THE SOUTH NAHANNI RIVER REGION, N.W.T.(1820-1972): PATTERNS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSITION IN THE CANADIAN NORTH

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THE SOUTH NAHANNI RIVER REGION, N.W.T.(1820-1972): PATTERNS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSITION IN THE CANADIAN NORTH

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PREFACE

This study is an attempt to draw from a local history some of the broader historical themes which are illustrative of the development of Canada's north. As such, the primary challenge lay in the research for the local information. A wide variety of material had to be searched for what often led to disappointing results, but provided a good working bibliography for the field of northern studies. Hence, all titles consulted appear in the Bibliography, even though many contain little to do with the Nahanni specifically. Although economic development and geography have been the focus of most of the work on the Canadian north, there is a great deal more available, and it is on these neglected aspects (culture contact, religion, sociology and settlement) that the emphasis is placed.

Thanks are due to many people, since the research necessitated considerable searching. The John Ewart fund at the University of Manitoba facilitated travel to Ottawa, and the History Department at the University of Winnipeg contributed generously for a trip to Edmonton. The staff at the Public Archives of Canada, the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, the University of Alberta Archives, the Queen's University Archives, and the Boreal Institute provided cheerful assistance. Particular thanks to Mrs.Shirlee Smith at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg, the staff

at the Documents Unit, Queen's University, and Laura MacLaughlin at Parks Canada in Winnipeg. I should also like to express my gratitude to Professor J.E. Rea for bringing the existence of the Parks Canada tapes to my attention, and to Professor Jean Friesen for her encouragement and guidance. Finally, I must thank my husband, Ron Tidy, for his invaluable support, assistance and patience.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of "North" has undergone substantial transition in the course of Canadian history. For the first French colonizers, the land along the St. Lawrence was a veritable northland, demanding special skills and gargantuan efforts to make it habitable. Later, as settlement in the lowlands became established, the Great Plains in the centre of the continent received the appellation "North-West", and many regarded agricultural pursuits in that land to be hopeless because of the severe climate. Still later, as the Plains developed into a great wheat producing zone, attention turned to the Canadian Sub-Arctic, composed of the wild and rocky pre-Cambrian Shield, the northern Cordillera, and an extension of the Great Plains. Today, this definition of "North" is gradually being replaced by the image of the Arctic, with its great blank sweeps of snow and ice in winter and sparse tundra vegetation in summer.

Clearly, the Canadian north is not merely a specific geographic locale, but is also an idea, associated with a collection of images, half fiction and half truth. Geographically, the North is deemed to be any area that is remote and possesses an inhospitably cold climate. Culturally, the North is generally considered to be dominated by Native peoples. Economically, the North is defined as underdeveloped in the sense utilized by a relatively industrialized society.

In spite of the fact that the North has been considered in these many ways, and that a general awareness of the northern "fact" in Canadian culture has long been observed, surprisingly little has been attempted towards an understanding of northern historical development. Geographers have studied the landforms and climate, economists have discussed in detail the comparison between the Soviet Union's intensive northern land use and the Canadian "failures" in their north, and anthropologists have produced a number of fascinating studies of the northern Native cultures. Some historians, such as W.L. Morton, have suggested that the possession of northern territory is a fact of great historical significance for Canada, but there have been no great theories proposed or defended to account for that significance.

In the past, several quasi-academic studies of the North have attempted to explain its uniqueness in terms of its physical features.[1] The traditional association between the North and purity, freedom and virtue was coupled with the concept of the North as a harsh, demanding environment with which men were forced to cope. The direction of man's activities was hence determined by his physical surroundings. This environmental determinism failed to take into account one of the greatest factors in human history, however: the role of culture. It is only when the elements of historical background are considered that a more complete understanding of the region and the nation can be attempted.

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[1] Particularly Vilhjalmur Stefansson, The Northward Course of Empire (New York, 1922) and Griffith Taylor, Canada: A Study of Cool Continental Environments... (London, 1950). See Bibliography section VII, 'The North'.

