Fort Macleod.⁷⁷

Although Dilworth made reasonable efforts to retire agency-sanctioned debts,⁷⁸ he was less helpful with unauthorized debts, taking guidance from the departmental regulations. For example, he advised the Riverside Lumber Co., Cardston, that their unauthorized credit to Indians had been advanced at their own risk. He informed them that in one case the individual concerned had little property though some income. The income, however, was beyond Dilworth's control.⁷⁹

Granting the Bloods credit without proof of agency approval, however, appears to have been a common practice. Dilworth found himself mostly in agreement with M.A. Coombs, Cardston, regarding his statement of account showing 26 individual Blood accounts totaling \$1,031.54, but he

businesses in Macleod. Macleod News, December 7, 1916, p. 1.

⁷⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 4035, file 306,458, J.A. Webbe to Officer Commanding, R.C. Mounted Police, Lethbridge, November 14, 1924.

⁷⁸ GAI, BIAC, file 92, Indian Agent to Assistant Deputy and Sec'y, DIA, September 2, 1915.

⁷⁹ GAI, BIAC, file 92, Indian Agent to Riverside Lumber Co., September 4, 1915.

protested he had no record of accounts for three others and insisted that the accounts were not authorized through his office.⁸⁰ Although he might wish to collect the debt, the varying fortunes of the individuals interfered with Dilworth's ability to do so. Peter Heavy Shield, for example, suffered from tuberculosis and could not work his farm. Joe Bullshields, though "a good boy and a good worker," had suffered a crop failure.

Consequently, the demands made of Dilworth to facilitate the swift repayment of debts were futile, and he angrily vented his frustration to the Department. He charged that he had only one rule with regard to debt collection, "Collect every time an Indian owing has funds to his credit in this office and pay in the order of seniority."⁸¹ Such a promise, however, did little to satisfy the merchants' need for repayment in order that they might keep their own creditors at bay.

⁸⁰ GAI, BIAC, file 92, W.J. Dilworth to M.A. Coombs, September 17, 1915. One problem is that the amounts for unauthorized accounts are often not quoted and so it is difficult to determine what percentage of the total business contracted was unauthorized and therefore, perhaps, not collectable.

⁸¹ GAI, BIAC, file 92, Indian Agent to [DIA], May 20, 1915.

Business Responds

Though desiring both agency and individual Blood patronage, unpaid accounts were a matter of great concern and distress for some businesses. Merchants employed a variety of tactics to encourage the agent or the DIA to assume responsibility for all unpaid Indian and agency credit. For example, the Western Lumber Company Ltd., Lethbridge, stipulated that business done with the Bloods had to be on the "ordinary terms of credit"; that is paid in full within 90 days. Therefore, accounts that were nearly two years in arrears were unacceptable. Though not stating the balance, the company wanted payment with interest.⁸² Equally frustrated at not being able to collect on an account, J.M. Callie, the Pioneer Furniture Store, Fort Macleod, wrote directly to the DIA for redress.⁸³ Callie's plea of pressing

⁸² NAC, RG 10, vol. 4024, file 290,240-2A, Western Canada Lumber Co. Ltd. to Minister of the Interior, August 22, 1916. For other examples of late accounts see GAI, BIAC, file 92, McLaren Lumber Co. to Indian Agent, November 24, 1915; W.H. Steed to W.J. Dilworth, December 15, 1915. The matter with the Western Canada Lumber Company was never satisfactorily resolved and by 1917 the company was in receivership, the liquidator having no more success with Dilworth than did former management. NAC, RG 10, vol. 4024, file 290,240-2B, Western Canada Lumber Co. to Secretary, DIA, August 28, 1917.

⁸³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.T. Faunt to Secretary, DIA, February 28, 1921; J.D. McLean to J.T. Faunt, February 22, 1921; J.M. Callie to Indian Department January 31, 1921.

need for the funds prompted DIA Secretary McLean to urge Agent Faunt to get the funds and pay the bill if possible.⁸⁴

The general crop failure in 1927 increased the merchants' debt load. Smith and Pitcher Limited of Cardston looked to the payment of the reserve's \$14,000.00 account to meet demands from its own creditors. The company was informed that "the account would be reduced as collections [from Indians] were made." For a larger company, perhaps, this assurance would have sufficed, but for this small business it spelled hardship. For redress the company appealed to the Minister of the Interior:

The above seems rather hard blow to us, as we have been forced to pay the Harvester Company every cent cash outlay, depending on the mentioned account being paid. This has been almost more than a small concern as we are to carry, because we presume you are aware of the fact, crops here were almost a failure, collections very poor, naturally the need of money for our present needs being necessary, we therefore appeal to you, is there anyway that this account can be realized? or arrangements be made with the bank giving collateral that we could use in order that we can carry on.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.M. Callie to J.D. McLean, March 3, 1921; J.D. McLean to J.T. Faunt, March 9, 1921.

⁸⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.E. Smith to Hon. Charles Stewart, December 23, 1927.

As with all such submissions to the Minister, Scott required a full report from Agent Pugh on the likelihood of the debt being retired.⁸⁶

Massey-Harris Company stated its belief that its sales were to the DIA and not to individual Bloods. As the agent had departmental approval to make the purchases, the Department was therefore responsible for ensuring payment. The company suggested that it had given the DIA a bargain in quoting "a very special price", on the understanding that the Department would pay.⁸⁷ Similarly, the Cardston Implement Co., with regard to its \$6,000.00 of credit issued to the Bloods or the agency, denied any understanding that the repayment of debt was dependent on crop returns.⁸⁸ It is clear that even though merchants differed in their

⁸⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Duncan C. Scott to J.E. Pugh, December 31, 1927.

⁸⁷ Based on these assumptions or understandings the company now wanted payment of \$2,931.82. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.A. Rowat to Deputy Superintendent General, DIA, March 3, 1928. Scott's response was a perfunctory denial of responsibility. "These arrangements were," Scott wrote, "undoubtedly made with individual Indians, the payments to be made from crop returns. This, as you are no doubt aware, has been the usual practice." NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Duncan C. Scott to J.A. Rowat, March 8, 1928.

⁸⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Cardston Implement Company to Honorable Charles Stewart, December 29, 1927. The Honourable Charles Stewart was asked to intervene in this matter. Charles Stewart to Cardston Implement Company, Ltd., January 27, 1928.

understanding or acceptance of the Department's responsibility for Indian incurred debt, practically all of them tried for departmental guarantees.

The general view that business took in their dealings with the reserve, however, was best expressed by R.N. Wilson of the Standoff Trading Co. from Standoff, Alberta. The account with his firm was for \$792.38. As a former long-time agent of the Blood reserve he knew the system and so directly wrote D.C. Scott and indicated that he did not wish to wait another year or two for payment. He pointed out the business pressure he was under, with wholesalers demanding monthly payment of their accounts. He clearly stated his understanding of doing business with the Bloods - that the government was responsible for the repayment of the debt. Debts that remained unpaid for years were, said Wilson, "a misfortune to the merchant and a disgrace to the Government of Canada." Getting at the crux of the matter he pointed out to Scott, "You will readily perceive that if departmental assistance to Indians in seeding and harvesting their crops was considered necessary for the proper administration of the reserve, it was the business of the Department to finance it when the expected revenue failed or when it became other wise inconvenient to collect in due course."⁸⁹ Scott's response,

⁸⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, R.N. Wilson to D.C. Scott, January 3, 1929.

as always, was that there was no official fund from which the debt could be repaid.⁹⁰

For local businesses, getting 'their money' was sometimes a difficult proposition.⁹¹ The point was made by the solicitors for one company that the system of doing business with the Indians was restrictive, "the situation really is that the goods were furnished as much to the Department as to the Indian himself, the situation being that our clients were practically prohibited from dealing direct with the Indian."⁹² This was in essence a summation of the wardship legally conferred by the Indian Act. They therefore refused to see the position of the DIA as anything but the rightful debtor.⁹³ The Department, however, accepted neither

⁹⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Duncan C. Scott to R.N. Wilson, January 16, 1929.

⁹¹ See for example the correspondence regarding the Pioneer Lumber Company, Lethbridge. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Pioneer Lumber Co. Ltd. to Secretary, DIA, October 7, 1930; Pioneer Lumber Co. Ltd. to Secretary, DIA, October 7, 1930. See bill in same file.

⁹² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Virtue, Paterson & Company to Superintendent, DIA, June 24, 1931. For other discussion on this disagreement see W.M. Graham to Secretary, DIA, August 31, 1931; A.F. MacKenzie to Virtue, Paterson & Beaumont, September 4, 1931.

⁹³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Virtue, Paterson & Company to Secretary, DIA, September 21, 1931.

moral nor legal obligation.⁹⁴

Despite the Department's attitude, and at a time when fundamental monetary policy questioned the extension of personal credit, the agency and the Bloods appeared to be incurring some of their heaviest debt.⁹⁵ If business practices prevailing in other areas of the prairies are representative, Native and White were treated very much alike. One dryland area farmer reported the ease with which creditors lent money during the good years and the ferocity with which they harassed farmers to pay up. This farmer admitted that the habit of "'buying on time'" spelled trouble for farmers.⁹⁶ Merchants and credit institutions, without distinction, harassed Indian and White alike to make good on their credit purchases. It was the 'farmer' who was the liability, especially for the local merchant. "In the long chain of creditors," writes David Jones, "local merchants

⁹⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, T.R.L. MacInnes to Virtue, Paterson and Company, September 28, 1931.

⁹⁵ See Table 2 for the collapse of Blood farming income in 1927. As farming income declined debt rose from \$17,056.12 in 1926 to 36,173.22 in 1927 and \$75,423.11 in 1928. GAI, BIAC, Statement of Indebtedness As At Audit On Feb. 13, 1928, File 163.

⁹⁶ Jones, "We'll all be buried down here," pp. lx, 39-41.

were at the last link."⁹⁷ With bank liens against poor crops there was often pitifully little left to be applied against the merchants' credit advances. Jones observes that in 1921 "Hotels were filled with collectors tracing across the countryside seeking to pry loose dollars from penniless farmers."⁹⁸

Unlike the banks which were often 'visiting institutions', merchants were more often members of the local community dealing with neighbours and friends who would be returning yet again to be provisioned against the next year's crop. Business woman Mrs. F.A. Moir, Milk River Alberta, wrote that

As a business woman running the largest general store in this district and knowing how my customers were situated I simply held back this fall [1921] on collections, only to see the banker, lumberman or implement man grab it all by threatening suits or court action. There is no use my holding off only to let some other heartless creditor clean the debtor up.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Jones, *Empire of Dust*, p. 155. Also see David C. Jones, "An Exceedingly Risky And Unremunerative Partnership: Farmers And The Financial Interests Amid The Collapse Of Southern Alberta," in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson, *Building Beyond The Homestead: Rural History On The Prairies* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 210-11.

