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Power and Performance

The Indian Agent and the Agency, 1877 - 1897: two
Western case studies.

by

Jean Manore

Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies
and Research of the University of Ottawa in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the M.A. degree
in History.

Ottawa, -Ontario

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Abstract

This thesis is a case study of two western agencies, Battleford and Clandeboye during the years 1877 - 1897, and the agents who were in charge of them. It examines the power and performance of the agent in administering government Indian policy at the local level by focusing on specific issues within the major themes of politics, health, education and economics.

This is not the first thesis to examine the powers of the Indian agent but it is the first to offer a detailed analysis of his performance as the person in charge of implementing Indian Department policy at the local level. Examining the agent's performance means trying to determine when and how he was able to use the legislative powers given to him by virtue of the Indian Act of 1876. Previous works on the Indian agent have not been able to give a detailed analysis of the agent's performance because they did not choose to adopt the case study approach as their methodology.

The first chapter examines the Indian Act, which serves as the seminal piece of legislation in regards to the government's idea of Indian - government relations, and explains the powers it gives to the agent. It then contrasts the Indian Act with the Treaties, specifically 1 and 6, which serve as the seminal pieces of legislation in regards to the Indians' idea of Indian - government relations. The political aims of the Department at the reserve level were: to supplant Indian government with a Euro - Canadian form of local government and to gain control

over political decisions made by that government. The easiest way it believed it could achieve this control was by controlling the chiefs. This belief was incorrect; even if a particular chief was sympathetic to the Department's aims, it was no guarantee that his followers would be or that they would follow his example. The agent was charged with overseeing the work of the chief and the band government and insuring that they performed their duties in accordance with Departmental directives. The agent's powers were limited though because the Indians did not wholeheartedly embrace the provisions of the Indian Act and because traditional Indian political custom allowed great individual freedom to act independently of the chiefs and councils.

Social and cultural policies of the Indian Department are also examined using health and education as examples. The conclusions drawn again point to a limitation on the agent's powers to effect change and therefore again hinders his ability to perform his duties. The agent was given the responsibility of "civilizing" the Indian, of forcing him to adopt white cultural norms. Indian culture however, for the most part, proved most retentive.

Finally a look at the Department's agricultural program is offered illustrating the problems the Department had in trying to decide whether or not it wanted Indians to be assimilated into the mainstream economy or to be merely self-sufficient and non-dependent on government assistance. Whichever the case, again the agent is unable to bring about the change in Indian life to the degree to which the Department desired. The Depart-

ment wanted the Indians to be farmers. The Indians did take up farming but usually only on a part time basis. The conversion from nomadic hunters to sedentary agriculturalists was not complete.

For those who think of the Indian agent as all powerful in carrying out his duties, this thesis offers another chance to see the agent from a different view point.

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INTRODUCTION

Historical generalizations
require foundational case
studies.

Cornelius J. Jaenen

There are many general histories of Indian-white relations. Some of these histories have focused on the role of Indian agents in carrying out the government's Indian policy, on the reserves. Unfortunately, existing studies tell more about the institutional framework and the legislating and regulatory powers of the agents than about social interaction and the actual performance of specific agents. Also though many of the conclusions drawn by these studies pertain to the effectiveness of the agents at the local level, that is, how much real power they had over their charges and how well they performed their duties, the focus of their research has been centred around the Indian Affairs bureaucracy in Ottawa. These conclusions then are historical generalizations but historical generalizations are akin to theories and therefore must be tested. The best way to test generalizations is to conduct case studies. Consequently, a case study of the power and performance of the agent has been undertaken using the Battleford and the Clandeboye Agencies, for the years 1877-1897, as the focus of research.

The impact of the Indian agent on all aspects of Indian life and the power he wielded over the Indians¹ under his charge has been a recent source of debate in Canada, largely due to published works by Indian authors which have strongly criticized the Indian agents' efforts on their behalf. These

authors refer to agents as: "petty administrators [out] to utterly destroy the Indian spirit"² or as men comparable to prison wardens because of the extraordinary range of administrative and discretionary powers they held.³ So great was their authority that according to Harold Cardinal, an Indian activist, the Indians "wryly joke that a native can't get sick without written permission of the Indian agent."⁴ The debate is not a new one. Indians and others, especially missionaries, have criticized the agents since the time they assumed a position of authority over the Indians' affairs by virtue of the enactment of the Indian Act in 1876. The debate exists because the Indian Affairs Department, as the chief protagonist for the Agent, has consistently praised him for his humane attitude towards the Indians and his capable efforts in carrying out his duties, while on the other hand, the Indians themselves, the chief antagonists, have argued substantially that "the only good agent is a dead agent."

Specific examples which illustrate the Department's view can be found in the annual reports of Indian Department officials. Finding written opinions by the Indians is more difficult. Nevertheless such accounts do exist as well as reports of Indian actions that indicate their displeasure with their Indian agents.⁵ Commissioner Edgar Dewdney in his annual report of 1887, for example, wrote that: "I am glad to be able to record that, with one or two exceptions, I have had every reason to be greatly pleased with the conduct of those [agents] who have been in the

service of the Department ..."⁶ Several years later, Inspector E. McColl recorded that: "The Indian agents ... are generally discharging in a commendable manner the various responsible duties incumbent upon them ..."⁷ and Deputy Superintendent-General Hayter Reed gave even greater praise to the agents when he stated that: "The Indians in Manitoba and the North-west Territories ... are under superior guidance."⁸

In contrast, the Indians complained about their agents stating that they were more interested in protecting the interests of the government and settlers rather than the interests and welfare of the Indians. The Indians of St. Peters of the Clandeboye Agency made this complaint in the form of a petition to the government.⁹ Other Indians disliked their agents because they cut back on their rations to the point where some Indians starved, or because they were physically abusive.¹⁰ The Indians of Big Bear's band disliked their agent, Thomas Quinn, because he had assaulted a few members of the band. They were somewhat more demonstrative in indicating their displeasure than the Indians of St. Peter's; they killed him.¹¹

Evidently then the Department praised the work of its agents while the Indians criticized it. To document this difference of opinion and to attempt to explain its existence were the prime motivations behind this thesis. The existence of such a difference of opinion renders it difficult to understand why the agents could exercise so much influence on Indian life. How could so much power and authority be acquired and

maintained over such strong, independent and often indignant groups of people? Also, if the agent did have so much power, how can one explain the fact that the Indian peoples survive as distinct culture groups? Once again, the value of the case study approach becomes apparent for it is only by studying the agent at the local level that answers to these questions can be found. But first, it is necessary to provide a brief historical overview of government Indian policy and the agent's developing role within the statutory and administrative frameworks.

Professor Douglas Leighton in his thesis: "The Development of Federal Indian Policy, 1840-1890", stated that the British government first introduced Indian agents into their system of native administration in the late seventeenth century. Their task was to learn native languages and to act as "officers conducting Indian affairs". Gradually, their role evolved in importance. By 1739, New York had appointed thirty Indian agents to regulate the fur trade and to suppress the liquor traffic. As the British came to realize the value of the Indians as military allies against the French instead of just trading partners, the need to maintain close and friendly ties with their Indian associates became increasingly important. Consequently the Indian Department was created in 1755 under the control of William Johnson. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 further acknowledged the importance of Indian military might. The Proclamation designated an Indian territory into which no

Europeans could go without government permission. Agents were assigned to protect Indian property and rights from white squatters who crossed the Alleghenies and tried to set up homesteads in this Indian territory. This protection was granted not primarily because the government respected Indian land title but because the government respected the Indians as a military power and needed them as allies.¹²

After the War of 1812, the British no longer needed Indian allies, thus the relationship between the British government and the Indians changed. What the British needed from the Indians thereafter was their land. The demands for land by white settlers were increasing and the British realized that aboriginal land title had to be extinguished systematically over much of the area then occupied by the Indians. Aboriginal land title had not yet been extinguished even though the French had been settled in Lower Canada for more than a century. The French relationship with the Indians had remained commercially and militarily based. The French had never alienated Indian lands, their own colonies were compact and slightly populated, and therefore they had had no reason to extinguish aboriginal title.

The British government also realized that some land had to be reserved for Indian use so that they could continue to support themselves and manage their own affairs.¹³ A proposal sufficient to meet these requirements was put forward by Lt. Governor Sir James Kempt in 1829. Kempt suggested that the Indians be confined within small villages with lands sufficient for their support.

To encourage the exploitation of these lands, the government would provide supplies to build homes, barns, fences, etc., and missionaries would teach the Indians to farm.¹⁴ Kempt's suggestions were indicative of a longstanding view of civilization and assimilation to European agricultural life and this view remained an important one for Indian Affairs officials three and four generations later.

Europeans were critical of Indian lifestyle for two basic reasons: it was primitive and it was believed to be nomadic, hence still in the first stage of human progress. Placing Indians on reserves would stop their "wandering ways" and would train them in agriculture thus allowing them to progress to a civilized "white" lifestyle.¹⁵ Reserve life and training in agriculture became the two objectives in Indian policy. No longer were Indians left to live as they pleased.

The first reserve established with these objectives in mind was on Manitoulin Island in 1836.¹⁶ It was believed by Lord Glenelg, the British Colonial Secretary, and others that this location was ideal because it was isolated from white settlement. Policy-makers at the time, influenced by the humanitarian movement in Britain, believed that Indians had to be protected from rapacious settlers and that Indian integration into white society would occur only if a brief period of segregation were allowed. Indians needed time to adjust to white ways, to learn about both the positive and negative qualities of white society, to understand the mores and customs of the dominant society and the

requirements of the law. Until the time was reached when Indians could survive independently of governmental protection in this new framework, Indian-white contact would have to be limited and closely supervised.

It was also hoped that Manitoulin would serve as an area to which bands from all over Upper Canada could be removed. The policy of removing aboriginal peoples from their ancestral homelands and resettling them in isolated areas far distant from white settlement was practiced by both the Americans and the Australians. The British hoped that Manitoulin would serve as the first step in implementing a policy of removal in British North America. This hope was never realized because it became evident by the mid-1840's that the Manitoulin experiment was a failure: agriculture was next to impossible in the inhospitable environment and internal religious problems had divided the community into opposing factions.¹⁷ The failure of the "Manitoulin Experiment" ended the government's brief flirtation with Removal as a policy in Upper Canada but ideologically agriculture was still the means by which the government intended to incorporate Indians into white society.

Apart from the Manitoulin mess, British government Indian policy in British North America was fairly successful from an administrative viewpoint. Aboriginal title was extinguished over a vast area of Upper Canada/Canada West in advance of white settlement especially with the signing of the Robinson Treaties in 1850. Many Indians had settled permanently on their

reserves and several Indians had received an education. A few even graduated from Upper Canada College and worked for the Indian Department.¹⁸ An administrative organization was also put in place by the British North American coloniew when they acquired jurisdiction over Indians and Indian lands in 1860. "Officers conducting Indian affairs" continued to regulate Indian-white contact within their jurisdictions, known as superintendencies, following Confederation. The British North America Act stipulated that the federal government had legislative authority for Indians and lands reserved for Indians.

When the Dominion of Canada acquired the West in 1869, by the passing of the Rupert's Land Act, the Indian Department's first concern was, as before, the extinction of aboriginal title. Negotiations for extinguishing land title in the North-West started in the late 1860's. In 1871, Treaties 1 and 2 were signed. The year before, the government had met the demands of the Metis by passing the Manitoba Act of 1870. The Metis were given the option of remaining on their homesteads along the Red River or of exchanging them for scrip. They were also given the right to receive Catholic schooling, where numbers permitted, and the French and English languages were given official status.

The most important terms of Treaties 1 and 2 included promises by the Indians to surrender large tracts of land and to maintain peace with their neighbours. In return, the government promised to establish reserves and schools.¹⁹ During the negotiations of the treaties certain promises were made by the

government negotiators which subsequently were not written into the treaties. These promises, later called "Outside Promises", included the granting of one bull and one boar to each reserve plus one cow and one sow for each Chief. The reserve was also to receive from the government, "a male and a female of each kind of animal raised by farmers" but only when the Indians were ready, in the judgement of the Department, to receive them. A plow and harrows were also guaranteed to each native settler who started cultivating the soil.²⁰

Government employees were sent to Manitoba to implement the terms of these treaties and oversee adherence to the conditions imposed therein. These employees, agents by function, but not necessarily formally designated as such, were to distribute supplies, pay annuities, survey reserves, establish new schools and negotiate new treaties.²¹ An example of such an employee was Commissioner Wemyss M. Simpson, one of the three men who had actually negotiated Treaties 1 and 2. He was to act specifically as "General Indian Agent" and also to continue in his capacity as the negotiator for the Indian Department and the Dominion government in the North-West.²² These wide powers vested in one individual could involve, at least on a theoretical basis, conflicting interests which required reconciliation between the Indians, the settlers, the Indian Department and the provincial and federal Legislatures.

The government soon realized that a stronger administrative framework was needed to handle Indian matters in Manitoba. As

a result, in 1873, an Indian Board was created which consisted of three members: the Indian Commissioner, the Lieutenant Governor of the province, and the chief of the Winnipeg Dominion Lands Office. The inclusion of the latter illustrated the importance of land title to the government which encouraged European immigration and settlement. The Indian Board proved ineffective from the beginning because of a personality conflict between Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris and Commissioner J.A.N. Provencher.²³ In 1876, the board was replaced and drawing upon previous experiences in Eastern Canada, two superintendencies -- Manitoba and the North-West -- were created. Morris was made honorary Chief Superintendent of Manitoba and David Laird was sent to the North-West not only as Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territory but also as the acting Indian Superintendent of the North-West.²⁴

This new organization seemed to meet the needs of administering Manitoba's Indians but it was not long before it was realized that there existed a great need to reorganize the North-West administration. This reorganization was necessary in large measure because the disappearance of the buffalo herds had precipitated a great economic crisis. Whereas in Manitoba the Indian groups at this time were somewhat self-supporting, thus giving Indian agents little to do, in the North-West Territory on the contrary, the Indians were completely dependent on the buffalo and the disappearance of the herds by the late 1870's left them completely destitute.²⁵ As a result, the Department realized that Indian policy would have to become more elaborate. It was no longer

sufficient to focus just on extinguishing aboriginal land title. Emphasis would have to be placed on training the Indians to accept a new lifestyle -- a European lifestyle. Thus when the North-West was reorganized in 1879, Commissioner Edgar Dewdney was placed in charge of Manitoba and the North-West and instructed to implement a short term program of distributing emergency rations of food and to implement a long term program of teaching Indians to farm.²⁶ In this way, the policy that had come to be practised in Eastern Canada was gradually implemented in Western Canada. Reserves again were the key feature of Indian policy and agriculture was again seen as the way to "raise" Indians from a primitive, nomadic lifestyle to a sedentary way of life and to introduce them to "civility" now called civilization.

Fortunately government officials were not the only ones interested in teaching Indians to farm. According to John Taylor, the Indians themselves realized that the end of their traditional life-style was near and therefore they asked the government to assist them in becoming farmers. Taylor suggested that herein lay the explanation of the "Outside Promises" granted to the Indians in Treaties 1 and 2.²⁷ Permanent farm instructors were appointed thereafter. Each farm instructor, named on the recommendations of Lieutenant-Governor David Laird, was appointed for a term of ten years and was expected to instruct four or five bands.²⁸ Taylor argued that farm instructors "formed the core of the second phase of the Dominion's Indian policy for the North-West."²⁹ The first phase had been the extinction of

aboriginal title.

With the establishment of reserves in the West and the appointment of various personnel to look after the people on the reserves, a new administrative unit for the prairies came into being. These new units were known as agencies. Essentially there were three groups of people who influenced the running of the agency: first, there were the inside employees such as the school teacher, the farm instructor and the Indian agent; secondly, there were the outside employees such as inspectors, and missionaries and other employees who worked for the government but in different departments; lastly, there were the Indians themselves. It was the establishment of these agencies that signified the start of an entirely new relationship between the government and the Indians in the West, a relationship in which non-Indians began to give greater direction in the management of the 'Indians' own affairs. The Saskatchewan Rebellion in 1885 resulted in an acceleration of this tendency of intervention especially by Indian agents who obtained more real power than any other officials over the affairs of the Indians of the prairie West.

Joan Boswell argued this point and explained that the Rebellion marked the change from the nomadic life to one of settlement on reserves by the Indians. This meant that new policies had to be implemented to meet those changes. Before the Rebellion, the agent was concerned mostly with distributing rations, annuities, and seed grain. After the Rebellion, other duties were included, such as dispensing justice, overseeing

sanitation improvements, promoting education, keeping records, etc.³⁰ A contrary argument does exist and it is offered by Douglas Leighton. He believed that:

During the autumn and winter following the rebellion, the Department faced the task of restoring its western operations to normal. This was speedily done, but there was little evidence that any great changes had been effected by the rebellion.³¹

Leighton argued that the Department was asking the same questions in the 1880's as had been asked fifty years before and that it came up with the same answers.³²

On the basis of the correspondence of the time, it appears that Boswell's argument is more convincing. In a report to Ottawa, Commissioner Dewdney observed that before 1884, the Agent was used chiefly as an administrator and organizer of ration distribution but he believed that the agent could be made responsible for much more. The Indians of Moosomin and Thunderchild reserves at the Battleford Agency and the Indians at the Fort Pitt Agency for example, had been very successful farmers. They no longer needed farm instructors but rather a "kind of reliable and accessible business manager who would actively assist the Indians in running their agricultural affairs". This manager could be the Indian agent and his assumption of this responsibility would perhaps eliminate the need for farm instructors intirely.³³ Implementing such a suggestion would have altered radically, of course, the traditional role of the agent.

Close contact and supervision by the agent afforded other benefits to ~~the~~ Department as well. Dewdney wrote that Indians, if they had a complaint, could raise them immediately with the agent in charge. This meant that Indians would no longer bother other officials and that they would no longer wander about the countryside in large groups looking for the Commissioner to hear their complaints. Close supervision also meant that the Indian Department, ever conscious of its budgetary limitations, could reduce the waste in expenditure that seemingly occurred every year inasmuch as the agent would be able to keep a close watch on all inventory.³⁴

Commissioner Dewdney's recommendations offered yet another advantage. They gave the government a chance to cut down on salary expenditures. He suggested that the Department hire six Indian agents and dismiss fifteen farm instructors who would no longer be required. The farm instructors had received a salary of \$900.00 per annum while agents were to receive \$1,200.00 per annum plus a house. His proposal would realize a saving of \$4,000.00 annually on expenses.³⁵

It must also be noted that the Indian agent already had been given a lot of authority through the Indian Act of 1876. For example, Section 45 of the Indian Act gave the agent responsibility over the management and sale of timber on Indian lands thus depriving the Indians of the freedom to exploit a valuable resource. The agent also had to be present at all council meetings. If he were not present, any decision made by the

council would not be recognized by the Indian Department as legally binding.³⁶ Dewdney felt that the time was right for the agents to start using these powers. His superiors agreed.

With the recognition of the importance of the agent in determining the success of the government's Indian policy by Ottawa and with the establishment of local agencies and reserves, the agents now had the power to perform their duties of directing the Indians' affairs, or did they? . . .

The history of Indian-white relations in Canada has been left largely unwritten until recently. With the advent of civil rights movements, multiculturalism and native cultural regeneration, academic and popular writers have dedicated much of their time to researching Indian culture and society, usually within the context of white contact. As a result, a favourite topic of research has been the Indian relationship with the Indian Affairs administration. Much of the focus for this research has been on policy making at Ottawa and the implementation of these policies in local areas. There have also been studies of the bureaucratic arrangement of the administration with explanations of how it worked. These studies have tried, by and large, to indicate the changes in Indian life that resulted from Indian Affairs policy and the Indian responses to these changes.

Studies also exist that cover more specific aspects of Indian Affairs policy and of Indian-white relations. These studies discuss issues that arose at the Superintendent or Agency level; they discuss the role of the missionaries, teachers, farm

instructors, or agents in administrative policy and their influences on Indian life-style. An understanding of the opinions and information presented in these studies is essential in order to situate the present study in its historiographical context.

General histories of the administration of Indian Affairs which often refer to agencies and agents fail to consider several important points. For example, George F.G. Stanley's, The Birth of Western Canada and E. Palmer Patterson's, The Canadian Indian: A History since 1500 discuss the philosophical aspects of Indian Affairs policy. Stanley argues that civilizing the Indians and then enfranchising them were the aims of Canada's Indian policy: "But to throw the uncivilized red man into the struggles and competitions of life with his white neighbour, without sufficient preparation, care and guidance, would have been the greatest cruelty and paramount error." During the period of transition from savagery to civilization, the Indian would need constant guidance.³⁷ Stanley concludes that the Canadian Indian policy was the correct approach and he defends it in these terms.

On the whole, the reservation policy met the needs of the moment. Although it limited their ability to sustain themselves by the chase and made them dependent upon the whiteman ..it probably saved the Indians from the fate of the buffalo.³⁹

Thus he sees nothing inappropriate in the policies and practices of the department.

Palmer Patterson, on the other hand, takes a different view

of Canadian Indian Policy. The establishment of government rules and regulations over the Indian peoples was not an act of benevolent paternalism but one of colonialism and imperialism and when, Patterson argues, the Indian "came under national government administration and the systemization of directed cultural change" this event represented "the completion of the conquest of his territory."³⁵

There are also several general histories of Indian Affairs administration written by Indians, mostly in response to the government's "white paper" on Indian policy in 1969. The Indian writers offer very different interpretations of the aims and effects of Indian policy and these views bring valuable alternative insights. For example, Harold Cardinal offers the following interpretation of the Indian Act and Indian Administration in his book, The Rebirth of Canada's Indians:

When the government sent out its first Indian agents to the Indian communities, the Indian people always felt that these people had come among them as a result of the treaties that they had signed with Her Majesty... they never understood that the agents who came among them came, not because of the treaties they had signed but because there had been a piece of legislation called the Indian Act, setting forth the powers that these agents would have over the Indian people and outlining the work they would do among the Indian people.⁴⁰

This citation indicates a complete misunderstanding between the government and the Indians as to what the aims of Indian policy should have been and it offers some explanation for the present

animosity between the two groups.

All of these studies offer conclusions regarding the broad effects of Indian Affairs policy but they do not discuss in significant detail the functions and activities of Indian Affairs personnel. The Indian agents remain especially obscure in these writings.

An example of a local history touching on Indian affairs is Lucien and Jane Hanks's, Tribe Under Trust. It is a case study of the Northern Blackfoot Reservation during the 1950's. It offers an excellent analysis of the band's relationship with the agent, especially in the matter of the trust fund which was the Indians' major source of income but which was entirely in the control of the agent. The study deals with a period well beyond the terminal date of this thesis and its exposition of a certain set of conditions does not necessarily apply to the time period of this thesis. Nor does Hanks' book offer an explanation as to how the agent became so powerful a figure in the Indians' lives.

Reservations are for Indians, written by Heather Robertson, a journalist intent on presenting a controversial book, is mostly a harangue aimed at government policy-makers who had so unjustly treated the Indian peoples. Her point is a valid one, but the invective used and the lack of objective analysis leave the reader with arguments based on rhetoric not on research.

There are several unpublished theses which deal with Indian administration: John Taylor's "The Development of a Federal Indian Policy for the North-West, 1869-1879", Joan Boswell's

"'Civilizing' the Indian:" government administration of the Indian", and Douglas Leighton's "The Development of a Federal Indian Policy in Canada, 1840-1890" which deals with the Indian agents in varying contexts. Finally there is Anthony Looy's "The Indian Agent and his Role in the Administration of the North-West Superintendency, 1876-1893" which is more directly involved with the agents, of course. The Taylor thesis focuses on the Treaty negotiations in the North-West. Boswell and Leighton offer general descriptions of Indian administration with much of the focus centred on Ottawa. The Looy thesis looks specifically at the North-West superintendency which during its designated time period included the Battleford Agency, but not Clandeboye, in its vast jurisdiction. Each of these authors offers opinions on various aspects of Indian Affairs policy, including for example, the purpose of reserves and the role and over-all effectiveness of the agent, and offers conclusions as to the general success of Indian Affairs policy. The four authors are not always in agreement and the conclusions of this thesis, while considering their views will be arrived at independently on the basis of a more penetrating analysis of the extant documentation.

According to John Taylor, the need for reserves in the West arose because of the disappearance of the buffalo. Also, because the buffalo disappeared far more quickly than anyone had anticipated, the government had to take drastic emergency action before massive starvation occurred.⁴¹ Commissioner Dewdney's reports at the time list numbers of Indians who had died of

starvation or exposure and of others who were trying to live by eating mice, dogs and buffalo skins.⁴² Reserves would allow the government to distribute rations to large bands of Indians at once and would enable it to start a training program in agriculture.

Joan Boswell, on the other hand, sees little humanitarianism behind the reserve policy of the government. She argues that reserves were created in the West as a result of the Indian Act of 1876. The act stated that "No Indian or non-treaty Indian resident in the Province of Manitoba, the North-west Territories or the District of Keewatin shall be held capable of having acquired or acquiring a homestead." Thus, if an Indian disliked the reserve, his only alternative was to find work in towns or cities and "few found this alternative attractive before 1896. Thus the government made the reserves an inescapable way of life for the Indians."⁴³ Consequently, the reserves served as "the clearest expression of racism" for they led to segregation of the races and conferred upon the Indians a special legal status.⁴⁴

Douglas Leighton argues that reserves gave Ottawa the opportunity to have input, if not control, in the running of Indian affairs at the local level and they gave Ottawa the opportunity to open up new areas for white settlement. Leighton does not see the reserves as an attempt to segregate the two populations but sees it rather as a means of providing a basis for future assimilation.⁴⁵

Looy supports Taylor in his assertion that the reserves were essential to the government in implementing its objectives of teaching Indians to farm. Unlike Taylor, Looy rules out the idea of duress. Looy states that the government could do little to force Indians onto reserves. He writes:

Hundreds of these Indians [those on reserves] returned to the plains -- sometimes for an extended stay -- preferring a life of near starvation on the plains to the often drab existence within the confines of a reserve.⁴⁶

The role of the Indian Agent and his effectiveness as a worker for the achievement of the Indian Department's goals is explained by all the authors, each giving a different interpretation. Only Taylor does not concern himself greatly with the Indian agent because he believes the most important figure on the agency was the farm instructor.⁴⁷

Boswell argues that the Indian Department wished to effect "radical changes in Indian life." To do this, the Department needed an effective organization and an effective agent at the local level.⁴⁸ Thus the importance of the Indian agent is made evident. Boswell writes:

He (the agent) was the link between the Indian and the Department; he was the man in the middle, legally, emotionally, and economically responsible to Ottawa but living among the people whose lives he administered. The character of the agent determined his success on the job. It determined more than any other single factor in the whole administrative structure of the Department, the successful application of Indian policy.⁴⁹

Boswell portrays the agent and the department as an omnipotent paternalistic force which interfered with and controlled every aspect of native life. The Department, through the agent, controlled Indian economic life and did what it could to control Indian social life. This included sending children to school, prohibiting certain practices like dancing and drinking, and encouraging cleanliness and good health.⁵⁰ Boswell in her thesis often contrasts the experience of the Indians in Eastern Canada with those in the West, emphasizing that the Indians of Eastern Canada had more autonomy and control over their lives than their Western counterparts.⁵¹

Boswell's assessment of the effectiveness of the Indian agent is unflattering. She argues that the agents were incompetent and that "weaknesses of character were more likely to surface in the west where the agent's jobs, demanding and lonely, tried the mettle of the strongest." She also emphasizes that these weaknesses "could have dire consequences for western tribesmen, because the bands in the west relied more heavily on their agents than the bands in the east did on theirs."⁵²

For Douglas Leighton, the "greatest problem in finding agents for the west faced by the Indian Department was not corruption, but mediocrity."⁵³ He also states that "The Department's western field operations were marked by drunkenness, dishonesty, and political jobbery which senior officials found difficult to curb."⁵⁴ Agent J. M. Rae serves as one example of an agent who passed much of the winter of 1885 in a drunken

stupor.. Leighton however is not as harsh a judge of the Indian agent as Boswell. He argues that despite all the hardships faced by the agents, most of them were conscientious and humane and did their best to bring their Indian charges into "comfortable contact with white British North American society." If there was a problem with the administration of Indian affairs, it lay not with the agents but with the Indian Department at Ottawa; its greatest fault, according to Leighton, was its "unwillingness to consult with its own agents and its Indian clients about their future."⁵⁵

The role of the Indian agent in the 1870's and 1880's as defined by Anthony Looy, was determined by two factors: the belief in the need to assimilate Indians into white culture and "a set of unique circumstances, characterized by Indian destitution and a sense of bewilderment, resulting from the rapid disintegration of the traditional hunting economy."⁵² The agents were to implement a program of "behavioural assimilation" and thus served as the government's instrument of civilization and Christianization.⁵⁷

Looy's appreciation of the field workers is also more sympathetic than Boswell's and any blame for Indian distress is once again directed at Ottawa not at the local agencies. Western Indian policy in the 1880's was characterized by tension between the central and local authorities. In fact, Commissioner Dewdney resigned his post because the chief bureaucrat in Ottawa, Lawrence Vankoughnet, ignored Mr. Dewdney, his opinions and suggestions.⁵⁸

Looy insists also that "agents were acutely aware of the cultural abyss that separated the two races."⁵⁹ Furthermore, "the agents generally speaking, did not regard the Indian as innately inferior or incapable of moral, mental and spiritual growth beyond a rather primitive level."⁶⁰ In conclusion, Looy suggests that the "performance of the Indian agents during the period under consideration must be judged as more than satisfactory."⁶¹

The success of the Indian Affairs' policy is debatable on the basis of the conclusions of these authors. Boswell reports that many of Canada's Indians were supporting themselves in some way, by 1896, meaning that the Department was realizing its goals. She adds however that progress would not proceed any further because there were too many restrictions on development to allow it. Indians were prohibited from taking financial risks therefore they could succeed only in a modest way. The government believed that the Indians were inferior and thus created legislation that made "the prophesy self-fulfilling"⁶² Her final conclusion on the matter is that:

The department of Indian Affairs had a workable organizational structure, clear lines of authority, adequate finances and a staff of reasonable intelligent conscientious employees. Enfranchisement for a few eastern Indians and the assumption of a self-supporting non-Indian way of life for all Indians were its clearly defined policy objectives. If the Department failed to attain those goals it was not because of its employees or organization, but because the goals were unobtainable.⁶³

In contrast to Boswell, Leighton concludes that:

It is a measure of the Indian Department's success in the half-century surrounding Confederation that much current Indian unrest is based, not upon negation of its goal, but upon an insistence that the treaties for which it was responsible and the rights which it acknowledged⁶⁴ must now be met by current authorities.

Looy is perhaps the most favourable in his assessment of the Department. Although he admits that Indian policy in the North West was at times found wanting, he concludes that "it was not because of lack of interest or qualifications on the part of the agents."⁶⁵ He also defends the interventionist policies of the government by stating that "there can be no doubt in the light of the historical realities of the 1870's and 1880's that intervention was necessary."⁶⁶

All of these theses, despite their differences, have one thing in common -- their approach. Each author starts with the policies that were formulated to bring Indians into white society and then attempts to explain what effects these policies had on the Indians. This thesis will take a different tack. It will focus on concrete social, economic and political issues that arose within the agencies of Battleford and Clandeboye and will explain how the agents tried to resolve them. It will also discuss the interaction of the various people working at the agency level; it will explain the effects this interaction had on the policies formulated. Taking this approach will illustrate the dynamics of agency life instead of portraying the agency as a passive entity which merely reacted to the dictates of the

Department. It will provide specific documentation to determine the correctness of generalized conclusions previously put forth. The study will also reveal several instances in which the agents were hindered in their attempts to carry out the policies of the Department, proving them to be far from omnipotent and far from successfully being able to perform their duties. The Battleford and Clandeboye Agencies will serve as the example case studies. These two agencies were chosen for a number of reasons: availability of sources, notoriety but mostly because of their representativeness. The experiences of the Treaty VI Indians and their responses to government policies are ably represented by the Indians of the Battleford Agency. Similarly, the experiences and responses of the Treaty I Indians are ably represented by the Indians of the Clandeboye Agency. The year 1877 was chosen as the starting date for this thesis because it marks the first year of service of Battleford's first Indian agent. The year 1897 was chosen as the closing date because it marks the last year of the existence of the Clandeboye Agency.

FOOTNOTES

1. The use of the term "Indian" is no longer in vogue. The accepted academic term is Amerindian whereas the accepted political term is Native peoples. However I have chosen to use the old term simply to be consistent. I cannot refer to Amerindian agents nor to the "Native Peoples Act of 1876". In both cases, I must use the word Indian consequently when referring to them as persons, I will call them "Indians".
2. Waubegashig, (ed.), The Only Good Indian, (Toronto: New Press, 1972) p. 113
3. Ponting, J. Rick, and Gibbins, Roger, Out of Irrelevance, (1980), p. 11
4. Cardinal, Harold, The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians, (Edmonton: Hurtig Pub., 1969), p. 43
5. The examples used are taken from sources that are in the time period of this study: 1877-1897
6. Public Archives of Canada, (hereafter PAC), Sessional Paper (hereafter SP) 15, vol. XXI, #13, 1888, Annual Report of Commissioner Dewdney, 1887, p. 198
7. PAC, SP 14, Vol. XXXI, #11 1897, Annual Report Inspector E. McColl, 1896, p. 104
8. PAC, SP 14, Vol. XXXI, #11 1897, Annual Report Superintendent-General, 1896, p. xxii
9. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3676, File 11,425, Petition of St. Peter's Indians to Government, February, 1879
10. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3793, File 46,121, Memo Vankoughnet to Thomas White, February 19, 1888
11. Tobias, John L., "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains' Cree", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXIV, (December 1983) p. 544
12. Leighton, James Douglas, "The Development of Federal Indian Policy in Canada 1840-1890", (Ph.D. University of Western Ontario, 1975) p. 53
13. Ibid, p. 49

14. Ibid, p. 26.
15. Taylor, John Leonard, "The Development of an Indian Policy for the North- West, 1869-1879", (Ph.D.: Queen's University, 1976), p. 232.
16. This is not to suggest that reserves did not already exist in Canada. For example the Caughnawaga and Sillery reserves were established in the 17th century by the French but these existed for different reasons. See Cornelius J. Jaenen, Friend and Foe.
17. Leighton, p. 34.
18. Leighton, p. 66.
19. Taylor, p. 160.
20. Ibid, Appendix B.
21. Ibid, p. 69.
22. Leighton, p. 286.
23. Ibid, p. 309.
24. Ibid, p. 312.
25. Bowell, Marion Joan, "Civilizing the Indian: government administration of Indian Affairs, 1876-1896", (Ph.D.: University of Ottawa, 1978), p. 214.
26. Edgar Dewdney was a long-time friend of John A. Macdonald. As Commissioner, he was the immediate superior to the agents who worked in Manitoba and the North-West. Dewdney later became the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories and in 1888 he was appointed the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs. For a complete diagram of the Indian Affairs bureaucratic structure see Table I, p. 183.
27. Taylor, p. 234.
28. Ibid, p.253f.
29. Ibid, p. 266.
30. Boswell, p. 216.
31. Leighton, p. 347.
32. Ibid, p. 402f.

33. Looy, Anthony J., "The Indian agent and his role in the administration of the North-West Superintendency, 1876-1893", (Ph.D., Queen's University, 1977), p. 263.
34. Taylor, p. 242.
35. Taylor, p. 263.
36. Treaties and Historical Research Centre, DINA, Indian Act and Amendments, 1868-1950, Indian Act 1876, p. 24.
37. Stanley, George F. G., The Birth of Western Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), p. 216f.
38. Ibid, p. 242.
39. Patterson, E. Palmer, The Canadian Indian: A History Since 1500, (Toronto: Collier-MacMillan Canada Ltd., 1972), p. 107f.
40. Cardinal, Harold, The Rebirth of Canada's Indians, (Edmonton: Hurtig Pub., 1977), p. 92.
41. Taylor, p. 242.
42. Ibid, p. 263.
43. Boswell, p. 58.
44. Ibid, p. 173.
45. Leighton, p. 307.
46. Looy, p. 135f.
47. Taylor, p. 266.
48. Boswell, p. 367.
49. Ibid, p. 202.
50. Ibid, p. 367.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid, p. 211.
53. Leighton, p. 367.
54. Ibid, p. 360.