Because of the fact that most of Canada's northern territories were settled by Europeans relatively recently, the records of the initial contact with the native peoples and the subsequent development of a northern society are readily available and usually quite complete. It is thus possible to trace the themes of that historical process from the point of contact over relatively few years, and to that end, this thesis will examine the development of a particular region in the Northwest Territories.

The South Nahanni River area is perhaps not well known by every Canadian, but it has held a particular fascination and appeal for the imaginations of many over the years. Even those who are unaware of its exact geographic location can recall tales of murdered men and evil spirits in "Headless Valley" and rumours of mysterious tropical vegetation hidden in remote canyons. Legends aside, the Nahanni region was one of the first areas to be explored by the Hudson's Bay Company after its merger with the North West Company in 1821. It was one of the first areas of missionary endeavour north of prairie settlement, and it welcomed the twentieth century with the promise of a second great gold rush which has subsequently been almost forgotten. One of the first peace-time applications of aviation technology, since become so vital to life "North of 60", was a flight into the Nahanni Valley in the early 1920's. The area was one of the first to be considered as a national wilderness park in the northern environment, although the park was not actually created until 1972. In 1979, U.N.E.S.C.O. declared the Nahanni a World Heritage Site because of its fascinating geology.

Thus, on the basis of its cultural and economic history, as well as its geographical location, the South Nahanni is a useful area for a regional study of the themes evident in the development of the Canadian north. The interaction between the Native people, the European traders, missionaries and prospectors, the physical environment, and the southern Canadian response must all be considered. Since much reaction to the North has been based on response to the physical features of the land, it is fitting that the South Nahanni River be introduced in terms of its geography.

For the purposes of this study, the South Nahanni "Region" is taken to mean the area of that river's drainage basin. Because of the close connections with Forts Simpson and Liard, these areas are also included in the discussion.

CHAPTER 1

THE SETTING

The South Nahanni River in the Northwest Territories has been a source of fascination, mystery, and even horror since white man first learned of its existence in the early nineteenth century. For the Hudson's Bay Company, the river appeared to provide a route through the formidable Rocky Mountain barrier as well as offer a vast field of untapped fur resources. For the churches, the valley's inhabitants seemed to comprise one of the last of the primitive societies ripe for conversion. For the Depression-weary prospectors of the 1930's, the Nahanni's numerous tributaries held the promise of a second Klondike. To the Canadian government, the river valley offered yet another source of wealth: hydroelectric potential from its fast waters, and natural gas under the layers of limestone. Each of these groups tackled the wild river and its native inhabitants, and each met with its disasters and successes. The disasters have been recorded on the maps: Deadmen Valley,Funeral Range,McLeod Creek, Headless Range, Broken Skull River. Ultimately, few of those who have attempted to colonize and conquer the Nahanni have been successful. In fact, the acculturation of the Mountain Indians has perhaps been the only goal to be realized, and that achievement remains a questionable "success".The creation of Nahanni National Park in 1971 as a wilderness area was an eminently suitable tribute to a magnificent river that has refused to be tamed by man.

The physical features of the land have been a crucial determinant in the history of the region. Mountainous terrain enabled the native inhabitants to avoid the influx of white traders for many years. The promise of navigable water brought the traders through the area searching for an easy passage across the Rocky Mountains. Physical isolation slowed the relentless cultural challenge of the Christian missionaries and then prevented the invasion of hordes of prospectors and rendered vast government development projects unfeasible. And ultimately, it is the fact of geography that nurtured the myths and legends that have filtered through the Canadian consciousness. It is thus to geography that attention must first be turned.