⁹⁸ Jones, "We'll all be buried down here", p. lx.

⁹⁹ Jones, "We'll all be buried down here", pp. 55-56.

The tendency for local businesses to show mercy was somewhat curbed by their own operating constraints which demanded that their own credit purchases from their suppliers be paid in thirty days while their "customers just paid when they could."¹⁰⁰

Local businesses, however, were generous with credit despite the knowledge born of long experience, that Department policy and the application of the Indian Act made such business transactions risky. It is an important consideration whether, in the long run, most of these accounts were paid, and so reduced the overall view of credit extension as more a short-term nuisance than a risk. Perhaps businesses reduced their risk by employing the double pricing system as discussed above. Since there were, by law, no liens against the Indians' property, all creditors were on a level playing field and each stood a chance to reap some benefit. Being the local supplier and having some knowledge about the ebb and flow of crops and currency, community businesses might possibly have had an edge. Regardless, many merchants probably looked upon the risks as the cost of doing business.

¹⁰⁰ Barry Broadfoot, Next-Year Country: Voices of Prairie People (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), p. 82.

The Department: Explanation and Reaction.

Agent Faunt, in 1921, calculated Blood indebtedness at \$4,590.18, down from approximately \$37,000 five years earlier.¹⁰¹ This statement of debt listed 29 businesses and the reasons for the debt but unfortunately not the location of the companies though most were likely in the vicinity of the reserve.¹⁰² This was also 'guaranteed indebtedness' that is debt incurred through and with the approval of the agent's office. There is every reason to suspect that unauthorized credit purchasing occurred at the same rate as for non-Natives of similar financial means.

Subsequent attempts to raise the Bloods and the agency to debt free status were frustrated. The policy followed on the Blood reserve had been to issue orders for work and pay after harvesting. By the fall of 1926, however, the accumulated debt was so pressing that some creditors were not paid as the Bloods soon ran out of funds. Pugh now asked the Department to pay about \$5,000.00 in outstanding debt. With a seemingly minor financial crisis on his hands, Pugh was instructed to curtail expenses by cutting the food bill from

¹⁰¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to D.C. Scott, January 8, 1921.

¹⁰² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Statement of Indian indebtedness signed by Agent J.T. Faunt. Vouchers often show business contracted with concerns as far east as Winnipeg.

\$3,500.00 to \$2,500.00 monthly. The results were predictable, "the Indians became very ugly, and last week one Indian attempted to assault me, for which I laid a charge,..."¹⁰³

By 1927 repeated crop failure placed the 'guaranteed' debt accumulation seriously in arrears because the Indians did not have sufficient funds to meet their obligations. Pugh now estimated a total approximate debt of \$21,017.00.¹⁰⁴

Merchants' collections from their Indian creditors now became practically impossible. Like Whites in the area, the Bloods were also without a crop and Pugh was instructed to advise merchants that accounts could not be paid. Importantly, in a contradiction of the DIA's previously argued position, Pugh stated his belief "that the merchants certainly were under the impression that these accounts would be met by the Department in the event of crop failure."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, DIA, June 7, 1927.

¹⁰⁴ Pugh broke down the debt as follows; \$6,000.00 due to the Cardston Implement Company, \$3,200.00 due to Massey-Harris Company, \$1,100.00 due the International Harvester Company. There was also a \$2,000.00 twine debt and \$1,400.00 for hail insurance. It was much the same situation for those companies who supplied the Indians with groceries; \$2,700.00 due the Cardston Trading Company, \$2,040.00 due Burt Brothers, \$1,750.00 due E. McNeil and \$827.00 due R.N. Wilson. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.E. Pugh to Duncan C. Scott, January 6, 1928.

¹⁰⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.E. Pugh to

Whether this impression was given by Pugh, or by previous practice, Pugh did not say but the latter is more likely.

The DIA now turned its attention to the twin concerns of debt reduction and the ordering system. Secretary McLean specifically wanted to know the extent of the Department's responsibility in meeting credit-order-incurred debt. McLean feared that paying any questionable accounts would bring a flood of demands from creditors. Such an eventuality was a concern given that neither departmental appropriation nor band funds were available to settle individual Blood accounts.¹⁰⁶ The alternatives seemed to be not to engage in the ordering system or to allow the Indians to incur bad debt.

It was Commissioner William Graham's opinion that the current debt crisis originated when credit borrowed was not re-paid from the 1925 crop. Subsequently, the following year the Bloods were short of funds and had to be financed again with the result that two years' operations had to be financed out of one year's crop (1926). Although the 1926 harvest looked promising bad weather cut the anticipated harvest from the 175,000 bushels expected to only 120,000 bushels. Much of this was graded as 'feed', bringing only 64 cents a bushel for a net return of approximately \$97,000.00. The bill for

Duncan C. Scott, January 6, 1928.

¹⁰⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.D. McLean to W.M. Graham, June 14, 1927.

the threshing operations was an estimated \$18,000.00 and, in Graham's words, "the Bloods had to have some money out of the proceeds of the crop to buy clothing for themselves and their families, as well as something to live on."¹⁰⁷

Although Graham believed that Natives could not responsibly handle their own financial affairs, he recognized that farming Indians were no different than Whites - both needed "a little financing" from both banks and merchants. Merchants in particular, Graham noted, needed assurance of payment which, in the name of the Department, he was willing to give. But Graham pointed out the limitations of his assurance by stating that merchants knew orders were issued on the promise of crops.¹⁰⁸ When all was said and done getting into debt, even for Indians, was considered an essential part of surviving in prairie agriculture.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Secretary, DIA, June 28, 1927.

¹⁰⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Secretary, DIA, June 28, 1927. Pugh was given instructions to withhold funds from those Indians who could afford it. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Secretary, DIA, June 28, 1927.

¹⁰⁹ On debt and prairie farmers see, Voisey, Vulcan, pp. 133-134; Jones, Empire of Dust, pp. 169, 172-174; Jeremy Adleman, "Prairie Farm Debt and the Financial Crisis of 1914," Canadian Historical Review, LXXI, No. 4 (December 1990), pp. 493-502; Royden K. Loewen, Family, Church, And Market: A Mennonite Community and the New Worlds, 1850-1930 (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 206-207.

The crop returns for 1927 were far worse than anticipated. Through a combination of frost, rain and snow an anticipated harvest worth \$300,000.00 was reduced to \$30,000.00.¹¹⁰ Graham now found himself forced to resort to the same tactical retreat from responsibility for increased debt that he was quick to condemn in the agents. He held out the hope of a possible reduction of \$15,000.00 in a \$40,000.00 debt, "and the balance will possibly have to be carried by the merchants."¹¹⁰ The crop failure was so extreme that many Indians would have to be supported by the Department if severe hardship was to be avoided.¹¹¹ Yet Graham declared that despite "crop failures or other contingent circumstances" the numbers of destitute should not increase "except by the addition of the aged and incapacitated."¹¹²

* This figure does not entirely agree with the figure in Table 2

¹¹⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Secretary, DIA, December 13, 1927.

¹¹¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Secretary, DIA, December 13, 1927; Report and Diary for month of November 1927, J.G. Pugh, December 2, 1927.

¹¹² The DIA was well aware that some members of the reserve had fallen on hard times. The number of Bloods said to be destitute in 1928-29 was one hundred and ten down from the two hundred and fifty reported for 1927-28. This was a substantial reduction and given the economic decline, calls into question the criteria used to determine eligibility for relief. Provincial Archives of Alberta, (PAA), Accession No. 70.189/SE., W.M. Graham to John E. Pugh, January 27, 1928.

Able bodied Bloods now without resources were clearly not intended to be provisioned. Pugh, however, felt that such an action was wrong. The Blood Agency, unlike other agencies, was a special circumstance since there was no economic diversification to permit other income. Unlike Graham, Pugh saw a connection between available work and whether or not an individual was in destitute circumstances. With no alternative, however, he responded that he would cut costs despite any hardship caused.¹¹³

Conceivably Graham's narrow views were the result of his intimate knowledge of the financial circumstances of the Blood reserve, and from appearances they should indeed have been well off. According to Inspector of Reserves M. Christianson's calculations, the Bloods had realized from farming and stock-raising more than a million dollars in the decade previous to 1928.¹¹⁴ Such information likely made

¹¹³ PAA, Accession No. 70.189/SE., Indian Agent to W.M. Graham, January 30, 1928. The criteria for determining need were not consistent. Destitution was sometimes determined by the kind of assistance needed whether "tea, rice and soap", beef and flour, or clothing. For example a list of "old destitute Indians" in need of underclothing for the winter of 1930 numbered 62 individuals. See also list dated Blood Agency, November 24, 1930.

¹¹⁴ Christianson gave the following: \$907,618.80 from farming and stock-raising. Currently the grazing lease brought in \$14,844.00 and a farming lease \$5,780.00 for a total of \$20,624.00, "which brings their total income derived from farming, stock-raising and leases to well over a million dollars." NAC, RG 10, vol. 7595, file 10103, pt. 5, M. Christianson to W.M. Graham, May 18, 1928.

Graham believe that the Bloods earned sufficient capital to meet immediate needs. The reports of repeated crop failure on the reserve, however, make it clear that income was sporadic and not uniformly spread over the decade. (Table 3). The danger was to see all the Bloods as beneficiaries of this apparent prosperity and to attribute a general well-being that was best credited to those individuals engaged in relatively prosperous farming and cattle raising. Income of this nature would certainly have made for the financial prosperity of some individuals. Local merchants must have indeed been buoyed by the infusion of much of this money into the local economy. Hence the economic tie was solidified.

In January, 1929, Pugh listed 15 companies to which the Bloods owed a total of \$19,676.19.¹¹⁵ This indebtedness, he said, had occurred over several years. Although orders were not issued in 1928 the crop was struck with frost, threshing costs were high, and after twine, hail insurance and repairs, insufficient funds remained to meet creditor demands and Blood needs. At the same time, Pugh accepted responsibility for the apparent sorry state of the reserve's financial affairs, blaming his failure to terminate the "order on

¹¹⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103. See List of firms carrying Indian indebtedness. Strangely the Marshall-Wells Hardware Co. was not listed among these. J.E. Pugh to Duncan C. Scott, January 26, 1929.

credit system."¹¹⁶ Commissioner Graham's solution was still to wait for "one good crop,"¹¹⁷ an action which, he apparently failed to see, was the original source of the accumulated indebtedness.