55. Ibid, p. 556.
56. Looy, p. 322.
57. Ibid, p. 292.
58. Ibid, p. 326.
59. Ibid, p. 337.
60. Ibid, p. 334.
61. Ibid, p. 338.
62. Boswell, p. 366.
63. Ibid, p. 225.
64. Leighton, p. 558f.
65. Looy, p. 338.
66. Ibid, p. 339.

I

THE AGENTS AND THE AGENCIES

This study revolves about two Western agencies and the Indian agents responsible for them. As individuals, the agents were as diverse as the agencies were diversified. The personal qualities of the Department's appointees and the heterogeneity of the Battleford and Clandeboye agencies played a major role in determining how successful the agent would be in carrying out the policies of the Indian Department.

A suitable definition for the term "Indian Agent" is hard to find in Indian Affairs records. According to The Indian Act of 1876 the "term 'agent' means a commissioner, superintendent, agent, or other officer acting under the instructions of the Superintendent General."¹ This general definition is of little help. It gives no details of the powers the Agent had, or of the instructions he received, or of the people over whom he was placed in authority. A better definition would be that an Indian Agent was the representative of the government on the reserves which made up his agency.

As a representative of the government, he was responsible for implementing the policy developed by the Minister in charge of Indian affairs. Indian policy in the West changed over time and each new change brought increased responsibility to the Indian Agent. From 1875 to 1879, the Agent was chiefly responsible for paying annuities and in some cases negotiating treaties. From 1879 to 1885, he was also in charge of distributing rations to destitute Indians and encouraging Treaty Indians to settle on

reserves. From 1885 onwards, the Agent acted as the local manager in charge of supervising the Department's educational and agricultural program. The agents then were men of great responsibility and importance to the government's Indian policy. Who were these men? What sort of qualifications did they have for the job? And did they help or hinder the Department's program?

When looking at the agents of Battleford and Clandeboye between the years 1877 and 1897, certain similarities seem to have been shared by all the agents. All of the agents were white and Anglo-Celtic. This did not mean though that there were no Roman Catholic agents in other western agencies but it cannot be denied that they were under-represented. In 1889, only two of the twenty-five agents in the west were Roman Catholic. The rest were Protestant, adherents of either the Anglican, Presbyterian, or Methodist churches. The lack of appropriate Catholic representation was not because of lack of interest on the part of Roman Catholics to become agents or employees of the Indian Department but rather because of a conscious effort by those in charge of hiring for Western operations to exclude Catholics from the service. In an 1889 petition, signed by the Roman Catholic bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of St. Boniface, the under-representation of Roman Catholics from the Department was protested. The bishops stated:

The exclusion of Catholics continues so systematically that we cannot help thinking that it is a thing resolved upon and fully determined ...²

Sir John A. Macdonald seemed unaware of this inequity and enquired of his friend, Archbishop Taché, if the charges were true. Taché replied in the affirmative.³

The second quality shared by most, but not all, of the agents was their cultural heritage. Most agents in the two agencies which are the subject of this study were born in Ontario. They all had some degree of education -- they could read and write -- and all had some knowledge of farming. This similarity in cultural heritage is significant for it meant that all agents were likely to share the same viewpoints of the Indians and of their responsibilities as Indian agents. For example, the agents regarded Indian culture as inferior to Euro-Canadian culture. Some even believed that the adoption of Euro-Canadian culture was the only means the Indians had of surviving as a race. Agent A. M. Muckle in his report of 1893 noted that the population of the Ojibway Indians on the various reserves was decreasing whereas the population of the Swampy Cree Indians was increasing. Since the Cree did less "wandering" than the Ojibway, Muckle used this fact to prove that:

Those [Indians] increase who have settled down on their reserves, and are more under the influence of the Department, and have become civilized to a great extent; but those who will not, will gradually disappear.⁴

As a result of this belief, the agents considered it to be their responsibility to make the Indians accept the dominant "white" culture in place of their own, using whatever methods the agents could, including force. Agent Reed in 1882, could not get one particular band of Indians to work; they had in fact gone on strike. Faced with this challenge to his authority, Reed had the leader arrested, tried before a court and punished.⁵ Agent J.M. Rae, while still at Fort Carleton, referred to the Indians around Battleford as rascals and recommended that:

A firm stand must be taken and the answer no given to all their demands, for if they succeed this time years will not undo the work of one day. At present they think they can do anything they like and they must be disabused of this idea even by force if necessary.⁶

It should be noted that Rae's statement makes clear that there was Indian resistance to federal policies.

A common tactic used to get the Indians onto their reserves, and then to have them stay there, was introduced by Agent Hayter Reed, who implemented the policy of giving rations only to those Indians on reserves who worked for them. The policy of withholding rations from those who would not earn them was a very effective one when it is realized that the Indians' only alternative to work was starvation. Earlier, Indian leaders had been forced to sign treaties in order to obtain food rations for their people. Naturally, the political use of rations to force compliance with reserve life proved no less effective. As a result of Reed's policy, he earned the name of Iron Heart from the Indians.⁷ Agent J.M. Rae was particularly fond of using the

threat of starvation as a weapon. In 1884, when the bands of Little Pine and Lucky Man continued to camp with Poundmaker's band against Rae's wishes, he refused to feed them.⁸ The department was very pleased with Rae's efforts in implementing the government's policies; it did not chastize him for letting the Indians suffer. The Inspector for the Battleford District, Alexander McGibbon described him as "very active and ever ready to advise and direct in a way that is for the good of the Indians and the benefit of the Department."⁹ Agent P.J. Williams too used heavy handed tactics to obtain native obedience. In contravention of the terms of Treaty Six, Williams at one point withheld treaty money from Poundmaker and Little Pines because someone was killing cattle provided by the Department and no one would confess to the "crime".¹⁰ The objective was to force the chiefs, whom the agents thought exercised coercive powers over their bands, to deliver up the culprits.

The fact that the agents were ready to use any means possible to get the Indians to accept Euro-Canadian culture indicates that they were completely sympathetic to the Department's policy of forced acculturation and not to traditional Indian values. Statements of agents found in their correspondence and annual reports criticize Indian culture and praise Department policy. For example, Agent Muckle reported to the Superintendent in 1881 that the teacher at Brokenhead River was instructing his children in the native tongue and in English. Muckle opined that the teaching of the native language

was a waste of valuable time.¹¹ Agent MacKay complimented the Department's policy in his report of 1886: "the many efforts made by the Department for the progress and future well-being of the Indians, although they have not evoked the gratitude which they deserve, have yet tended to give the Indians hope for the future."¹² Likewise, Agent P.J. Williams spared no compliment when commenting on Departmental policy. Numerous times he wrote to his superiors praising them for their great wisdom in implementing one policy or another. In his annual report of 1893, Williams gave his full support to the idea of the industrial schools when he stated:

The industrial school still continues to exercise a beneficial influence over the pupils entrusted to its care, and I am of the opinion that more lasting good would accrue to the Indian children who attend the day schools on the reserves if they could be admitted to the industrial school.¹³

Because the agents agreed with the Department's policy of forced acculturation, they had little sympathy for Indian complaints. Any complaints made to the agents were often dismissed or ignored. Agent Williams, in his reports of 1888 made several references to Indian dissatisfaction but dismissed them entirely using phrases such as "all appear as contented as can possibly be expected from Indians"¹⁴, or Poundmaker's and Little Pine's reserves suffer from a "chronic desire for grumbling."¹⁵ Agent Muckle in his annual report of 1896, described the advances the Indians had made towards a civilized life-style in adopting a sedentary way of life and concluded that:

They no doubt sigh for the good old days, and many of the pagans and ignorant who are a minority among them, still talk of the Stone Fort Treaty, and desire to be spoon-fed; but there is no doubt that they are far better off, more civilized, better clothed, better housed and educated. In fact, they are new Indians since they have been wards of the Government.¹⁶

The third quality common to most of the agents was their work experience. Many of the agents were living in the West at the time of their appointment, therefore they were familiar with the political conditions there and many of them had had previous experience working for the government. In fact, some had been employed as clerks or farm instructors for the Indian Department. Agent J.P. Wright worked as a clerk in the Commissioner's office at Winnipeg and P.J. Williams had worked as a farm instructor before becoming the agent at Battleford.

The last common characteristic was that all the agents were required to be married. This became a mandatory qualification for the position after 1887. Also most of the other agency personnel were required to be married by the mid-1880's, thus forcing many single department employees to rush back East to find brides. The marriage requirement was deemed necessary by the Department for two reasons: first, it was believed that married men were less likely to continue bachelor ways of carousing and loitering around town--everyone knew how "civilizing" women could be, secondly, critics of agency personnel, who suspected every single employee of immorality, had to be silenced. These views were voiced by Lawrence

Vankoughnet, the Deputy-Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, to his superior, John A. Macdonald, in a letter dated September 6, 1887:

Until we have respectable married men living with their families upon all the reserves, the public mind will not be disabused of the suspicion that there is immorality prevailing on those on which Agents of that class do not live.¹⁷

Beyond these four qualities, there was very little else the agents had in common. There were many differences of character--temperament, personality, intelligence, motivation--among the agents of Battleford and Clandeboyne and it was these differences that often determined the success of the Indian agent from the Department's assessment, if not from the Indians' viewpoint. As a result, although it is possible to judge the agents as a collectivity, they must also be judged as individuals.

The first agent officially appointed to the Battleford agency was M.G. Dickieson, who received his appointment in January, 1877. Previous to Dickieson's official appointment, North West Mounted Policemen had served as "agents" by handing out rations and annuity money. These duties were over and above their regular police duties and they received compensation for their extraordinary responsibilities.¹⁸ Dickieson was not new to the West nor to Indian Affairs because in 1874, as David Laird's private secretary, he had accompanied Laird to the Qu'Appelle Valley for Treaty #6 negotiations. There he took the minutes of negotiations and helped to distribute payments and presents. In the following year, he returned to the Treaty

Four area to make annual payments and to negotiate with other bands in order to obtain their adhesion to the treaty.¹⁹

Dickieson's activities have been recorded elsewhere.²⁰ Suffice it to say, that he spent most of his time setting up the agency with the necessary buildings such as a storehouse and office.

Dickieson also encouraged the Indians to farm but if they did not want to, he provided them with ammunition to go hunting.

This was preferable, he believed, to having Indians begging for food from the local settlers.²¹ This action on his part demonstrated a degree of flexibility insofar as he acknowledged the impracticability of holding Indians to agricultural pursuits.

Dickieson was to be criticized for his generosity by other agents who succeeded him. In June 1879 he traded positions with Walter Leonard Orde who had previously served as a clerk in the finance department of the Indian Office in Winnipeg.²² Orde continued as agent until February, 1881 when he returned to work in finance. A year later, his career ended when he was forced to retire because of the onset of blindness.²³

The next agent to administer Battleford agency was Hayter Reed who would have a long and distinguished career with the Indian Department, eventually obtaining the post of Deputy Superintendent-General. Reed's first visit to the West was as a volunteer in the militia during the Manitoba resistance movement. Hayter Reed was a man with good educational qualifications and better social and political connections. He was educated at Upper Canada College, he knew French and a little "Indian". He was also a surrogate son to Augusta and Chief

Justice Draper and it was Augusta Draper who wrote the letter of reference for him to John A. Macdonald.²⁴ It is difficult to say precisely that her letter secured the job for Hayter Reed but doubtless it helped. There seems to be only one slight shadow on Reed's career as an agent at Battleford. It is revealed in a letter to Vankoughnet from a settler of the Battleford area by name of William Donavan. In the letter, Donavan accuses Reed of immoral behaviour with a Miss Pratt and a Mrs. Quinn, both Indian women. He goes on to condemn Reed for pushing an ordinance through the North-West Council which would have compelled men to support their illegitimate offspring. Donavan ended his letter by suggesting that the Department first purge its service of "libertines".²⁵ That "libertines" existed in the service was an acknowledged fact and the Department did its best to remove them. It also sent circulars out to all the agents cautioning them to refrain from socializing with Indian women and it set up a commission of inquiry to investigate Donavan's charges. The commission found Reed guiltless.²⁶

Hayter Reed's appointment paralleled the shift in emphasis of Indian Department policy for the North-West. Previous to his appointment, the agents mainly distributed rations and annuities but Reed was given the added responsibility of "encouraging" Indians to settle **permanently** on the reserves. This meant that the Indians' wishes and their interpretations of the treaties became subordinated increasingly to the Department's interpretation. In a letter from Commissioner Edgar

Dewdney in February, 1881, Reed received clear instructions concerning his principal duties which were to offer "every inducement" to Indians to settle on Reserves. This was to be done by informing Indians that rations were only to be distributed to those on the reserves. Reed was also charged with keeping records, and an inventory of stores and for ordering any necessary supplies from the Winnipeg Office. He was also responsible "for the satisfactory working of the Farms" and had to supervise farmers and hired hands, ensuring that neither spent too much time working on their own farms which were not to exceed twenty acres.²⁷ The agent at Battleford had responsibilities outside of his own agency too. For a time, the ultimate responsibility for the Fort Carlton and Edmonton agencies rested at Battleford. The agents at Carlton (Agent Rae) and at Edmonton (Agent J. Anderson) were sub-agents to Reed.²⁸ The added responsibility meant that Reed received and passed on communications from the sub-agents to the Department and vice versa. The sub-agents really did most of the work, while Reed kept informed about the progress of Indians and helped out whenever he could.

Reed's successor was Agent J.M. Rae. Agent Rae was only in that position temporarily though because he proved completely inadequate for the job, suffering as he did from two serious human weaknesses: he loved to drink and he was a coward. These were not good attributes for an Indian agent especially when the Indians were aroused to the point of armed resistance. Rae was

also not the most dedicated agent. When Edgar Dewdney asked him to move onto Poundmaker's reserve in order to better supervise the running of the mills and blacksmiths shops, Rae refused and got the townsmen of Battleford to help him argue against the move before the Department.²⁹

On June 23, 1884, Agent Rae wrote to Dewdney asking that the government "adopt a more coercive policy designed to subjugate the Cree."³⁰ Rae's request came after an incident involving Big Bear, his followers and the North West Mounted Police. Big Bear held a thirst dance at Battleford and during the festivities an Indian hit a Farm Instructor. When the police tried to arrest the offender, they were barricaded from him by several aroused Indian men. The NWMP had to retreat not once but twice. On the third attempt to apprehend the offender, they succeeded in making their arrest but only because Big Bear intervened and allowed the man to be taken. Rae was so frightened by these events that he sent off the letter demanding a more aggressive policy to Dewdney.³¹

Another example of Rae's cowardice occurred during the Saskatchewan Rebellion. On hearing of the fighting at Duck Lake and the deaths of the police officers, the townspeople of Battleford panicked and evacuated the town to take up shelter at the nearby Fort. Everyone was convinced that the Indians--hundreds and hundreds of them!--who were camped just a short distance from Battleford were on the war path. This was not so; the Cree were peaceful at this time and proceeded to Battleford only to obtain rations. They also knew about the Duck Lake

incident and wished to speak with Rae to tell him that they were at peace. Rae refused to budge from the fort thus no parlay took place. Meanwhile, faced with starvation, the Cree merely helped themselves to the goods to be had in the deserted town. If Rae had been a little more knowledgeable of his Indian charges and a little less cowardly, the "looting and siege of Battleford" would not have taken place. In any case, only foodstuffs seem to have been seized; personal belongings were not stolen.³²

Agent Rae left the agency after the Rebellion and was succeeded by Agent John Carney. This proved to be another temporary appointment. Originally, Mr. Carney had been the agency storeman and so knew something about the running of the agency and about Indians. Carney was born in Portsmouth and was a Presbyterian.³³ He was also very much like Rae because he was a drunkard and was lacking in courage. In October, 1885 Carney requested that a police detachment be sent to Battleford for protection from the Indians. Inspector Wilson investigated the request and discovered that it was based on a rumour that seventy-five Indians were on the war path at a camp 125 miles away. The Inspector visited some of the reserves and noted that Sweet Grass was quiet and that the Indians on Poundmaker's reserve were far from threatening but were rather afraid themselves of being arrested. Wilson, when making up his report, also commented on the negative results on the reserves that were a direct result of Carney's neglect. He stated that Agent

Carney was drunk too often to do his duties. As a result, his Indians were too weak or starving because they had not received sufficient rations; many had left to look for food. Of those that remained, many were sick and would probably die because they had no medicine. It was the agent's responsibility to send in a doctor and/or medicine when required.³⁴

One month later, November of 1885, Carney was dismissed as agent and he returned to the storeroom. There he remained doing satisfactory work until forced to retire in 1897 because of ill-health. It appears his intemperance took its toll.³⁵ Agent Reynolds, from Fort Pitt Agency, took over the position just long enough to increase the rations supplement and to send medicine to Poundmaker's band.³⁶

In the meantime, Edgar Dewdney was searching frantically for someone suitable to take charge at Battleford. Finally, he recommended one of his own clerks at the Winnipeg Office, J.P. Wright. Mr. Wright was an Irish Canadian from Ancaster, Ontario, and an adherent of the Church of England. He had worked at the Winnipeg office since April, 1876.³⁷ Unfortunately, J.P. Wright did not keep the agent's position long either because just after he arrived in Battleford in November 1885, it was discovered that he had embezzled \$2,023.81 from Inspector McColl's Indian account. He had also pocketed some annuity money. Wright was arrested and taken to Winnipeg but the Department later agreed to drop the charges in return for Wright's agreement to repay the funds. J.P. Wright made a full confession and pleaded for mercy saying that he had only done it for his wife and child.

Dewdney, however, in a letter to Macdonald, claimed Wright's impropriety had resulted from gambling debts. Once again human weakness had appeared at the Battleford agency.³⁸

The next agent at Battleford was a man consciously chosen as least likely to succumb to human weakness. Dewdney recommended that the Venerable Archdeacon J.A. MacKay replace Wright. MacKay was a "first class Cree scholar and well known to the Indians." He was one-fourth Indian and his brother, Joseph MacKay was an Indian Agent in British Columbia. The only drawback to MacKay, as pointed out by Vankoughnet, was that he was a minister of a Protestant church which would likely arouse denominational jealousy. Vankoughnet himself favoured hiring a man by the name of Donnelly, who was a Roman Catholic, but he was overruled. MacKay did get the position yet only stayed for three and one half months.³⁹ Perhaps his Protestant ministerial status did arouse too much denominational jealousy, especially because many of the Indians in his agency were Roman Catholics.

Stability finally returned to the Battleford Agency with the appointment of Peter Job Williams. Williams was born in 1841 in Osgoode County, Ontario and remained there for several years as a farmer.⁴⁰ Desiring better employment, he wrote to John A. Macdonald in May 1879, asking for a farm instructor's position in the North West. Williams stated that he had supported Macdonald even when in opposition and that his M.P.P., A.J. Baker would supply a letter of reference if needed.

Williams' letter was answered with a job offer to serve at Fort Pitt as a farm instructor.⁴¹ When the continued vacancy occurred at Battleford, Williams was promoted to agent and kept that position for eleven years, finally retiring in April, 1897.

The numerous agents at Battleford were often full of weaknesses. Many were previously employed by the Department and became agents through promotion. Also, many entered into the Indian Department's service through personal or political connections to the people in charge of hiring. All were Protestant Anglo-Celts, and few exhibited any particular sympathy for the Indian. All appeared to be dedicated to carrying out Indian Department policy.

The situation of Clandeboye was somewhat different. The Indian Department experienced better luck in finding competent agents to fill the position in the Clandeboye Agency. For the twenty year period studied only two men held the position of agent as opposed to eight in Battleford. The first agent appointed to Clandeboye was Dr. David Young. He served from January 1877 to April 1881 and he would have served longer but for one basic problem. As early as February, 1879, petitions were forwarded to the Prime Minister from the Indians of the St. Peter's Band complaining about Agent Young and asking for his dismissal. The complaints included: charges of favouritism, charges of neglect, and charges of not honouring the terms of Treaty I. Specifically, the Indians claimed that they never saw the agent because he lived fifteen miles from the reserve

and if an Indian went to visit the agent in town, he would often have to wait because Dr. Young would be off attending to his medical practice. Dr. Young was accused of favouring the whites in the area and not concerning himself with the interests of the Indians. At one point, he had seized, in payment of debt, some Indian property. On another occasion, he had employed a constable to protect the land of a white settler who, according to the Indians, was squatting on reserve land. He also took a portion of the Indians' rations ostensibly to feed poor and sick Indians, but in reality to feed himself and some companions as they travelled to other reserves to distribute the yearly annuity. Finally, the Agent refused to give Indians permits to cut and sell wood, and when they did so without authorization they were caught by the timber agent. As a result, they were charged with cutting wood illegally and then received permits so that they could cut wood in order to pay their court costs. The Indians perceptively concluded their petition by asking for another agent because Young was "more like an Agent for the whites, than the Indians."⁴²

The Department did investigate the charges made against Dr. Young and concluded that many of the charges were exaggerated, while others were not worth worrying about. The Department was unconcerned with the Indians' viewpoint on the role of the agent. Not surprisingly, Dr. Young kept his job.⁴³

The following year, the St. Peter's Indians tried again to have Dr. Young dismissed. The charges were similar but with a slightly different emphasis. Agent Young was again accused

of neglecting his duties: The Indians claimed that Young was distributing worthless implements and that he had turned out an Indian on a winter night to find other shelter. He also arbitrarily took ten dollars of an Indian's annuity to pay for "two small vials of medicine". The Indians also mentioned that Young was too busy with his own medical practice to attend to the Agency. As a result, the Indians pointed out, he was robbing the government of his salary because he only pursued his own professional career. This last argument was the one that persuaded the ever parsimonious Indian Department to replace Dr. Young.⁴⁴ Thus in April 1881, Agent A.M. Muckle, on the recommendation of Edgar Dewdney, took over the Clandeboye Agency.

Alexander Montgomery Muckle was born in 1844 in Quebec but he was an English Protestant, not a French Catholic. In 1869, he had moved West and taken up farming at St. Peter's Parish (this parish was in fact located within the St. Peter's Reserve). He retired from that position and from the Indian Service in August, 1897 because of the abolition of his post by the new Liberal government in an attempt to promote efficiency and economy.⁴⁵

Thus it appears that successful agents--that is agents who were not dismissed from their positions by the Indian Department --were men who agreed with the Department's policies, who therefore tried to implement them and who also exhibited no great human failings. What the Indians thought of a particular agent was of little consequence. Agent Carney was dismissed because of intemperance; Agent Wright because of defalcation.

Dr. Young was not fired because of the Indians' complaints of neglect but because he was not earning his government salary. On the other hand, Agent Reed and Agent Williams were retained in their positions despite the fact that they broke treaty promises and withheld rations until they received native compliance. Such actions were praised by the Department and any Indian complaints regarding broken promises were scarcely considered.

From the Indian viewpoint, the agent was seen as a spokesman and implementer of Department policy and not as the agent, mediator and advocate of the Indian peoples. Although he stood between the Ottawa bureaucracy and the Indian bands, he was perceived correctly as the agent of government rather than as the agent of the Indians, who had their own beliefs as to what government policy should be, which was something entirely different from the Department's thinking. As a result, no matter how well intentioned the agent might be, he would have limited success in implementing Department policy--in changing Red men into White men.

During this time period, the administrative unit over which the agent was in charge was known as an Agency. The agency could be defined as a simple administrative unit at the bottom of the Indian Affairs pyramidal structure. But this would be inaccurate because farm instructors, teachers, interpreters, fishery inspectors, clergy, etc, also worked at the agency level. The presence of inspectors and missionaries

shows that there was not just one bureaucracy operating on the reserves, or at the agency level, but three jurisdictional systems interfaced. The presence of all these various workers and of the various bureaucracies indicates that the agency was more than a simple administrative unit. A simplistic definition is rendered further inappropriate by the diversity of people living within an agency--whites, status Indians, and Metis. The complexities of an agency are amply illustrated using Battleford and Clandeboye as examples.

The number of reserves within Battleford and Clandeboye Agencies changed over the twenty year period. Battleford agency started with eight reserves in 1877, remained at eight in 1884 but with some reorganization, and then decreased to seven in 1885. Clandeboye never exceeded four reserves. In 1881, the number of reserves in the agency dropped to two and then increased to three, two years later.⁴⁷

The reserves at Battleford were sixty miles apart with Battleford at the centre. Two of the reserves were at Eagle Hills, eighteen miles south of Battleford and two others were twelve miles north. The remaining three were between twelve and forty miles above Battleford.⁴⁷ The area covered by the Clandeboye agency was considerably less. (See maps)

Within Battleford agency there were five bands of Cree Indians (Red Pheasant, Poundmaker, Strike-him-on-the-back, later Sweet Grass, Thunderchild, and Lucky Man, later Little Pine). There were also three bands of Stonies settled on one reserve

(Mosquito, Grizzly Bear's Head and Lean Man) and one band of Saulteaux (Moosomin). All of the reserves had a mixture of Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Native traditionalists. There were also both English and French schools on many of these reserves.⁴⁸

The religious and linguistic divisions of Clandeboye were even more pronounced. The Indian tribes that lived in this agency were Saulteaux, Swampy Cree and Ojibway. Both Saulteaux and Swampy Cree lived at the St. Peter's Reserve and Ojibway were found on the Fort Alexander reserve, at Brokenhead River and at Black River. French Métis lived on Fort Alexander and in communities adjoining the St. Peter's Reserve. Religious differences existed on all the reserves too. The Brokenhead River Band was a mixture of Native traditionalist and Anglican. They were taught in an English school. St. Peter's had a large population of Métis so that Roman Catholicism was propagated and French was taught; but so too was Anglicanism propagated and English taught on the reserve. St. Peter's was also peculiar because it had within its boundaries a parish of white settlers--unwelcome ones at that! The same divisions--excepting the presence of white settlers--existed on the Fort Alexander reserve where the English-speaking Protestants lived on the upper part of the reserve and French-speaking Roman Catholics lived by the lake. Black River was nominally English and more homogeneous.⁵⁰

Thus the two agencies offered great diversity, and with

diversity came major problems. These problems would sorely test the agent's powers and inhibit his ability to perform his duties. How greatly the agent's effectiveness was hindered will be examined in the forthcoming chapters which deal with political, social and economic issues in the reserves of the Battleford and Clandeboye agencies.



FOOTNOTES

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 2. PAC, MG 26A microfilm reel #C1704, Petition of Roman Catholic Bishops to Sir John A. Macdonald, August 1889.
 3. Ibid
 4. PAC, SP #14, Vol. XXCII #10, 1894, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1893, p. 49.
 5. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XVI #4, 1883, Annual Report Agent Reed, 1882, p.50.
 6. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3741, File 28856, Agent Rae to Commissioner Dewdney, March 28, 1881.
 7. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3755, File 30961, Agent Reed to Dewdney, June 18, 1881.
 8. PAC, SP #3, Vol. XVIII #3, 1885, Annual Report, Agent Rae, 1884, p.85.
 9. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3707, File 19,417, Report of Inspector Alexander McGibbon, 1890.
 10. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3765, File 32784, Agent Williams to the Commissioner, October 31, 1889.
 11. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3762, File 32331, Agent Muckle to Superintendent Graham, October 7, 1881.
 12. PAC, SP #6, Vol. XX #5, 1887, Annual Report of Agent MacKay, 1886, p. 126.
 13. PAC, SP 14, Vol. XXVII, #10, 1894 Annual Report Agent Williams 1893, p. 74.
 14. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3765, File #32784, letter, Agent Williams to Commissioner Dewdney, May 31, 1888.
 15. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3765, File #32784, letter, Agent Williams to Commissioner Dewdney, January 31, 1888.
 16. PAC, SP 14, Vol. XXXI #11, 1897, Annual Report Agent Muckle 1896, p. 108-112.
 17. PAC, MG 26A, microfilm #C1691, Vankoughnet to Macdonald, September 6, 1887.
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18. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3693, File 14402, Agent Dickieson to Vankoughnet, June 12, 1879.
19. Looy A.J., "Saskatchewan's First Indian Agent: M.G. Dickieson", Saskatchewan History, Vol. 32, (Autumn: 1979) p. 106.
20. See above.
21. PAC, SP 4, Vol. XIII #3, 1880, Annual Report, Agent Dickieson, 1879, p. 104.
22. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3679, File 12,034, Personnel Record: Agent Orde.
23. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3772, File 348171, Personnel Record: Agent Orde.
24. PAC, MG 26A, microfilm reel CC1748, letter Augusta Draper to John A. Macdonald, February 10, 1880.
25. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3772, File 34938, Wm. Donavan to L. Vankoughnet, October 30, 1886.
26. Ibid
27. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3733, File 26,743, Dewney to Agent Reed, February 25, 1881.
28. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3733, File 26,743, Memo to Superintendent-General, February 5, 1881.
29. PAC, MG 26A, microfilm reel #C1769, pp. 197993ff, Dewdney to John A. Macdonald, n.d.
30. Tobias, John L., "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree", Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXIV, (December 1979), p. 536.
31. Ibid, p.536.
32. Ibid, p. 543.
33. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3777, File 37,473, Commissioner Dewdney to Superintendent General, February 21, 1881.
34. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3726, File 24,515, Police Inspector Wilson to Assistant Police Commissioner, October 23, 1885.
35. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3777, File 37473, Commissioner Dewdney to Superintendent General, n.d.

36. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3726, File 24,515, Dewdney to Superintendent General, November 23, 1895.
37. PAC, MG26A, microfilm reel #C1691, Vankoughnet to John A. Macdonald, November 9, 1885.
38. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3729, File 26, 174, Personnel Record Agent J. P. Wright, 1886.
39. PAC, MG26A, microfilm reel #C1597, Dewdney to Macdonald, February 8, 1886.
40. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3746, File 29628-1, Personnel Record: Agent Williams.
41. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3684, File 11868, letter P. J. Williams to John A. Macdonald, May 1879.
42. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3676, File 11,425, Petition of St. Peter's Band to John A. Macdonald, February 1879.
43. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3676, File 11,425, Inspector McColl to Superintendent General, February 10, 1879.
44. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3676, File 11,425, Firing of Agent Young, 1880.
45. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3768, File 33579 Personnel Record Agent Muckle.
46. PAC, MG26A, microfilm reel #C1800, Affidavit of D. D. Potter, 1890.
47. See Sessional Papers, Annual Reports of Agents for Battleford and Clandeboye, 1877, 1884 and 1885.
48. PAC, MG26A, microfilm reel #C1769, Charles B. Rouleau to John A. Macdonald, September 27, 1884.
49. See Sessional Papers, Annual Reports of Agents for Battleford, 1877-1897.
50. See Sessional Papers, Annual Reports of Agents for Clandeboye, 1877-1897.

II

THE INDIAN ACT VS. INDIAN CUSTOM

We fail to see on what
ground the agent assumes
for himself the authority
of acting with us, just as
he was the chief...

Poundmaker must be shown
that he cannot do as
exactly as he may please.
Agent Hayter Reed

The Indians of St. Peter's

When looking at the political issues of the reserves in the Battleford and Clandeboye agencies, there appeared to be very little meeting of the minds between the two cultures working within those administrative units. The government insisted that the Indians were subject to Canadian law and spent many years vainly trying to educate the Indians of that fact. If disputes of a political nature, such as land encroachment or enfranchisement, arose between the government and the Indians, the government always sought to resolve them through its Indian policy which was defined by the Indian Act and other pieces of legislation. The Indians insisted that they would be subject to their own laws and sought to resolve any political issues by referring back to the treaties which were viewed by them as binding promises by the government to look after native needs.

The Indian Act can be divided roughly into four parts. The first part, after the definition of terms, was concerned with lands: reserves, improvements, such as the building of roads and bridges, and surrenders. The second part concerned itself with the control and use of resources. These resources ranged from timber to produce to the trust funds. The third

part described the political privileges and disabilities of the Indians. It described the form of government they were entitled to, it described the process of enfranchisement, taxation and the forbidden use of intoxicants. These three sections were encompassed by miscellaneous items such as the definition of terms at the beginning and the repeal of previous Acts at the end.

The Indian Act was designed to consolidate all the existing pieces of legislation concerning Indians into one act hence its broad range of topics. It was also designed to give legislative authority to the field workers so that they could control the Indians' political, social, and economic activities in order to hasten their entry into mainstream society. The Indian Act was subject to numerous revisions; indeed every few years or so a new Indian Act was passed which replaced the old one. For the time period of this study, there was an Indian Act of 1876, 1880, 1886 and of 1888. Each successive Act gave the Department greater legislative authority and gave the Indians less control over their own social, economic and political affairs.

The agent figured prominently in the Indian Act even though he was rarely named directly. The authority given to the Department in the Indian Act resided in the Governor in Council or in his representative. The agent acted as his representative and therefore was given the authority to run the affairs of the Indians at the reserve level. How much authority or power

was he given? To what degree did he control Indian activities?

Section sixty-two of the Indian Act of 1876 serves as one example of the agent's authority. This section gave the Governor in Council, or his representative, the authority to call for the elections of chiefs on those reserves which did not have a recognized "life-long" chief and also to depose those who were found guilty of dishonesty, intemperance, immorality or incompetence.¹ In the Indian Act of 1880, political restrictions were increased significantly because chiefs that had formerly been recognized by the Department as life-long chiefs could stand to lose that designation if the Governor in council decided that his band should be introduced to the electoral system.²

Political activity in general, was restricted when the Indian Act of 1880 was amended in 1884 to include the following provision:

1. Whoever induces, incites or stirs up any three or more Indians, non-treaty Indians or half-breeds apparently acting in concert,--
 - a) To make any request or demand of any agent or servant of the Government in a riotous, routous, disorderly or threatening manner, or in a manner calculated to cause a breach of the peace; or--
 - b) To do an act calculated to cause a breach of the peace,--Is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, with or without hard labor.³

This clause was strengthened in the Indian Act of 1886 by adding section 112 which stated: "Every one who incites any

Indian to commit any indictable offence is guilty of felony and liable to imprisonment for any term not exceeding five years."⁴

With the passing of the Indian Act of 1886 came the first real attempt to limit Indian cultural expression. Section 114 prohibited the celebration of the Indian festival known as the potlatch and the Indian dance known as the Tamanawas. The punishment for participating in such events or of even encouraging the practice was a term of imprisonment from two to six months.⁵ In 1895, Section 114 was expanded to include a prohibition on festivals which involved "the wounding or mutilation of the dead or living body of any human being or animal which forms a part or is a feature."⁶

The Indian Acts and their amendments therefore might be compared to the War Measures Act. This might seem an extreme comparison but if one stopped to think about it, the Indian Acts did in fact give the Indian Department the power to suspend Indian civil rights. For example, Indians were not allowed to hold public meetings without a government official present, they were not even allowed to call a public meeting without the government's permission. They could not vote in provincial or federal elections unless they were enfranchized which was allowed only with the government's permission. Indians were not allowed to think freely because the Department tried to restrict their cultural and religious activities.

It must be pointed out that the Indian Acts were not all

bad. For example there were some protective provisions in them that prohibited the sale of reserve land without the Indians' consent; also, Indians were free from taxation as stated in the Act but even with these protective clauses, the Acts stood out in stark contrast to the original treaties and gave the Department powers that the treaties did not.

The chief recipient of these powers was the agent and it was his task to use his powers to institute white forms of local government and to prevent any unsanctioned political or cultural activities. He was also to see that the regulations passed by the Dominion government concerning Indians were implemented at the reserve level. This proved to be a difficult task because the Indians viewed the treaties as the only binding piece of legislation between themselves and the government.

Treaties 1 and 2 were signed in 1871. The Indians agreed to surrender specified lands to the Crown and to observe the treaty and the law, to not molest settlers, to aid in apprehending Indian offenders and to maintain peace and order. The government agreed to give each Indian three dollars at the time of signing the treaty and five dollars annually thereafter. Chiefs were to receive an annual payment of twenty-five dollars. The government also agreed to provide a school on each reserve at the Indians' request and to provide farm stock and equipment. Liquor was to be prohibited on the reserves and the government was charged with the responsibility of protecting Indians from the "evils of intoxicants". Finally, each family of five was to

be granted one hundred and sixty acres. Treaty 6, signed in 1876, said much the same thing except that it was more generous in the amounts received for annuities and lands. The Treaty 6 Indians received one square mile per family of five and twelve dollars at the time of signing the treaty; for annual payment, the headmen were to receive fifteen dollars instead of five. The bands were also given a medicine chest and were permitted to hunt and fish except on tracts taken up for mining, lumbering, settlement or other purposes.⁷ In neither of the treaties were there references to the election of chiefs or the prohibition of Indian festivals and dances. Is it any wonder then that disputes arose between the Indians and the government over who had the authority to do what?

The recognition by the Department of chiefs and councillors was something it took great interest in. To the officials who worked in Indian Affairs and who were eager to obtain Indian compliance to their policies, the recognition of chiefs was not just a mere formality. In the 1870's, when the Department was anxious to have the Indians settle permanently on their reserves, it decided to recognize any man as chief provided he had one hundred or more followers. Thus the traditional political structure of the Indian system was not always adhered to and this proved to be of some benefit to the Department. Chief Thunderchild for example received his chieftainship from Commissioner Edgar Dewdney. Originally, Thunderchild had been a follower of Big Bear but when Big Bear refused to accept

Treaty 6 , half of his followers deserted to Thunderchild and Lucky Man, both of whom advocated farming in order to receive rations.⁸ Thus Big Bear's influence was lessened and his stand against the government and its policies was undermined. The Department, on the other hand, received the support of two new chiefs and their followers and it believed as a result that it could then begin to implement its policies of agricultural instruction and schooling free from opposition.

The Department was anxious to give chieftainships to co-operative Indians because it believed that the chief was the most important Indian on the reserve. He was considered a man of authority, who could command his followers to do as he asked therefore if the chief supported the government's policies then his followers would have to support them also. As was pointed out earlier, the exercise of political control was according to the Indian Act, entirely in the hands of the Superintendent General or his representative -- he determined when elections for chiefs and councillors took place, who was considered eligible to run and which elections were valid. The Superintendent General also assumed the right to depose chiefs when it was felt necessary. Therefore the Act was designed to give the Department control over the chiefs and thus also over his followers, but the Department believed the chiefs' position to be more important than the Indians did themselves, consequently the legislative authority of the Indian Act could only be effective ideally on reserves where the chief

actually was the most influential man on the reserve and when he had coercive powers to enforce his will. Indian government however did not work by coercion but by persuasion hence the Department's attempts at gaining political control through chiefs and councillors were often unsuccessful and certainly misguided.

Proof of the Department's belief in the importance of the chiefs is found in the annual reports of the agents and inspectors. When the agents and inspectors discussed the various chiefs of the reserves or their role as leaders, they often spoke in terms of the amount of co-operation they received from the chiefs in their attempts to carry out the Department's policies. Generally there were two types of chiefs, good and bad. Good chiefs were those who made no complaints and who supported the government's policies. Bad chiefs were those who did complain, who demanded the fulfillment of treaty promises and who did not set a good example of imitating Euro-Canadian culture. Agent Reed in his report of 1881, stated that he managed to get some Indians to stay on each of the Battleford Reserves except one, Poundmaker's. He then went on to blame the chief himself as being the "moving spirit" behind that band's refusal to cultivate the soil. Chief Poundmaker was described as a man "possessing talents far beyond the ordinary combining the characteristic craftiness of the Indian with the sound judgement of the white man." Reed believed that if Poundmaker were ever persuaded to remain on the reserve and farm, then no

other chief would set so fine an example.⁹

Reed also had trouble with Chief Thunderchild. In that same year, Thunderchild's band had left to search for buffalo in the south. Reed tried to persuade members of the band to stay and received no support from Thunderchild. As a result, Thunderchild was described as a man who was "particularly stubborn and not in the least amenable to reason."¹⁰ Thunderchild though had merely acted as any Indian chief would have. He remained behind to cultivate the soil and in that way suggested that his followers should do likewise, but if any band member wanted to choose another course, he was free to do so.

A similar example can also be found in Clandeboye. Chief William Prince's first year in office was praised by Agent Muckle who reported that he and his councillors were doing well, that they were upright, sober and straight forward and that they set a good example to their people.¹¹ A year later, Muckle was critical of the new chief because he did nothing to help him solve a dispute over the use of a government ox. Agent Muckle had given a government ox to one Indian in order to break new land but another Indian, the one who had kept that ox for the previous two years, reclaimed it. Muckle requested the chief to have the ox returned but the chief was not able to do so. Consequently, William Prince and two of his councillors were labelled "oppositionists."¹² Again, according to Indian custom, William Prince lacked the coercive authority to have the ox returned and it was up to

the Indian himself to return it. Agent Muckle failed to understand traditional Indian patterns of authority. As a final point that illustrated the Department's definition of good chiefs, it seems that whenever a chief was complimented, in the annual reports, for being pleasant, or good, or well mannered, there invariably followed the statement that: "he did not ask for anything."¹³

The most important function of the chief in the Department's eyes was to set a good example of imitating white man's ways. In 1887, Agent J.A. MacKay of the Battleford Agency, reported that the tribal system was breaking up in Moosomin's band because the Indians were starting to farm on separate locations. MacKay made special mention of the chief's son who was one of the first to farm separately.¹⁴

Agent Muckle in 1892, explained the good example set by the chief at St. Peter's reserve for he sent three of his children to the day school and three to the Industrial School at St. Paul's. Muckle also mentioned that the chief and his council were doing all they could "to make" their people send their children to a school.¹⁵

In 1894; Inspector McGibbon noted that Chief Thunderchild's house, though neat and tidy, lacked furniture. He then took measures to end that by asking the principal at the industrial school to have Thunderchild's son make a table and a couple of benches for the house. McGibbon thought that since Thunderchild was the chief, "he ought to show an example in taking his meals

otherwise than on the floor."¹⁶

Chiefs who did not set good examples or who hindered the Department in carrying out its policies were deposed. Chief Lucky Man was deposed by the Department in 1884 because Dewdney reported him to be "utterly worthless" and that all of his followers had gone to join Big Bear's Band.¹⁷

In Clandeboye, Chief Henry Prince was deposed for materially obstructing the payment of annuities. Originally, the annuity payments had taken place on the old Peguis reserve but in 1890, the agent moved the payment area to Netley Creek, the place where another band lived. Henry Prince tried to protest against this action by demanding payment at the old site and by persuading other Indians not to go to the new site. Because he opposed the agent's decision, Henry Prince was removed from office.¹⁸ It is interesting to note that the annual reports make reference to Henry Prince but there is no reference to the political opposition he raised to a Departmental decision. Instead, the report stated that Henry Prince was removed from his office because he defrauded the government of annuity money. It is also interesting to note that Agent Muckle supported fully the Department's actions stating that "it shows them (something they hardly believed before) that the Government will and can punish even the highest amongst them if they do wrong."¹⁹

The Department soon realized that appointing co-operative Indians to the position of chief was not a guarantee of gaining

co-operation from the other band members. For one thing, the Department's choice of chief was not always accepted by the rest of the Indians of the reserve. This situation stemmed mostly from the fact that the Department recognized only one chief per reserve, not per band. The Department wanted to establish clear monolithic lines of authority and therefore recognized as few chiefs as possible. In Clandeboye, where most of the reserves consisted of two bands, many selections were contested and many reports from agents told the Department of inter-band "jealousy". Examples of the above disputes are found on the Brokenhead River Reserve and the St. Peter's Reserve.

The two bands that settled on the Brokenhead River Reserve were the bands of Na-pha-Re-penais, sometimes called Grandes Oreilles, and of John Raven. The people of the latter band had originally been members of the band at St. Peter's under Chief Henry Prince. They were converts of the Anglican church and had been at Brokenhead River, farming, for three generations. Na-pah-Re-penais and his people had transferred from the Rousseau River area to Brokenhead River in 1873. This band had not converted to Christianity and was much less inclined towards agriculture than the other band. John Raven's band numbered seventeen families while Na-pha-Re-penais's numbered nine.²⁰

With these comparisons in mind, one would think that the Department would have recognized John Raven as the chief of the Brokenhead River Reserve: he had a larger following, he

was Christian, he was pursuing agriculture; however, the Department did not recognize him as chief but rather granted Ne-pha-Re-penais that status. The explanation for this state of affairs comes perhaps from the fact that Ne-pha-Re-penais had already received such recognition as a result of his neutrality during the Métis resistance movement in 1870. Agent Muckle, at the time of the chief's death, refers to the influence Ne-pha-Re-penais had over the Indians in the area and gives him the credit for keeping the Indians neutral during the conflict.²² John Raven never did receive Department recognition as chief because he and his followers were always considered members of Henry Prince's band, despite their protests to the contrary.

The recognition of Henry Prince as chief of the St. Peter's Reserve caused a storm of protest from the Netley Creek band of Indians. Henry Prince was a member of the Peguis band and a Cree Indian. The Netley Creek Indians were Saulteaux and wrote to Ottawa informing the Department that they would not recognize Henry Prince as their chief. They insisted that they had not taken part in the negotiations between the government and the Indians at Peguis and that they had not signed Treaty 1. The Netley Creek Indians requested the government to recognize one of their own as chief.²³ The Department refused, believing as Agent Young did, that recognizing another chief would only complicate matters and "give the other cliques an opportunity and excuse for asking the same."²⁴ Difficulties between the two bands continued even after Henry Prince lost his chieftainship

to another member of his band. In 1885, Agent Muckle reported that the two bands were jealous of each other: "the Saulteau [x] think because they allowed the Swampies, who were originally from York Factory, to take the treaty with them that they have no right to have a voice in the affairs of the band, and as the Swampies are settlers, and increasing in numbers every year, they do not by any means intend to allow this."¹⁵ He also reported that a similar situation existed at Fort Alexander where Metis, although not in the majority, disliked being ruled by Indians.²⁶ If the Indians of a particular band refused to recognize the Department's choice of chief then how could the agents work through the chief as a means of implementing Department policy?

Because the Department faced difficulty in implementing policies through the chiefs, it adopted other tactics to control the lives of its Indian charges. Don Whiteside, in his thesis, claims that the Department tried to hamper any development of aboriginal political associations. If the Department heard of such groups being formed then it adopted a variety of methods to hamper the group's growth or eliminate it. Such methods involved confining Indians on their reserves, restricting travelling, refusing to meet delegates or answer correspondence, having the agents interfere with band elections and decisions.²⁷ For example, the pass system as a means of confining Indians on their reserves was introduced during the Saskatchewan Rebellion. Hayter Reed reported to Commissioner Edgar Dewdney that:

I am adopting the system of keeping the Indians on their respective Reserves and not allowing any to leave them without passes -- I know this is hardly supportable by any legal enactment but we must do many things which can only be supported by common sense and by what may be for the general good.²⁸

The Department also employed spies to look after things on the reserves in case there were any unsanctioned political undertakings going on. For example, Peter Ballendine was employed by Reed to spy on the Indians in Battleford.²⁹ In 1890, the Commissioner's office kept a close watch on Battleford Indians fearing an insurgence of the Messiah Craze. The Messiah Craze was the Ghost Dance ceremony practiced by Sitting Bull and the Sioux: it was a revivalist movement and both the United States' and the Canadian governments feared it would lead to violence. Agent Williams informed the Commissioner that the Battleford Indians were curious but lacking information. There were no messengers or rumours crossing the border as far as he knew but he would continue to keep a close watch on the reserves just in case.³⁰

Traditional Indian cultural events were often banned by the Department. For example, after the Rebellion of 1885, the Indians were forbidden to beat their drums and dance, to paint their faces or leave their reserves without a pass. They were quite upset with these restrictions and wondered aloud if peace really had been declared and if there would be more people arrested.³¹ In 1890, the Acting Agent at Battleford, Mr. McNeil reported that Little Pine's band had camped on Poundmaker's

reserve to have a Sun Dance. Because the Sun Dance was an unsanctioned cultural activity, the agent took stern measures to end it. McNeil reported that he had had a long talk with the leaders and threatened to arrest them if they did not move off to their own reserves. He also threatened to withhold annuity payments and ordered the farm instructor to stop distributing rations. McNeil's tactics worked. The Indians of Little Pine's returned to their own reserve.³² Because of these tactics, the agent to a certain degree was able to institute a form of white government on the reserves and to control cultural and political activity but to say that he successfully performed his duties in regards to these matters is an overstatement.

The Indians were not passive characters letting the agent of the Department take care of them or give the orders or do all the work. They were quite capable of responding in an active way to the proposals or policies set forth by the Department. Often their response was resistance, passive and active. Indian culture, for example, despite the efforts of the agents still remained predominant on the reserves. In 1882, Agent Reed reported that the root crop was not as great as was expected. The reason: a band of non-treaty Indians while encamped across the river from a reserve had carried out nightly raids on the potato and turnip crops. They had been helped in their raids by the reserve Indians themselves who wished to share their food with their less fortunate tribesmen, according to their custom.³³ Another example of Indian generosity was reported by Agent Muckle in 1886. He

bemoaned the fact that the Indians preferred to be poor, rather than be called stingy, therefore during the winter they would host parties whenever they raised any money.³⁴ Many other native customs remained intact and this will become more obvious in the next chapters.

Also, the Indians tried several methods of active resistance. One was simply to desert the reservation and try to find a better life elsewhere. In 1886, Agent MacKay reported that sixty-four Indians had left Poundmaker's Reserve to head for the Peace Hills. The North West Mounted Police were sent out and after having caught up with them, persuaded all but one family to return. The one family that continued on its way was told not to expect government assistance.³⁵ At the same time, another party of twenty Indians left and started heading South. They too were persuaded to return by the North West Mounted Police. The reasons given for leaving the reserve were: lack of clothes, crop failure, no annuity payments and they had heard of better prospects in the South.³⁶ Other Indians threatened the white settlers if their government did not give them more food. In 1888, Agent Williams reported that the Indians on Moosomin's, Poundmaker's and Little Pine's had threatened to kill white settlers unless their rations were increased. They claimed not to worry about retribution or capital punishment because they were starving to death anyway. Williams dismissed their grievances claiming that they received the same amount of rations that the Indians of the other reserves did and that previously they had been fed too liberally.³⁷

Another tactic of resistance offered by the Indians, particularly by the chiefs, was to refuse to acknowledge any legislative authority of the federal government. In 1875, Little Pine and Big Bear refused to sign Treaty Six because they did not want to be relegated to Canadian law. They did not want to "enslave" their people.³⁸ Chief William Pennyfeather and the Fort Alexander band of Indians refused to accept the Indian Advancement Act. This Act which was passed in 1884, made provisions for the more progressive Indians to become enfranchized. The chief declared that he was the chief and could "manage his own people without any new laws".³⁹ Finally, in 1887, Agent A. M. Muckle mentioned in his report that Inspector McQuinn was trying to collect license fees from Indians for the purposes of fishing. Muckle reckoned that he would have a hard time doing so because the Indians considered the fees a hardship and a violation of their treaty, which they interpreted as the right to free-fishing as a means of livelihood.⁴⁰

The most important political issue to be resolved and that offered the most resistance from the Indians was that of land claims in the Clandeboye Agency, especially on the St. Peter's reserve. Land tenure disputes arose between Indians, whites and Métis. In 1886, the Métis of Fort Alexander petitioned the government to settle all their outstanding land claims. They insisted that previously it had been impossible to settle because they had had to deal with corrupt officials who sold the land to the highest bidder. They also spoke only English and acted rudely

to the half-breeds.⁴¹ The Métis requested that they be allowed to go out of the treaty but to still remain on their land. Inspector McColl sympathized with their position realizing that it would be a great hardship to make them move but feared the dangerous precedent it would set.⁴² The Métis were still there on the Fort Alexander reserve in 1887 and Muckle reported that "much ill-feeling" among the Indians towards the Métis resulted. The Métis had been given scrip as compensation and were therefore expected to withdraw from the reserve but they stayed on and also brought liquor onto the reserves and sold it to the Indians.⁴³ Complaints about the Métis presence were loud and frequent.

The problem of land tenure in St. Peter's stemmed from the presence of white settlers on the inner two miles of the Red River. In 1871, it was understood that these two miles would be part of the reserve except the lots that had previously been granted to whites by Chief Henry Prince. Unfortunately lots were given out or claimed after the treaty was signed.⁴⁴ The Indians considered these claimants to be squatters and wanted them removed but the settlers had the political vote. The presence of these squatters was rightly seen as a great danger by the Indians who knew that if they remained then the reserve would be broken up and the Indians removed. The Indians complained about the squatters to the agent, to the Commissioner and to the government. Generally speaking, the field officers were most sympathetic to the Indians but the Department did nothing despite repeated urgings from agents and inspectors.

Inspector McColl though labelling the St. Peter's Indians "always troublesome and difficult to manage", recognized that it was a complaint of importance.⁴⁵ In 1882, John Prince one of the Band councillors, addressed Inspector McColl directly and stated:

We want the claims of non-treaty people, who have taken up or purchased lands within the limits of the reserve since treaty, settled. We consider that non-treaty people should not be allowed to hold unimproved lands within the reserve.⁴⁶

Agent Muckle was sympathetic to the Indian plight and accused the non-treaty men of being the "root of all evil" on that reserve because they were continually exciting the Indians with stories of land sales.⁴⁷ The St. Peter's land question was eventually settled in a manner that the Indians had feared. In 1907, the reserve land was thrown open for public auction.⁴⁸

In conclusion, the Indians really had no political rights: the federal government legislated all their rights away. The Indians were regarded as wards of the government which meant that the government could decide where the Indians were to live, how they were to be educated, and how their property and income were to be managed. This does not mean though that the Indians themselves acted as wards of the government, that they passively accepted the policies developed by the Department to run their affairs, or that they obeyed the orders of the agent as a child obeys the orders of his father. Instead, the Indians used any means at their disposal to resist any government policies that they disliked and to make their own demands for recognition and fulfillment of the promises of Treaties 1 and 6.

Indian resistance proved to be the greatest obstacle for the agent in achieving anything positive in terms of implementing government policy. The most he could do to break Indian resistance was to respond in a negative way. He arrested those who participated in "unlawful" political or cultural activities. He recommended that the Department depose troublesome chiefs. He enforced the provisions of the Indian Act rather than uphold the promises of the treaties. When the agents were sympathetic to Indian complaints, they seemed ineffective in persuading the Department to acknowledge the legitimacy of native remonstrances.

Indian resistance was not the only great obstacle faced by the agent. Ignorance of Indian social and political customs on the part of the Department and its agents was another great obstacle. Failure to recognize the traditional role of the chief is an example of such ignorance. Failure to recognize the social divisions that existed on the reserves is another. The internal politics of the reserves were quite complicated as each band tried to influence the agent or the Department and tried to maintain its separateness from the other bands. That is not to say that the various bands were too jealous to get along with each other because it does appear that the reserve councils were made up of members from all the bands on each reserve. Nevertheless the political structure of the traditional bands remained at least partially intact and the Department failed to break up their social and cultural connections. Consequently, the Department's attempt to impose a form of white local government on each of the reserves did not succeed beyond the superficial level.

FOOTNOTES

1. Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (hereafter DINA), Indian Acts and Amendments 1868-1950, sec. 62 p. 24.
2. - Ibid, sec. 72, p. 42.
3. Ibid, sec. 1, p. 52.
4. Ibid, sec. 112, p. 77.
5. Ibid, sec. 114, p. 77.
6. Ibid, sec. 6, p. 95.
7. Treaties and Historical Research Centre, DINA, "Treaty Agreements between the Indian People and the Sovereign in Right of Canada", Treaties I and VI.
8. Tobias, John L., "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXIV, (December: 1983), p. 526.
9. PAC, SP #6, Vol. XV, #5, 1882, Annual Report Agent Reed, 1881, p. 75.
10. Ibid, p. 80.
11. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XVI, #4, 1883, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1882, p. 36.
12. PAC, SP #4, Vol. XVII, #3, 1884, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1883, p. 55f.
13. See for example, PAC, SP #5, Vol. XVI #4, 1883, Annual Report Inspector Wadsworth, 1882.
14. PAC, SP #15, Vol. XXI #13, 1888, Annual Report Agent MacKay, 1886, p. 2.
15. PAC, SP #14, Vol. XXVI #9, 1893, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1892, P. 143.
16. PAC, SP #14, Vol. XXVIII, #9, 1895, Annual Report Inspector McGibbon, 1894, p. 102.
17. PAC, SP #3, Vol. XVIII, #3, 1885, Annual Report Commissioner Dewdney, 1884, p. 158.
18. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3604, File 2172, Memorandum, Aug. 30, 1890.

19. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XVI #4, 1883, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1882, p. 36.
20. PAC, RG10, Vol. 3555, File 16, letter from Lt. Governor Morris to Superintendent General, Feb. 25, 1876.
21. PAC, SP #7, Vol. XII #6, 1879, Annual Report Agent Young, 1878, p. 51.
22. PAC, SP #14, Vol. XXVIII #9, 1895, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1894.
23. PAC, RG10, Vol. 3872, File 89,627, Petition Netley Creek Indians to the government.
24. PAC, RG10, Vol 3872, File 89,627, letter Agent Young to Commissioner.
25. PAC, SP #4, Vol. XIX #4, 1886, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1885.
26. Ibid.
27. Whiteside, Donald, "Efforts to Develop Aboriginal Political Associations in Canada, 1850 - 1965". (Ph.D. Aboriginal Institute of Canada, Ottawa, 1974), p. 52.
28. Bennett, William, "A Study of Passes for Indians to Leave their Reserves." Treaties and Historical Research Centre, DINA, 1974, p. 3.
29. PAC, MG26A, The John A. Macdonald Papers, C1597, letter Reed to Commissioner Dewdney, September 30, 1884.
30. PAC, RG10, Vol. 3845, File 73,419, letter Agent Williams to Commissioner, Dec. 11, 1890.
31. PAC, RG10, Vol. 3726, File 24,515, letter Police Commissioner Crozier to Colonel A. Cr. Irwine, Oct. 26, 1885.
32. PAC, RG10, Vol. 3765, File 32,784, letter Acting Agent McNeil to Commissioner, July 31, 1890.
33. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XVI #4, 1883, Annual Report Agent Reed, 1882, p. 76.
34. PAC, SP #6, Vol. XX #5, 1887, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1886, p. 50.
35. PAC, RG10, Vol. 3766, File 32949, letter Agent J. A. MacKay, Indian Commissioner, Sept. 21, 1886.

36. Ibid.
37. PAC, RG10, Vol. 3793, File 46 pt.2, letter Vankoughnet to Thomas White, Feb. 29, 1888.
38. Tobias, John L., p. 523.
39. PAC, SP #6, Vol. XX, #5, 1887, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1886, p.49.
40. PAC, SP #15, Vol. XX1 #13, 1888, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1887, p.58.
41. PAC, MG 27A, C1707, letter Metis of Manitoba to John A. Macdonald, Aug. 25, 1886.
42. PAC, RG10, Vol. 3747, File 29701, Inspector McColl to Superintendent General, June 5, 1886.
43. PAC, SP #15, XX1 #13, 1888, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1887, p.56.
44. PAC, SP #4, Vol. X111 #3, 1880, Annual Report Agent Young, 1879, p.67.
45. PAC, SP #14, Vol. X1V #8, 1880-1881, Annual Report Inspector McColl, 1880, p.56.
46. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XV1 #4, 1883, Annual Report Inspector McColl, 1882, p.139.
47. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XV1 #4, 1883, Annual Report Agent Muckle, p.36.
48. "Indian Land Claims Surrenders - Treaties 1-11", Treaties and Historical Research Centre, DINA, 1975, p.3. Remarkably, with the exception of surrendering small bits of land for road allowances, there were no land surrenders in these agencies during this period of study.

III

A CLEAN BODY AND A CLEAN MIND

Of old the Indian trusted
in his God and his faith was
not in vain. He was fed,
clothed and free from sick-
ness. Along came the whites
and persuaded the Indian
that his God was not able to
keep up the care. The Indian
took the white man's word
and deserted to the new God.
Hunger followed and disease
and death.

The march of the
human mind is slow.

Edmund Burke

Chief Poundmaker, 1885.

The term savage when used to describe the Indians often conjures up the image of wild, war-whooping natives. Its denotative meaning is however less dramatic yet carries with it the implication of inferiority. Savage means uncivilized; hence, savage Indians are uncivilized Indians: they have no permanent place of residence, they are unclean, they do not read or write, their language is primitive and their religion, pagan. Europeans on the other hand, do have permanent homes, they pride themselves on cleanliness, they do read and write, their language is not primitive and they are Christians. Consequently Europeans are civilized, they have progressed farther culturally than have Indians and are therefore superior to them. Such was the philosophy of many nineteenth century thinkers and this savagery/civilization dichotomy provided a popular explanation of the differences between Indians and whites and acted as the fundamental conceptual framework from

which Indian Department officials formulated and implemented Indian policy in the late nineteenth century. The savagery/civilization dichotomy for this time period and these men focused more on the supposed cultural "deficiencies" of the Indians and not on their "racial" ones. As a result, policy-makers saw no great problems in transforming the Indian from savage to citizen. They only needed to supplant Indian culture with European culture. The Department's objectives and methods are revealed in its health and education programs designed to provide for the physical and social betterment of its wards.

The Department's health program was two-pronged in its approach. It was designed to provide civilized medical treatment to sick or injured Indians and to minimize the effects of epidemics; it was also designed to teach Indians proper hygiene and proper methods of sanitary disposal. The first measure was implemented in response to the crises of epidemics that were decimating the Indian population and was, it was hoped, just a short term expedient. Staff doctors were hired on a full-time basis in 1888 and were obliged to visit the various Indian reserves in their area once a month. They were also to be available in the event of an emergency. Chiefly, the doctors prescribed medicines for colds and skin rashes and distributed vaccines. Their work received much praise from the agents and inspectors and consequently so too did the Department for its wisdom in hiring the doctors (even if it was not until 1888, that it began doing so). Inspector McColl made special

mention of the doctors' fine work in his report of 1888:

The appointment of medical superintendents and dispensers for administering remedial prescriptions to those afflicted with various diseases within this superintendency has been instrumental in alleviating much suffering among the Indians.¹

The Department was also determined to improve Indian standards of hygiene and sanitation and indeed educating Indians of the need for such care was the chief focus of its health program. When the Indians made the switch from travelling in teepees to staying in log shanties their hygiene and methods of sanitary disposal had to change as well. In a society where cleanliness was considered next to godliness, the Department personnel could only look with horror at scenes such as "helpless invalids lying on mats and bullrushes ... covered with filthy rags in a wretched smokey wigwam."² It was also recognized that the improvement of Indian hygiene would lead to the improvement of Indian health. Inspector McColl reported:

If the sanitary regulations of the Department relative to cleanliness around their residences were universally observed, the prevalence of consumption, scrofula, scarlet fever and measles as well as the alarming fatality attending these malignant diseases would doubtless be materially diminished.³

The Department's sanitary regulations called for white-washing of homes yearly, inside and out, the building of beds, the use of soap and the burning of all garbage. The Agent was instructed to insure that Indian houses and yards were kept

clean and the inspectors were quick to point out any sloppiness that they saw when making their yearly visits.⁴

What then was the state of Indian health during this period that forced the Department to implement such an elaborate program and what were its effects? A year by year chronicle of Indian health can be found in the annual reports of the agents and inspectors of the two agencies. Rarely does a year pass by in which a high incidence of mortality, because of disease or some other cause, is not recorded. In the early years of the period under study, starvation was a major cause of morbidity and mortality. The Plains Indians were dependent on the buffalo for survival. By 1874, the herds had disappeared from western Manitoba and southern Assiniboia. Some large herds remained in western and southern Alberta but nowhere else. By 1879, these last herds were gone too. When the buffalo disappeared, the Indians starved. Edgar Dewdney, the Commissioner for the North-West, reported that more than a thousand Indians were "destitute and so near starvation that they were eating dogs, gophers and mice." Many Indians had been forced to pawn their rifles and sell their horses for which they received a meager few cups of flour. Father Scolten, a missionary in southern Alberta, reported that some Indians had nothing to eat but poisoned wolves. Both these men, and others, urged the government to establish immediately emergency supply posts to distribute beef and flour rations to the Indians.⁵ One such post was established at Battleford and remained there

for several years.

The famine years in the North-West have been recorded elsewhere in detail but the Indians of Clandeboye (and other areas of Manitoba) also faced such hardship. Agent Young, when first reporting the conditions of the Indians in Clandeboye stated that "Much distress prevailed last winter in many of the bands notably so in what is known as the St. Peter's Band." As a result of his report, the Acting Indian Superintendent was authorized to distribute rations to those too old or too sick to get their own food. The department spent \$1,000 in rations to meet the Indians' needs.⁶

Even after the Indians had settled on reserves and started agriculture, starvation still remained a danger. The Department reasoned that the Indians were unable to feed themselves because they were naturally improvident. Inspector Ebenezer McColl in his report of 1893 stated that the Indian

does not possess that energy and perseverance which constitute the mainspring of prosperity in any undertaking, hence he never accumulates anything beyond his immediate requirements, and consequently he is frequently on the verge of starvation.

McColl concluded that instilling the Christian work ethic into the Indians would be a difficult task for the Department, perhaps too difficult.⁷

There are however better explanations for the continued food shortage. One explanation comes from the failure of the government to provide sufficient equipment to work the fields. At times there were five or six months delays in receiving

equipment. Spring ploughing could not be done effectively if the plows did not arrive until the following autumn. Rations too only amounted to one good meal a day and with no other source of food to be found it is understood why restless rumblings from Indians came forth. In 1883, budget cuts reduced the amount of money available to Indian Affairs resulting in a further reduction in rations distribution.⁸ There can also be no doubt that the political unrest that resulted in the Saskatchewan Rebellion contributed to the hardship. In 1884, the Battleford Agency recorded having 886 acres of land under cultivation but the following year this acreage was reduced to 257.⁹ Coupled with this was the fact that Commissioner Dewdney had ordered the agents not to distribute rations to those Indians who had not signed any of the treaties in order to force their compliance.¹⁰

Starvation continued to be a lingering problem even after the Saskatchewan Rebellion. In 1888, there was a report that one Indian woman had offered to sell her only blanket in order to get food for her starving child.¹¹ This report was dismissed by Indian Department officials though because it seemed to originate in the Metis community around Bresaylor.¹² In February and through to May, rumours were reaching Ottawa from the North-West that the Indians were starving. But farm instructor Oscar Orr in his report to Agent Williams stated that the Indians were more healthy and consuming forty per cent less government rations than before. Orr was very pleased

with this statistic and concluded that "too much provisions is as great an evil as you can have. My Indians if they were getting all they could consume out of store would not be so willing to earn money, and would be much harder to manage." ¹³

Still the rumours of starvation persisted. Agent Williams and the North West Mounted Police were instructed to investigate. Williams reported that any Indian complaints stemmed from his reducing the rations in January. The Indians insisted that he feed beef instead of bacon to the sick. Williams complied and ended the complaints. Williams felt that the Indians were better fed than the whites and half-breeds and wanted to reduce the rations further if the Department would allow him to do so. ¹⁴

Agent Williams also reported that he had visited both the Thunderchild and Moosomin reserves and learned that the Métis had been trying to incite the Indians into rebellion. One Métis claimed that other Métis were planning to break into government storehouses and take what they wanted. ¹⁵ Superintendent Cotton of the NWMP visited Moosomin's reserve also and reported no signs of destitution among the Indians but that there was a group of about thirty Métis who visited him; they were close to starving and demanded relief. ¹⁶

The Métis were in a particularly difficult situation. The government gave rations to those who were part of a treaty and to those who had not participated in the Rebellion of 1885. Consequently few Métis were eligible for rations, yet all had

lost their traditional food supply, that is, the buffalo and the smaller game animals.¹⁷

Thus it seems that starvation was a lingering problem especially among the Métis. The isolated cases of Indian starvation indicated perhaps a breakdown of support groups but more importantly the general economic poverty that most Indians lived in. True, they had enough food to feed themselves but little extra to share and even less to sell in order to buy other things. Inspector McGibbon in his report to the Commissioner, October 17, 1891, stated that the Indians were poorly clad and requested that they be given clothes from the military surplus supplies.¹⁸

Besides the lingering threat of starvation, or at least of extreme hunger, there were several diseases of European origin which frequently took on epidemic proportions and decimated the Indian peoples. These diseases were so deadly to the Indian peoples because they had virtually no resistance to them. The Indians of Eastern Canada had experienced the same reaction to European diseases earlier, when contact had first been made. The most common diseases were tuberculosis, scrofula, smallpox, measles, whooping cough and influenza. Of these diseases, tuberculosis was the most virulent and the most deadly.