Threats by businesses to cut credit to the reserve and warnings of imminent collapse or appeals to higher authority left both Scott and Graham unmoved.¹¹⁸ Scott eventually concluded that nothing could be done about these debts, they were an unfortunate, involuntary but necessary circumstance. Credit, concluded Scott, was "one of the vices of our system."¹¹⁹ Accounts would have to await the realization of a bountiful harvest which was once again anticipated for the

¹¹⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, J.E. Pugh to Duncan C. Scott, January 26, 1929.

¹¹⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Duncan C. Scott, February 7, 1929.

¹¹⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, D.P. Sullivan to J.D. McLean, February 13, 1929; W.L. Smith to Duncan Scott, February 20, 1929. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, D.C. Scott to J.E. Pugh, January 11, 1928. On the situation in the west at this time see Jones "We'll all be buried down here", pp. 10-21; Jones, Empire Of Dust, p. 151 ff.

¹¹⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Memorandum, Duncan C. Scott to Mr. Pratt; May 23, 1929; Duncan C. Scott to W.L. Smith, February 26, 1929. Only in "a few cases of real hardship" to the government's friends might something be done. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Charles Stewart to W.A. Buchannan; June 21, 1929. Senator W.A. Buchannan of Lethbridge personally pleaded the case of the Cardston Implement Co. to the Hon. Charles Stewart. He said that the "MATTER IS A DISTURBING FACTOR AS OUR FRIENDS ARE AFFECTED".

Blood Reserve for the fall of 1929.¹²⁰ In its expectation for credit financing for Indians the DIA's attitude was no different than that of the farmer/settler. When it came time to pay the bills the DIA, like the farmer/settler in 'next year country', looked to the elusive bumper crop.

Depression

By comparison with the two previous years, 1929 brought a bountiful harvest with 130,250 bushels of wheat average No. 2 grade. The sale of 110,000 bushels at an advance of eighty cents per bushel brought in \$88,000.00. Approximately \$42,200.00 of this amount was used to pay off old creditors. Fifteen thousand dollars were placed at the disposal of individuals for purchases such as wagons, furniture or living expenses and the balance of \$20,000.00 was deposited in individual Indian bank accounts. The Bloods still owed some \$11,533.84 on individual personal credit accounts. How much of this would ultimately be discharged was uncertain until the final payments from the sale of the grain. Even with further payments, Graham estimated that a debt of about

The account was subsequently paid. W.A. Buchanan to Chas. Stewart, June 17, 1929. Emphasis in original. Stewart reminded Buchanan that the accounts were owed by the Indians, not the Treasury. Duncan C. Scott to W.M. Graham, July 24, 1929. See also Duncan C. Scott to W.M. Graham, July 24, 1929.

¹²⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Duncan C. Scott to Marshall-Wells Company, Ltd., July 26, 1929.

\$8,000.00 would remain on the books. Inspector Christianson, with a view to once and for all being rid of the debt, now advised that the merchants be paid in full out of collections for beef and seed grain. This placed the Indians in debt to the Department rather than to the local merchants.¹²¹

Any possibility of such debt relief was subsequently dashed when the Bloods, like many others, were victimized by the fall in commodity prices during the Great Depression. The Blood's tenuous position was further aggravated by the market speculations of Agent Pugh. Pugh believed he could get a better price for the Bloods' harvest and held the grain off the market as the price rose eventually expecting to get \$1.40 a bushel. When the markets subsequently collapsed and the grain was finally sold, the tribe received less than 77.5 cents per bushel or about \$88,000.00. Pugh accepted responsibility for the disaster insofar as the decision not to sell had been his. But that was only the beginning. The onset of winter shut down ploughing and haying earlier than usual, even cutting short work in the sugar beet fields. All of this severely limited the income of many Blood families. These circumstances led to disillusionment on the part of reserve farmers and many quit. By 1932 acres under cultivation decreased by fifty percent while income from

¹²¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, M. Christianson to W.M. Graham, November 30, 1929.

farming dropped from \$100,000.00 in 1930 to \$24,000.00 in 1932.¹²² From a decade of prosperity for some and limited financial success for others, the reserve and surrounding communities had suddenly descended into a period of economic chaos and depression.

In these circumstances survival, not debt restructuring, became the most urgent concern of the Blood reserve's residents. Yet the DIA's senior personnel remained singularly inflexible and insensitive to the Bloods' situation and refused to return to the order system as a means of temporarily alleviating the distress. Christianson still expected that future successive crops would square the Bloods with the Department.¹²³ Graham wanted any moneys collected applied against accounts with creditors "and we would at least be square with the public at large..."¹²⁴ to

¹²² Esther S. Goldfrank, "Administrative Programs And Changes In Blood Society During The Reserve Period," Applied Anthropology, 2 (Jan.-Mar. 1943), p. 21. Dempsey gives the income for 1929 as \$97,000. Dempsey, The Gentle Persuader: A Biography of James Gladstone, Indian Senator (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986), pp. 75-76.

¹²³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, M. Christianson to W.M. Graham, November 30, 1929.

¹²⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, W.M. Graham to Duncan C. Scott, December 4, 1929; M. Christianson to W.M. Graham, November 30, 1929. The DIA's Chief Accountant, F.M. Paget, pointed out that "collections made from Indians on account of Beef and Seed Grain, are due the Band's Interest Account, and not the Department." Though such payments "could be diverted towards paying off merchants [sic]

which Scott gave approval.¹²⁵ This was a change in that some of the senior bureaucrats recognized Departmental responsibility for legitimately authorized Indian indebtedness.

Little changed, however, and the 1932 crop was so poor that only about \$1,000.00 could be spared to pay on all debts.¹²⁶ As a consequence of conservative policy and a shortage of funds, the debt was permitted to languish "until at least next fall, and only then if we get a fair crop."¹²⁷

In 1933 the total indebtedness of the agency stood at approximately \$10,000.00, an amount which Christianson felt would be very difficult to clear. Christianson believed that

indebtedness, and when subsequently collected from the Indians would be credited to the Band's account as refunds due for seed and beef." Memorandum; F.M. Paget to Dr. Scott, December 18, 1929.

¹²⁵ Authorized debts to merchants were given preference over monies owed the Department and the band. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, Duncan C. Scott to W.M. Graham, December 19, 1929.

¹²⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, M. Christianson to Secretary, DIA, November 23, 1932; Memorandum for the Right Honourable The Prime Minister from Duncan C. Scott, October 19, 1931. Correspondence over this particular debt continued into 1933 with only \$97.76 being paid on the account in a two year period. M. Christianson to Secretary, DIA, December 1, 1933.

¹²⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, M. Christianson to Secretary, DIA, December 1, 1933. See also A.F. MacKenzie to Virtue and Company, December 6, 1933; and Hugh B. Brown to General J.S. Stewart M.P., January 4, 1934.

* This does not include monies owed the Department.

"The good farmers on the reserve have all paid their accounts in full." The balance was owed by the deceased, farmers who had quit, or poor farmers, and this debt was unlikely to be eliminated soon.¹²⁸

The trying problem of debt adjustment was long standing for merchants and the Department and was without an apparent satisfactory solution. In 1934, with much attention directed by the Department at Blood indebtedness, Agent Pugh did a major inventory of the accounts owing to the Department, agency, and to outside creditors. Pugh divided his study into four classes: Class A - Deceased Indians, Class B - Old and Destitute Indians, Class C - Able Bodied Indians Farming or Cattle Raising (F/C), Class D - Able Bodied Indians Not Farming or Cattle Raising. (Table 4.) According to his calculations the Bloods were in debt to all creditors, including the Department, in April, 1934, for a total of \$122,521.31. He recommended that the balance owed by all classes to the Department be written off, plus what Class A and Class B owed to the agency, for a total write off of \$92,445.53 or 75.45% of the total debt. He further recommended that what classes C and D owed the agency (\$12,351.53) and what all classes owed outside creditors (\$17,724.25), be

¹²⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7881, file 35103, M. Christianson to Secretary, DIA, December 1, 1933.

collected. He offered no suggestion about how to collect for Class A and from B for outside creditors.¹²⁹

The \$17,724.25 owed to outside creditors was 14.5% of total debt. If Pugh's recommendation that the debt owed the Department and also what classes A and B owed the agency be forgiven outside creditors, perhaps, stood a much better chance of having their debt repaid. In theory, this move would have placed less strain on the incomes of the individual indebted Bloods. Unfortunately, this was the Depression and incomes were reduced as a result of both depressed prices and reduced harvests. Outside creditors now had to compete with the agency which wanted to collect the portion of debt owed by Classes C and D. These creditors also stood to lose, or at least face great difficulty in collection, of the portion of the debt owed by Classes A and B, which amounted to \$3,254.39 or 18.4% of the total \$17,724.25 debt owed.¹³⁰ (For a breakdown and summary of the

¹²⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, April 18, 1934, and attached details.

¹³⁰ Pugh judged most of the outside debt legitimate, with one qualification: the \$7,798.14 owing the Cardston Implement Company. The debts owed to Massey-Harris Co., Smith & Pitcher, and the Cardston Trading Co. in particular, he said, were the result of "Orders issued to Indians by Authority of the Department and remained unpaid at the end of 1928, at which time this system was discarded and no orders issued after that year." NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, April 18, 1934. The Cardston Implement Co., the Bloods largest creditor, was itself in debt and consigned its account of \$7,798.14 with the Bloods to

debt by class/community see Tables 5 and 6.) Fortunately, the Department permitted Pugh to collect the debt owed the agency and use these funds to pay outside creditors.¹³¹

The winter of 1934-35 was a difficult one for the Bloods. Most of the revenue came from the sale of horses which Pugh permitted because of a shortage of funds from other sources. Pugh went on to explain that some of those individuals currently experiencing difficulties were good workers with good incomes who had built up estates requiring

Marshall-Wells Co., Winnipeg. Marshall-Wells in turn was owed \$1,026.08 by the agency. These two creditors alone accounted for \$8,824.22 or 49.8% of the total reported Blood outside debt. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, See Cardston Implement Co. Ltd. and Marshall-Wells Ltd., Assignment of Blood Agency Account; Z.W. Jacobs, Barrister, and Solicitor, Cardston, Alberta.