Statements about the deadliness of tuberculosis were made repeatedly by the agents and inspectors in their reports. In 1889, Inspector Thomas Wadsworth reported that tuberculosis was the "bête noir" of the children, especially in the industrial

schools and noted that once the children contracted the disease, death soon followed.¹⁹ The industrial schools were often poorly built and poorly ventilated. The children ate, slept and worked in close proximity of each other and those that were infected were not isolated from the others thus allowing the spread of the disease. The idea of separating the infected children from the healthy ones was entertained quite frequently but nothing was ever done. The cost proved too great an obstacle. Besides, in some years, separating the healthy from the sick would have been futile because there were so few healthy children.²⁰

Smallpox was also a cause of concern among the Indians. In the autumn of 1877, J.A.N. Provencher, the Acting Indian Superintendent, reported an outbreak of smallpox among the "bands on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg" (St. Peter's Reserve).²¹ The Department responded by appointing a resident doctor to vaccinate those Indians against further recurrences and also to vaccinate the rest of the Indians in the Territories.²² Provencher observed that the death toll among the Indians as a result of that epidemic was "only in the hundreds" because of the speedy actions of the Department, otherwise the mortality rate would have been ten times as great.²³

Two years later, Dr. Young, the agent of the Clandeboye Agency reported an outbreak of scarlet fever on the St. Peter's Reserve. This time the Church Missionary Society stepped in to alleviate the suffering.²⁴

In 1882, it was pertussis that plagued the Indians of Manitoba and some of the Prairie Agencies.²⁵ There is one report of venereal disease affecting great numbers of people on the Stony Reserve in the Battleford Agency. This report was filed in 1886.²⁶

Each year the litany of epidemics and deaths continued. In 1887, Inspector McColl told of various epidemics occurring in Manitoba over the year, resulting in many deaths. The department responded to these outbreaks by sending in medical supplies and physicians to oversee the dispensing of medicines. McColl indicated that this outbreak was serious enough to warrant hiring physicians.²⁷ Agent Muckle, in his report of the same year, recorded that on St. Peter's the most common diseases were "consumption, pleurisy, eye diseases of different kinds, itch, scrofula," and that there was one case of diphtheria which was "happily cured and did not spread".²⁸ There were also on all the reserves a great number of children suffering from the itch, whooping cough and some sort of fever believed to have been brought on by drinking "dirty Red River water". They had been drinking from the river because no well had yet been dug.²⁹

In 1888, following the appointment of Dr. George T. Orton, epidemics became fewer and a skin disorder which had been common began to disappear as a result of Dr. Orton's treatments. Agent A. M. Muckle passed on a message of thanks from the chief and council of the St. Peter's band to the Department saying that the Indians were grateful to the Government for furnishing them with a doctor and were pleased to know that "the Government

wish ... them to live."³⁰

In Battleford, Agent Williams reported a lot of child deaths as a result of whooping cough and colds, in 1889. There was also an unidentified fever going around which affected both Indians and whites.³¹

In the following year, Williams reported that influenza carried off many of the elderly in his agency, including Chief Moosomin. As many as five hundred contracted the virus, also tuberculosis and scrofula were on the increase.³² So too was the "itch". Agent Williams declared that the outbreak had never been worse and he even considered closing the schools.³³

In 1891, "la grippe" was reported to be the worst killer of children on both the Clandeboye and Battleford reserves.³⁴ In 1892, much sickness occurred again in Clandeboye, especially at St. Peter's where a lot of people died, especially children from whooping cough and old people from influenza. Dr. Orton was called in to deal with this emergency and Agent Muckle reported dispensing "hundreds of doses of Medicine."³⁵

Then measles broke out at Fort Alexander in 1893 and the agent had trouble containing it because the Indians still continued their practice of visiting the sick.³⁶ Again, two years later, illnesses such as whooping cough, mumps, influenza, and tuberculosis, were reported to be prevalent on the reserves in Clandeboye and to have carried off a large number of people.³⁷ In 1896, the principal causes of death in Battleford were identified as scrofula and tuberculosis,³⁸ while in Clandeboye

the principal cause of death was whooping cough.³⁹ Inspector McColl also listed consumption, syphilis, scarlatina, variola, and other fevers as causes of death.⁴⁰

There was little doubt that the epidemics that afflicted the Indians were responsible for their poor health. Nevertheless there were other factors that contributed to the decline of Indian health. One factor was intemperance. This was a problem that the Department took great pain to try to resolve. The buying and selling of liquor between Indians and whites was strictly prohibited by law and the agents and police went to great lengths to stop the illegal traffic. Generally their efforts were not entirely successful. In 1880, Agent Young of the Clandeboye Agency reported that despite the legislation, the Indians could obtain all the liquor for which they could pay.⁴¹

In 1881, Inspector E. McColl in his annual report wrote that the "dissipation of the Indians was most deplorable, for the demoralizing effects of intoxicating liquors left the semblance of humanity scarcely discernible."⁴² The Indians of St. Peter's complained as well about the drunkenness at annuity time and informed McColl that one of the constables employed to stop the liquor traffic was himself inebriated at this critical time.⁴³ There is no record of any punitive means being taken nevertheless the following year a slight improvement was noted. Four Indians were arrested for intoxication and sentenced by the Agent to one month's imprisonment or to pay a fifteen dollar fine.⁴⁴ Inspector McColl recommended that in future,

uniformed policemen be attendants at the payment of annuities because he believed two of them would be more effective than a dozen Indian constables "in stopping this vile traffic among a people proverbially incapable of resisting the temptation."⁴⁵ McColl's recommendations were accepted and there is some evidence to suggest that they helped stop the trade. For example, in 1883, McColl noted that the selling of liquor was not as much of a problem as in years past. During the actual payment of annuities, there were no cases of intoxication and the arrest of one Indian trader and the confiscation of five gallons of whiskey prevented much drunkenness. However as soon as the agent had left the reserve, the traders appeared and sold about one hundred bottles of whisky to the Indians.⁴⁶

Also around this time, the Department started to receive help in suppressing the liquor traffic from the communities of East and West Selkirk. Both these communities prohibited the establishment of "tent grogeries" on the outskirts of their towns and the hotel owners inside the city refused to sell liquor to Indians. The communities realized that the presence of drunken Indians did little to enhance their towns.⁴⁷

In 1884, a Temperance Society was organized at St. Peter's Reserve under the auspices of the clergymen of the Reserve; however, not all Indians could have been faithful as shortly thereafter five were convicted of possessing liquor. Of these five, one was acquitted because he turned informer, two were fined \$25.00 each, and the other two were ordered to pay a fine of \$50.00 or to spend six months in jail.⁴⁸ The suppliers of the intoxicants were not caught.

There apparently was some slight improvement as a result of the measures taken by the government, the settlers and by the Indians. In 1892, Agent Muckle reported that there was almost no drinking of liquor on any of the Clandeboye reserves, although some drinking did occur along the Canadian Pacific Railway line near Whitemouth where Indians went to chop wood. While thus employed they were paid between two and three dollars a day, yet some returned to the reserve with hardly any money.⁴⁹

As a result of epidemics and illnesses, the Indian population was barely able to sustain itself and in fact usually declined over the years. Aboriginal depopulation historically had followed upon sustained contact with Europeans. The pattern persisted in the West. For example in 1890, the overall death rate exceeded the overall birth rate at the Battleford Agency sixty-three to forty-six. The only band to have an increase in population was Poundmaker's which had six deaths and fourteen births.⁵⁰ The birth and death rates in 1896 were thirty-two to fifty respectively. For the same year in Clandeboye, the rates were eighty-six to eighty-five respectively with a higher birth rate only on Fort Alexander, the others witnessing a decline.⁵¹

The most effective measure the Department was able to adopt to lower the mortality rate was vaccinating all of the Indians. This was a difficult task though because the Indians resisted getting vaccinated. Indians were loathe to receive vaccinations mostly because of the severe reaction they had to the vaccine. It was reported that often the Indians "developed ulcers that took a month to heal".⁵² This indicates again that

the Indians possessed no natural immunity to the European diseases and infections. Agent P. J. Williams reported, when making the vaccination rounds with Dr. P. Aylen in 1889, that there was much resistance to their efforts particularly from the members of the Little Pines and Sweet Grass bands. He informed the Department that the Indians ran off, hid or simply refused to have it done. It took Agent Williams and Dr. Aylen a month to complete their task.⁵³

The Department also hired staff doctors to attend to Indians on the various reserves. Of the doctors for which there are references in the agency files, Dr. George T. Orton of the Clandeboye Agency figured most prominently in the agency files. Dr. Orton was born in Guelph in 1837, he was a member of the Anglican Church and in February 1888, he was hired as the physician for Clandeboye; at that time he had established practices in Winnipeg and Selkirk.⁵⁴ Two years later, he was to become embroiled in a dispute with the Department.

In a letter to Inspector Ebenezer McColl in March, 1891, Orton criticized the Department for not providing proper help and facilities for his Indian patients. Orton claimed that his responsibilities were far more onerous than those on staff in the East; he attended to two or three thousand Indians whereas his Eastern counterparts attended to only one thousand. He also complained of the enormous costs and time he incurred because he had to travel nine miles to St. Peter's from Selkirk or thirty-one from Winnipeg. He also decried the lack of provision by the Department for Indians who required surgery

or hospital care. This too meant that the costs for such things had to be assumed by the doctor. To illustrate his point, Orton recounted the time one of his patients had required an amputation while he was out of town. His substitute, a certain Dr. Grain, had had to transport the patient to Selkirk and put him up in his office. In conclusion, Dr. Orton recommended that the Department rent an office with an overnight accommodation to provide emergency hospital care when needed.⁵⁵

Orton also pleaded directly with Edgar Dewdney, who at this time was the Minister of the Interior. He stated that there were many chronic cases of scrofula and he recommended the building of a hospital to control the spread of this and other common diseases, or at the very least provide a home for indigent and chronically ill Indians. As far as Dr. Orton was concerned "no more worthy application of Charity and humanity could be made."⁵⁶

However, it seems that the officials at the Indian Department were little interested in charity. Hayter Reed disliked the idea of establishing an Indian hospital because it would only have increased Indian dependency on the government. Also, Reed believed that the Indians of Clandeboyne were healthier than the majority of white settlers and if that were the case, there could be no possible justification for establishing an Indian hospital.⁵⁷ There is perhaps yet another reason for the Department's reluctance to grant Orton's request for expanded medical services. The Department believed, or at

least hoped; that many of the diseases which afflicted the Indians would disappear if the Indians adopted "civilized" notions of cleanliness. It would be very convenient, indeed if this were true because it would have eliminated the need for Indian hospitals and expanded medical services thereby saving the Department money.

The need to adopt white sanitary ways came about because the Indians had adopted white living arrangements. The transition from airy, portable teepees to poorly ventilated permanent houses led to the spread of infection because no immediate improvements were made for waste disposal.⁵⁸ The Department realized the negative effect the Indians' changing lifestyle was having on their health and instructed the agents to do everything they could to educate their charges in matters of hygiene and sanitary disposal. Circulars were sent out telling agents to demand that the Indians "stop expectorating on floors,"⁵⁹ and to inspect the Indian yards to see that they were kept clean and that all garbage was removed or burnt. The agents were also encouraged to compel the Indians to white-wash their homes on the assumption that a little lime would control the generation of germs.

The agents' efforts in this regard did little to improve the general health of the Indians. There were several reasons for this. First, the agents were unable to prevent Indians from visiting their sick relatives as had been their custom for ages. This habit naturally encouraged the spread of infection and other illnesses. As C. R. Maundrell explained:

They [the Indians] would congregate in their one room cabins and dance all night in evil smelling atmosphere and when over-heated would step outside into the cold, only to catch a chill. Being susceptible to pulmonary ailments, is there any wonder that many died of tuberculosis, pneumonia and pluerisy?⁶⁰

Secondly, whitewashing the exterior of the homes did little to improve the interior of the homes or their faulty structures. Indian houses in the West were no more than one-roomed shacks, twelve feet wide by eighteen feet long.⁶¹ The roofs and floors were mud, making the houses impossible to keep clean. Any improvements to the houses would have to be done by the Indians at their own expense and it was not until the 1890's that several Indians had enough cash to make the only improvement recorded in the agency files for this time period, that is, to install wooden planks as flooring for their homes. The best the agents could do to improve the Indians' living conditions was to allow them to live in their teepees during the summer months. This was allowed because the agents recognized the advantages of portable houses over permanent ones.⁶²

Thirdly, the access the Indians had to proper medical attention was extremely limited. Although the Department did have doctors on staff, Departmental policy formulated in 1890, required these doctors to visit the reserves only once a month or in times of crises. These periodic visits were insufficient to care properly for the Indians. In Agent Muckle's annual report of 1893, he stated that the Indians in many cases called

in local practitioners (which they paid for) and relied on the free services "time and again" of a certain Dr. O.I. Grain of Selkirk.⁶³

The Indians themselves complained about Departmental policy. Directing their criticism at Dr. Orton, the Indians of the Clandeboye Agency stated that they resented the fact that he visited the reserve only once a month, that he dispensed medicines and then left without seeing how effective the medications were going to be.⁶⁴ It must be noted that these criticisms were not directed at Dr. Orton personally because when he resigned his position in 1896, the Indians of St. Peter's reserve expressed regret, stating in a petition that:

we can testify to the industry, care
patience and skill which he has displayed
both as a Physician and Surgeon and whereas
after nine years' experience amongst the
Indians, he has gained their perfect
confidence...⁶⁵

Rather it was the manner in which medical services were rendered that caused discontent.

Fourthly, the Department was too parsimonious to provide anything more than the minimum of health services, especially before 1888. So miserly was the Department that it had agency personnel such as missionaries and agents attend to vaccinations and fill prescriptions. Both Agent A. M. Muckle and Dr. George Orton took the Department to task for these practices. In a letter dated March 22, 1890, Muckle complained that he spent all of his time protecting wood stands and compounding medicines. He resented playing the part of pharmacist and concluded:

I suppose Dr. Orton who is in charge of the Indians is, or ought to be paid for this kind of work, and I think he might mix his own prescriptions as well as write them out for what would only take him a few minutes, takes me half an hour.⁶⁶

Orton too disliked the idea of Agent Muckle compounding medicines. He wrote to Inspector E. McColl stating that Muckle was not trained in pharmacy and that "under skilled supervision doubtless greater safety would be ensured." Since Orton himself was reluctant to assume the responsibility of filling prescriptions, he recommended that the Department hire a trained pharmacist.⁶⁷

The Department ignored Orton's recommendation and had only harsh criticism for Muckle. McColl writing to Vankoughnet in April 1890, informed him that other agents were compounding medicines without difficulty and stated that:

the Agent himself is largely responsible for this wholesale drugging of the St. Peter's Band, for instead of encouraging them by dispensing medicines to them, when in the majority of cases they were better without them, he should have discountenance[d] this promiscuous drugging and only given medicines to those who actually require them.⁶⁸

Lastly, it must be stressed that the Department was not interested in providing medical services in the first place. Its chief concern was to see that the Indian houses were kept clean and that their garbage was burnt. The Department was correct in teaching the Indians how to properly dispose of their refuse but it was negligent in not providing extra health services to care for the sick and diseased.

To conclude, it must be remembered that although the government did not provide much in the way of health care to the Indians, it did not provide much in the way of health care to whites either. The concept of extensive health services had not yet arrived. Although the federal government assumed the responsibility of caring for its Indian charges, it failed to understand that its responsibilities were any greater towards Indians than to the lowest class of citizens. By refusing to recognize the unique difficulties faced by the Indians, it pursued a policy doomed to failure. The agents generally did little to enlighten the Department as to the special needs and abysmal conditions of the Indians on the reserves, probably because they were in agreement basically with the Department's policies and practices.

Before discussing the Department's education program, the link between the Department's health program and its goal of civilization must be reiterated. The link exists in two ways. First, the Department insisted that those Indians who were to receive the benefits of civilization had to settle down and give up their nomadic ways. With the adoption of a civilized life-style came the need to adopt civilized methods of waste disposal. This point has already been referred to. The second and more direct link came from the desire on the part of Indian officials to "civilize" Indian medical practices. They disliked the Indians' use of charms and incantations and viewed the shaman or medicine man as an instrument of evil at worst or as a crackpot at best. There was perhaps some appreciation of

Indian medicine amongst the field workers. For example Agent Muckle commented that:

At their heathen religious ceremonies
... every summer the principal work was
the teaching of medicine to the younger
generations; this is almost done away
with now, and with it the knowledge of
medicine, a great loss to the Indians.⁶⁹

Generally speaking however Indian medical practices were considered savage and therefore needed to be replaced. Inspector McColl noted with satisfaction that "the conjuring heathen ceremonies are not so commonly indulged in since they [the Indians] have realized the benefits of the superior treatment of our physicians"⁷⁰ and even Agent Muckle proved that his thinking was not too far from the norm when he stated:

...there has been a good deal of sickness
amongst the Indians of this agency --
scrofula, consumption etc: and as the
people are becoming more civilized they
are giving up their own practice of
medicine, and depending on ours.⁷¹

Thus the savagery/civilization dichotomy is in evidence. The Department tried to supplant "savage" medical practices with "civilized" ones and to teach Indians "civilized" methods of waste disposal. The Department attempted to replace the shaman with doctors but it was unable to persuade the Indians to accept other changes: the Indians continued to visit the sick, they continued to prefer living in teepees to houses. Indeed in the latter case, it could be argued that ignoring some Departmental injunctions had more beneficial results than in obeying them. On the whole, Departmental policy failed to

improve significantly Indian health during the 1880's and 1890's; in fact Indian health did not greatly improve until the 1950's.

The goal of civilizing the Indians was also the basis for the Department's education program and in fact the Indian schools were the chief instrument used to civilize them. But educating Indian children was not an easy process at the agency level. Numerous problems were encountered by the agent as he tried to carry out the Department's educational program. Problems in staffing, in administration and in attendance were most common and hindered greatly the implementation of the educational program.

In the Clandeboye Agency there were at least a dozen day schools, seven of which were on the St. Peter's Reserve. These schools were either under the direction of the Roman Catholic or the Anglican church (other Protestant denominations ran schools too but in different agencies) and all were government funded either in part or entirely. At St. Peter's the Anglican Church Missionary Society ran five schools: two in the north end, one in the south end and two in the east end, around Muckle's Creek. The North St. Peter's school was taught by Archdeacon Cowley and then by a certain Miss McLean. The other school in the area was taught by Henry William Prince, a native of the St. Peter's band. The South St. Peter's school was first taught by Rev. H. Cochrane, followed by Mr. R. McDougal in 1892. Mr. McDougal earned special praise for his work with the Indian children. Agent A. M. Muckle's annual report

of 1893 stated that the parents could not keep their children at home so successful was McDougal's appeal to the children through an outdoors sports program.⁷²

The Roman Catholics had jurisdiction over the school at Netley Creek which commenced operations in 1883 and over the East St. Peter's school which started much earlier under the direction of Rev. Father Allard.

At Fort Alexander there were three day schools -- two Anglican and one Roman Catholic.

There was one school at Brokenhead River which had originally been non-denominational and funded entirely by the Indian Department. The school was founded in 1874 when Acting Superintendent J. A. N. Provencher hired Richard Chief as a teacher for that band.⁷³ The school fell under Anglican jurisdiction when the Christian Indians requested a permanent teacher for fifteen of their children in 1878. Agent D. Young recommended hiring Mr. William Dennett, who was at the time a lecturer for the Church Missionary Society, promising that if Dennett were hired the Department would also acquire a school building, something of great convenience for educating children. Dennett's qualifications were limited; he had never passed an Educational Board exam and had no certificates but Archdeacon Cowley was willing to vouch for him and Young deemed that recommendation sufficient qualification.⁷⁴ The Department in the end did give Dennett the job but only because he agreed to give the Indians instruction in farming without any additional pay. His salary

was set at \$12.00 per pupil per annum up to a limit of \$300.00.⁷⁵

In the Battleford Agency, the number of schools and divisions is less discernable. The records, unlike those for Clandeboye, do not indicate clearly which denomination ran which school. Nevertheless, it does appear that several of the reserves had both a Roman Catholic and an Anglican school. The establishment of two different schools on each of these small reserves was the source of considerable annoyance for the agents and the Department. This issue will be discussed more fully later.

On Moosomin's reserve there was one school supported by the Church Missionary Society of the Anglican Church, according to the Departmental records. The teacher from its inception to 1887 was Mrs. Clink, the wife of the Farm Instructor. Later, Miss Applegarth, the sister of the new Farm Instructor, George Applegarth, ran the school and in 1890, won a prize from the Department for her achievements. She was replaced in 1894, by a Mrs. Donavan. The Church Missionary Society also ran schools on Thunderchild's reserve, Little Pine, Red Pheasant and the Stony Reserve. The Catholic Missionary Society ran schools on Poundmaker's and Sweet Grass's reserves.

The teachers of the day schools were usually white, although a few were Indian. Both men and women were hired as teachers: the women hired were usually related to the agency personnel, especially to the farm instructors. Their qualifications were often superior: many held university degrees or

provincial teaching certificates, while others were missionary licentiates.⁷⁶ In 1887, Inspector McColl mentioned that among the teachers in the Clandeboye Agency, twelve were graduates of Cambridge University, St. John's College in Winnipeg, or other universities, while thirteen were natives who "notwithstanding their limited acquirements, are occasionally excellent instructors."⁷⁷ The following year, McColl was less generous. In his annual report of 1888 he stated:

Although there are many excellent teachers in the employment of the Department the majority of them unfortunately do not possess sufficient energy, determination and enthusiasm in their profession to enable them to become successful educators.

He concluded that it was almost impossible to "secure efficient teachers at the present salaries offered."⁷⁸

Therein lay one of the basic problems of Indian education. The Department was too miserly in remunerating teachers to attract many superior candidates into its service for any length of time. In 1891, McColl offered the same criticism when he stated:

...it is utterly impossible to secure, at the present salary of three hundred dollars per annum offered for a daily average attendance of up to twenty-five pupils, the [] of efficient teachers to isolate themselves from congenial surroundings and live on remote reserves, with nothing except their own wandering thoughts to entertain them...⁷⁹

The teachers themselves complained of their low salaries.

In the same report, McColl mentioned that:

They argued that it was unreasonable to expect them to continue teaching in Indian schools at salaries averaging about \$300 a year, when other teachers with no greater attainments were receiving from \$500 to \$1,000 per annum from the Provincial Board of Education.⁸¹

The Department also faced the problem of trying to determine the need on the various reserves for school buildings. The policy adopted in the North West was to have the agent first call a Council meeting for each reserve to determine the denominational affiliation of its school and to ascertain whether the minimum number of students required to establish such a school lived on the reserve.⁸¹

It was the Department's hope that the number of schools could be kept to a minimum. But a census of Moosomin's Reserve taken by the agent in 1892, for example, indicated there were four Protestants, fifty-five Roman Catholics and thirty-two Traditionalists.⁸² This census was taken because the band had requested the erection of a second school. They already had an Anglican school, so Commissioner Reed was loathe to accede to their request because he was "averse to having so many schools on small Reserves, in the face of the fact [that] large Boarding and Industrial Schools have been established to which many of the children can be sent." Reed proposed instead to ignore the Catholic majority and to secularize the existing Anglican school so that the Traditionalists would be willing to send their children to that school.⁸³

A similar situation arose on Little Pine's reserve. There a

request had been made to build an additional school -- a Roman Catholic one -- but this reserve according to the census taken in 1890 had a majority of Anglicans: seventy Anglicans, twenty-five Roman Catholics and thirty-two Traditionalists.⁸⁴ The Department intimated that perhaps the Catholic children could go to the school on Poundmaker's reserve, but that entailed a walk of three to five miles and therefore was too inconvenient. Finally the Department agreed to build another school.⁸⁵

Once the Department agreed to build a new school, it was the agent's task to assess the costs and oversee the building of the school-house. He was also responsible for seeing that all of the schools had the necessary inventories. Whenever possible, the agent's estimates were lowered by substituting Indian labour, often drawn from the Industrial Schools, for white labour. The Department was not overly generous in granting money to build schools consequently the buildings were shabby and poorly constructed. The poor condition of the buildings was the subject of criticism by the school inspectors in the 1890's. McColl responded to these attacks in his Annual Report of 1891. He stated:

... that no public money has ever been expended more economically and advantageously by any Government of the Dominion, than in constructing and furnishing these buildings for the small amount of one hundred dollars appropriated by Parliament for this purpose ...

He concluded that it was unreasonable to expect the Department to provide wonderful buildings without first testing the

willingness of the Indians to attend school, and that only when the children were indeed attending school regularly, was it appropriate to build new schoolhouses.⁸⁶

In the following year Agent A. M. Muckle reported that the Indians of Fort Alexander were thankful and proud of their two new school-houses.⁸⁷ This policy of "renewal" was carried out on many of the reserves throughout 1892, 1893 and 1894.⁸⁸

Once a school was established on the reserve, complete with teacher and curriculum, the Department then had to deal with the problem of poor attendance in schools. Table I offers some statistical evidence showing the inconsistent daily attendance at the schools. It must be further mentioned that these statistics only indicate the number of children on the roll, not the number of children on the reserve. Figures detailing this information are not available.

There were many causes for poor attendance; one of them being the distance some children had to walk in order to get to their school. In 1884, for example, the Councillors at Brokenhead River requested a government grant to build another school because the existing one was operated by the Church Missionary Society at the lower end of the river, one and a half miles away.⁸⁸ That same year, the Fort Alexander Band made a somewhat similar request. There, twenty-five Protestant children living at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, could not attend the Anglican school because it was four miles away and on the other side of the river. There was another school only one mile and a half away but it was a Roman Catholic school and therefore

Table I

Statement showing attendance record of reserve children for the Battleford and Clandeboye Agencies, 1884, 1889, 1894.

Reserve	1884			1889			1894		
	Average Attendance	Total # on roll	%	Average Attendance	Total # on roll	%	Average Attendance	Total # on roll	%
Battleford Agency									
Moosomin	23	41	56	10	12	83	11	14	79
Thunderchild				16	26	62	22	35	63
Poundmaker's	8	18	44	9	22	41	12	19	63
Stony	6	14	43	26	33	79	14	22	64
Sweet Grass				9	19	47	12	16	75
Red Pheasant	No figures given								
Little Pine's							14	18	78
Clandeboye Agency									
Brokenhead River	17	53	32	7	16	44	4	17	24
Fort Alexander	22	48	46	22	57	39	38	84	45
St. Peter's	102	127	80	108	187	58	71	128	55

Taken from Sessional Papers, Tabular Statements showing attendance record of school-age children on the reserves of the Battleford and Clandeboye Agencies, 1884, 1889, 1894.

considered unsuitable.⁸⁹ In both cases, despite Department reluctance, the requests were approved.

At Fort Alexander, attendance remained a problem even with two Protestant schools, located at approximately each end of the reserve. The Protestant Indians were scattered throughout the breadth of the reserve and that meant that some Indian children remained too far away from either school to attend regularly.⁹⁰ The same problem existed on the St. Peter's Reserve. The Netley Creek school was reported by Agent Muckle in 1887 to be poorly attended: "the parents soon got tired of taking their children so far."⁹¹ This school was eventually closed. Rev. Mr. MacKay in his annual report for Battleford of the same year mentioned that attendance was poor on Sweet Grass Reserve because of "the Indians living in different localities on the reserve, too far apart for any number of children to be within reach of the school."⁹²

Inconvenient location was not the only reason for poor attendance. Several schools in the agency met with little or no success because of a variety of other problems. The Protestant school at Brokenhead River was not a success until the late 1890's. It had been established in the 1870's and had been poorly attended because the Traditionalists refused to send their children to a denominational school, according to the agent's reports of 1880 and 1881. In 1882, the school closed down entirely.⁹³ The reason given this time was that the parents always went off to hunt and took their children with them.

Nomadic Indians remained great obstacles to the success of the Indian school at Brokenhead River. Mr. Black, the second teacher to assume the position, was described by Agent Muckle as a "painstaking teacher" who became discouraged because the parents moved around so much he would witness improvement in some pupils only to have "them leave without any warning and [not be] seen again for weeks."⁹⁴ In 1894, the situation had not improved. Muckle wrote in his annual report that:

There are forty children of school age, only twenty-three of whom live on the reserve, and only seventeen within two miles of the school. Their parents are great wanderers, and the heathens would be pleased to see the school closed, although they, when home, send their children.⁹⁵

It was only in 1895, that the school in Brokenhead River reported regular attendance. Agent Muckle wrote that a change of teachers doubled the average attendance. There were twenty-three pupils on the roll where previously there had been twelve: these twenty-three children represented all of the school age children on the reserve.⁹⁶ However, in Agent Muckle's annual report for 1896, the old problem had returned. He said:

The parents take very little interest in the school and it is difficult to get them to supply enough wood to keep the building warm in winter: when they go away from home, they have to take their families with them; they seem not to be able to lose sight of their wives and children.⁹⁷

Close knit family life was a basic tenet of Indian culture but apparently it was not appreciated by the agent.

Apathy and nomadism were problems on the other reserves too. Muckle reported in 1888 that the total attendance for all the schools in St. Peter's was one hundred and sixty. He stated that there should have been twice that many "but a number of parents care very little whether their children learn anything or not, and the heathen families are always moving about..."⁹⁸

In 1891, Muckle complained about school attendance once again adding that, by his suggestion, "the Chief and Council have considered the advisability of having a compulsory law of some kind to compel parents to send their children" to school.⁹⁹ In the end, a law was passed but it was ineffective. The law stated that children between the ages of six and fifteen had to attend school or the parent would have to pay a fine of five cents a day. There were however exceptions allowed and it was these exceptions which made the law ineffective. Children are allowed to miss school if they were ill, if the weather was stormy, if their parents took them hunting and fishing and if the teacher, in the opinion of the agent, punished the child too severely.¹⁰⁰ During that same year, the schools in Fort Alexander faced a general decline in attendance because the sawmills that had previously been a steady employer of many Indians on the reserve moved away. This forced many families to move to Selkirk, Whitemouth, Rat Portage and Winnipeg in search of work.¹⁰¹

Poor quality instruction could also undermine progress. It has already been stated that a superior teacher at Brokenhead

River resulted in a doubling of attendance. On the other hand, there is one case of a teacher being fired for not giving satisfaction.¹⁰²

The Department tried to encourage attendance in various ways. Agent P. J. Williams reported an increase in attendance at the schools in Battleford because of new improved desks, seats and buildings.¹⁰³ In 1884, some day schools started offering Indian children a free noon meal if they attended the school for the whole day. This program met with some success and was continued well into the 1890's.¹⁰⁴ If the carrot policy did not work then the agent used the proverbial stick. He would cut off the rations of the whole reserve until the parents sent their children to school. Agent Williams reported doing this to Poundmaker's and Sweet Grass's reserves in 1888.¹⁰⁵

Trying to improve attendance at the day schools was not the only problem the Department encountered. For example, at St. Peter's Reserve in 1878, a dispute arose between treaty Indians and settlers over the ownership and control of a particular school. According to Inspector McColl, the St. Peter's Band had built a school that was to be shared with the non-treaty members of St. Peter's Parish. The Treaty Indians had wanted to hold council meetings in the school after hours but the other party disliked this idea and locked them out. The Treaty Indians complained to the Department and demanded that the school be returned to them and that they be given sole

rights to the use of the building.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, such a solution could not be imposed because the Provincial government and the local settlers had also invested some money in the school building, had paid for its maintenance and had contributed to the teacher's salary. In addition, it seems that the Local School Board had hired a teacher, Miss Blyth, without first consulting the St. Peter's Indians. This had caused ill-feeling between the two groups.¹⁰⁷

There was yet one more complication. Coupled with the school dispute was the land dispute. Apparently, from the Indian point of view, there were white squatters on Indian land who claimed to have received their lots from Chief Peguis before the negotiations for Treaties I and II took place. The Indians disagreed and feared that if they compromised on the school issue, they would be forced to compromise on the land issue.¹⁰⁸

Consequently when the Department suggested that the Indian children attend the school, known as the Union school, they refused feeling it would better to be ignorant than to be losers. Finally in 1880, the Department built a new school for the St. Peter's Indians. Ironically, the Union School closed in that year because the settlers refused to pay maintenance costs.¹¹⁰

Disputes between Indians and whites over the control of a school were rare but disputes between the various religious missions in the agencies and the Indian Department were frequent and unfriendly. Many disputes arose because the missionaries were critical of either the efforts of the agents

or of the Department's policy. In 1886, the Rev. J. Robertson, general superintendent of the Presbyterian Missions in the North West complained in a newspaper article about the Indian agents and farm instructors "who are sent out there as being very unreliable and immoral in many instances, thus making the Indians distrustful of the whites..."¹¹¹ In 1880, Archdeacon Cowley frustrated by the Department's tardiness in resolving the school question at St. Peter's wrote to Mr. John Schultz, an M. P. and demanded that he goad the government to act.¹¹² In 1882, the Bishop of Rupert's Land wrote to John A. Macdonald to complain that the agents were not at all interested in educating and morally uplifting the Indians. They allegedly treated education in a "stupid and oppressive way... under the authority of the Department." The Bishop closed his letter with the recommendation that men who have a "Christian sympathy" with the Indians should be appointed to the field positions.¹¹³

The Roman Catholic Church was critical of the Department's attitude towards Catholic education. It felt that its "attitude was biased and its actions were often discriminatory. Archbishop Tache confided to John A. Macdonald in November 1886 that: "when trying to establish a school or whatever, [we] always meet with courteous, polite discussion but constant delays in actions."¹¹⁴ Indeed there appears to have been some attempt in 1887 by the Department to place Roman Catholic children in Protestant schools. Vankoughnet put an end to it but he betrayed an unsympathetic attitude. He wrote:

I do not see, however, how we can avoid under the circumstances placing these schools under the Roman Catholic Church if all the Indians are Roman Catholic, as the Bishop gently threatened; if it was not done, the parents would be forbidden to allow their children to attend the Schools.¹¹⁵

Clergymen often used the press to air their views on the inefficiency of the Department. One such attack drew a response from Edgar Dewdney to the Anglican Bishop of Saskatchewan in May, 1886. Dewdney urged the Bishop to restrain his clergy because it did more harm than good. Public criticism tended to increase tensions between Departmental employees and the missionaries, he opined, and hence retarded the achievements of both administrations.¹¹⁶

Another source of dispute between the clergy and the agents was the insistence by the Roman Catholic clergy that they had the sole right to educate the children of their parishioners. This caused considerable problems on reserves where Indians tended to oscillate between Protestantism and Catholicism and where the Department tried to keep costs low by operating only one school if possible. One reserve which had both Anglican and Roman Catholic missions was Thunderchild's. In 1889, Father Cachon, an Oblate missionary, commenced building a school on the reserve, contrary to the wish of the Chief and the majority of the band. The Chief and Council requested the Priest to remove his school-house but he refused.¹¹⁷ The farm instructor then complained to the agent that the Indians were spending their time building instead of ploughing.¹¹⁸ The agent, P. J. Williams reported to Commissioner Hayter Reed:

I fear if such interference on the part of missionaries living on reserves is persisted in our farmers will have more trouble with them than with the Indians but that is pretty generally understood.¹¹⁹

Agent Williams also disliked the priest's activities because it decreased attendance at the school already established.

In another letter to Hayter Reed, Williams complained that:

Several times I have been obliged to stop the rations on several of the reserves in order to make their children attend school. Now it appears ... that the Priest has forbidden the children to attend the school taught by J. Hope.¹²⁰

The Department finally instructed Agent Williams to take a survey to determine who favoured setting up another school on the reserve and who opposed it. The result showed nine in favour and twenty-two opposed.¹²¹ The basic objection of the Indians to building another school was that it would divide the community into two camps.¹²²

As a result of the survey, Hayter Reed sent a letter to Bishop Grandin asking him to restrain his priest. The bishop replied that he was acting under the authority of John A. Macdonald who had previously promised (December 9, 1886) that the Indian children had a right to choose which school to attend and that the work of the missionaries should not be interfered with. The bishop also stated that Father Cachon had tried to go through the proper channels but had been stonewalled each time, therefore after receiving permission from the Catholic Indians on the reserve, he had started to build the school on his own initiative.¹²³

The Department's response to this letter was to acquiesce. Agent Williams was instructed to let Indian wishes in this matter take precedence. If they wanted to build a school, they were to be allowed to do so. After all, allowances for minorities existed under the Indian Act in Section 76(a).¹²⁴

A similar situation developed on Sweet Grass's Reserve. Originally it had been decided that a Protestant school would be built on the Reserve. According to Agent Williams, the school was Protestant because at the time the decision was made to build the school, the agent was Archdeacon MacKay, a Protestant missionary. Later Father Cachon arrived on the reserve and persuaded several Indians to ask for a Roman Catholic teacher. The ensuing dispute forced the agent to ask for a vote and he was to turn the school over to the majority. Unfortunately, the vote was a tie, and the deadlock remained.¹²⁵

The Department again pleaded with the Catholic Bishop to stop Father Cachon's activities at Sweet Grass, but he refused.¹²⁶ Finally the Department gave in; two schools, one Protestant and one Catholic, were allowed to operate on the reserve. Similar situations arose on Moosomin's and Red Pheasant's Reserves.

As a result of all the priest's activities, Agent Williams had some unpleasant things to say about him. In a letter to Commissioner Reed in March, 1890, Williams stated:

If the Roman Catholics require a school or missionary on this Reserve I wish they would [not] put a man on who's sole ambition is to set the Indians at variance with the Instructors and to destroy all authority, in fact it is considered even by his own sect that he is more fit subject for a Mad House than a missionary on an Indian Reserve.¹²⁷

Clandeboyne Agency too was not safe from inter-denominational competition. Father Allard built a school at St. Peter's without the permission of the Chief and Council. As far as they were concerned Father Allard was trespassing on their reserve. The Councillors also complained that his actions had "introduced war between Men and Women in families."¹²⁸ Agent A. M. Muckle disliked the idea of establishing a Roman Catholic school because it put him in an unfavourable position. It meant that one day he was accused "of helping or hindering the Protestants and the next day, the Roman Catholics."¹²⁹ Eventually, after two years, the Catholic school was given official government sanction.

In an effort to overcome the deficiencies of its day school program, the Department created the industrial school, which was a boarding school for older children in which, besides the usual curriculum of reading, writing and arithmetic, the boys learned trades such as carpentry and blacksmithing and the girls learned housekeeping, sewing, etc. Poor attendance would no longer be a problem because the children lived in these schools and the churches would be less critical of the agents because they had little to do with these schools. Inter-denominational competition would be reduced because the schools were off the reserves. Both the Department and the agents were enthusiastic about the new schools. In 1889, Inspector Wadsworth reported favourably on the success of the Battleford Industrial School:

The condition of the children is very satisfactory; they have developed in intelligence and have made good progress, both in school and in their several industrial pursuits, they are exceedingly well behaved and [] ; they have adopted the change of life with commendable cheerfulness and are obedient...¹³⁰

Agent Williams in his report suggested that "more lasting good would accrue to the Indian children who attend the day schools on the reserves if they could be admitted to the industrial school."¹³¹

The Indians were less enthusiastic than the Department about the industrial schools. At first, many parents were afraid that the industrial schools were synonymous with prisons and refused to send their children away for the minimum three year period.¹³²

Agent Muckle reported in 1890 that:

It is most difficult to persuade parents to allow their children to attend these schools, and almost harder to prevent them from taking the children away after they do allow them to go. Their constant companionship with their children in their every day life makes their absence felt much more than it would with us.¹³³

As a result, the parents had to sign a contract with the Department agreeing to send their children away to school for a specified time period. If the child ran away from the school then the Principal or agent had permission to return him or her forcibly.¹³⁴

Criticism of the industrial school system was muted. There seem to have been few "horror stories" of the sort that came from Eastern Canada. One newspaper did claim that an Indian boy had been mistreated at the Battleford Industrial School. 'It

claimed that he was turned out to do or die for "not acting to the master's fancy."¹³⁵ Upon investigation of the incident, the Indian boy was interviewed and he denied any mistreatment towards him by the school.¹³⁶ A more serious complaint was lodged against St. Paul's Industrial School which received some of its students from the Clandeboye Agency. One agent had reported that some parents had withdrawn their children from the school because they had been severely beaten. In this case, the agent was supportive of the parents' actions.¹³⁷

It should be pointed out that the Department had to offer annuity money to the children to attend the industrial schools. The purpose of the annuity was to give the children attending school some money upon graduation so that they could purchase something of permanent benefit such as trade tools or household supplies. In order to get the money, the pupil had to inform the agent how he or she was going to spend it. Buying clothes was not acceptable but the intention to buy cattle, grain, or butter churns was. One Indian, James Stanley, requested money to buy heifers because at school he was trained as a shoemaker for which there was no future on his reserve. Thus after years of training he was forced to follow in his father's footsteps as a farmer.¹³⁸

Religious divisions existed in the Industrial schools too. In July 1891, James Mann converted to Roman Catholicism and requested that his son be transferred from the Protestant Industrial school to a Catholic one. The Principal of the Protestant school strongly objected stating: "I most strongly maintain that the Perversion of the clergy does not give the

Roman Catholic Church the right to demand that the boy shall be discharged, ...¹³⁹ The Department though followed the policy that no child should be entered or allowed to remain in a school that was not of his denomination therefore James Mann's request was granted.¹⁴⁰

The quality and effectiveness of education varied from reserve to reserve and from school to school. Agent Williams wrote that the most advanced schools in his agency were Moosomin and Thunderchild and that they were comparable to the Industrial school at Battleford in proficiency and cleanliness. These schools were compared with those on the Stony reserve which were so backward, in the agent's opinion, that the Indian boys still brought their blankets to class.¹⁴¹ Some schools were able to offer enough of interest to the Indian children so that their attendance was regular but never perfect, whereas others had to close down. It is difficult to determine from the records why the Indian parents took little interest in educating their children. Certainly, the importance of having children participate in family life was an important factor in determining attendance but there were no doubt other reasons. A European-centred education was of little relevance to Indians. Their history was not one of British Kings and imperial wars nor could they find much relevance in the study of European literature.¹⁴² If parents were not pleased with day schools then they simply did not send their children to them. If this were the case, the agent used force or bribery to get the children back in the schools. The agents' tactics had limited success.

The officials of the Indian Department hoped that giving a Euro-Canadian education to Indian children would civilize them and clean their minds of savage thoughts. A year did not go by without some mention being made in the annual reports about the advancements Indian children were making in regards to reading, writing and arithmetic or in playing cricket or brass instruments. Often there were references made to their advance towards civilization. Inspector McColl in his report of 1893 made a representative statement when he claimed that "the darkest clouds of pagan ignorance and superstition which overshadowed for centuries their mental horizon are gradually vanishing as the glimmering rays of civilization are penetrating through them."¹⁴³ However the optimism of the officials was always overshadowed by the "glimmering rays of reality." The problem of attendance remained a serious set-back for the Department and the squabbling between the agents and missionaries did little to help advance the program. The problem of poor attendance remained, despite various Department attempts to correct it, simply because the Indian parents did not see education sufficiently valuable to warrant substituting it for their own culture and lifestyle. The Indian parents kept their children with them as they went out to fish, to hunt, or to work in the towns. If they were on the reserve, or if they were coerced, then they would send their children to school. Some did send their children voluntarily and some did send them to the industrial schools but by and large the interest

shown in Euro-Canadian education was minimal and hence the Department's educational program, no matter what tactics were employed, was not a success.

FOOTNOTES

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IV

Assimilation vs. Self-sufficiency

We are lazy and find
[farm] work distasteful.
Chief Moosomin.

One can but fondly
express the hope, that
now as the inutility
of wandering about in
search of a living be-
comes so strongly ap-
parent to the Indian,
he will settle down and
work, even though it
be but one-third as hard
as the white man.

Agent Hayter Reed

In discussing the goals of the Department's agricultural programme it would seem natural to continue the civilization theme as developed in the previous chapter. Indeed it would be a safe avenue to pursue, because previous writers have done exactly that. Reservations were to be the first step towards homesteading, towards holding individual property. In the philosophical context, Joan Boswell defined Victorianism in terms of the need to own private property.¹ J. E. Chamberlain argued that whites believed that "Common property and civilization... cannot co-exist."² There were also numerous references by Indian Department officials which suggested the need to encourage severalty in order to "raise" the Indians towards civilization. Agent MacKay was always referring to the supposed "breaking up of the tribal system" and greeted this revolution with great joy.³

The danger in pursuing the theme of civilization is that as a concept it is too closely linked with assimilation: if the Indians were civilized there would be nothing distinguishing

themselves from their Euro-Canadian neighbours. Whether or not the Department actually sought to assimilate Indians into the dominant economy is hard to determine because for every statement or action of the Department that seemed to support the idea of assimilation as its goal there existed a contradictory one suggesting that the Department's real goal was to simply give the Indians a means to be self-sufficient. A close look at the Department's agricultural program and at the other types of livelihood Indians pursued will determine what the Department's goals in regard to its agricultural program really were. Did the Department seek to civilize the Indians or to simply give them an opportunity to be self-sufficient? Were the bureaucrats more interested in seeing the Indians removed from dependence on compensation for loss of their aboriginal rights than in seeing them become successful farmers competing with European agriculturalists?

Reserve Indians earned their livelihoods in a variety of ways. Income was derived from government-sponsored programs such as grain growing and stock-raising; the government also handed out school and treaty annuities. Any income that the Indians earned from government sources was strictly controlled by the Indian Department. The Indians had little control over the operation of their farms and over any profits that arose from those operations. Reserve Indians also earned income apart from what the government gave them. This income came from the traditional pursuits of hunting and fishing and from work they did as labourers, construction workers, fishermen, lumbermen,

domestic servants, and seamstresses, for white employers. These sources of income were not government controlled and the Indians were able to dispose of this income in any way they wished.

Of all the livelihoods pursued by reserve Indians, perhaps the one that received the most attention by academics was the government-sponsored program of grain growing and stock-raising. This attention should not be interpreted as proof that agriculture was the most important source of income for the Indians. Certainly, it was considered of prime importance to the government but other factors must be considered to determine whether in fact agriculture was the most important source of livelihood on the reserves.

By 1875, as has already been pointed out, the government realized ~~that~~ the Plains Indians had lost their main source of economic livelihood with the extinction of the buffalo herds and that a replacement staple was needed. The government determined therefore that the replacement would be farming. It was prepared to use force if necessary to establish this new economy. It did prefer to use persuasion and negotiation but it insisted that the Indians learn to provide for their own survival, and survival could only be achieved, it was hypothesized, by taking up a "civilized occupation" such as farming. It also insisted that the Indians become self-sufficient, that is, live without government aid, as soon as possible. Many an agent's or inspector's report predicted that one band or another would be self-sufficient within the next year. More often than not, the predictions were untrue.

Agent Reed (1881-1883) reported that he refused to give rations to those who did not work thus forcing many Indians (excepting the old and infirm) to farm their plots in order to get something to eat.⁴ This form of coercion was about the only one used until the Rebellion of 1885. Previously, the government had had no legal authority to keep the Indians on their reserves nor had it had the military might necessary to imprison recalcitrant Indians. After the Rebellion though, the pass system was introduced forcing Indians to get a signed pass from their agent if they wished to go off their reserve.²⁵ The North-West Mounted Police contingent was doubled after the Rebellion and the actual military presence in the Northwest during the Rebellion gave the government more coercive power than had hitherto existed. This visible increase of power allowed the government to pursue vigorously the implementation of its agricultural policy.

The program devised by the government was quite complex. Initially, the Indians were given grain such as wheat, barley and oats to grow, but following repeated crop failures, for one reason or another, hardier crops were added such as potatoes and turnips. The Stony Reserve in the Battleford Agency gave up wheat production altogether. The Indians were also given cattle, both dairy and beef, to raise and in the late 1880's, the Department experimented with sheep-raising on the reserves.

Was the farming policy of the Indian Department a success? If just the annual reports submitted by the inspectors and agents to the Department are used as the source of information

to determine the success of the policy then the conclusion drawn would be that despite setbacks, the Indians did meet with some success and were becoming more advanced in their knowledge of farming and progressing towards assimilation. However, if a comparison of the annual reports, which were presented to Parliament and public scrutiny, with the private correspondence between Departmental personnel is made, then the progress of Indians towards assimilation is less evident because of the amazing discrepancies that exist between the two series. The private correspondence is much less positive. For example, the Annual Report in 1890 submitted by Agent P. J. Williams, dated September 8, stated that:

The endeavours of the different bands of Indians under my care to support themselves this season promised to be crowned with success in midsummer, but a heavy storm which passed over this section of the country during the month of August has left great doubts as to the favourable result anticipated, and it is now doubtful what the damage to crops may yet prove to be.⁶

One week previous to this, Agent Williams had written a letter to the Commissioner and described the effects of the storm in a much more precise fashion. His report stated that a frost had done considerable damage to the crops on Sweet Grass and had destroyed the grain crops on Red Pheasant's and the Stony reserves. He also stated that Moosomin's and Little Pine's crops were damaged by hail, that Poundmaker's crop was totally destroyed also by hail except for one small patch and that their potatoes were badly damaged by the hail and by frost. Williams was more explicit and pessimistic in

his private letters than he was in his annual report."⁷

Bluntly stated then, despite annual reports, the Department's farming program was not a complete success: it did not lead the Indians to assimilation nor even self-sufficiency. Within the twenty-year period studied, rarely did a year go by without at least one reserve having to suffer a poor harvest. This was especially true of the grain harvest and especially true of the Little Pine's, Red Pheasant, Stony, and Sweet Grass Reserves. The black and dark brown soils of the reserves in the two agencies were rich in minerals and retained the most water for longer periods of time than any other soil but there were other factors, mostly climatic, that reduced the amounts of the annual harvest. (see Table II)

Table II

Table indicates poor harvests per reserve per year with causes given.

Legend

Product		Cause	
Roots - R	Wood - W	Cold - c	Water (flood/rain) - w
Hay - H	Sheep - S	Pests - p	Drought - d
Grain - G	Misc. - M	Frost - f	Fire - b
Cattle - C		Neglect - n	Misc. - m

Table IIA

	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887
Battleford											
Little Pines								Gdf Rdf	Gf	Gd	Gm
Moosomin's					Gn Rf	Gn	Gf	Gdf Rdf	Gf	Gd	Gm
Poundmaker's			Rp		Gn Rf	Gn Cn	Gfn	Gdf Rd	Gf	Gd	Gm
Red Pheasant					Gn Rf	Gnf Rnf	Gnf Rnd	Gf			
Stony					Gn Rf	Gn	Gf	Gfd Rd	Gf	Gdf	Gm
Sweet Grass				Gfw	Gn Rf	Gn	Gf	Gf Rf	Gfd Rd	Gd	Gm
Thunderchild				Gm Rm Hm	Gn Rf	Gn	Gf	Gf	Gf Rf	Gd	Gm
Clandeboyne				Rf							
Black River				Gfw Rf Gfw	Hw Gwd	Cp Gd	Rd	Gdp		Gd Wb	Rm Cc Hm
Brokenhead River						Rm					Rp
Fort Alexander			Rc	Rf	Cp	Hm	Gf				Hm
St. Peter's		Gp		Gfw Rf Gfw	Cn Gw Hw	Cp Wn Gp	Gdf Hm	Gfp Hw	Gf Rd		Rm Hm

Legend

Product: Roots - R, Hay - H, Grain - G, Cattle - C, Wood - W, Sheep - S, Misc. - M.
Cause: Cold - c, Pests - p, Frost - f, Neglect - n, Water (flood/rain) - w,
Drought - d, Fire - b, Misc. - m.

Table IIB

Battleford	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897
Little Pines	Gf	Gd Rd	Cc Ghm Rhm	Gf Rf	Rm	Gm Rm	Gd			Cc
Moosomin's	Gn Sp	Gd Hb Rd	Cc Gn	Gf Rf	Rm	Gd Gm				
Poundmaker's	Gf	Gd Rd	Gh Cc Hb	Ghf Rhif	Rm Gm	Gm Rm	Gd	Gdh Rdh		Cc
Red Pheasant	Gf Rf	Rd	Cc Rf	Rf	Rm	Rm				Cc
Stony	Gf	Gd Rd	Gf Cc	Gf Rf	Rm	Gm Rm	Gd	Gm		Cc
Sweet Grass	Gm	Gd Hd	Gf Rf	Gfh Rf	Rm	Gm Rf	Gd	Gm Rm		Cc
Thunderchild	Sp	Gd Hd Sp	Gm Rm Sp	Gf Rf Sp	Rm S Sold	Gd Rd	Gd	Rm Gm		Cc
Clandeboyne Black River										
Brokenhead River					Gfnw					
Fort Alexander				Gw Rw Hw	Rw				Cm	
St. Peter's							Gd Hw			

Legend

Product: Roots - R, Hay - H, Grain - G, Cattle - C, Wood - W, Sheep - S, Misc. - M.
 Cause: Cold - c, Pests - p, Frost - f, Neglect - n, Water (flood/rain) - w,
 Drought - d, Fire - b, Misc. - m.

The principal killers of the grain crop were drought, frost, and sometimes a combination of the two. The Red Pheasant Reserve was reported to have frost ten of the twelve months of the year.⁸ At one time, the Indians of Red Pheasant tried to avoid the fall frost by planting especially early in the spring. The result: the crop was destroyed by a frost that occurred in July. Frost was also an ever present hazard on the Stony, Little Pine's and Sweet Grass Reserves. Moosomin and Poundmaker's were usually lucky and escaped the severest effects of the frost but suffered nonetheless during five and three years respectively, out of a total of eighteen harvests.. The most fortunate reserve was Thunderchild's. In all the years studied, it had the highest average return and only suffered complete failure twice. Table III gives statistical evidence of how damaging the frost was to the Battleford harvest in 1884 and compares it to the previous peak obtained on each reserve. There are no comparable figures for Clandeboye.

Table III

Table III compares the Battleford harvest of 1885, which was damaged by frost, to the previous peak harvest of the reserves.

Reserve	1885		Peak harvest to date	
	Wheat	Potatoes	Wheat	Potatoes
Moosomin	-	-	494	800
Poundmaker's	-	-	750	1500
Thunderchild	-	1½	120	45
Stony	-	160	200	1,900
Sweet Grass	-	-	300	2,500
Red Pheasant	-	160	200	1,900
Little Pine's	-	-	-	65

Taken from Sessional Papers, Government of Canada, Tabular Statements of Agricultural Production of the Reserves of the Battleford Agency, 1885, 1884, 1883.

Frost was less dangerous in the Clandeboye Agency in Manitoba. For the twenty year period, Fort Alexander suffered only one complete crop failure while St. Peter's suffered damage on three occasions but never complete failure. Brokenhead River had two harvests ruined by frost.

Drought was another serious problem to the farmers of the two agencies, especially to those of the Battleford Agency. The reserve that had the most crop failures as a result of drought was Poundmaker's with six dry summers, followed closely by Little Pine's, Moosomin, Sweet Grass and Thunderchild. The two remaining reserves, Stony and Red Pheasants, had three and two dry summers respectively during the two decades which concern this thesis. Table IV illustrates the ill effects of

drought to the Battleford harvest in 1889 and compares it to the previous peak obtained by each reserve. Again, there are no comparable figures for Clandeboye.

Table IV

Table IV compares the Battleford harvest of 1889 which was damaged by drought to the previous peak harvest of the reserve.

Reserve	1889		Peak harvest to date	
	Wheat	Potatoes	Wheat	Potatoes
Moosomin	614	30	1385	963
Poundmaker's	90	10	750	1500
Thunderchild	300	60	1600	1300
Stony	10	68	200	1900
Sweet Grass	75	45	300	2500
Red Pheasant	80	32	200	1900
Little Pine's	10	15	700	1050

Taken from Sessional Papers, Government of Canada, Tabular Statements of Agricultural Production of the Reserves of the Battleford Agency, 1889, 1888, 1883.

Again Clandeboye was less endangered by the elements than Battleford. Fort Alexander was never subject to a critical drought in the period studied and St. Peter's had only three dry summers. Brokenhead River was the most affected by drought, reporting five dry seasons which damaged its grain crop but did little to harm the root crops.

If frost or drought, or both, did not damage the crops in Battleford, something else occurred to minimize returns.

In the early years, the greatest problem in producing a good

harvest was overcoming the desire of the Indian farmers to neglect their crops and go off hunting. Agent Reed reported that in 1881, the yields were down because of the Indians' neglect. During the summer, Reed had witnessed a "general strike" by the Indians, meaning a refusal to work the fields. Following that, a thirst dance was held and then another work stoppage was called to protest the distribution of annuities on the reserves, instead of in town, and finally at harvest time no threshing was done because all the Indians had left their reserves to meet the Governor-General on his trip to the North-West.⁹

In 1883, the agent reported that the crops were being neglected and that no advancement had been made in two years on Red Pheasant's Reserve. The reason given for this poor showing was the apathy of the Indians towards farming.¹⁰ It is no wonder that such an attitude existed on that reserve because, up to that time, frost had damaged the crop every year and it would continue to do so wiping out the return on the investment. The crops of the Battleford Reserves were also on occasion beset with hail or insects. Furthermore, in 1893, when all the reserves were counting on a successful harvest, a freak scorching hot wind passed over the area in July and withered the standing crops.

Though it did little actual damage to reserve crops, fire was always a menace. None of the fires that threatened the crops were reported as having started within the reserves. Often sparks from the engines of passing Canadian Northern Railway trains would alight on the prairie and start a blaze. The Indians were often

hard pressed to contain these fires or to prevent them from burning their homes and crops. In 1889, there was a report of the hay supply being burnt, as a result of which many tons of hay had to be purchased in order to prevent the starvation of the cattle the following winter. The fires also burned up a lot of timber stands that would have been valuable in later years.

In the Clandeboye Agency, the biggest threat to the crops, apart from frost and drought, arose from flooding or excessive downpours. Fort Alexander particularly was vulnerable to flooding and deluge; St. Peter's experienced some trouble with excessive runoffs too. The agency had to deal with pests and fires as well. Inspector McColl in his report of 1882 recorded that the St. Peter's Reserve was "rapidly being denuded of wood." He assumed that all the wood was being chopped and sold by the Indians. Agent Muckle, though, in his report corrected McColl by placing the blame for the loss of timber solely on the numerous fires that kept occurring during the course of the year."¹¹

The production of roots and tubers, especially potatoes, was less risky than the production of grain and therefore the harvest was more successful. They did suffer though during the severe frosts and severe droughts. Eighteen eighty-four was a particularly bad year for roots in Battleford Agency where either drought, frost, or both, afflicted the harvest on five of the seven reserves, and in 1889, drought reduced the returns on the root crop in six reserves. Occasionally these crops were damaged by pests such as the Colorado potato beetle and moles.

The raising of cattle and horses proved more successful, although Plains Indians had had little more experience with raising domestic animals than with growing cereal and root crops. The Department also introduced sheep onto the reserves but this innovation met with slight success. In the early years of the experiment, many of the lambs were killed by dogs. Eventually, most reserves were able to curb that problem by shooting any dog that worried sheep. The problem remained on Thunderchild's reserve therefore in 1892, the sheep on that reserve were sold.¹²

Production report indicates a steady rise in the number of head of cattle for the reserves in both agencies. There were only occasional problems encountered by the Indians in stock-raising. The most threatening was the difficulty of keeping the cattle properly sheltered during the winters. In 1889, the winter was so severe that some cattle died from the cold while others were considerably weakened. In 1897, another cold winter settled in, resulting in "great losses to the herds."¹³ There is only one report which indicates starvation as the cause of death of some of the cattle; this occurred on Poundmaker's reserve in 1882. Starvation was generally not a problem because the Indians were always able to secure enough hay, despite intense competition from the whites about which more will be said later.

Brokenhead River and the Fort Alexander Reserve had about as much success as the Battleford reserves in cattle raising.

Yet their successes were limited in comparison to St. Peter's progress because both these reserves had difficulties securing enough hay for winter fodder. Frequent flooding at Fort Alexander and occasional flooding at Brokenhead, as well as limited accessible haylands, accounted for these limitations.

St. Peter's reserve was by far the most profitable reserve in terms of cattle raising. It had six hundred head of cattle in 1887, reached a peak of 1,000 head in 1890 and then dropped off to 752 head in 1892. The decrease was due to the selling and butchering of many cattle from 1890 onward, and was not attributable to any unfortunate event. In comparison the reserve with the most head of cattle in Battleford for the year 1887 was the Sweet Grass Reserve which boasted forty-two head. By 1889, their herd had increased by one and then declined to thirty-three by 1892. St. Peter's could afford to have such a large herd because the band had access to at least 2,000 tons of hay annually. In many years, they sold their surplus to neighbouring settlers or to other reserves, sometimes earning ten dollars a ton (but usually averaging between two and three dollars a ton) on hay which cost one dollar a ton to produce. In 1885, their peak year of production, they stacked a record 3,200 tons of hay.¹⁴

Horses were raised by the Indians, often on their own initiative and for their personal use. Any profits an individual was able to make from farming often went into the purchase of a

horse. The government did give some horses to Indians as gifts but preferred to use oxen as its work animals when tilling the soil.

Thus despite many setbacks, most of the reserves experienced some success in growing their own food. The Department, through the farm instructors, was successful in teaching the Indians the skills of farming -- they learned how to plough, how to plant, how to harvest; but the Department was unsuccessful in persuading Indians to adopt farming as a way of life. Table V indicates very well the precariousness of relying on farming as an economic base in the Battleford Agency. There are no comparable figures for Clandeboye Agency but based on the information given in Table II, it is evident that the Indians of this agency faced difficulties too.

Table V

Table indicating agricultural productivity for the years 1891 and 1895 for the reserves of the Battleford Agency.

	1891	Total Acres	Hay (tons)	Wheat (bushels)	Potatoes (bushels)
Little Pines		96	225	440	410
Moosomin		149	300	2,008	260
Red Pheasant		126	400	892	420
Stonies		25	200	None Planted	700
Sweet Grass		138	300	594	220
Poundmakers		75	232	300	113
Thunderchild		225	325	2,000	1,100
1895					
Little Pines		42½	325	-	109
Moosomin		51	450	434	305
Red Pheasant	23	9/16	1,075	5	698
Stonies		25	600	None Planted	610
Sweet Grass		35	750	45	200
Poundmakers		40	325	6	20
Thunderchild		53	400	40	318

Taken from Sessional Papers, Government of Canada, Tabular Statements of Agricultural Production of the Battleford Agency, 1891, 1895.

Overall the only years in which there was no damage reported to the harvest on any reserve in the Battleford Agency were 1896 and 1897. Even so, in 1897, many cattle died during the severe winter so economic loss was suffered on that account. For some reserves, notably Red Pheasant's, Poundmaker's, Stony and Sweet Grass, 1896 was the only good year all round. Though some success was met with in stock-raising, as has been illustrated, repeated discouraging harvests, helped to determine that farming was not to become the Indian way of life, even in the Clandeboyne Agency where farming was much more successful. Discouraging harvests was only one reason why farming was unpopular; there were others. Farming as a livelihood was not appreciated enough by the Indians to supplant fully the traditional economy of hunting and fishing. Moreover, farming was unprofitable because the Indians were not allowed to compete with whites on the open market or because there was no accessible market. Finally, the Indians did not endorse, for the most part, the government's program because the financial incentives were meagre as profits that did accrue were government controlled and not band controlled.

The reserves on which the Indians chose to settle held out opportunities for them to pursue their traditional lifestyle of hunting and fishing. Therefore, during the lean years after the great buffalo herds had disappeared, it could be argued that the Indians still pursued their traditional life as hunters and fishermen. All of the reserves were located close to water supplies, all were given timber stands, and all covered a fair area in which hunting and trapping could be carried on.

Even in the more successful agricultural reserves of the Clandeboyne Agency, the Indians continued to hunt and to fish. Ample evidence of this exists in the annual reports and correspondence of the agents stationed there. For example, Agent A. M. Muckle in his report of 1882, confessed that he only saw the Indians of Brokenhead River during annuity time. The rest of the time, generally, they were off the reserve pursuing hunting or fishing.¹⁵ He also admitted that he tried to get the Indians of St. Peter's to move to higher ground because the river kept flooding their haylands and eroding their embankments. The Indians, however, refused stating that they wished to be closer to the water so that they could pursue their fishing.⁴⁶ This was an indication that fishing took precedence over farming. Even as late as 1888, the Indians of Fort Alexander, ranked second in "civilization" to St. Peter's, all gathered into their boats to carry on the fall fishing. Some too stayed out all winter to ice fish.¹⁷

The Agency reports also record earnings from hunting and fishing. Inspector McColl reported that Fort Alexander made \$15,000 in 1885 from the fisheries alone, while furs in the same year brought in \$4,000.¹⁸ Unfortunately there are no comparable figures for agricultural production but it is probably safe to assume that \$15,000 in 1885 represents a significant portion of the reserve's income. Depletion of stocks in the late 1880's, trimmed the profits considerably and in the early 1890's, Fort Alexander suffered a succession of stormy autumns making it impossible for the fishermen to get their

boats on the water or to keep their nets from breaking.¹⁹ Fur bearing animals were also scarce at times and thus earning cash by selling furs and obtaining meat to eat was not always possible. Despite these shortcomings, it is evident that the traditional economy continued to exist even when one or two reserves experienced success in farming.

Another shortcoming of the Department's program was that often when the Indians wished to sell their surplus, they had no market in which to sell it. Agent Muckle reported that the great drawback to farming in his agency was that there was no market, and there was really not much use for the people to grow more produce than they required for home consumption and seed.²⁰

There was another reason for the lack of overwhelming interest in the farming program. The Indians did not have control over their farming operations. The Indian Act of 1880, which was amended in 1881, gave the agent control over the sale and barter of all Indian produce. The amendment read as follows:

1. The Governor in Council may make such provisions and regulations as may from time to time, seem advisable for prohibiting or regulating the sale, barter, exchange or gift by any band ... of any grain or root crops, or other produce grown upon any Indian Reserve in the North-West Territories, the Province of Manitoba or the District of Keewatin; ...

Also, ownership of most of the cattle and decisions regarding their disposal remained in government hands for most of the period under study. Consequently, there were several complaints from Indians that they were not allowed to slaughter their cattle as needed or desired but instead had to spend numerous

hours gathering hay to feed these cattle. They also had to travel farther and farther away in order to get enough hay to feed increasing herds. Eventually in the 1890's, the Indians were given Departmental approval to butcher some of their cattle.²² This coincided with a reduction in the food rations given to the reserve Indians, however, and thus profits from beef were reduced. Also, Agent Williams reported that the Indians took greater interest in their cattle as soon as the Department initiated a "rent to own" program. In 1893, the Department agreed to relinquish control over certain stock to particular Indians who proved themselves capable of caring for their herds.²³

Another reason which added to the difficulties experienced by the Indian farmers was the lack of workers on some of the reserves. The population of the reserves was made up disproportionately of children and elders, or the very young and the very old. For example, the Nepahase band on Thunderchild's reserve in 1884, consisted of 175 people, but only forty of those were classified as working adults.²⁴ In 1883, Sweet Grass reserve was reported to have a population of 189 with twenty-six of those classified as working adults.²⁵ Farming is a labour intensive occupation and the Indians were unable to supply that necessary labour. It must also be remembered that the Indians could not use their children as sources of labour because they were expected to be in regular attendance at school. If they were not at school for a long period of time, then the families risked losing their government rations. Also day schools operated during the

summer months and many of the children, especially in the Battleford Agency, were sent off to the industrial school and saw their parents only once or twice a year, perhaps during annuity time.

Another problem with the farm program was the poor quality of instructors hired to teach the Indians farming. In the Battleford Agency, several complaints were laid against farm instructors for their performances. In 1887, Edgar Dewdney received a letter from Mr. T. Mitchell in which several complaints were made against farm instructor Oscar Orr, who was working on the Stony Reserve. Mitchell accused Orr of neglecting his duties and cited several examples to prove his point. During the planting season, Orr left the reserve to pick up his wife and children; he used the farm team to do this, depriving the Indians of necessary equipment. The potatoes were improperly planted, that is, they were planted in unfertile land which was unploughed and unprepared, and the seed was just dropped in and covered. The careless use of implements was a recurring problem and Orr did little to insure that the implements were properly taken care of. As a result, many implements were broken. Between planting and haying seasons, the Indians resorted to "the most abandoned indolence", the camps were filthy and no sanitary corrections were made resulting in a high morbidity and mortality rate. Mitchell stated that if Orr had been able to speak the Indian language,

or to at least have had an interpreter to give instructions to his charges, then more could have been accomplished in educating the Indians about farming and sanitation. So bad was the situation on the reserve, that some Indians petitioned to be placed on another reserve. Mitchell's list of criticisms went on and on and he also criticized the agent, accusing him of giving out passes to women who then hung around town as prostitutes.²⁶

As a result of this complaint, Edgar Dewdney instructed the agent to investigate the allegations. In the end, the charges were largely dismissed because Mitchell was believed to be engaging in a personal vendetta. Mitchell had originally been a teacher on the reserve and had been "permitted to retire"; he thought that Orr had been the person responsible for his early retirement.²⁷

A more serious charge against a farm instructor came from Chief Moosomin in 1883. The Chief claimed that farm instructor W. S. Clink had struck him once and another time had thrown Moosomin out of his house.²⁸ Clink admitted that he had done this but insisted that he had been provoked. The agent told Clink that he had no right to strike an Indian and if the Indians violated the law then Clink was to go to the proper authorities for redress. In his report, the agent requested that these incidents be overlooked because generally Clink was a good instructor as the "forward State" of the reserve illustrated.²⁹ Assistant Commissioner Hayter Reed would have liked to have Clink arrested and tried but his view was considered inappropriate.³⁰ Commissioner Dewdney agreed with the

agent about Clink's abilities, thus Clink was kept on in his position. The decision to overlook Clink's actions, it should be noted, was made two years after the incident occurred; by this time, Chief Moosomin had ceased to complain.³¹

Another problem with the farm instructors was their tendency to pay more attention to their own crops and stock than to those of the Indians. As early as 1882, a policy of prohibiting farm instructors from keeping their own stock was introduced, but the problem persisted. In 1884, Commissioner Dewdney distributed circulars to all the agents to tell farm instructors that they were not allowed to keep their own stock. The agents were also told to "report any infraction of this regulation on the part of any instructor".³² Still, in 1888, the issue was raised again by Farm Instructor Gopsill, in charge of Little Pine's. In a letter to Assistant Commissioner Reed, Gopsill requested that he be allowed to keep his own team of horses. He said it was necessary because the Department horses were decrepit and he needed a good strong team to visit the various hay lands and to go into town. He also wanted to keep his horses as a safety precaution because in his mind "it was hard to tell when it might be necessary to have a good nag."³³

Gopsill's request was forwarded to Ottawa and opinions on the matter came from many sources. His request raised many concerns, one of them the fear that if the instructor kept his horse, he might be tempted to wander into town too often and thus neglect his duties. There was also the fear that if one instructor were permitted to keep private stock then others would want to

do the same and there would be no place to draw the line. Abuses such as these had existed previously, thus the Department's fears were justified. The inspector of the Piegan Reserve once reported that he had noticed that all the Department employees had a private stock of fat and slick horses while the Department's horses looked neglected. Apparently these employees were running a private horse trading business.³⁴ The wife of a farm instructor (no other details of identity given) in Battleford raised poultry and made considerable money selling hens and eggs. The grain eaten by the hens was grown by the Indians and the instructor while carrying out his official duties. She also kept two cows and sold the butter, alleging that the Indians never milked their own cows anyway.³⁵

As a result of the inquiry into Gopsill's request, the rule of prohibition of stock was continued. Gopsill was informed that he could not keep his own horses but that he and the agent could use the Department's horses for official business. They were also to be given a cow or two each for the use of the family.³⁶

The question of the need for having "a good nag" at the ready was a cantankerous one for the Department. Gopsill's remark was interpreted as an excuse for self-protection and the Department wondered if he did not get along with the Indians. The Department informed the agent that if the farm instructor was endangered, an investigation should be made and the source of trouble removed. On the other hand, if he had no justification

then the Department would suspect that Gopsill was unfit for his position, because "the Farming Instructors should be the last to raise false issues between the Department and the Indians."³⁷

Thus farming as a means of earning a livelihood was fraught with difficulties. Despite all of the problems, it did help the Indians to attain self-sufficiency but only when combined with other economic pursuits such as hunting, fishing and lumbering. If the Department's goal in establishing its farming program was to help make the Indians self-sufficient then it was successful; however, if the Department wanted farming to be the means by which Indians would be assimilated into the larger commercial agricultural community then the program was a failure. A look at the Department's views and policies regarding the Indians' other economic pursuits will determine whether or not assimilation into the mainstream economy or just self-sufficiency was the Department's goal and consequently whether or not its economic policy was a failure.

Farming was not the only source of income for the Indian people, as has been pointed out already, nor was it the only one that met with limited success. As previously mentioned, Indians received income from fishing, trapping, and outside employment, although there were often restrictions placed on the Indians that prevented them from realizing great profits. Often they faced restrictions on the quantities of goods such as, wood, fish and hay, which they were allowed to sell. These restrictions, imposed on them by the Department and enforced by the agent, caused friction between the government and the Indians.

In Clandeboye, a serious dispute arose during the late 1880's over the fishing rights of Indians. The dispute arose because the fish stocks in Lake Winnipeg and other inland waters were rapidly being depleted. The ministry in charge of fisheries adopted the policy of conservation and insisted that the closed seasons be implemented on the lakes for both white and Indian fishermen and that both pay license fees. The Indians protested strongly against this because it was an infringement of their aboriginal rights and the Indian Department supported their protest, to a point. The Department was sympathetic to the ideal of conservation but realized that the year-round fisheries were essential to Indian self-sufficiency. Because the Indian Department did not wholeheartedly endorse the Fisheries Department's policy of conservation, conflicts arose between the personnel of the two Departments.

In a letter to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Fisheries Inspector McQueen complained that the Indians abused their privileges. He stated that the Indians did not pay fees when catching fish for their own use and that they took advantage of their year-long privileges by catching large quantities of fish during spawning season and selling them later in the year. He also complained that the agents spent too much time "arousing prejudices" against fishery inspectors instead of conserving fish which was their chief responsibility in regards to the fisheries. McQueen added that the Indians were not suffering from lack of fish because they were feeding them to their dogs. He would have liked to impose the same

fishing restrictions on the Indians that existed for whites.³⁹

Agent A. M. Muckle felt that the Indians should not have to pay license fees (which amounted to two dollars) because it was contrary to their treaty rights but he agreed that the need for conservation was paramount. In his mind, Indians should have to obey the closed season restrictions.³⁹ Assistant Commissioner Reed informed the Commissioner that the old people fished because they could not do any other form of labour and therefore the paying of license fees was particularly burdensome to them. He therefore agreed with Agent Muckle that there should be no license fees for Indians. Reed also agreed that conservation was the most important consideration in deciding when and in what quantities, Indians could fish.⁴⁰ Treaty stipulations concerning traditional hunting and fishing rights were subordinate to federal conservation measures incumbent on all inhabitants.