¹³¹ Pugh noted the unfairness of this approach given that those owing the most, Classes A, B and D, (total of \$9,106.91 or 51.4% of the total of \$17,724.25 owing Outside creditors), he would be able to collect the least from. He felt that the Class C would be more than compensated by being so penalized because they stood to gain the most if the debts owed to the Department were written off. Their saving would be \$49,226.09 or 54.8% of the total of \$89,773.74). It is difficult to determine the fairness of this approach since we do not know how much each individual owed to the outside creditors or to the Department. Individuals with the least debt in both cases would not be receiving equitable savings from the cancellation of the debt to the Department and therefore would be subsidizing those more heavily in debt in both cases. To do what Pugh advocated would have meant that the agency was in fact foregoing collection of its debt, since the funds received were to be used to pay outside creditors, and therefore that portion of the debt was also being canceled. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, April 18, 1934, and attached details.

maintenance.¹³² Some of the Bloods did have personal means and Pugh reported that for the period of December 31, 1934, to December 31, 1935, the Bloods had transacted some \$5,177.01 worth of private business, mostly for groceries and car repairs, through the agency.¹³³

Despite a poor harvest in 1936¹³⁴ the amount owing to the agency and outside creditors had not increased. Pugh was much more tight-fisted because of the experience of the past decades and the added attention of the Department to the Bloods' financial affairs. They, however, continued to spend from their own accounts, and for the period of January 1 to

¹³² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Report of J.E. Pugh, March 27, 1935.

¹³³ The two largest expenses of this sum were \$862.88 for groceries and \$341.91 for car repairs. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Statement of J.E. Pugh.

¹³⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, J.E. Pugh to L.W. McCutheson, December 11, 1936; N.C. Allen to J.E. Pugh, January 17, 1936. Another indication of difficult times is the reduced balance in the Blood Agency Bank Account which "prior to 1929 this Trust Account would contain balances ranging from \$20,000 to \$70,000 for several months, generally from about September to January. It would rarely fall below \$1,000 or \$1,200." Since 1929, however, "owing to reduced prices for farm products and poor crop returns these monthly balances have dwindled, and during 1935 a further reduction has been caused by placing monies due the Receiver General in a separate Bank Account..." As a consequence of the above conditions the average monthly balance for the ten months of February to November, 1935 was \$5,448.99 or approximately half of what it should have been. See RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, N.C. Allen to Dr. McGill, January 23, 1936.

December 31, 1936, transacted \$6,708.55 of private business.¹³⁵

After several years of disaster the projected 1937 crop promised a general recovery. The Cardston News predicted more than \$18,000,000.00 in earnings for Cardston and its trading area. In a clear indication of the importance of reserve business to the Cardston economy, local merchants were challenged to turn their energies towards thwarting the attempts of Lethbridge and other areas to attract a share of this money. The paper speculated, "Unless Cardston merchants become active in the realization that this year presents an opportunity unparalleled for many years past much of this cash trade will glide over the graveled roads to distant points."¹³⁶ Coming at the end of several years of depression and bad crops, it is not surprising that the News would view this local bonanza as a gift from heaven and be reluctant to share it with competitors.

Like those around them, the Bloods were increasingly prosperous. Individually financed business transactions

¹³⁵ In 1936 179 Bloods had active accounts and enjoyed a per capita income of \$104.00 while the per capita income for the tribe was \$15.00. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Statement of J.E. Pugh. *The problem with these figures is that they do not show the business the Indians may have conducted through barter or through the expenditure of money in hand.

¹³⁶ Cardston News, September 7, 1937, p. 1.

amounted to \$24,978.43 for the period January 1 to December 31, 1937. There were approximately 160 accounts with \$28,375.87 paid to the Indians.¹³⁷ Undoubtedly local businesses reaped the benefits of the Bloods' increased prosperity which lasted for the next several years.¹³⁸ Overall indebtedness for the period 1934 to 1942 experienced only minor fluctuations and the amount officially owing to outside creditors was reduced from just under one thousand dollars to just under one hundred dollars of total debt. (Table 7.) It is not clear whether the Bloods were spending and financing less or whether there was simply less being done officially through the agency office.¹³⁹

Individual fortunes seem to have improved late in the Depression and spending for those who could afford it was significant. In 1938 the Bloods spent \$37,392.48 from individual accounts with the two biggest expenditures being groceries at \$10,882.57 and car repairs etc. at \$5,303.61.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Statement of J.E. Pugh.

¹³⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Statement of Clerk Anthony McMillay; Statement of J.E. Pugh.

¹³⁹ Meanwhile the uncollectable debt was put at \$86,824.84 for 1934 and by 1942 still stood at \$86,696.38. NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, See Statement of J.E. Pugh and Statement of Clerk Anthony McMillay.

¹⁴⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Statement of Clerk Anthony McMillay.

Expenditure for 1939 was down at \$33,312.45 but still significant. Again groceries, car repairs, gas and oil accounted for most of this expenditure at \$15,571.21 and \$6,411.98 respectively.¹⁴¹ The total sum spent did not dip below \$31,000 during the following few years. There was, however, very little change in the amount of debt incurred or retired during eight years of records between 1934 and 1942. (Table 7.)

Conclusion

Though DIA policy on permitting Natives to purchase on credit and incur debt was clear, its application was less so. A number of factors intervened to cause variations in policy implementation. The feelings of the agent and DIA field personnel, political exigencies and the view from Ottawa, the personal wealth of the individual concerned, the amount of money on hand, economic circumstances in general and the perception of urgency all played a part in decision making regarding policy implementation. The fact that the Department was very restrictive in both releasing funds, and in sanctioning purchases, for example, encouraged the Bloods to incur unauthorized debt. The one immutable fact is the general acceptance that the Bloods needed financing in order

¹⁴¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Statement of J.E. Pugh.

to make their reserve activities economically viable, especially with regard to farming.

From the beginning the Bloods were planned into the economic strategies of the merchant community. Their patronage was both encouraged and appreciated. Attempts by the Department to limit or curtail this form of economic integration with the non-Native community had only limited success. Had the Bloods been simply a debtor society, their commercial involvement with local businesses might have been more easily and formally regulated - the DIA purchasing on their behalf and for their needs as it saw fit. Because the Bloods displayed some commercial independence, however, they were in a position to maximize their efforts to use credit.

The difficulties that attended all settlers' attempts to succeed in 'next year country' also attended the Bloods. Success could not be attained independent of national economic structures, such as banking institutions, or patterns of commercial exchange such as credit. Crop failures in the southern Alberta region and on the Blood reserve made the DIA realize that Indians were very much in the same position as Whites, and their isolation on reserves could not mitigate this fact. The result was that eventually Department bureaucrats at Ottawa came to the same realization as Blood reserve agents - policies had to bend with circumstances if the Bloods were not to be totally reduced to a commercially impotent and beggar society. The boundaries

of the reserve and departmental supervision were no antidote to the changing economic fortunes of the region or the nation, or to the Bloods' own efforts. The Bloods could neither be driven nor restrained without reference to the extended environmental and commercial community in which they lived.

Clearly the Bloods' personal spending habits, and Indian Affairs expenditures on their behalf, resulted in a significant cash transfer to merchants in Cardston, Fort Macleod, and the small businesses situated close to the reserve. In December, 1928, the Cardston News recognized the special commercial relationship that existed between Cardston and the Blood reserve. The paper wrote that "The Indian is a prospective citizen of no mean importance."¹⁴² In March, 1929, the News elaborated on this bond, describing business relations with the Bloods as

...most cordial. It is true that the system sometimes causes annoyance to those who must give credit but generally speaking, the Indians' business is fully as well paid and as properly conducted as that of any similar group or community of white men. In fact some of our own business methods might well be remodeled to measure up to the standards of business ethics set by many of our Indian friends.¹⁴³

¹⁴² Cardston News, December 27, 1928, p. 1.

¹⁴³ Cardston News, March 21, 1929, p. 4.

As the Depression ended, increased spending by the Bloods likely ended most of the complaints about the non-payment of debts by individual Bloods. It is clear that much of the delinquency regarding settling of accounts was attributable to agency and Department of Indian Affairs policies. The Bloods were but one portion of the consuming public, of necessity tolerated and, as any other group with financial wherewithal, harassed or wooed by business as alternating economic fortunes dictated. The Bloods' attraction as shoppers, however, may stem from a tradition of garnering prestige through 'conspicuous' consumption, mistakenly viewed by Indian Affairs officials as "riotous living."¹⁴⁴

Both Department-sponsored and individually arranged expenditures were eagerly sought, even though collecting on the credit extended often proved exceedingly frustrating or even impossible. Undoubtedly the impact on some commercial establishments was considerable, but for most it was well worth it as the benefits outweighed the risk. This was especially true where establishments were not totally dependent on the local area for their sales. Though, like

¹⁴⁴ Goldfrank, Changing Configurations, p. 28.

others, the Bloods' fortunes varied, collectively they represented a financial opportunity too great to ignore.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Change Over Time

This study has looked at one small area of southern Alberta containing an immigrant population encountering a host Native culture. The intent was to ascertain how both fit together at the economically significant points of encounter, land and products from the land, and labour and monetary exchange.

This specific southern Alberta location fits historian W.L. Morton's definition of a 'site', that is, an area having both significance of position and function. Though the significance of a 'site' "varies with the nature of the environment and the state of technology",¹ the region has been deemed more or less significant over time by its various inhabitants and for a variety of reasons. Historian Paul F. Sharp viewed the area as a natural northern extension of the American plains, and a hinterland of American commerce.² At the same time, Canada, driven by a dream of continental

¹ W.L. Morton, "The Significance of Site in the Settlement of the American and Canadian Wests," in A.B. McKillop, Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1980), p. 87.

² Paul F. Sharp, Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), pp. 7-8.

expansion, regarded the region and the surrounding expanse of prairie and parkland as necessary for its own geographic and imperial ambitions.³ The Bloods clearly indicated the significance of this region to themselves when they selected their reserve.

The significance of this site was rarely, if ever, questioned by the nation which viewed the west as a fount of wealth, a hinterland appendage to be exploited.⁴ Those settlers who lived there came to question its suitability for their purposes only after the heady visions of progress and prosperity had been tempered by the bitter experience of failure. This in turn brought about a reassessment of the

³ Andy den Otter argues that the Canadian government's "nationalistic fiscal regime, set within a business and transportation revolution" drove American entrepreneurial influences out of this region. Andy den Otter, "Transportation, Trade and Regional Identity in the Southwestern Prairies," Prairie Forum, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring 1990), p. 1. See also Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies In The Ideas Of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 56-58; Doug Owsam, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 49, 59 ff.; R. Douglas Francis, Images of the West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690- 1960 (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), pp. 73-103.