The Indians too were adamantly opposed to paying fees and in having restrictions imposed on their fishing. In response to the government's decision to remove the Indian exemption, the Brokenhead River Band had this to say:

We have to say that such a notification is by us considered extraordinary. We have hitherto fished without license, whether for our use, or for purposes of Trade and Commerce and it's our intention to continue fishing as heretofore, without paying license.

When we made the treaty with the Government we sold our lands of course, but we did not sell our fish, this commodity we reserved for our exclusive benefit. The fish then being clearly our own we cannot but come to the conclusion that we can sell it to whomsoever we choose without paying license.⁴¹

The Indians also got support for their claims from Lieutenant Governor John Schultz. Schultz wrote a letter to Edgar Dewdney in October 1889, lambasting Inspector McQueen for his incompetency. Schultz stated that McQueen knew nothing of the situation of the Indians since he spent his time in Winnipeg instead of out on the Lake. His assistants were not very effective either because they rarely visited the reserves, and when they did so they would go out on the fishing companies' tugs which sent signals in advance warning their employees of the presence of inspectors. Schultz also said that there was a big problem with offal, (dead fish) rotting in the water, mostly because fishing took place on Sunday but the nets were not lifted until Monday. McQueen's suggestion that the whitefish at the south end of Lake Winnipeg had simply moved north was preposterous, he affirmed, because fish never change their spawning habits. McQueen had been a worker in a printing office before becoming a fisheries inspector and his inexperience showed. Schultz concluded that the Indians were dependent on the fish and not on farming because of the poor soil conditions of the Laurentian shield therefore, he told the government, that if it did not act to conserve the fish for the Indians then it should be prepared to feed the Indians.⁴²

The government took Schultz's warning seriously, it responded by passing the Fisheries Act of 1889 which provided for the conservation of fish through closed seasons and the paying of license fees on fish caught and on nets. The Indians still refused to acknowledge the legality of these restrictions on

their fishing rights. In December 1890, the Indians of Fort Alexander petitioned the government to exclude Indians from the jurisdiction of the Act. They stated that the Act was at variance with their Treaty because it was improper to tax Indians and that "the Indians under Treaty were permitted to enjoy all privileges of hunting and fishing for their own use and benefit, in perpetuity without payment of any license..." They claimed too that they sold their fish because of necessity. The Indians had to barter their fish for flour and other supplies and that as proof of the poverty of the people, they secured the fish only with great hardship as they had to travel across ice, cut three feet through it and wait for a catch at -30F.⁴³

Another demand of the Indians was to have exclusive fishing rights to certain areas in Lake Winnipeg. The Fishery Department agreed to this provided that the Indian Department ensured its agents' co-operation in enforcing the fishery regulations.⁴⁴ This was agreed to and the agents became fish inspectors and were instructed to choose the areas necessary to set aside for the Indians.⁴⁵ As for the enforcing of closed seasons etc., the Department's basic philosophy was to enforce the rules only in areas where white settlement was widespread. Otherwise, the Indians were left largely to their own devices.⁴⁶

The Department therefore resolved the fisheries problem by allowing Indians the freedom to fish without restrictions only in areas where there was no white settlement and where the fish stocks were in no danger of depletion. This policy would seem to indicate that the Department did not want the Indians to

compete with the white settlers and that it insisted that the Indians provide for themselves whenever possible. If given a choice between breaking treaty promises and letting fish stocks be depleted, the Department would ignore the treaty by implementing conservation measures in order to avoid Indian dependency on the government.

The issue of wood supply bore many similarities to the fishing problem. Conservation of wood became a government concern. Around 1879, settlers complained about the Indian "monopoly" on wood.⁴⁷ The programme of distributing licenses was again instituted and certain areas were set aside for the exclusive use of the Indians. As white settlement increased and the available wood supplies dwindled, the white settlers demanded access to the Indian woodlots. The issue came to a head at the Clandeboye Agency in 1879, when a petition appeared in Selkirk stating that a number of half-breeds living on the St. Peter's reserve were unhappy with their status as Indians. They claimed that they had been tricked and pressured into signing Treaty I and as a result suffered great disadvantages: they were unable to sell wood or hay, and could not obtain credit; they were forced to live with uncivilized Indians and the best they could do was eek out a living.⁴⁸ The petition did not originate with the Métis or with the Indians. In fact, it was drawn up by a local settler and posted publicly in town in hope of garnering signatures. Only two people signed it.⁴⁹

The local newspaper picked up the story and in an editorial commented that few of the Swampies of St. Peter's had signed the petition but in future more signatures would follow "unless a change is made in the present harrassing system of permits for wood-cutting." The newspaper believed that the issuing of permits was a weapon being used by the government to pressure the Indians off the land, which was of prime value; and to relocate them farther up Lake Winnipeg.⁵⁰ Agent David Young believed that their removal would be for the better because they were exposed to temptations which they were powerless to resist, being too near civilization where they spent their leisure time, drinking and loitering around the town.⁵¹

The Indians' response to this pressure was to complain to the government that the wood permits were an encroachment on their treaty rights.⁵² The Department was unmoved by the Indians' argument. The question of conserving the wood on the reserve for future generations was the one that raised the most concern; the Indians could not be self-sufficient if they had no wood. It was decided that permits would be issued by the agent and that there would be no license fee. The government did not consider wood to be an economic resource to be exploited at will by the Indians but rather a necessary element for the Indians' survival during the winter. It was argued that if the Indians wanted something to sell, then they were to direct all their energies into farming.⁵³

In Battleford, wood was a scarce commodity too. The Indians requested in 1879 to have the various wooded islands within their

treaty area set aside as wood reserves for themselves. The Department was not willing to be so generous. The islands being negotiated were located on the south branch of the Saskatchewan River and the settlers claimed that this was the only place where wood was available.⁵⁴ Lawrence Vankoughnet, the Deputy Superintendent General decided that "no wooded islands should be included in the reserve to be made..." but if there was no wood on the reserves then the Indians were to be apportioned the same area of wood as the settlers received. Islands that had been granted previously to the Indians by the Lt. Governor were to remain in Indian hands.⁵⁵ Again, the Indians were allocated enough wood for private use but not for public sale.

The third issue that arose over economic livelihood between Indians and whites was the competition for haylands. In 1887, the Dominion Land Commissioner was informed that Pound-makers and Sweet Grass Reserves needed hay lands. They had been using particular lands for several years and now that white settlement was encroaching, they asked that the lands be reserved permanently for them.⁵⁶ The Department decided that the haylands would not be given to a specific band but to ones that needed it as determined by the agent.⁵⁷

Two years later, the Stonies and Red Pheasant Indians complained that they had a surplus of hay but were not allowed to sell it.⁵⁸ At the same time a certain Mr. W. McDuvall, M.P. received a petition from the settlers who were feeling great resentment because the haylands chosen for the Indians were the best and those which settlers had been previously exploiting.

The settlers stated that if the government continued its present policy, settlement would be retarded in the area. The petition ended with the comment that this matter should be considered for the advantage of the government and his own career. The settlers also accused the Indians of cutting hay on lands that were not theirs.⁵⁹

The Dominion Land Agent had his own complaints. He reported in November, 1889 that the Indians were able to use only half of their allotted land (which totalled 8,000 acres) and that the hay cut was not for the sole purposes of the Indians but that whites were also cutting the hay on a shared basis according to which they kept fifty per cent of the mowed hay.⁶⁰

The Department agreed that 8,000 acres was too much to reserve and that in future only what was considered absolutely necessary would be allocated to the Indians.⁶¹ This decision was taken in spite of the fact that the accusations made by the Dominion Land Agent were unfounded. Agent Williams reported that, on the contrary, it was white settlers who had cut hay on Indian lands and this had been done without permission. Williams then declared that the settlers dissatisfaction really stemmed from the policy of the Dominion Land Agent who let his friends monopolize the haylands allocated to the settlers through a partial designation of permits. One particular friend, a certain Mr. Speers who acted as the forest ranger, was supplying settlers with maps and grossly exaggerating the amount of Indian haylands that there were. Williams also stated that the Indians automatically were blamed for any damage, whether responsible for it

or not, and he recommended that the Indians be granted an isolated block of land, for example the north side of the Saskatchewan River, so that the settlers would not be able to use the Indians as scapegoats.⁶² Though in this instance, the agent defended the Indians' rights, he also advocated non-competition with the local settlers, again encouraging a policy of self-sufficiency and isolation rather than assimilation and competition.

Another problem that arose between the settlers and the Indians in the Battleford Agency stemmed from a complaint made by some settlers that the Indians had cut and sold their hay in town one week before the legal date for such a transaction. The settlers demanded that this not happen again.⁶³ The reply came from the Assistant Commissioner, A.E. Forget. He stated that the Commissioner would ensure that hay was left in the fields long enough to allow for reproduction and that he would do his best to co-operate with the Department of the Interior. But he could not commit the Indians to be bound to a certain date for harvesting and selling because it was too hard to predict the Indians' time table; they tended to be slow.⁶⁴

Another incident between the Indians and settlers occurred when dogs belonging to a settler killed two cows which belonged to the Indians. Assistant Commissioner Forget recommended that the owner of the dogs be sued for damages and added that the Indians, if they could not get isolated hay lands, should build a fence and if breakage occurred then the Indians would be able

to seek damages.⁶⁵ Assistant Commissioner Forget was overruled by the Superintendent General who argued that it was not advisable to prosecute settlers because it was too costly and too risky. The Department would prosecute only if there was no chance of losing in court.⁶⁰

The policy developed by the Indian Department in regards to hay lands was decidedly beneficial -- to the white settlers that is. Hay reserves granted to Indians were considered only temporary and could be thrown open to white settlement when population warranted. This policy was arrived at by mutual agreement between officials of the Department of the Interior and the Indian Department. In a letter dated January 9, 1881, the Minister of the Interior stated: "As soon as the lands are required for the purposes of actual settlement, of which one year's notice will be given, it will be necessary to remove the [hay] reservation." It was expected that the Indians would grow their hay on their own reserves.⁶⁷

In Clandeboye, the competition for hay lands resulted in similar problems. In 1890, Leo Schauns, a settler near the Fort Alexander reserve protested to Mr. N. F. Stevenson, the Crown Timber Inspector in Winnipeg, against the amount of hay lands the Indians had been granted by the government. Schauns believed that the Indians had four times as much haylands as they needed for their stock. The fact that the Indians were selling their surplus seemed sufficient proof of such a view. Schauns accused the Indians of trying to crowd the settlers out and to make them buy hay from them. The letter concluded with a

plea to "please by so kind to protect our interest because we are Canadian subjects, who have a word to say at the ballot box..."⁶⁹

Schauns's letter was forwarded to the Indian Department which investigated his claims.

The Indians of the Fort Alexander reserve denied having enough hay and stated that:

We think it is very poor encouragement to us from our Great Mother, that because we are trying to improve ourselves and raise Animals that when we have more than we can find Hay for on our Reserve when we ask for more we have got to pay for it with a Certain or equivalent portion of our present Reserve. We would be doing our children an injustice by acceding [sic] to this bargain.⁶⁹

They added that if the government did not want to give them the hay land then it should supply clover and timothy. The Fort Alexander Indians also stated that they had no objections to the government protecting the interests of the settlers but they also asked the government to protect them "who [were] poor so that [they] with [their] needs may not be trampled on by [their] White brethren who are rich and have power and Votes." The Indians ended their letter by admitting that some hay was sold but that hay did not represent a surplus: rather it was sold by Indians as trade goods or by Indians who had lost their stock and had no need for hay.⁷⁰ Thus the hay issue illustrated amply the Department's policy of self-sufficiency and non-competition with whites.

In conclusion, though the government at times advocated a program of assimilation, it practiced a policy of self-sufficiency and isolation. If the Indians grew more hay than they could dispose of themselves, then the government removed some of their hay lands. If the Indians tried to compete with whites in agriculture, or fishing, then the government removed its support or issued conservation directives. The person in charge of removing reservations or of enforcing conservation was the agent. Once again, instead of encouraging Indians into different economic endeavours, he acted as an obstructionist, pushing the Indians back onto their reserves and onto their farms. It must be stated that the measures of the government were not adopted because of maliciousness -- on occasion, the agents did act to protect Indian interests when these interests were in direct line with Departmental objectives -- but rather because the government disliked giving Indians preferential treatment. Agent A. M. Muckle, in one of his reports, stated that he made sure that all the Indians under his charge knew they were Canadians.⁷¹ This statement is perhaps indicative of the government's thinking and explains why special considerations were not taken with the Indians. The government also insisted that the Indians live off the resources of their farms because it could only perceive Indians as small-time agriculturalists and stock-raisers, not as lumbermen or fishermen.

As a result, Indians laboured under great difficulties in trying to earn a living. Rarely did they as individuals or as a band succeed in achieving a comfortable level of prosperity.

Table VI indicates the per capita income for the Battleford Indians for the years 1891 and 1895. Again, there are no comparable figures for the Clandeboye Indians. The table indicates the poor amount of income the Indians received from all their various labours.

Table VI

Per capita Earnings of Battleford Indians per reserve for the years 1891 and 1895.

Reserve	Earnings*	
	<u>1891</u>	<u>1895</u>
Red Pheasant	\$7.52	\$6.90
Stonies	\$7.61	\$5.72
Sweet Grass	\$4.11	\$4.05
Poundmaker's	\$.57	\$2.54
Little Pine's	\$.42	\$1.82
Moosomin	\$2.17	\$3.99
Thunderchild	\$1.75	\$1.33

* Earnings include profits obtained from grain, roots, stock, furs, fish, wood, hay, manual labour, lime, charcoal and miscellaneous.

Taken from Sessional Papers, Government of Canada, Tabular Statements of Agency incomes and Population Figures for the Reserves of the Battleford Agency, 1891, 1895.

Part of the problem lay in the unique difficulties faced by the Indians in trying to establish themselves in the predominant economic system. Their reserves were often inadequate to serve as an economic resource base and until the late 1890's, when the population stabilized, they also lacked the necessary manpower -- children (especially when in school) and old people are not the

most productive workers. The rest of the problem lay in the ineffectiveness of the government's programs and its failure to appreciate that, in applying various restrictions on Indian economic activity, it in effect prevented the Indians from competing with their white neighbours and therefore limited their potential for economic success.⁷²

FOOTNOTES

1. Joan Boswell, "'Civilizing' the Indian: government administration of Indian Affairs, 1876-1896", (Ph.D.: University of Ottawa, 1978), p.99.
2. J.E. Chamberlain. The Harrowing of Eden, White Attitudes Towards Native Americans, (New York: 1975, p.19).
3. PAC, SP #15, Vol. XX1, #13, 1888, Annual Report of Agent Mackay, 1887, p.2.
4. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XV1, #4, 1883, Annual Report of Agent Reed, 1882, p.49.
5. Bill Bennett, "Study of Passes for Indians to Leave Their Reserves", DINA, 1974, p.2.
6. PAC, SP #18, Vol. XXIV, Annual Report of Agent Williams, 1890, p.97.
7. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3765, File 32784, letter, Agent Williams to Commissioner, Aug. 31, 1890.
8. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3793, File 46,062, Report of Farm Instructor Oscar Orr to Agent Williams, February, 1888.
9. PAC, SP #6, Vol. XV, #5, 1882, Annual Report Agent Reed, 1881, p.77f.
10. PAC, SP #4, Vol. XV11, #3, 1884, Annual Report Inspector Wadsworth, 1883, p.122.
11. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XV1, #4, 1883, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1882, p.36.
12. PAC, SP #16, Vol. XX11, 1889, Annual Report Agent Williams, 1888, p.85.
13. PAC, SP #14, Vol. XXX11, #11, 1898, Annual Report Agent Daunais, 1897, p.116
14. PAC, SP #6, Vol. XX, #5, 1887, Annual Report Inspector McColl, 1886, p.157.
15. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XV1, #4, 1883, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1882, p.37.
16. PAC, SP #5, Vol. XV1, #4, 1883, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1885, p.32.
17. PAC, SP #16, Vol. XX111, #3, 1889, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1887-1888, p.47.

18. PAC, SP #6, Vol. XX, #5, 1887, Annual Report, Inspector McColl, 1886, p.158.
19. PAC, SP #3, Vol. XV111, #3, 1885, Annual Report, Agent Muckle, 1884, p.54.
20. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3765, File 32784, letter, Agent Williams to Commissioner Dewdney, Jan. 31, 1889.
21. Treaties and Historical Research Centre, DINA, The Indian Acts and Amendments, 1876-1950. The Indian Act, 1880, p.49.
22. PAC, SP #14, Vol. XXIX, #10, 1896, Annual Report Inspector McGibbon, 1895, p.232.
23. PAC, SP #14, Vol. XXV11, #10, 1894, Annual Report Agent Williams, 1893, p.74.
24. PAC, SP #3, Vol. XV111, #3, 1885, Annual Report Inspector Wadsworth, 1884, p.152.
25. PAC, SP #4, Vol. XV11, #3, 1884, Annual Report Inspector Wadsworth, 1883, p.123.
26. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3774, File 36528, letter, T. Mitchell to Edgar Dewdney, Jan. 25, 1887.
27. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3774, File 36528, letter, Agent MacKay to Edgar Dewdney, Dec. 13, 1886.
28. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3659, File 9740, letter, Agent to Commissioner Dewdney, Nov. 20, 1883.
29. Ibid.
30. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3659, File 9740, extract of a letter from Dewdney to Vankoughnet, Sept. 2, 1885.
31. Ibid.
32. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3694, File 14553, letter from Mr. Gravete (?) to Dewdney, Oct. 21, 1884.
33. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3694, File 14553, letter, Farm Instructor Gopsill to Hayter Reed, Feb. 29, 1888.
34. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3694, File 14553, memo to Vankoughnet, March 23, 1888.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.
38. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3788, File 43856, letter, Fisheries Inspector McQueen to Mr. Tilton, Feb. 4, 1886.
39. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3788, File 43656, letter, Agent Muckle to Inspector McColl, November 7, 1887.
40. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3755, File 30979-4, letter, Reed to Superintendent General, n.d.
41. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3788, File 43856, letter, Brokenhead River Indians to the Government, Jan. 12, 1889.
42. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3755, File 30979-1-1, letter, Lt. Gov. John Schultz to Minister of the Interior, Oct. 10, 1889.
43. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3788, File 43856, Petition of Fort Alexander Indians, Dec. 23, 1890.
44. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3755, File 30979-1-1, letter, Minister of Fisheries John Tilton to Deputy Superintendent General, Sept. 11, 1889.
45. Ibid.
46. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3766, File 30979-1-1, John Tilton to Deputy Superintendent General, Sept. 11, 1889.
47. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3676, File 11,425, Inspector E. McColl to Superintendent General, Mar. 18, 1879.
48. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3676, File 11,425, Petition, Jan. 20, 1879.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3676, File 11,425, letter, Agent Young to newspaper "The Standard", Feb. 4, 1879.
52. Ibid.
53. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3676, File 11,425, letter, Agent Young to L. Vankoughnet, Apr. 17, 1879.
54. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3680, File 12,185, letter, Surveyor General to Vankoughnet, July 2, 1879.
55. Ibid.

56. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3782, File 40316, letter, Ass. Comm. Reed to Superintendent General, June 14, 1887.
57. Ibid.
58. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3765, File 32784, letter Agent Williams to Edgar Dewdney, Jan. 31, 1889.
59. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3782, File 40316, petition re: haylands to W. McDuvall, M.P., Jan. 31, 1889.
60. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3782, File 40316, letter Dominion Land Agent to Department of the Interior, Nov. 22, 1889.
61. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3782, File 40316, letter Vankoughnet to Reed, Jan. 23, 1890.
62. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3782, File 40316, letter Agent Day to Commissioner Reed, Mar. 3, 1890.
63. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3782, File 40316, letter Secretary of the Interior to Vankoughnet, Oct. 27, 1890.
64. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3782, File 40316, letter Ass. Comm. Forget to Vankoughnet, Dec. 20, 1890.
65. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3765, File 32784, letter Ass. Comm. Forget to Vankoughnet, Mar. 12, 1890.
66. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3765, File 32784, Secretary of the Superintendent General to the Indian Commissioner, June 20, 1890.
67. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3782, File 40316, letter Deputy Minister of the Interior to Vankoughnet, Jan. 9, 1891.
68. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3570, File 10228, Petition Leo Schauns to Crown Timber Inspector, Feb. 4, 1890.
69. PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3570, File 10228, Indians of Fort Alexander to Indian Department, n.d.
70. Ibid.
71. PAC, SP #14, Vol. XXXI, #11, 1897, Annual Report Agent Muckle, 1896, p.109.
72. **For a comparative analysis of production in Indian and white agricultural communities, see Noel Dyck, "The administration of federal Indian aid in the North West Territories, 1879-1885", (M.A.: University of Saskatchewan, 1970).**

CONCLUSION

Power vs. Performance

General histories of Indian-white relations which conclude that the agent was an influential figure tend to assume that because of the wide-ranging powers granted to him he performed his duties with success. The case studies of this thesis, however, reveal that the agent's power and authority did not necessarily lead to the successful performance of his duties or the attainment of his superiors' objectives. The concepts of power and of performance must be considered separately in order to evaluate the impact the agent had on the Indians' lives.

Theoretically, the agent had extensive powers by virtue of the serial Indian Acts to bring about radical changes on the reserves but legislative authority is an effective source of power only if the people over whom it is exercised recognize its legitimacy. If they do not, then the effectiveness of that authority is considerably weakened. The Indians of the Battleford and Clandeboye Agencies did not choose to recognize the authority of the Canadian Parliament; they preferred to recognize the authority of their own "laws" when governing themselves, or of the negotiated Treaties when dealing with the government. For example, they resisted the government's attempts to enfranchise them by refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the Indian Advancement Act of 1884. Also, when the government proposed any sort of license fee or seasonal restrictions on fishing, the Indians protested vigorously against the provisions and then

disobeyed them on the grounds that they constituted violations of their treaties with the Crown. When the Indians did not recognize the government's legislative authority they also questioned the agent's authority. Hence his power to act was circumscribed.

The agent's powers were limited in other ways too. Geography worked against the exercise of power. The agents did not live on the reserves and therefore did not keep a constant eye on the Indians. They ~~did~~ not visit the reserves daily, sometimes not even monthly. The people who came closest to having sustained contact with the Indians were the farm instructors and especially the missionaries. The distances between the agent's house and the various reserves which constituted an agency were often great. As a result, it was with considerable inconvenience and expenditure of time that the agent maintained contact with his charges. To do so, he had to plan wisely and sometimes rely on good fortune. Those Indians of Brokenhead River that were nomadic rarely saw their agent and were not directly influenced by his efforts to implement Departmental directives.

The Department granted the agents broad powers to help it carry out its goals of assimilating or Canadianizing the Indians and of transforming them into self-sufficient farmers. It was hoped that the exercise of these powers would reflect positively on the Department and would be beneficial to the Indians. For example, the agent was empowered to institute elected forms of government on the reserves so that the Indians could enjoy the benefits that presumably accrued from local self-government. The agent was also entrusted with the conservation of valuable

resources, such as timber and fish, so that future generations of Indians would have access to the same resources as their ancestors. Instruction in farming would give the Indians the means to become economically independent; the agent was responsible for making sure Indians farmed as much as possible. Instruction in schools would give the Indians an understanding of the new order that had come into being; the agent was responsible for making sure the Indian children took advantage of the schooling. Also, measures were taken to improve living standards and to promote better health on the reserves of the agencies.

Unfortunately, the stated objectives were rarely achieved and the performance of the agent was rarely positive and only occasionally beneficial. Instead of working with the chiefs and instructing the bands in the principles of self-government, he often interfered with council meetings and recommended the deposition of "troublesome" chiefs. Instead of helping the Indians towards obtaining self-sufficiency by all means possible, he insisted that they rely on farming and he discouraged their initiative as fishermen or lumbermen. When some Indians did not want to send their children to school, he forced them to do so by cutting off their rations. On the other hand, the agent acted in the interests of the Indians by protecting their lands from outside sale and by supporting some demands for more hay lands. These occasions were the exception rather than the rule. Generally, the agent was more active in promoting Departmental policy than in promoting Indian interests. He exercised his powers more to overcome Indian reticence and resistance than to promote Indian initiative.

In view of the circumscriptions on the exercise of his powers could the agent still perform his duties successfully? Success was measured in different ways by the different groups involved. Most Indians did not seem to consider that the agent carried out his duties effectively. They had hoped that the agent would act principally to protect their interests and interpret their point of view to the settlers and the government. They wanted the agent to be an agent of the Indians not of the government. Because the agent did not meet their expectations, the Indians did not think he performed successfully.

Did the Department believe that the agents performed successfully? The introductory chapter of this thesis gives examples of the Department's general satisfaction with its agents even though they did not achieve success in realizing the Department's goals. In general, the Departmental bureaucrats considered that any blame for failure rested not with the agents but with the Indians who were stereotyped as stubborn and troublesome. Not surprisingly, the Department did not place the blame for failure upon itself, even though its objectives of Canadianizing Indians yet keeping them separate from Canadian society were contradictory. Filling Departmental objectives was therefore an impossible task. This does not excuse the agent though from his role in carrying out Departmental policy, because the agent agreed with the Department's goals and he directed his efforts towards their achievement.

What have the results of historical analysis revealed about the commission and competence of the Indian agent? In general, it has been concluded that the agent, acting either in the defence or to the detriment of Indian concerns, carried out his duties satisfactorily. Our research points to a different conclusion. The task of the Indian agent was to ensure, among other things, that the Indians adopted Canadian culture; that they spoke English, and were literate; that they dressed and acted like Europeans; that they tilled the soil, lived in permanent housing, went to church, and believed in the virtues and coercive authority of elected councillors. Whether largely attributable to their efforts or not, the agents could report some success in getting the Indians to adopt some aspects of Euro-Canadian culture. They did wear wool shirts, skirts and trousers; they lived in permanent housing, at least during the winter months; and many children learned to read, write and speak English. Nevertheless, much of the Indian culture was retained. The Indian languages were still spoken, native customs and religious practices were observed, traditional Indian generosity continued to be practiced and even when agriculture was adopted, many continued to hunt and fish on a regular basis. Also, the social and political structures of the bands continued intact. In short, the Indians were selective about what they chose to adopt from white culture and what they rejected and no efforts on the part of the agents, obstructive or otherwise, fundamentally altered that spirit of independence.

The agent was not able to use his powers effectively in order to bring about a radical transformation in the Indians' lives. He did have some success in changing certain aspects of their lifestyle but this success was not always of benefit to the Indians. Moreover, his exercise of power often caused resentment amongst his Indian charges because it was too often heavy-handed and obstructionist. Not infrequently he came to be regarded as a "petty administrator" or as somewhat of a "prison warden". The Indian agent was not an agent for the Indians but rather he was a government agent over the Indians and as a result was rarely able to retain their respect. His commission as a government officer in close contact with the reserves to explain to the Indians Euro-Canadian ways and to assist in bringing them into more productive contact with white society must be judged in the cases of the Battleford and Clandeboye Agencies, 1877-1897, to have been of limited success only, from the Department's point of view, and to have been largely unsatisfactory from the Indian perspective.

Glossary of NamesThe Agents of Battleford & Clandeboye
1876 - 1896Battleford

M.G. Dickieson	1877
W.L. Orde	June 1879
Hayter Reed	Feb. 1881
J.M. Rae	late 1883
John Carney	Post-Reb. 1885
J.P. Wright	Oct. 19, 1885
J.A. Mackay	Mar. 20, 1886
P.J. Williams	July 1, 1886 - Apr. 1897

Clandeboye

David Young	Jan. 1, 1877
A.M. Muckle	Apr. 21, 1881 - 1897

Source: Matheson, G.M.
Historical Directory of Indian Agents & Agencies in
Canada. DINA, 1971.

The Inspectors of Manitoba and The North-West

Thomas Wadsworth, Inspector for the N.W.T.	1878 -
Alexander McGibbon, Inspector for the N.W.T.	1880 -
Ebenezer McColl, Inspector for Manitoba	1878 -

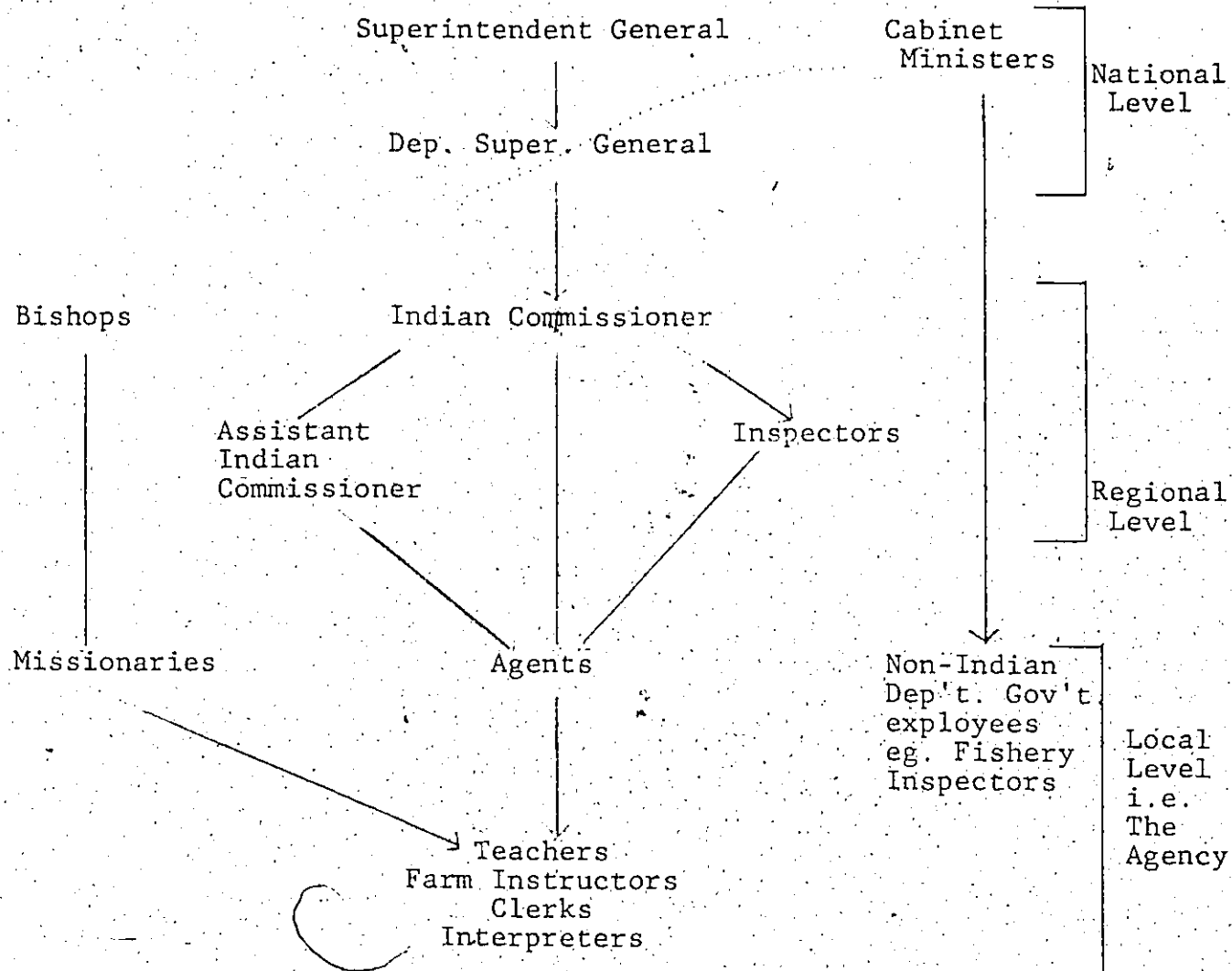
The Commissioners of Manitoba and The North-West

Edgar Dewdney	1878-1888
Hayter Reed	1888-1893

The Deputy Superintendents - General of Indian Affairs

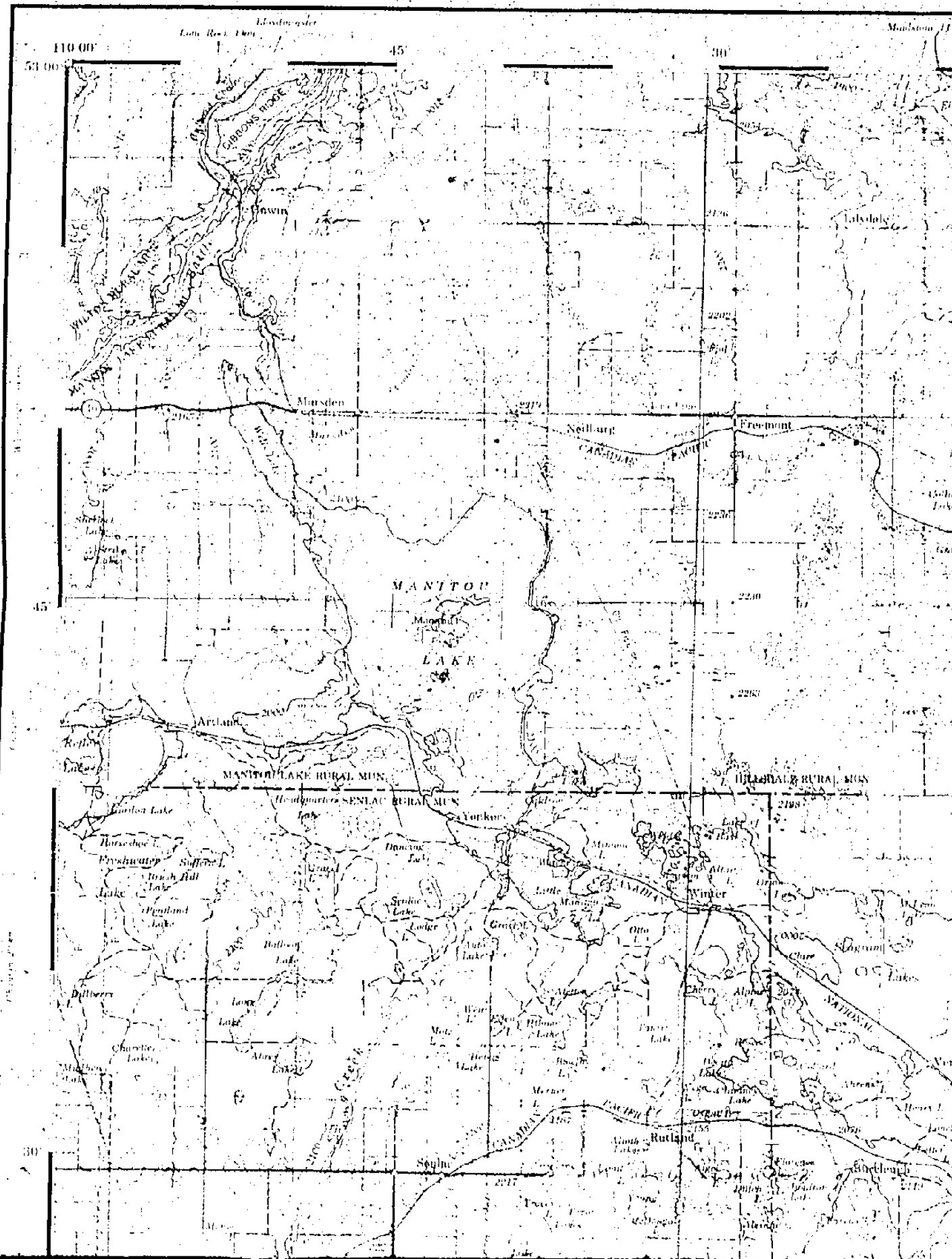
Lawrence Vankoughnet	1874-1893
Hayter Reed	1893-1897

The Bureaucratic Organization of Indian Affairs

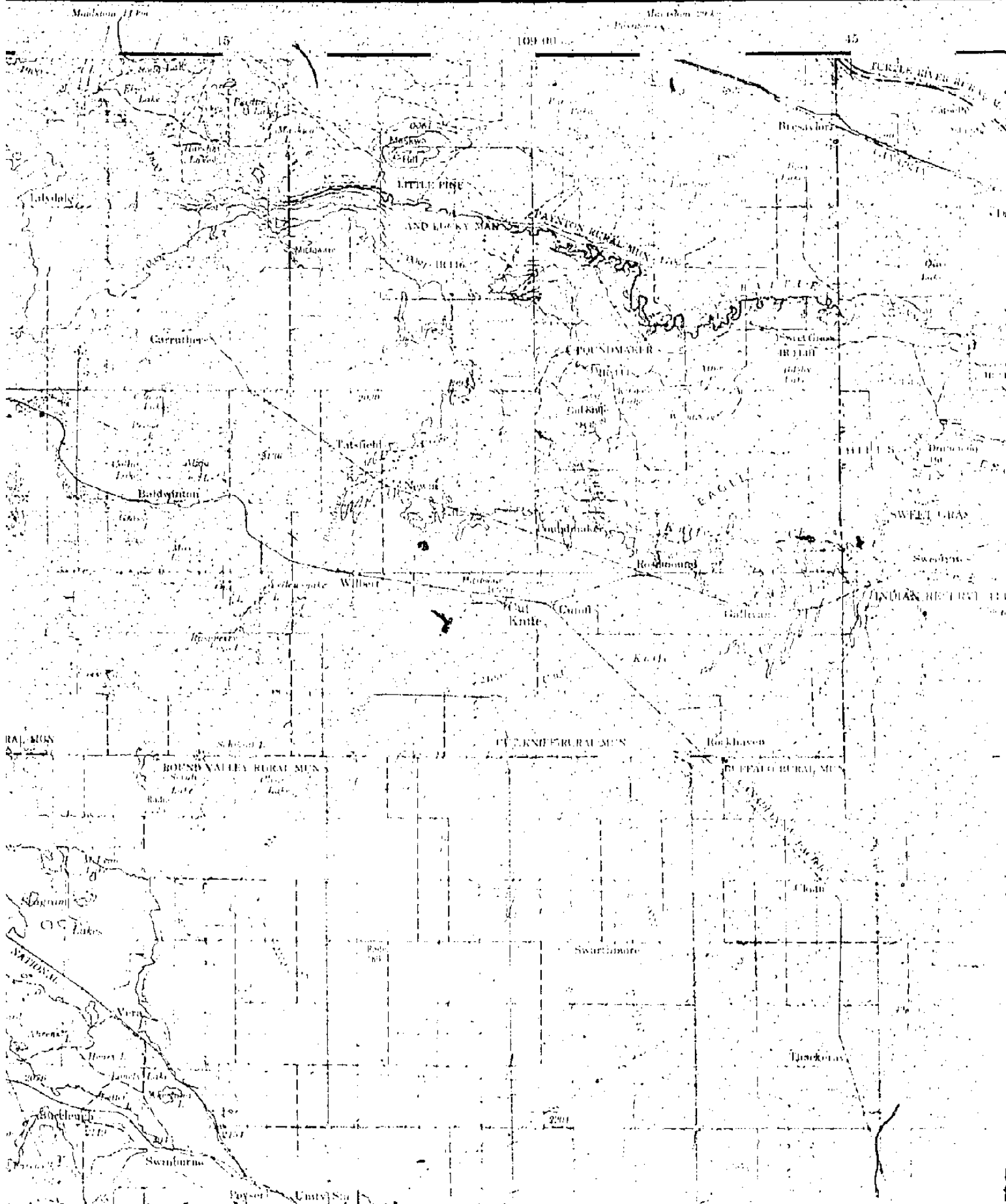


Arrows indicate direction of authority

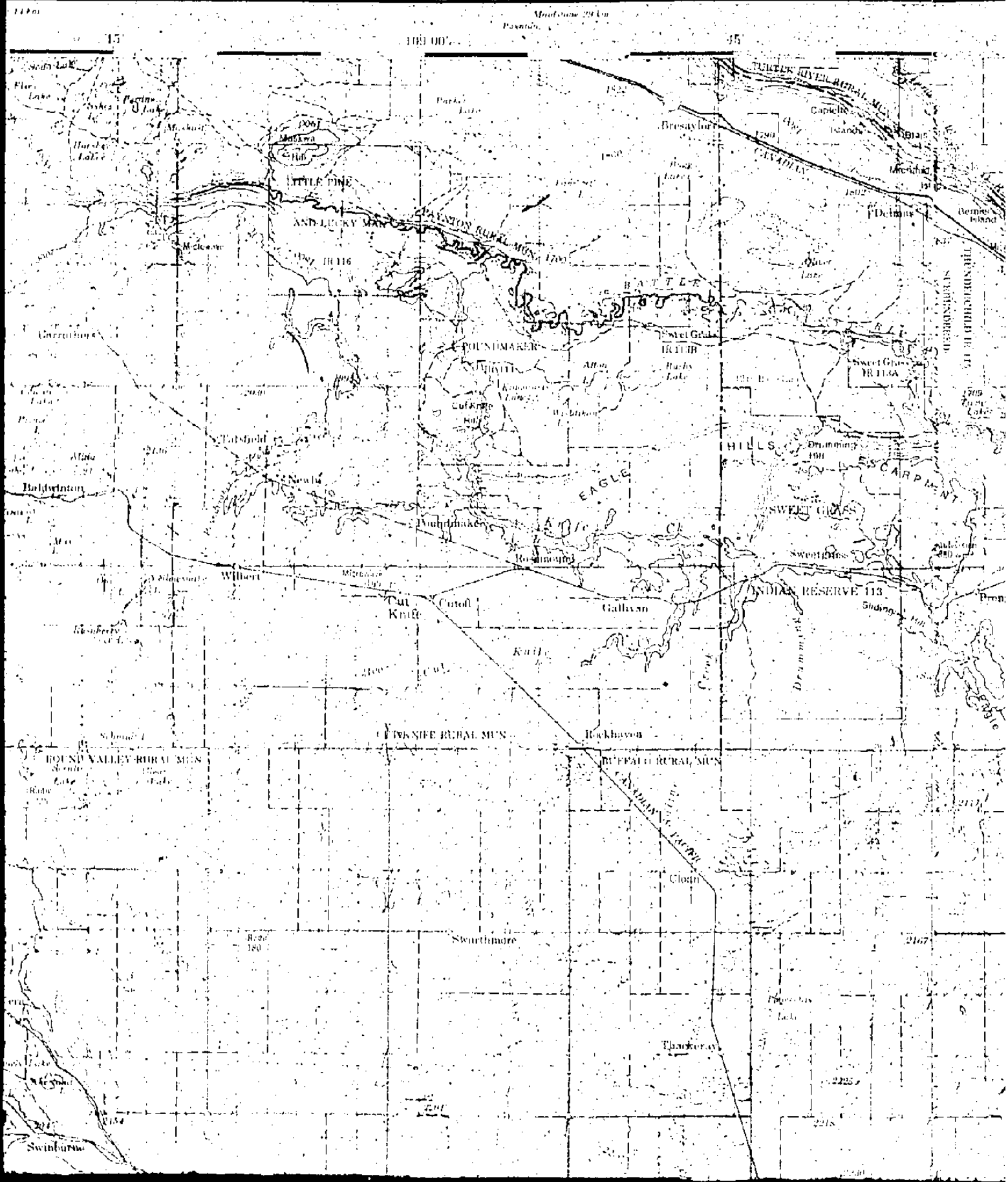
NORTH BATTLEFORD
Saskatchewan



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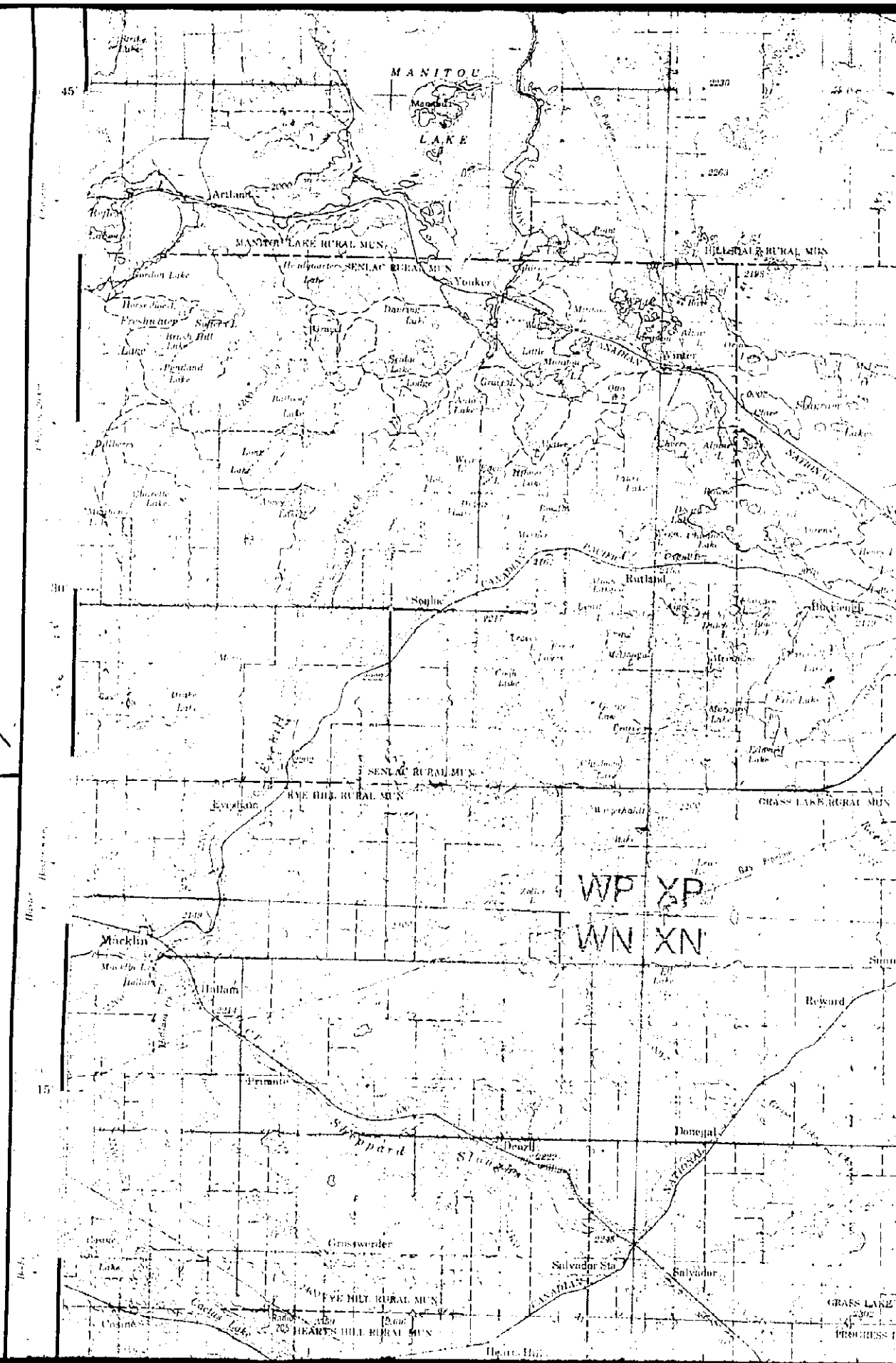




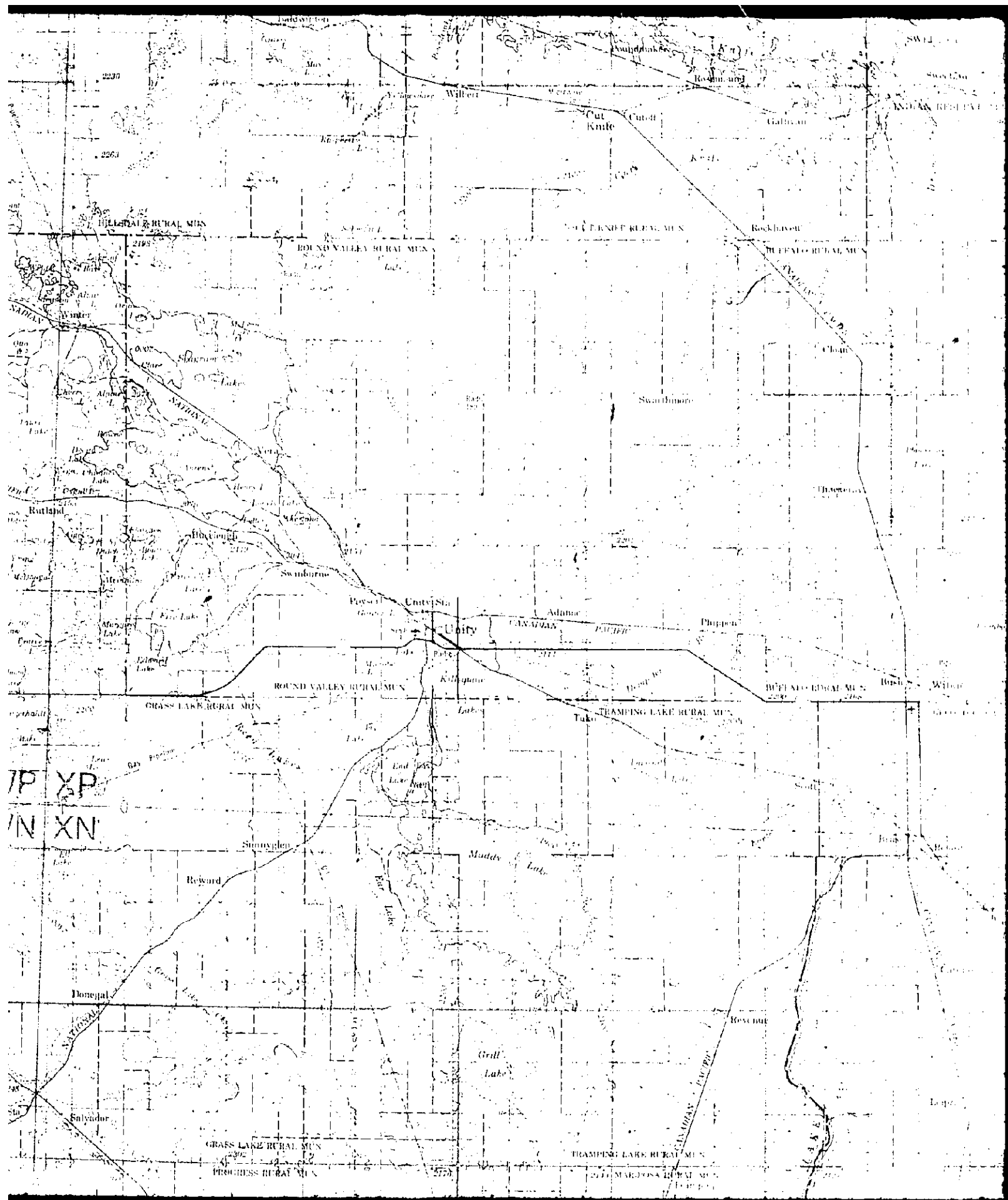
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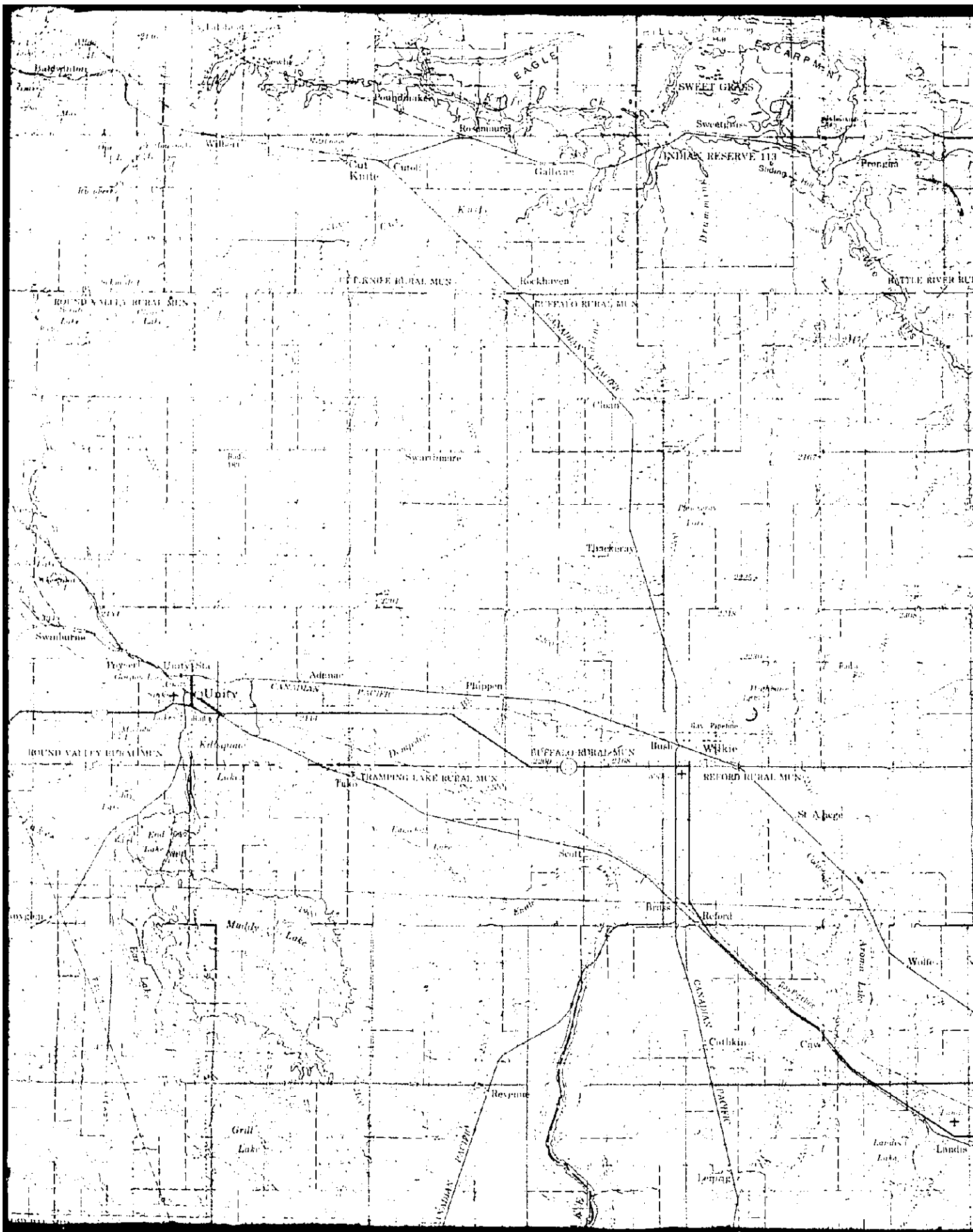
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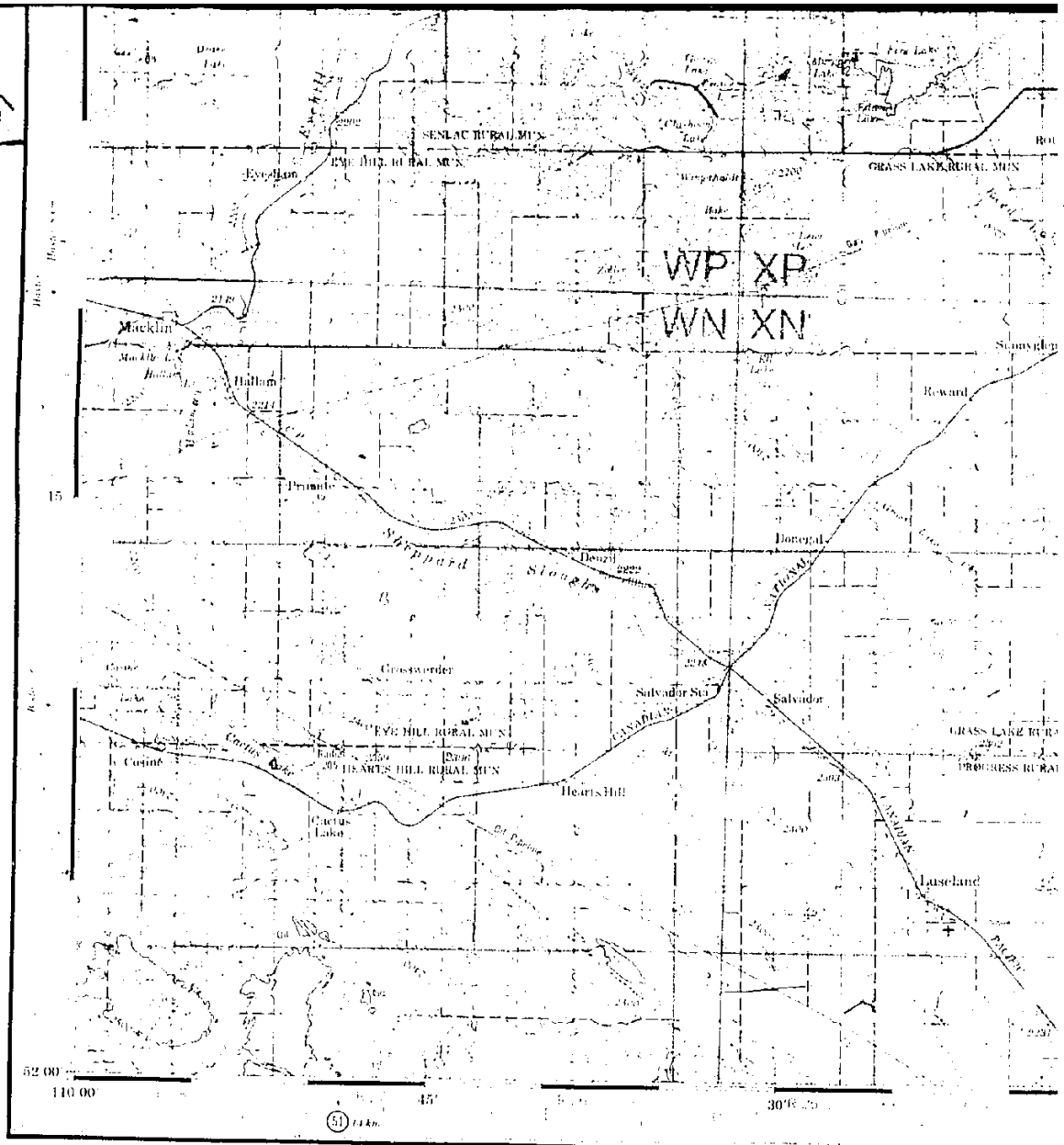
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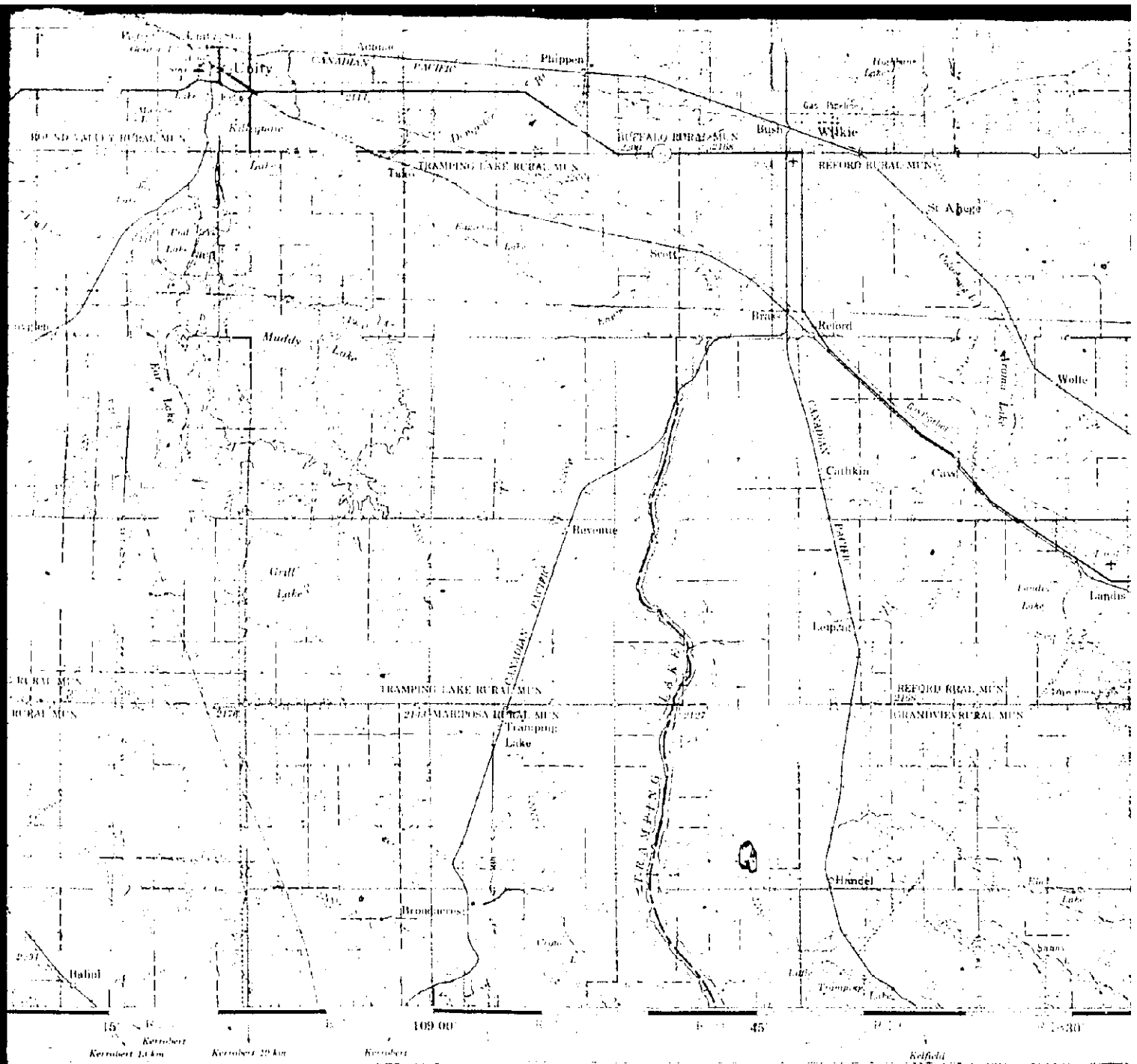
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1976

roads	roads	roadway	roadway
hard surface or weather	surface, paved or concrete	roadway, paved or concrete	roadway, paved or concrete
hard surface with weather	surface, paved or concrete	roadway, paved or concrete	roadway, paved or concrete
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FOR COMPLETE REFERENCE SEE REVERSE SIDE POUR UNE LISTE COMPLÈTE DES SIGNES, VOIR AU VERSO



Projections 1980

Corrections provisoires 1980

Table par la DRI
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Mise à jour à l'Échelle
qu'indiquent au Croq

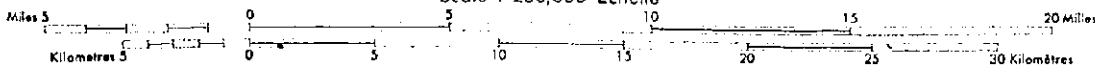
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sont mises à
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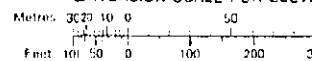
NORTH BATTLEFORD **SASKATCHEWAN**

WEST OF THIRD MERIDIAN - OUEST DU TROISIÈME MERIDIEN

Scale 1:250,000 Échelle



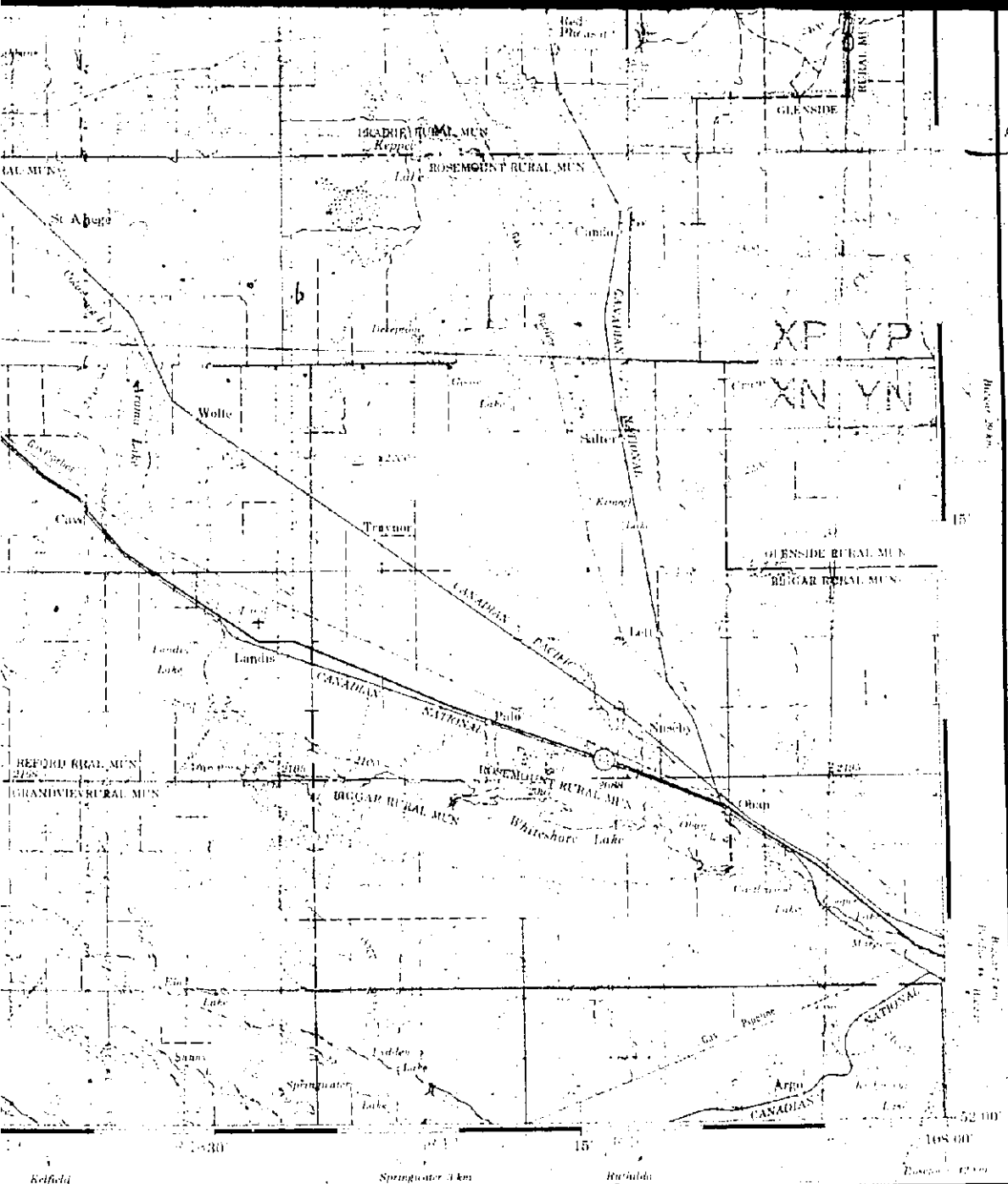
CONVERSION SCALE FOR ELEV.