⁴ For discussion of the west as national hinterland see J.M.S. Careless, Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada before 1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 40 ff.; J.M.S. Careless, Careless at Work: Selected Canadian Historical Studies (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990), pp. 120 ff.

viability of this 'next year country' to sustain their dreams. Fluctuating fortunes and altering circumstances threatening their survival gave added critical significance to the area of the Blood reserve and its possessors. It seemed to be endowed with rescue potential, the potential of the surrounding community to repair the frustrated hopes shattered by nature and the limitations imposed by the 160 acre homestead.⁵

The dynamic at work in this area both encapsulated the hopes and reflected the policies of Canada's expanding national influence: Fort Macleod founded by the NWMP represented the extension of authority, Lethbridge the grasp of expanded eastern enterprise,⁶ and communities such as Cardston and Raymond the reality of transplanted society and economy, the tramp of 'civilization' across the frontier. The formation of the Blood reserve illustrated for the newcomers the dispossession of the Natives and foreshadowed their imminent assimilation or even extinction. The new

⁵ It is now accepted that the 160 acre homestead was not sufficient for general economic well-being and that access to other land on which to expand was essential to make ends meet or survive. John W. Bennett and Seena B. Koh, Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 18.

⁶ For a complete discussion of this idea see A.A. den Otter, Civilizing the West: The Galts and the Development of Western Canada (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982.)

economy created demands for land, materials, money and labour, all of which the Bloods possessed in varying degrees at various times. Thus the fortunes and history of the Indians and the Whites were of necessity intertwined. The needs of both the Bloods and their neighbours, though seen by some as competitive, rationally encouraged co-operation and integration of the 'white' neighbourhood with the reserve.

Irene Spry has argued that after the influx of immigrants into the Red River area, Natives in the vicinity collaborated with and integrated themselves into the new economic arrangement, opted for economic and cultural change and in so doing gained an appreciation for "a cash calculation of well-being".⁷ This possibility has not been properly evaluated by historians with regard to the study of southern Alberta Natives, in particular the Bloods, in the post-buffalo period. Historians have been too willing to accept the picture of an economically frustrated, incompetent and incapacitated people failing to thrive. The focus of scholarship on Native and newcomer interaction in general has been on an Indian marginalized existence⁸ and the failure to

⁷ 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. VI, Series IV (June, 1968), p. 190.

⁸ Lucas noted the failure and inability of Indians to integrate with developing 'white' communities. Rex Lucas, Minetown, Milltown, Railtown: Life in Canadian Communities

reconstruct him as an "imitation white man."⁹ Thus the impact of the various influences; ranching, mixed farming, and the competition between the two, White/Native interaction and animosity, and economic developments which reflected the aspirations of the region and the nation have largely been ignored.

The narrow historical focus on reserve agricultural ventures has blinded many to the possibility that a diversified economic approach periodically produced a viable economy on reserves such as that occupied by the Bloods. This perspective neglects other economic activities that contributed to the overall economic welfare of the Natives, in particular the Bloods. Samek, for example, viewed the Blood economy only as a crop agricultural venture and concluded that the reservation economy was an outright failure. She attributed Blood economic stagnation early in the 20th Century to the government's policy of leasing

of Single Industry (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), pp. 33, 128-30, 133.

⁹ Spry, Transactions, p. 196. See also J.R. Miller, Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 151-216; Robert F. Berhkoffer, Jr., The White Man's Indian: Images Of The American Indian From Columbus To The Present (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 113-133; Jennifer Lorretta Pettit, "'To Christianize and Civilize': Native Industrial Schools in Canada," (Calgary: University of Calgary, Ph.D., 1997), See especially chapter 10, pp. 337-360.

reserve land to local ranchers.¹⁰ She concluded that after nearly fifty years of reservation existence the Bloods, like their Blackfoot neighbours, had failed to "establish a viable economy."¹¹

The problem with this conclusion is Samek's sole focus on farming. Rolf Knight is more accurate in his contention that the limited economic return from agriculture on the prairies stimulated an outward and diversified approach to earning income.¹² Indeed the Reports of the DIA in the Sessional Papers bear this out and indicate a much more diversified approach to work and income than Samek credits. For example, as early as 1896 the DIA recognized that the area in which the Bloods resided was not particularly suited to crop agriculture and as a result the Department encouraged them to take up mixed farming or stock-raising.¹³ Within two years the Bloods had added freighting to their economic

¹⁰ Hana Samek, The Blackfoot Confederacy 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and U.S. Indian Policy (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987, pp. 84-85.

¹¹ Samek, Blackfoot Confederacy, pp. 84-86.

¹² Rolf Knight, Indians At Work: An Informal History Of Native Indian Labour In British Columbia 1858-1930 (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1978), p. 169.

¹³ CSP 14, 1897, pp. 155-156.

activities.¹⁴ By 1903 the agent downplayed the significance of farming, noting that cattle, hay, and freighting, both for "the reserve and the neighbouring ranchers," returned more revenue.¹⁵

By 1904 the Bloods had diversified once again and added labour in the Raymond sugar beet fields to their income earning opportunities. Crop agriculture may have been, as Samek argues, unsuccessful but its modest nature should not be construed to represent overall Blood economic achievement. Even officially-measured economic returns from these recognized activities may not indicate the true measure of successful Blood economic endeavours as they responded to off-reserve demand for their labour and resources.

It may be more revealing, therefore, to compare the Bloods not with prairie farmers who pursued cereal grain monoculture, but rather with Whites who practiced subsistence farming and were required to follow a variety of seasonal occupations. This included working for others and migrating to other areas in order to eke out an existence. Thus a variety of occupations were followed in the completion of a work year. Geographer Larry McCann has pointed to the need for such an adaptive strategy among Atlantic Canadians

¹⁴ CSP 14, 1899, p. 133.

¹⁵ CSP 27, 1904, p. 141.

responding to the failure of industrialism to bring full and permanent employment.¹⁶

Although the Canadian government recognized aboriginal right or title to the lands they occupied¹⁷ others did not. Expansion to the westward, for the man on the street or behind the plough, simply meant the acquisition of free and available land. This view was totally at odds with Native perceptions that they owned the land and continued to have unimpeded rights to it confirmed by treaty. Once established, however, reserves were accepted by many as inviolable Indian lands only as long as they were not needed by the non-Native community. The attitudes and actions of both settlers and government placed intense pressure on the Indians to alienate large segments of their reserves in the interests of the incoming settler population.¹⁸ The Bloods,

¹⁶ Larry McCann, "The 1890s: Fragmentation and the New Social Order," in E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise (eds.), The Atlantic Provinces In Confederation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 122-123.

¹⁷ Christopher McKee, Treaty Talks In British Columbia: Negotiating a Mutually Beneficial Future (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996), pp. 5-10. Though recognized or acknowledged the precise definition or character of aboriginal title has eluded both politicians and jurors alike and in consequence is as much a problem today as it has been historically. Kent McNeil, "The Meaning of Aboriginal Title," in Michael Asch (ed.), Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality, and Respect for Difference (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), pp. 135-136, 141-152.

however, largely resisted such persuasion and pressure successfully.

The influx of settlers after the turn of the century and the enthusiasm of town booster ideology resulted in a more integrated region. Towns vied for supremacy in the surrounding hinterland and insisted that communication and commerce required efficient transportation routes. The pressure on the Bloods to open their reserve's borders to provide access was strong and persistent. Cardston insistently regarded the reserve roadways as thoroughfares to more effectively extend its reach and became troublesome to the Bloods. When in 1899, for example, the DIA granted a road allowance through the Blood Reserve from Cardston to the St. Mary River, Agent Wilson wanted to close the old road allowance which he felt was now redundant. Wilson was perturbed to learn, however, that the new one was simply to be an addition to the two existing ones, and that the White settlers considered all three roadways necessary. Wilson believed that since the Bloods had no use for such a road, and since it interfered with the reserve boundary, it was obviously intended solely for the benefit of the citizens of Cardston.¹⁹

¹⁸ Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 159-160.

¹⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1564, pp. 270-71, James Wilson to Deputy Minister of Public Works, April 10, 1899.

As towns and villages such as Hillspring, Glenwood, Mountain View, Magrath and Raymond extended their reach towards both the east and the west the reserve was absorbed into the local transportation system by travelers and entrepreneurs who sought the most efficient and shortest means of communication and movement. In 1899 the Bloods fenced the road connecting Cardston and Mountain View where it crossed the reserve much to the chagrin of local residents who complained that it inconvenienced the traveling public and hindered mail delivery. Despite the fact there was clear trespass on the reserve the DIA recommended that the fence be removed to grant unimpeded movement across the reserve.²⁰ Though the DIA determined that the Government of the Territories could not secure road access without the consent or surrender of the Bloods, this was an exceptional case which held potential for future strife and could, perhaps, set a precedent. DIA secretary J.D. McLean pointed out to Agent James Wilson that "Old traveled roads, referred to in Section 108 of the N.W.T. Act and amendments thereto, are not included in the foregoing opinion."²¹

²⁰ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1535, p. 11, Deputy Commissioner to Jas. Wilson, July 7, 1899.

²¹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 1535, p. 39, J.D. McLean to Jas. Wilson, November 3, 1899.

Villages or towns separated from other Euro-Canadian settlements by the reserve felt that they qualified for special dispensation where the reserve was concerned. Thus McLean instructed Agent W.J. Hyde, in August 1911, that in order to avoid potential conflict with the Bloods, as Glenwood residents were demanding a thoroughfare across the reserve to Cardston, he was to tell the Indians of the right of the government to construct roads across reserves as granted by Treaty Seven.²² It is clear that in such cases the DIA was not prepared to allow the public to be unduly inconvenienced by interference with "a continuous and large volume of trade and travel between the two places..."²³ The petition requesting the surveyed road had one hundred and twenty three signatures and was supported by the Lethbridge²⁴, Macleod and Magrath²⁵ Boards of Trade.

The demands for roads across the reserve, and reserve surrender to facilitate their construction, continued through

²² NAC, RG 10, vol. 7730, file 23103-1, J.D. McLean to W.J. Hyde, August 2, 1911; S. Bray Memorandum to Deputy Minister, Dept. of Indian Affairs, June 24, 1911.

²³ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7730, file 23103-1, Edward Leavitt et. al. to Hon. Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, November 19, 1913.

²⁴ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7730, file 23103-1, D.J. Hay to Minister of Indian Affairs, December 15, 1913.

²⁵ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7730, file 23103-1, W.D. Finley to W.J. Roche, December 20, 1913.

the 1920s. Added pressure was exerted on the Bloods in the 1920's and 1930's by the province of Alberta as it sought to update and better integrate its transportation systems to accommodate rural and urban growth.²⁶ Ultimately these roadways proved beneficial to the Bloods as people and commerce used the right of ways. Any attempt to socially and economically isolate the Bloods was frustrated by the demands and needs of the non-Native community and the governments that worked on their behalf. As late as 1926 DIA secretary J.D. McLean, on the occasion of turning down the most recent request for yet another road right of way across the Blood reserve, reassured the Province of Alberta that "the Department is willing to expedite the development of the country by allowing roads to be established anywhere necessary..."²⁷

The Bloods clearly did not remain economically or physically isolated despite prevailing attitudes towards the Natives' menial social position²⁸ and the existence of their

²⁶ See in particular correspondence in NAC, RG 10, vol. 7730, file 23103-1 and NAC, RG 10, vol. 7730, file 23103-1A.

²⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7730, file 23103-1A, J.D. McLean to Deputy Minister, Department of Public Works, Alberta, March 17, 1926.

²⁸ For example Sarah Carter, "Categories And Terrains Of Exclusion: Constructing The 'Indian Woman' In The Early Settlement Era In Western Canada," Great Plains Quarterly, 13 (Summer 1993), pp. 147-48, 158.

reserve as a social and political entity. The Bloods were almost immediately drawn into the newly emerging complex of economic patterns established by the rancher, farmer, town and village regimes. The needs of the new settlers, both real and imagined, forced open doors to mutual cooperation and exchange with the Bloods. Economics proved more potent than social attitudes and prejudice and ultimately proved more of a unifying force than a divisive one.

Canada's early activities in southern Alberta were largely influenced by the Native presence. Fears of Indian wars and American influence brought the North West Mounted Police. Fears of American expansion brought Canadian sponsored and planned settlement and for the Bloods and other Native peoples, planned reserve homelands. The Bloods began adapting to their changed circumstance almost as soon as the Whites arrived, responding with permanent settlement on their reserve and engaging themselves in the recently developed economic activities.

Historians have often viewed the period of plains Native history that followed the collapse of the buffalo herds as a time of traumatic economic and cultural adjustment and evidence for the belief that Natives only played a minor part in local, regional or national schemes of development. They picture Natives as outside the bounds of modern capitalist society in an officially imposed isolation. It is generally assumed that Natives lacked the skills to adapt to the

economic circumstances unfolding around them. They were therefore unable to overcome the obstacles intentionally placed in their way by legal restrictions, such as those contained in the Indian Act, and by DIA policy. It is also assumed that non-Native communities required or demanded little from the Native land base or the people living on the reserves other than that they should surrender their land to the use of Whites. In the case of southern Alberta and the Bloods this view is inaccurate.

It is inconceivable that the Blood Indians with their more than 500 square miles of territory, would have had no impact on, or part to play in a local or regional economy. It is inconceivable, as well, that local business enterprises and mercantile interests, in general, did not recognize the benefits to be gained from tapping the resources of this land base and its people, and were, therefore, content to let the Bloods remain in isolation. Though reserves were planned as isolation units Natives and Whites could not be kept apart except through a rigorous application of the regulations. To believe they could denies the Bloods' active participation in the economic life of the region. The reality is, however, that the Bloods did have a significant impact.

The Bloods entered the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries having to deal with a much different incoming society. The primary desire of the new arrivals was to integrate the region into the national economy and

exchange agricultural products for the manufactured goods of central Canada. They quickly found that the Bloods had much to offer in fulfilling their individual or collective dreams for prosperity. With their traditional economy made obsolete, the Bloods themselves needed goods that could make their existence more comfortable. Whites needed both Blood land and labour and the purchasing power the tribe represented; hence it was impossible for the Bloods to remain detached from the economic forces at play around them. Acts of mutual exchange occurred not through default, but were deliberate and generally welcomed by all parties.

Both the Bloods and the non-Native community recognized the potential each held for the other. Non-Natives were aware of the benefits that Blood land promised and recognized that the Blood people could supply needed raw materials. For the ranching industry the increase in the number of cattle and the subsequent reduced grazing capacity, limitations imposed by variations in weather and natural disasters made the large area of the Blood reserve important to its well-being. The Bloods systematically and strategically offered their land as a market commodity. When direct access to the Bloods' land and its resources was denied to non-Natives, the Bloods were contracted to supply their labour and the desired produce. By all indications the Bloods were not loath to accept such arrangements if they believed they could financially benefit from them. The intensity with which the

payment of land rents was fought or avoided sustains the argument that access to the Blood reserve was perceived by many Whites as a necessary right which Whites were reluctant to give up. The voluminous correspondence on this issue suggests this was regarded as a genuine need. The arguments made by ranchers and settler/farmers about supposed excessive rental costs, however, are less easy to gauge.

Ranchers could co-exist with the reserve as a political entity, so long as they were not deprived of access to grazing land. Farming, however, was more land use intensive, and individual. Land that was separate and legally inalienable was simply not available for farming. The Bloods dismissed demands to surrender land, and the more insistent the demands became the more the Bloods refused to accommodate the needs of the non-Native community, preferring instead to move to large scale land rental.

During the early years the Bloods lacked the means to fully exploit the reserve's resources and recognized the potential to export its wealth for profit. They therefore arranged exchanges that fit local needs. Eventually, beginning in 1895, these arrangements became more formal. Contract leasing provided the Bloods with needed money, while local ranchers and farmers considered access to the land's resources as essential. The terms of the contracts, however, often proved unsatisfactory and the final arbitrator in all such arrangements, the DIA, convinced of its own correctness,

often did not act as either the Bloods or the renters would have wished or expected.

Land became the focus of development both for the Indians and the non-Native mercantile interests. Opinions differed between the Government, seeking to realize a specific policy aimed at answering the needs of an immigrant population, and the Bloods hoping to realize benefits from their titled possession. And although historians have often judged Indian agents as mean spirited and neglectful of Native interests, agents defended the rights of the Bloods as often against the Department as they did against rancher and farmer interlopers. It is clear that the land base of the Blood reserve played an important part in the economic well-being of ranching and subsequently the mixed farming enterprises of the region. When the non-Native needs did not clash with the Bloods' own requirements an accommodation, though sometimes strained, could usually be worked out. Problems arose when over-exploitation exhausted the land to the detriment of the Bloods, as happened during the drought of the 1930s. Difficulties also occurred when the government failed to recognize or adequately protect the Bloods from the impact of illegal land use and the abuse of lease privileges.

The Bloods, through their agents, pressed the Department, often unsuccessfully, to protect their reserve from illegal and unwarranted intrusion and exploitation. The main problem was that the DIA felt it knew best what the

Bloods needed and acted accordingly. Thus the reserve's resources were sometimes alienated despite the protests of both the Indians and the local agent. Though this often occasioned bitterness on the part of the Bloods, neither they nor their customers lost sight of the value of each other. The Bloods' needs, reserve politics, agents' ambitions, Department policy and natural conditions, all had a part to play in decisions affecting the disposal of reserve resources. Drought conditions during the 1930s, for example, eventually led to a decision to curb outsider access but this was never fully implemented.

As the land became more settled and urban centres developed, a much greater awareness of metropolitan-hinterland associations emerged. This, in conjunction with the local adherence to the booster ideology that held to the belief that every town or village had unlimited potential for growth, resulted in pressure on the Bloods to surrender a portion of their large reserve to satisfy the needs of the settler/farmer. The most vocal proponents of this view were local newspapers which often echoed the feelings of local boards of trade.

Not only did the Bloods integrate their land into the growing economic system of their area but they also sold their produce and labour. Thus for a short time the Bloods' coal and hay sales and their contract freighting displaced those who were less competitive or who lacked the Bloods'

connections. Significantly, despite official policy directed at curbing the Native competition with Whites, the Blood agents were forceful and energetic in acquiring off-reserve employment for their charges. This approach was not seriously challenged by the DIA. Attempts by the public to restrict the Bloods' market access all failed and indeed by the 1920s the DIA had accepted the Bloods' right to inclusion, if only because it saved public money.

Blood labour in the Raymond sugar beet fields provides the best example of their participation in the local economy. They were aggressively recruited for this work and were deemed essential by the growers to the functioning of the industry. Despite repeated attempts by the industry no suitable alternative labour could be found to replace them. The beet industry eventually went into decline and while critics blamed an inadequate labour supply, it is clear that market forces independent of labour supply were important contributing factors to the failure. A more detailed examination of the sugar beet industry in southern Alberta for this early period is clearly indicated.

Blood income was also important to the local economy. Both the DIA and the Bloods themselves could only meet their immediate needs through commerce with off-reserve businesses. Whether or not Indians possessed personal wealth, they generated wealth by their needs. Most non-Native entrepreneurs held the mistaken idea that the government was

a bottomless purse on which the Bloods had call. Thus merchants in both Cardston and Fort Macleod curried Indian favour; in fact competed for it despite the obvious risks. Indeed problems with collection never resulted in a long term denial of credit to the Bloods though the Department did attempt to apply and enforce its own restrictions by making the collection of debt difficult.

What was striking, however, was that the Bloods, even though they became a numerical minority and faced an increasingly complex and more competitive market situation, increased their economic influence. Anthropologist Esther Goldfrank reported an annual Blood income in 1895 of \$7,500. Where Samek envisioned agricultural failure Goldfrank saw change, the partial abandonment of crop agriculture in favour of cattle raising and the development of the more lucrative contract haying, with the result that the annual income in 1906 was \$40,000. By 1920 the income was \$254,332, more than a six fold increase, and, as significant, less than one half of this was realized from agricultural products, including hay.²⁹ The implications of this dramatic increase can better be appreciated when one considers that during this period the Blood population remained fairly constant, a population of

²⁹ Esther S. Goldfrank, "Administrative Programs And Changes in Blood Society During The Reserve Period," Applied Anthropology, 2 (Jan. - Mar., 1943), pp. 19 -20.

1,168 in 1906³⁰ and 1,158³¹ in 1924.' True, the Bloods' income collapsed with the onset of the Depression, from \$100,000 in 1930 to \$24,000 in 1932.³² This dramatic collapse, however, did not set the Bloods apart; they simply suffered, as did all their neighbours, the misery of general national economic collapse.³³

³⁰ CSP No. 27, 1907, p. 161.