Magnetic declination 1977 varies from 20°01' eastwards at
centre of west edge to 18°46' eastwards at centre of east
edge. Mean annual change decreasing 2'

La déclinaison magnétique pour 1977 varie de 20°01' Est
au centre de la limite Ouest à 18°46' Est au centre de la
limite Est. Variation moyenne annuelle décroissante 2'

CONTOUR INTERVAL 100 FEET
Elevations in feet above Mean Sea Level
North American Datum 1927
Transverse Mercator Projection



Établi par la DIRECTION DES LEVÉS ET DE LA CARTOGRAPHIE,
MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉNERGIE, DES MINES ET DES RESSOURCES.
Mise à jour à l'aide des cartes à grande échelle. Révisé, imprimé, à jour les
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CONVERSION SCALE FOR ELEVATIONS

Metres 30 20 10 0 50 100 150 200 250 300
Feet 100 50 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000

ÉCHELLE DE CONVERSION DES ÉLEVATIONS

150 200 250 300
500 600 700 800 900 1000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 100 FEET

Elevations in feet above Mean Sea Level
North American Datum 1927
Transverse Mercator Projection

LOUDESTANCE DES COURBES 100 PIEDS

Elevations in feet above the mean level of the sea
North American Datum 1927
Projection transverse de Mercator

NORTH BATTLEFORD

73 C

EDITION 2

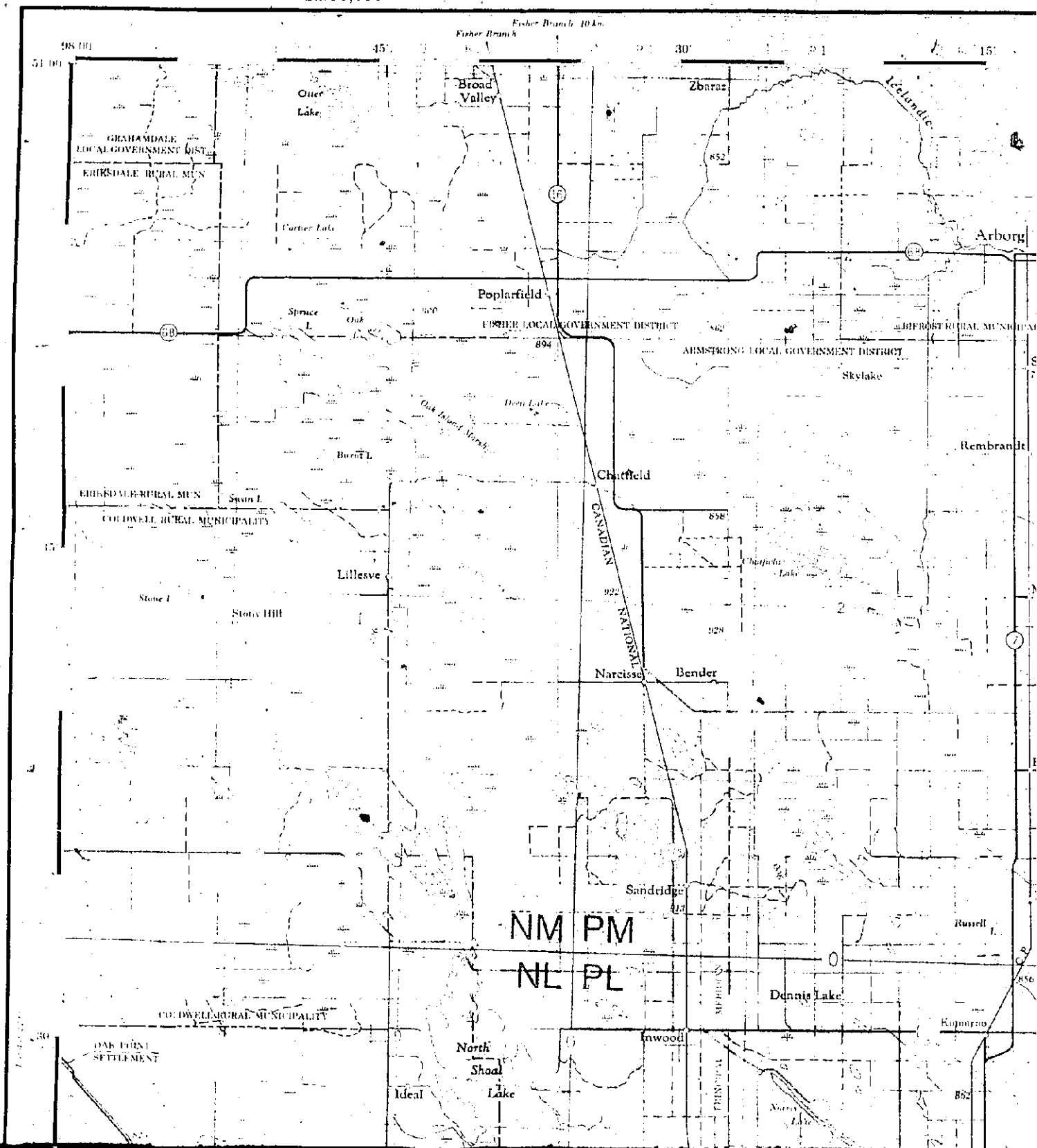
(1980)

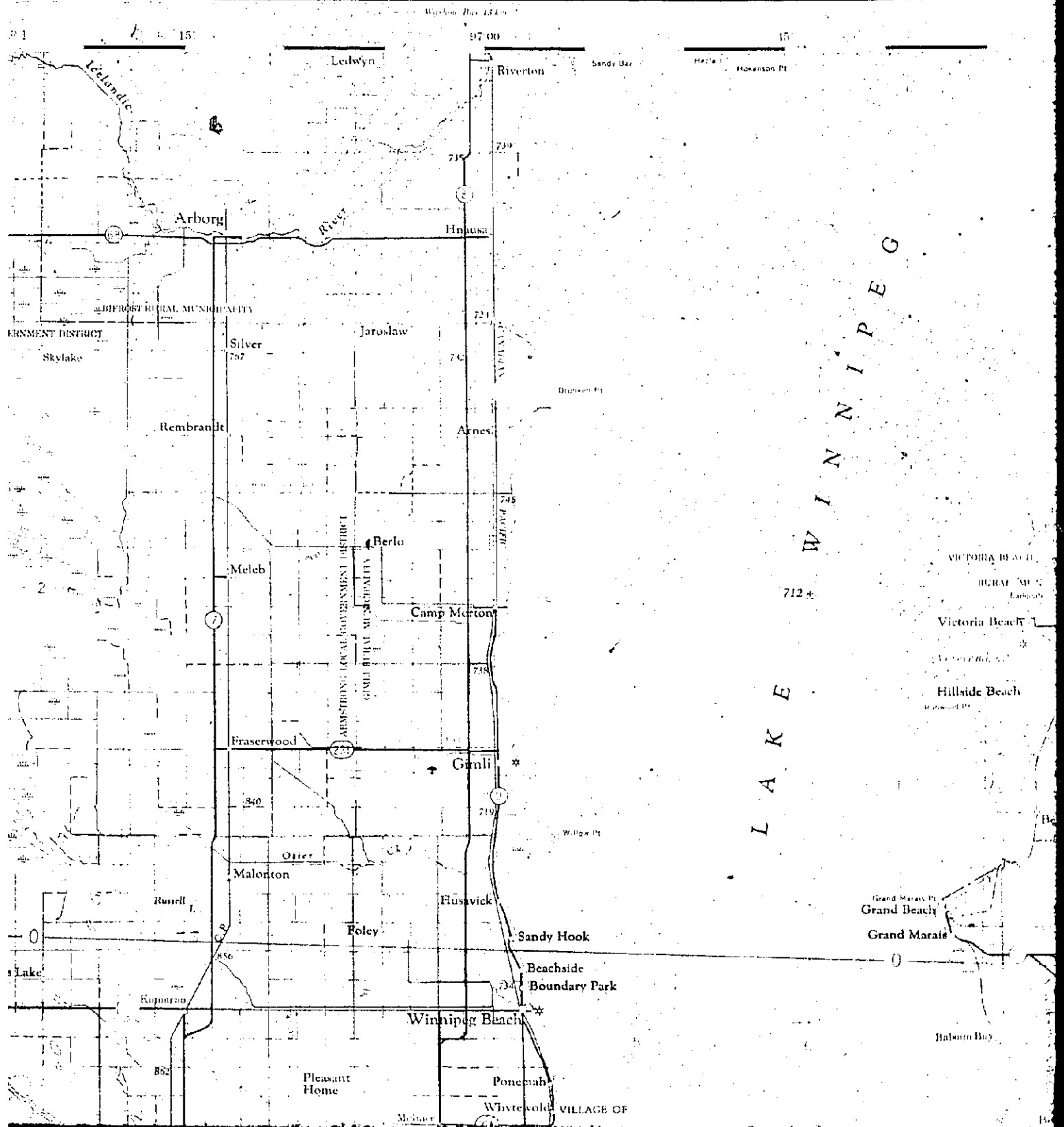
Index to adjoining MAPS of the National Topographic System
Tableau d'assemblage du Système national de référence cartographique

SELKIRK
Manitoba

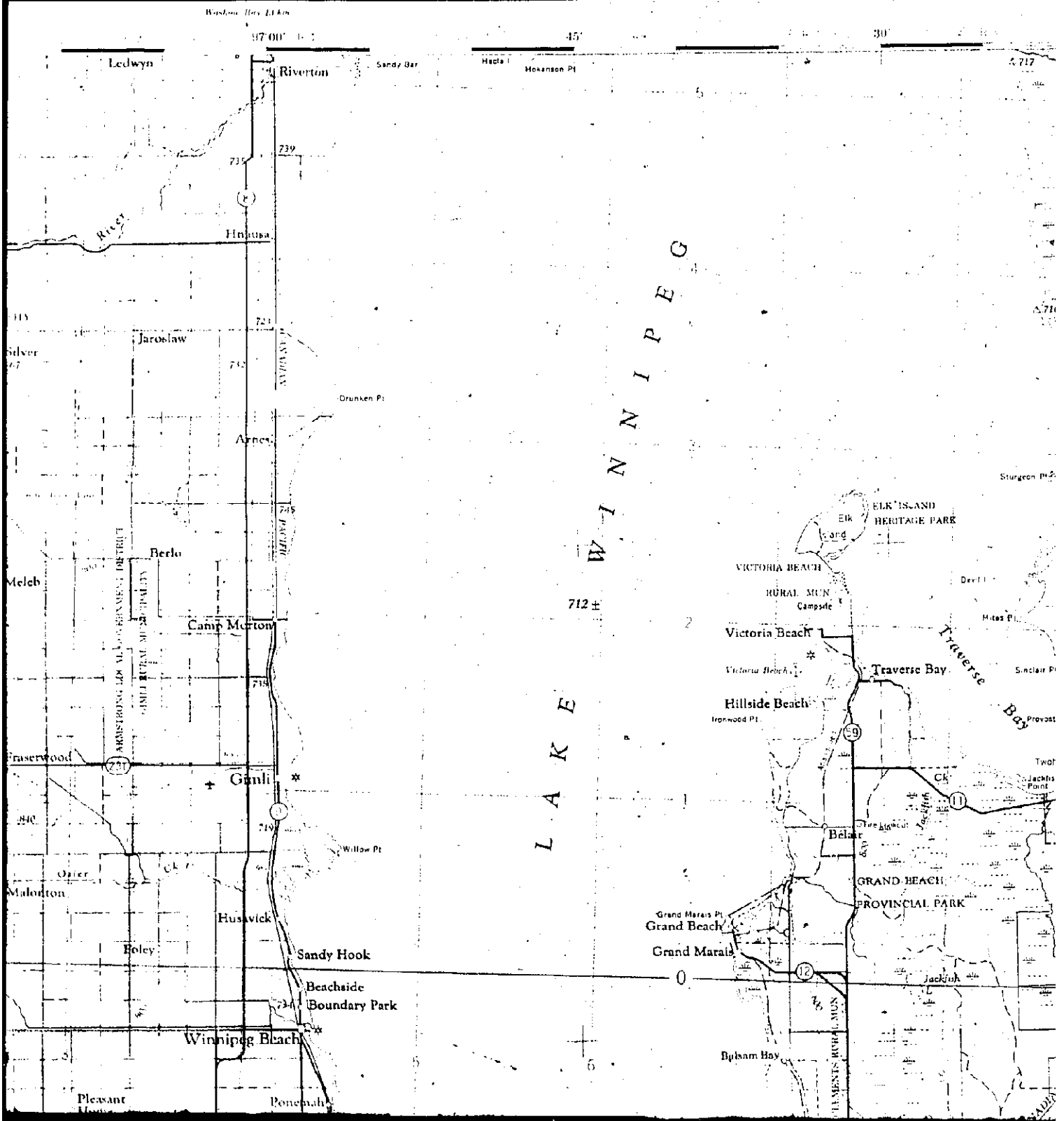
(NB: St. Peter's Reserve boundaries drawn from PAC, National
Map Collection, #12079)

DX



$$W_{1/2} = 1.5 \times 10^{-2} \text{ sec}$$


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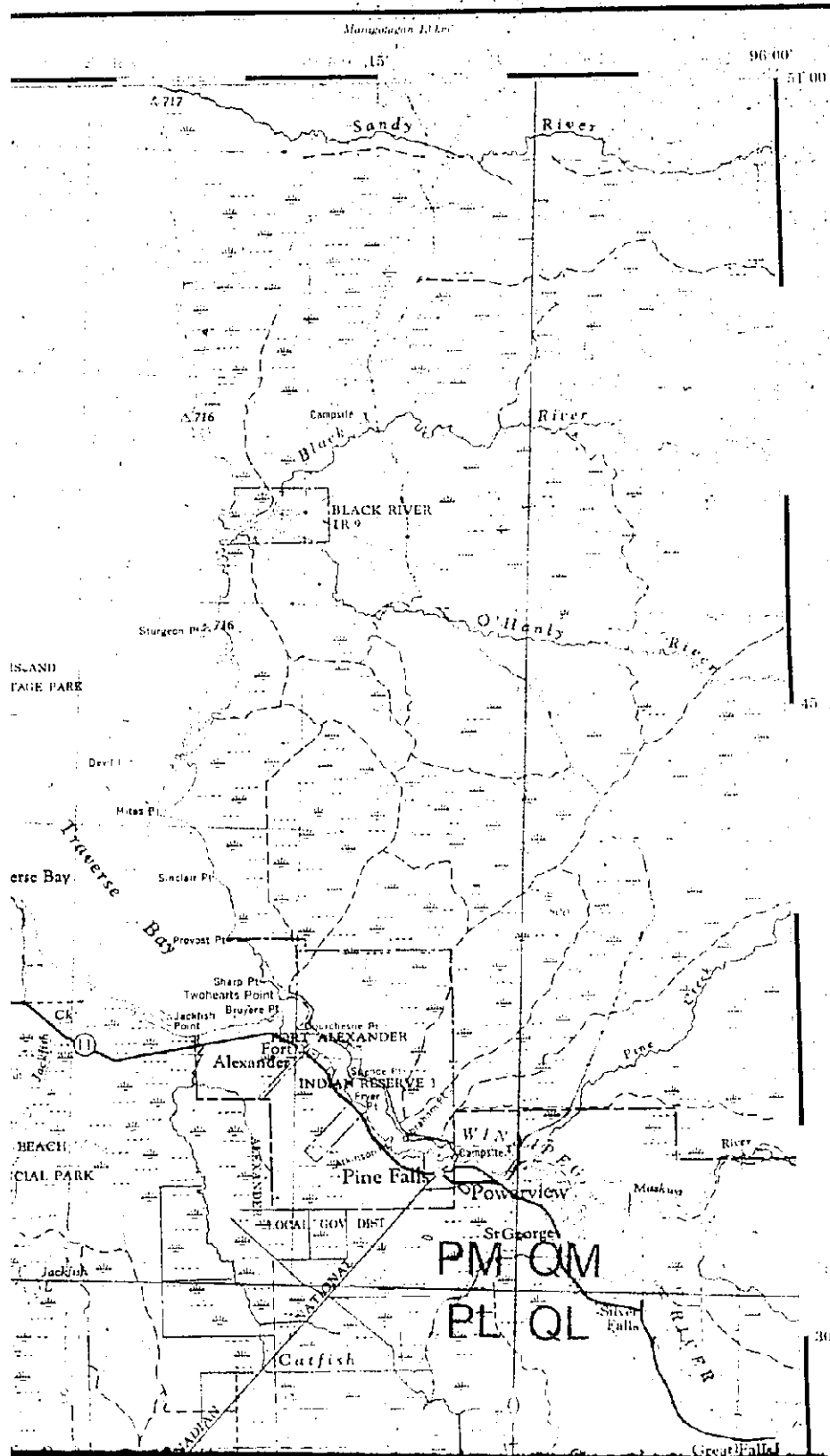
EDITION 6

62-I

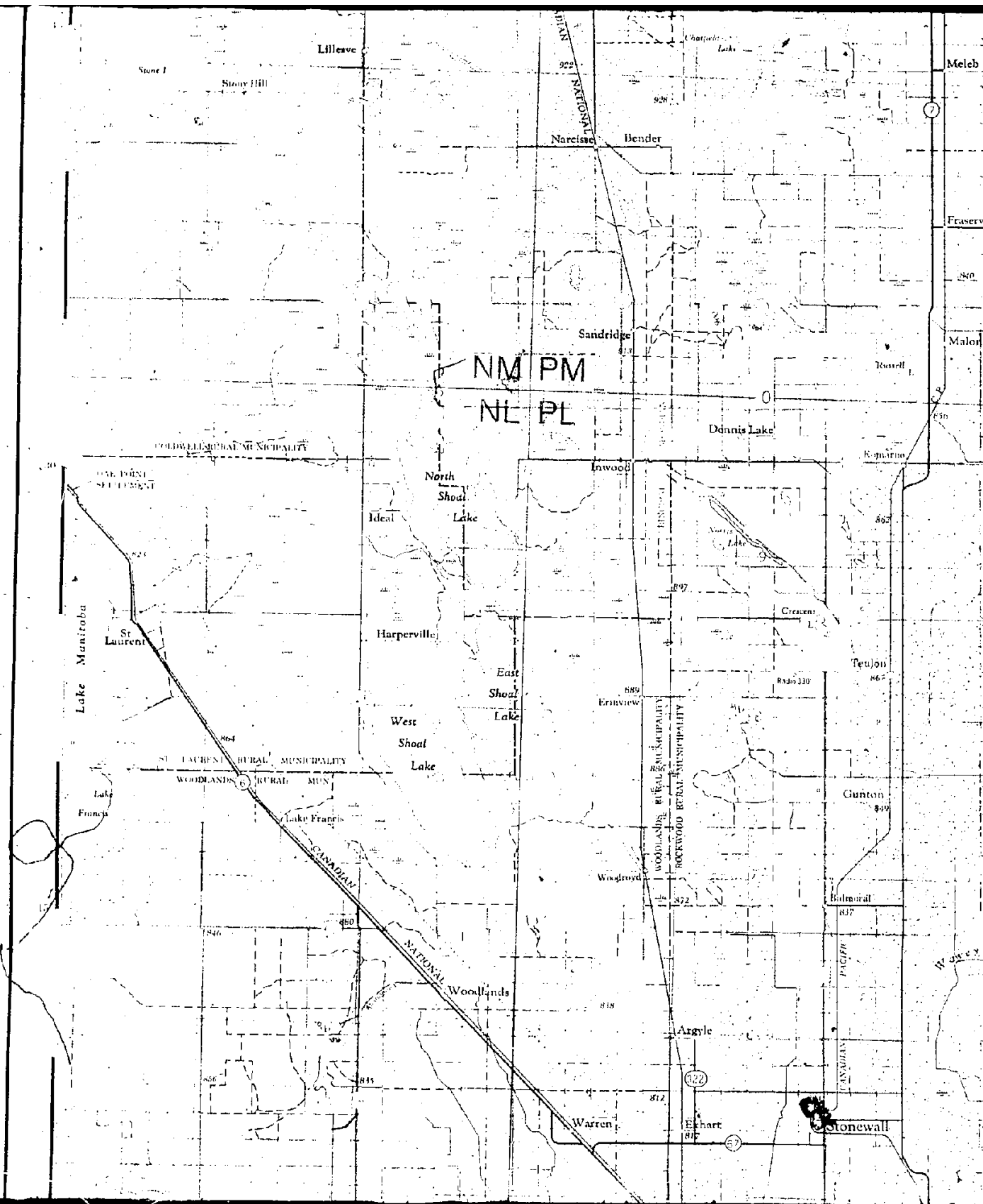
Manitowish Lake

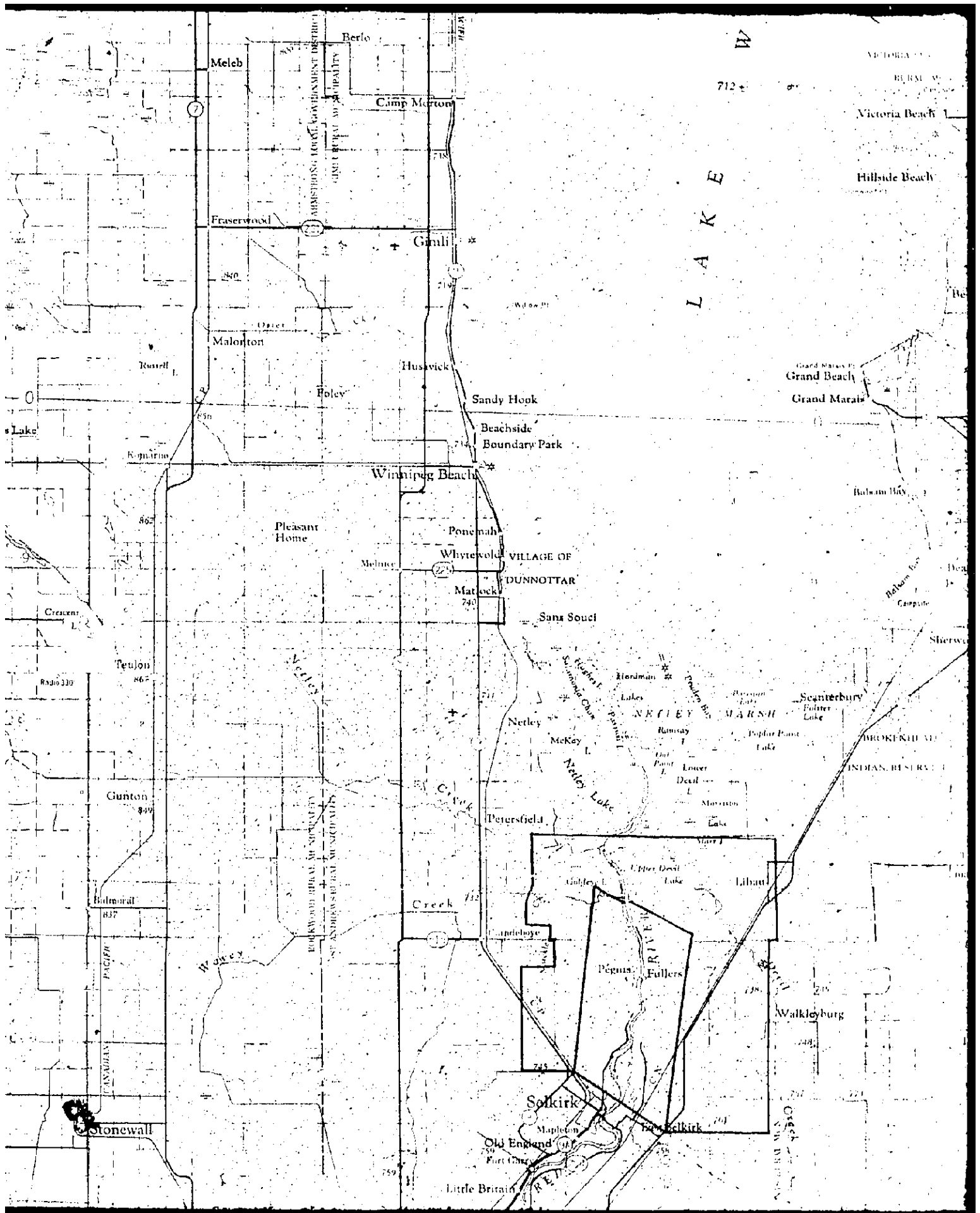
96° 00'
51° 00'

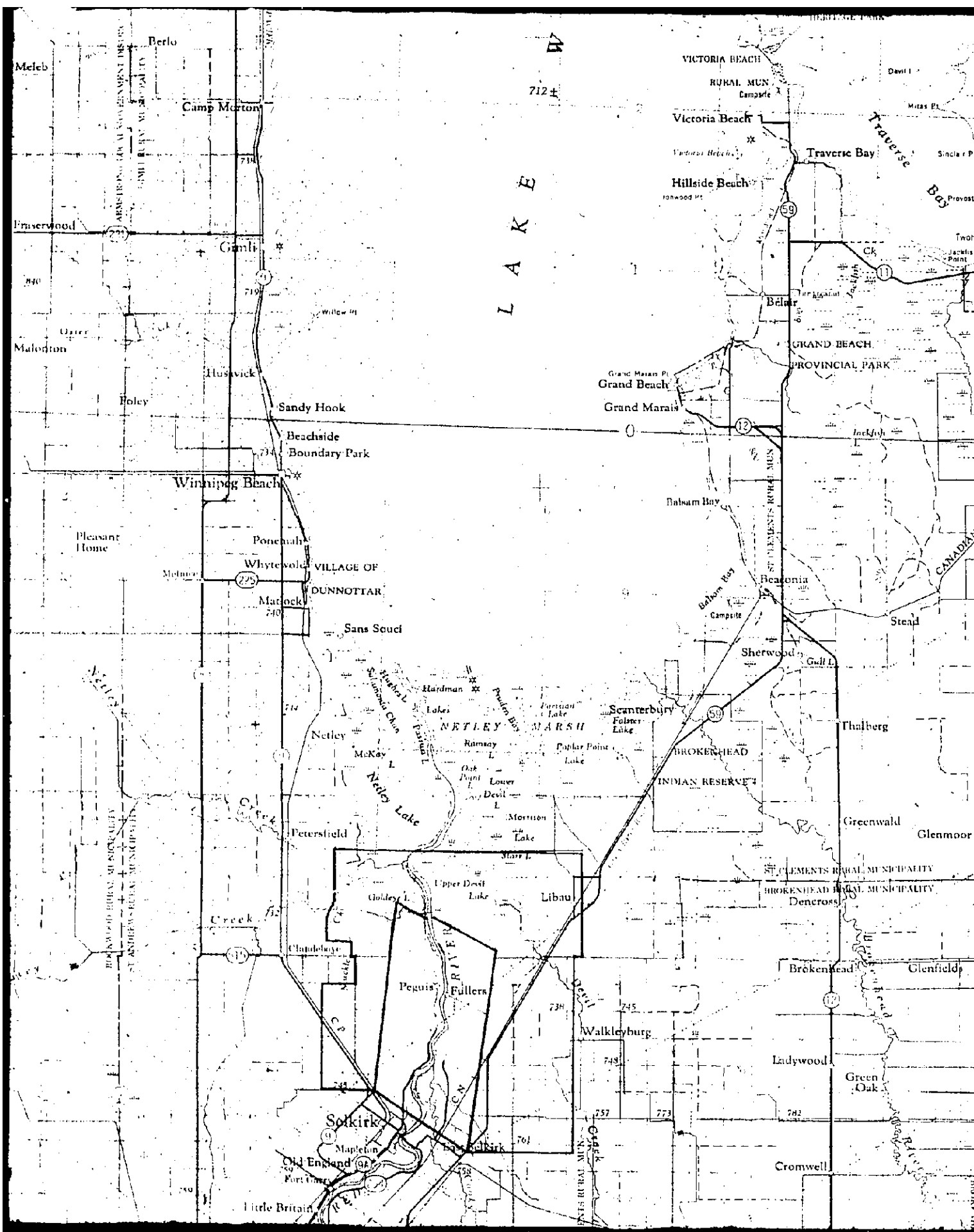
Military users... refer to this map as Reference de cette carte pour usage militaire	SERIES - A 502 - SERIE MAP - 62-I - CARTE EDITION - 6 502 - EDITION
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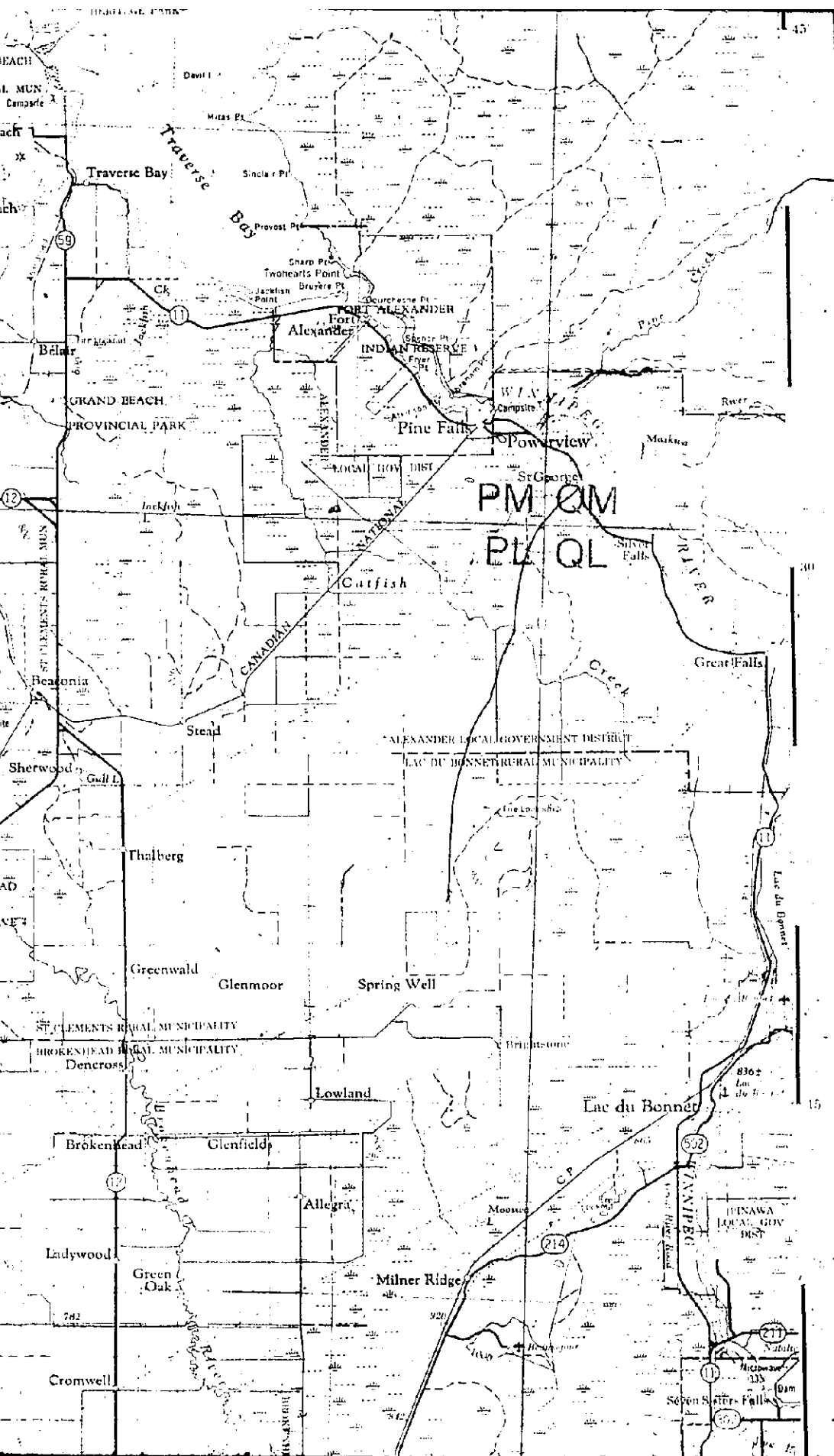


TEN THOUSAND METRE
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ZONE 14
QUADRILLAGE DE DIX MILLE METRES
PROJONCTION TRANSVERSE DE MERIDIDIEN









TEN THOUSAND METRE
 QUADRILLAGE DE DIX MILLE METRES
 ZONE 14

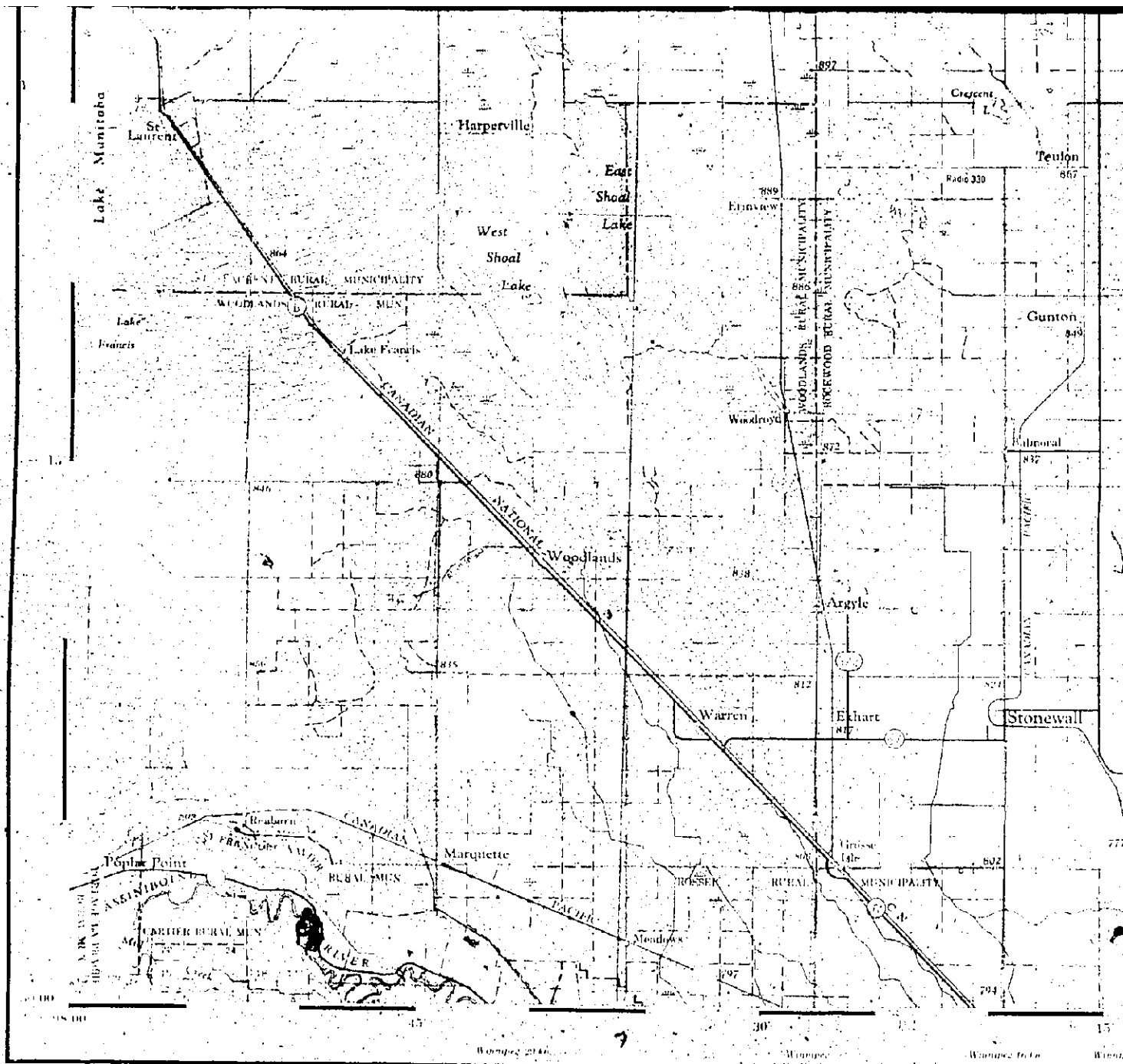
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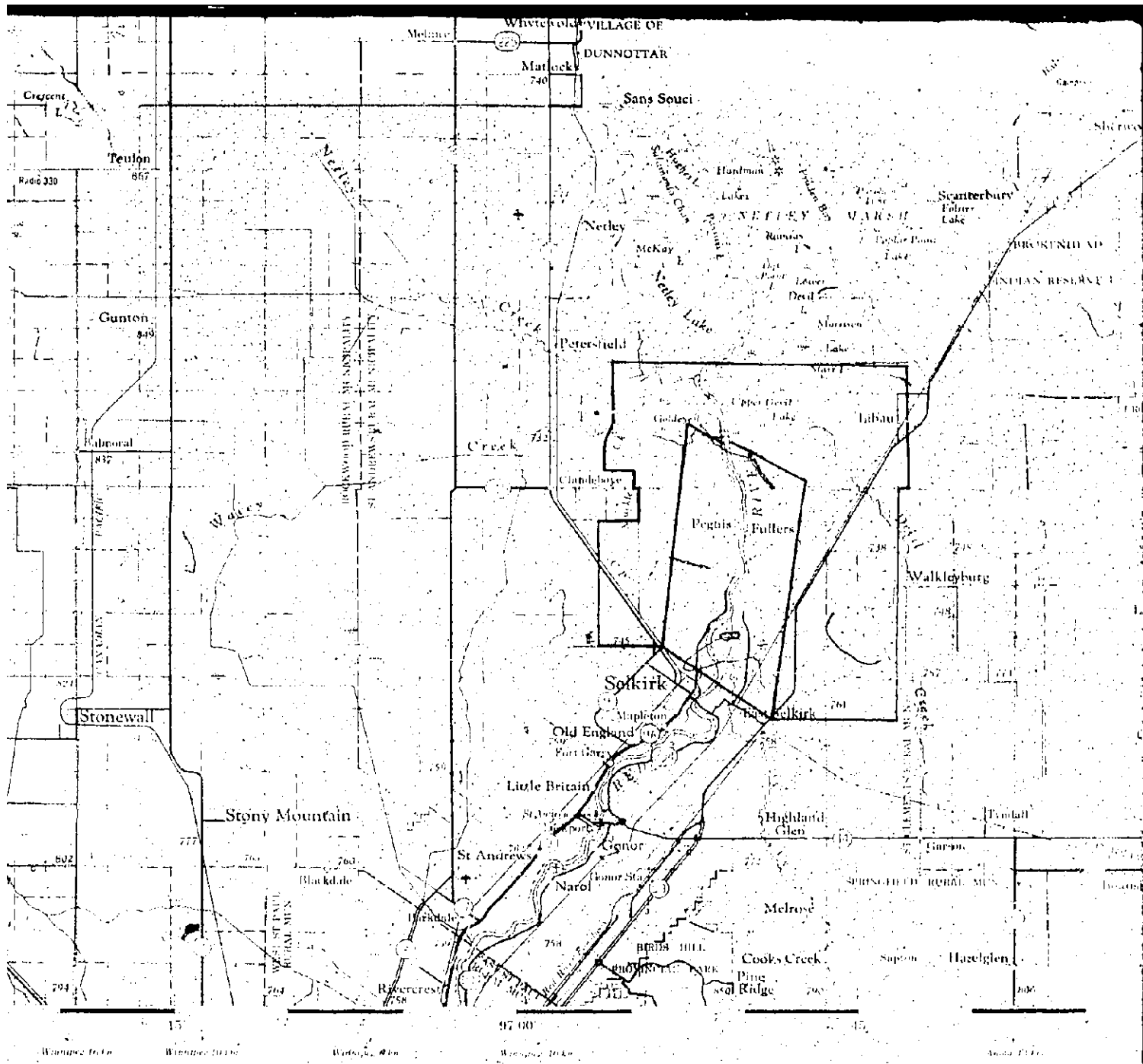
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- Gravel
- Hard surface, all-weather
- Soft surface, all-weather
- Loose or stabilized surface, all-weather
- Loose surface, dry-weather
- Dirt-track

One-lane	more than 2 lanes
Two-lanes	less than 2 lanes
Three-lanes	less than 2 lanes

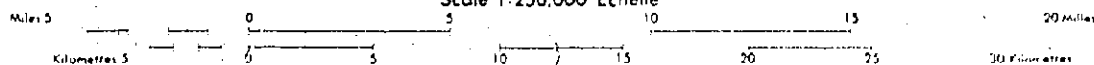
Miles 5
Kilometres 5

1:50,000 METRIC REFERENCE MAP REVISION 1001



SELKIRK MANITOBA

Scale 1:250,000 Échelle



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