³¹ CSP No. 14, 1925, p. 28.

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This population decline is most likely due to the influenza epidemic of 1919-1920 and the probability that some Bloods were absent from the reserve doing work in the surrounding area. Hugh A. Dempsey, Tom Three Persons: Legend Of An Indian Cowboy (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1997), p. 85.

³² Goldfrank, "Administrative Programs," P. 21.

³³ The decade of 1911 to 1920 had been one of increased economic diversification and increasing, if limited, prosperity. Incomes for 1911, 1914, 1919, 1920 were \$56,750, \$61,100, \$233,746, and \$254,332 respectively. Goldfrank, Changing Configurations, p. 32. It was not until the decade of the 1920's that reserve farming finally accounted for more reserve income than other revenue sources. Prior to this, therefore, one must not give too much weight to crop agriculture; as its importance was discounted by agents and that of hay was stressed. By 1921, however, the total value of farm products including hay was \$80,000 or 60.2% of total income of \$132,989. C.S.P. No. 27, 1922, p. 58. In 1922 it was \$50,000 or 41.8% of \$119,735;³³ 1923, \$108,300 or 61.5% of total income of \$176,070;³³ and in 1924 it was \$209,000 or 74.6% of total income of \$280,332. CSP No. 15, 1925, p. 78. *The difficulty with the statistics is that the value of hay sales is generally included in agriculture returns and so it is not possible to determine its value relative to other agriculture income. For some years the Agents do give the value or the tonnage harvested.

The Bloods' economic adaptations, however, suggest that the necessary integrative strategies that they had developed in the early reserve days were essential throughout much of the period of study. The reserve remained incapable of completely supplying the economic needs of all its residents and thus some integration into the surrounding economic environment of southern Alberta, both from a reserve base and through temporary out migration, continued to be a practical and necessary alternative.

The Bloods participated in the tremendous economic growth experienced by Canada's agricultural sector during the 1920s and it is in this decade that agricultural production became a critical factor in the Blood reserve economy.³⁴ This evidence contradicts the commonly held belief that the Bloods had been so continually poverty stricken that they did not even notice the collapse of regional and national economies in the Great Depression.³⁵ It is inconceivable that they failed to realize that their hundreds of thousands of dollars in income in the 1920s had shrunk to mere thousands in the

³⁴ Between 1911 and 1920 the percentage of income attributable to farm products, including hay was 52.2%, 39.2%, 42.6%, 43.3%, or less than fifty percent except for the year of least income. C.S.P. No. 27, 1922, p. 58.

³⁵ See for example Taylor, Standing Alone, P. 35. Hugh A. Dempsey, "One Hundred Years of Treaty Seven," in Ian L. Getty and Donald Smith (eds.), One Century Later: Western Canadian Reserve Indians since Treaty 7 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978), p. 28.

early 1930s. It is more likely that the misery of the 1930s was worse because of the relative prosperity of the previous decade, a problem common to the entire region. Despite severe setbacks, however, the Bloods maintained their market share.

Contrary to the perception that the economy held no place for them, the Bloods adapted well from the beginning and carved out a niche for themselves. Non-Natives also recognized the contributions that the Bloods could make to their efforts at amassing wealth and influence. The economy was based on the use of land and the exchange of produce, labour and capital. These, in part, define the relationship of the Bloods and the non-Native southern Alberta community.

The flawed perception of some historians is largely a result of viewing the history of relations from the standpoint of what was officially desired, demanded or perceived as ideal by government, especially in creating a western economy based on farming, and not in viewing particular circumstance of specific locations. There is also a tendency to see Natives as exploited rather than as competitive or exploitative, a view that does not recognize the reality of relationships with neighbours. The Bloods' self-interested behaviour in the leasing of their land, the sale of their labour and produce, the way they spent their money, and incurred debt provides sufficient evidence. Their

actions in the Raymond area beet fields is simply a further proof.

Clearly the Bloods and the surrounding community attempted to maximize their own potentials and work out arrangements to meet their own needs. In the end it was mutually agreeable circumstances that permitted each to function in conjunction with the other. The Blood reserve could not, no more than the surrounding countryside, exist in 'splendid isolation', functioning independently of local or national forces. Both communities accommodated each other's needs, while operating within the national economic system.

In the period of this study the Bloods overcame the calamitous loss of the buffalo, took advantage of market forces and largely avoided becoming totally marginalized. What emerges is a clear indication that the Bloods were more or less disadvantaged depending on the general economic circumstances to which both Natives and Whites were subjected. Some Bloods were likely more economically marginalized than some of their White neighbours, and less than others. Whites who were suffering financially could either leave or seek help from financial institutions and banks, options not open to the Bloods because of legal and cultural restrictions. The Bloods' land and patronage, however, often determined the well-being of the industries developing around them and thus they became an essential, and not an irrelevant factor, in the local economy.

Accepting the hypothesis of Natives as insignificant to the processes unfolding around them is to believe that they suffered from an absolute disadvantage. Such was not the case. In fact, Whites were so desirous of making the Bloods' land and labour a part of the overall economy of the area that these became necessary. As a consequence the Bloods could sometimes pick and choose the means with which to define the associations, a situation wholly out of keeping with an insignificant status.

Unlike the Peigans who were coerced into selling their land for the benefit of settlers, the Bloods resisted the market forces. The agricultural and grazing leases, the crop share harvesting of hay, the sale of coal, freighting and sale of labour permitted the Whites to integrate the Blood reserve into their economy, perhaps never to the extent they desired, but certainly to an extent they and the Bloods could live with. Therefore demands for the sale of the reserve, though periodically brought to the fore, were never sufficiently powerful to achieve success.

Life changed with the catastrophic disappearance of the buffalo. However, as far as human potential was concerned, skill, energy, foresight and planning to maximize benefits from economic activities were still needed and used and still existed. True, the economy was driven by Whites. The Bloods, however, successfully responded to resource depletion and a new economic and political order. Unlike the Dakota,

who Peter Elias concluded suffered from an imposed isolation and therefore exclusion from the surrounding labour market,³⁶ the attempt to impose the same on the Bloods did not succeed.

The mistake has been to assume that all plains Natives experienced the same fate following the loss of the buffalo, and to accept the conclusion that somehow today's stereotypes either reflect a historical reality in all cases, or represent a continuity of experience through time. To do so is to assume that the Bloods were submissive in the face of government repression, failed to appreciate the value of the wealth they possessed in their land and labour, had no need for material possessions that could improve their standard of living, and deliberately chose to remain outside the market economy. It is also to conclude that non-Natives did not recognize any potential in their Blood neighbours or, if they did so, chose to ignore it in favour of some perceived status quo. Neither conclusion is sensible or true. Each society had materials and skills the other needed, so an accommodation had to be worked out for both to thrive or function in their common environments.

For Natives and non-Natives living in a shared neighbourhood the economic changes that occurred with time required shared efforts. Historian Daniel Francis has

³⁶ Peter Douglas Elias, The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest: Lessons for Survival (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), p. 223.

concluded that "In the White version of history, Indians stood in the way of Canada realizing its true potential."³⁷ And although many ranchers, farmers and government officials believed this to be true this stereotype does not hold up in southern Alberta. Whites recognized that it would take a partnership, a blending of interests and efforts if either one was to prosper.

Through diverse economic, environmental, social and cultural changes the Blood reserve and its people remained, a constant in the fluctuating fortunes of the area. The reserve was an oasis, promising respite from the shrinking economies of scale for those Whites who could access its benefits. The promise of the reserve's potential forged an environmental and economic link between it and the surrounding neighbourhood.

This thesis has attempted to show an Indian reserve and the surrounding non-Native community as in some ways integrated. However, the extent of economic interaction was not overwhelming, nor was it consistent for all the factors during the time period considered in this study. There was a period, for example, when there was no coal mine and when sugar beet labour was not required. Though limited the extent of integration, however, has not previously been

³⁷ Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian In Canadian Culture (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), p. 222.

appreciated for its significance. The Bloods were important first to the ranching community and then to the farmers and the towns for the produce, services and capital they provided. Much more detailed work will have to be done to determine the extent to which this was common to other reserves or whether the Bloods were indeed a special case. It should be noted, however, that the size and location of the Blood reserve makes it difficult to apply conclusions reached here to other Native groups and communities. But there is no reason to suppose that the Bloods were exceptional in responding to the challenges of the post-buffalo period.

An attempt has been made to determine some of the principal ways in which the Bloods participated in the economic institutions brought into their homeland. Much remains to be done and several possibilities for further research may be suggested. No attempt was made to define or explain the nature of Blood cultural adaptations for this period. It remains for the cultural anthropologist to determine the extent to which the Bloods used their participation in the local capitalist system to sustain economic or cultural traditions. Nor was this study intended to be a history of the Blood reserve therefore a more detailed spatial study of this and other reserves is in order.

While the Bloods did not achieve either economic independence, or wealth, they did make the most of their opportunities, so much so that they presented an attractive prospect for the mercantile interests in the vicinity. More detailed work will have to be done before a complete picture of the role and impact of Natives and their land on the non-Native communities around them can be detailed or determined with any certainty.

Detailed works on towns³⁸ and regions³⁹ exist but such studies need to be approached with a view to explaining the Native participation and attachment to urban and rural areas, to considering Natives as integral rather than peripheral. The Peigan reserve near Pincher Creek and the Blackfoot reserve near Gleichen suggest parallel studies.

The economic impact of Natives and their wealth and resources on adjoining towns and regions await the economist, as does the impact of reserves on the exchange of land await the historical geographer. Research is also required to deal

³⁸ Donald G. Wetherell and Irene Kmet, Town Life: Main Street and the Evolution of Small Town Alberta, 1880-1947 (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1995); Walter Hildebrandt, Views from Fort Battleford: Constructed Visions of an Anglo-Canadian West (Regina: Canadian Plains Research center, 1994).

³⁹ John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, Settling The Canadian-American West, 1890-1915 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

with the perceptions, such as those of Howard Palmer, that Native Canadians were isolated from the mental landscape.⁴⁰

Unclear too are the mechanisms of the Bloods' decision-making structures, the politics of the reserve which determine the nature of relations with the outside community. Hugh Dempsey has done admirable work in detailing the leadership of the Blood reserve for the late nineteenth century and has offered glimpses of the later period. To date, however, no detailed study of the political processes exist for the reserve during the twentieth century and these surely would contribute significant information on factors defining the relations of the Bloods with the non-Native community during the 1920s and 1930s.

Social relationships between the Bloods and their neighbours also require analysis. The extent to which both formal and informal social intercourse occurred, as are the factors controlling it, remain unclear.

It would also be illuminating to trace the fortunes of the Bloods up to the present to determine how much of the economic relationship established during the period of this study remains. Did, for example, opportunities decline in the decades after the 1930s causing a retreat to the

⁴⁰ Howard Palmer, Patterns Of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), p. 12.

reserve,⁴¹ a trend believed to have been entrenched early in the history of the reserve and with which this work disagrees. The evidence in this study refutes the view of Native homelands managed in isolation, struggling unsuccessfully to forge successful economic links and achieve well-being in an economic climate and environment dominated by Whites. Leasing continued in the period beyond this study, but the nature of the arrangement and its significance for both the Bloods and their neighbours has yet to be examined.⁴² Though a start has been made on studying the family and gender response to labour and production,⁴³ for this period and beyond, more detailed analysis is necessary.

The DIA exercised a great deal of paternalistic control over the Bloods. Clearly there were many times when the

⁴¹ See for example the comments of John E. Pugh, in 1940, that "Passage of time and development of the outside areas, and the consequent settlement, has naturally confined the Indian to his reserve, and where years ago the Indian was sought for hay contracts, beet work, threshing and so forth outside the confines of his reserve, today his living has largely to be eked out on the reserve." John E. Pugh, "The Blood Indians at Cardston and Macleod, Alberta," Canadian Cattlemen, vol. 3, no. 2 (September, 1940), p. 420.

⁴² George Yackulic, "the Blood Indians ponder progress," Canadian Business, 25 (April, 1952), p. 148.

⁴³ Janet Mancini Billson, "Standing Tradition on Its Head: Role Reversal among Blood Indian Couples," David R. Miller et. al. (eds.), The First Ones: Readings In Indian/Native Studies (Craven, Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Press, 1992), pp. 215-225.

Bloods would have been better off without departmental interference. There were occasions when the DIA placed the Bloods' interests second to those of their White neighbours and where the Department's decisions were nothing if not misguided. Equally, however, there are examples that indicate that the Bloods benefited from the guidance and guardianship of well-intentioned agents and their intercession with Ottawa. This is not to argue that the Bloods were incapable of looking after their own affairs. Clearly they were. Agents like R.N. Wilson, however, sometimes made the Bloods' defense of their interests a little easier.

The southern Alberta area went through periods of economic highs and lows much as the economy of the rest of the country. Those economic downturns caused by nature and the world economy generally affected the region as a whole, when the surrounding White population suffered so did the Bloods, and vice versa. As the initial settlement phase ended the Bloods had cast their lot with their neighbours, integrating themselves and becoming integrated into the local economy. In consequence they were sometimes victimized by Whites, the DIA and individual tribal members. But they did not respond as helpless victims. Instead the Bloods enjoyed the benefits of economic cooperation and also suffered setbacks while making their contribution to the general well-being of the region.

The best agents on the Bloods' behalf were themselves. They adapted to the new reality and refused to be made 'strangers' in their own land.⁴⁴ Native reserves had a more important part to play in the local or regional history than has previously been credited. In this case the Bloods' importance to the ranching and farming community and to Cardston, Fort Macleod and Raymond is clear.

⁴⁴ Jennifer Reid, Myth, Symbol, And Colonial Encounter: British And Mi'kmaq In Acadia, 1700-1867 (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), p. 110.

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Macleod News

Macleod Spectator

Macleod Times

Pincher Creek Rocky Mountain Echo

Raymond Chronicle

Raymond Leader

Raymond Recorder

Raymond Rustler

U.I.D. News

Western Native News

AppendixTable 1.

Population at Census Year

<u>Town</u>	1901	1906	1911	1916	1921	1926	1931	1936	1946
Cardston	0639	1001	1207	1370	1612	2034	1672	1711	2334
Maclod	0796	1144	1844	1811	1723	1715	1447	1365	1649
Raymond	----	1568	1465	1205	1394	1799	1849	2094	2116 ¹
<u>Total</u>	1435	3713	4516	4386	4729	5548	4968	5170	6099
Blood ²	1253	1168	1128	1154	1158 ^{3*}			1325 ^{4**}	
<u>Blood as % of Total</u>	87.3	31.5	25.0	26.3		20.9		25.6	

¹ Census of Prairie Provinces, Vol. 1, 1946, p. 522. The 1881 and 1891 census reports do not differentiate on the basis of community and so were not used.

² Taken from Agent's Reports contained in Canada Sessional Papers.

³ *This is the population count for 1924 taken from C.S.P., No. 14, 1925, p. 28.

⁴ **This is a reading for 1935 taken from NAC, RG 10, vol. 12645, file 205/3-2, pt. 1, M. Christianson to R.H. Coats, December 30, 1935.

Table 2

1935 - Lease Monies due Bloods		Year	Rate -\$1.25
Blackmore, H.J.	Cardston	1934	\$194.60*
		1935	\$194.60
		1935	\$ 32.00
Penney, W.T.	Mcgrath	1935	\$570.54*
Patterson Ranching Co.	Lethbridge	1935	\$600.00
Parker, Russel	Orton	1935	\$112.15
? B.G.	Lethbridge	1935	\$ 11.00
Horn, Fred	Lethbridge	1935	\$ 70.68
Stringham, G.L.	Glenwood	1935	\$1100.18
Crest, C.S.	Lethbridge	1935	\$869.09
Jensen, L.	Lethbridge	1935	\$916.06
Meldrum, Jas.	Mcgrath	1935	\$322.41
Pitcher, W.F.M.	Cardston	1935	\$824.59*
Smith, J./Kearl. S.	Cardston	1935	\$248.80
			\$.60
Whitney, A., et. al.	Kipp	1935	\$429.28
McNab, W.H. et. al.	Macleod	1935	\$153.60

*denotes year and amount in arrears

Above statistics taken from NAC, RG 10, vol. 1538

Table 3

Blood income from the sale of wheat and oats for the years
1920 - 1927.

		<u>Value</u>	<u>Total</u>
1920-	32,598 Bus. Wheat-	\$065,196.00	
	16,260 Bus. Oats -	6,504.00	\$071,700.00
1921-	27,985 Bus. Wheat-	\$027,985.00	
	7,206 Bus. Oats -	2,522.10	\$030,507.10
1922-	60,537 Bus. Wheat-	\$054,483.30	
	12,899 Bus. Oats -	4,514.65	\$058,997.95
1923-	212,319 Bus. Wheat-	\$191,087.10	
	27,249 Bus. Oats -	9,537.15	\$200,624.25
1924-	197,642 Bus. Wheat-	\$187,859.90	
	29,598 Bus. Oats -	8,879.40	\$196,739.30
1925-	89,580 Bus. Wheat-	\$116,454.00	
	3,497 Bus. Oats -	1,049.10	\$117,503.10
1926-	120,825 Bus. Wheat-	\$097,000.00	
	5,191 Bus. Oats -	1,557.30	\$098,557.30
1927-	69,995 Bus. Wheat-	\$041,997.00	
	2,482 Bus. Oats -	,992.80	\$042,989.80
		<u>Total</u>	\$817,618.80 ⁵

⁵ Figures taken from NAC, RG 10, vol. 7595, file 10103, pt. 5; M. Christianson to W.M. Graham, May 18, 1928.

Table 4

Blood tribe debt as of April 1934.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Dept.</u>	<u>Outside</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Total</u>
A-Deceased	3079.92	512.00	826.21	4418.13
B-Old/ Destitute	15442.96	2742.39	3111.58	21296.93
C-Able Bodied (F/C)	49226.09	8617.34	6749.40	64592.83
D-Able Bodied	20758.77	5852.52	5602.13	32213.42
<u>Totals</u>	88507.74 1266.00	17724.25	16289.32	122521.31
	89773.74 ⁶			
<u>% of Total</u>	73.3	14.5	13.3	

Table 5

Blood tribe debt on the basis of community.

<u>No. of Co.s or Individuals</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
14	Cardston	\$14,316.99	80.8
04	Macleod	\$458.85	02.6
04	Lethbridge	\$910.00	05.1
03	Calgary	\$1,012.33	05.7
01	Winnipeg	\$1,026.08	05.7
<u>26</u>		<u>\$17,724.25</u>	<u>99.9⁷</u>

⁶ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, April 18, 1934, and attached details.

⁷ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, April 18, 1934, and attached details. Emphasis in original.

Table 6

Summary of Blood tribe debt by class.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Class A</u>	<u>Class B</u>	<u>Class C</u>	<u>Class D</u>	<u>Total</u>
1922	232.65	0022.00	1056.17	1032.48	2343.30
1923	000.00			0370.00	0370.00
1924	059.05	0152.92		0127.00	0338.97
1925	648.46	2915.18	6677.46	4800.01	15041.11
1926	782.23	3115.34	8455.15	6584.23	18936.95
1927	847.99	3204.67	6548.44	5631.36	16232.46
1928	820.30	2816.46	7369.79	3888.27	14894.82
1929	295.00	2138.74	5435.39	2252.30	10121.43
1930	569.63	3971.47	17104.61	3628.17	25273.88
1931	076.24	0798.65	2828.81	0741.21	04444.91
1932	057.60	1121.40	4909.81	1393.13	07481.94
1933	028.98	1022.62	4160.26	1765.08	06976.94
<hr/>					
<u>Total</u>	4418.13	21279.45	64545.89	32213.24	
		21296.43	64592.83	32213.42 ^{8*}	

Table 7

Blood tribe debt 1934 - 1942.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Collectable</u>	<u>Collections</u>	<u>Incurred</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Owing</u>
	<u>Indebtedness</u>	<u>on</u>			<u>Outside</u>
					<u>Creditors</u>
1934	14538.59				
1935	14538.59	0960.64	0671.85	14249.80	0989.79
1936	14249.80	0000.00	0426.48	14676.28	0989.79
1937	14676.28	1325.20	1056.18	14407.26	0989.79
1938	14407.26	2088.52	0999.36	13235.34	0097.00
1939	13235.34	0000.00	0000.00	13187.59	0097.00
1940	13187.59	0000.00	1685.84	14873.43	0097.00
1941	14873.43	0000.00	0000.00	14873.43	0097.00
1942	14873.43	000.00	000.00	14873.43	0097.00 ⁹

⁸ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, J.E. Pugh to Secretary, April 18, 1934, and attached details.

* Indicates official figures which do not agree with my own calculations contained in the line above.

⁹ NAC, RG 10, vol. 7899, file 40103-1, Table compiled