The South Nahanni River is a tributary of the Liard River. Its source lies in the Mackenzie Mountains near Mount Christie, where the Keele and Ross rivers also commence. It runs rapidly southward through the Mackenzie and Selwyn mountains, and a little over half way to its mouth, cascades over the spectacular Virginia Falls with a drop of 316 feet, almost twice that of Niagara Falls. The Nahanni is then joined by its major tributary, the Flat River, near whose source is located Canada's major tungsten mining operation. The river then rushes through a series of three canyons carved through layers of limestone. "The Gate", one of the most awesome of these passages, finds the river narrowed to only 75 yards, forcing its way through sheer rock walls of 1000 feet or more. The north cliff walls of the First Canyon contain a series of fascinating caves located 1500 to 2000 feet above the river level. These caves contain a variety of rock formations which have intrigued spelunkers. Some are quite large; "Mickey" cave, for instance, has over two kilometers of explored passages and galleries. One of the caves contains the skeletons of some one hundred sheep which apparently perished over a lengthy period, sometime between 700 and 2000 years ago. The cause of their deaths has mystified natural scientists. Forty five feet above the First Canyon is the Tlogotsho Plateau, home of the Dall Sheep (_ovis dalli_) for which the Nahanni is famous. After passing the canyons, the river becomes a tangled mass of twisted channels and snyes, and finally joins the Liard at Nahanni Butte, 130 miles from Virginia Falls, 55 miles north of Fort Liard, and 100 miles from Fort Simpson and the Mackenzie River. Over its course, the Nahanni descends 2900 feet.

Other natural features of interest include two hotsprings. The Rabbitkettle Springs, located at the confluence of the Nahanni and Rabbitkettle rivers, near the northern boundary of the park, are a mineral springs composed of a series of rock terraces about 225 feet in diameter and 90 feet high. Warm water cascades over the terraces to the river below. The other springs are located near the mouth of the First Canyon on the eastern side, where sulphurous water at a comfortable 37°C creates a small oasis of slightly more luxuriant vegetation, giving rise to tropical valley stories which have circulated widely.

The South Nahanni River is located in the Mackenzie Lowlands forest region, and thus supports goodly stands of trees in its valley, although there is insufficient timber for commercial purposes. Some trees also tend to remain somewhat stunted; large birch are rare, for instance, so birch bark canoes were never used by the Indians. The soil has successfully supported the small vegetable gardens of white settlers.

The climate somewhat resembles that of Ontario north of Lake Superior in that winters are long and cold and summers are warm but seldom hot. Chinooks can occur, so that rain in December has been witnessed. Temperatures average 20° to 25°C in the summer and can drop as low as minus 40° to 45°C in winter. Precipitation is usually light, although a heavy rainfall can occur and sometimes causes sudden rises in the river level. One inhabitant, for instance, observed a rise of six or seven inches in only an hour in a July storm.*

Animal life in the valley cannot be described as "plentiful", and population tends to run in cycles, so some years may find certain species almost non-existent. The Dall sheep with their huge curved horns are a common sight on the Tlogotsho Plateau and some of the mountain slopes. Wolves were a fact of life for the trappers in the area, and fur trade journals mention the importance of the rabbit population as a food supply from the region. Black bears are common, and the occasional grizzly has been spotted. There are some moose in the flatter country. Of course, there is the ubiquitous beaver, although perhaps the most common species of wildlife in the Nahanni is the mosquito, for which the area is almost as famous as for its headless bodies!

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*R.M.Patterson, The Dangerous River, (Victoria, 1966), pp.125-26.

The valley has never supported a large human population, even in the pre-fur trade days. In fact, there is some doubt if any Indians ever made permanent homes along the river itself. Migratory bands used it for a hunting ground; these same bands also hunted in the mountains further west in what is now the Yukon. The name "Nahanni" with its numerous spellings has been applied to a variety of Native groups, but modern anthropologists suggest the name means little ethnographically, and denotes merely a geographic location.[1] At any rate, the original inhabitants were probably Mountain and some Kaska Indians, members of the Dené or Athapaskan linguistic group.

The current migration theory proposes, of course, that the Amerindians originally crossed the Bering land bridge to North America from Asia. The largest group followed the Rockies south, but some crossed the mountains, probably via river routes such as the Liard system, some time after the last ice age. Unfortunately, sound evidence of these migration routes is lacking, for the simple material elements of Athapaskan culture disintegrate rapidly and were long vanished by the time anthropological curiosity was aroused. However, it is likely that Indians reached the Nahanni even before they attained the Mackenzie, although both areas were occupied relatively recently: some 4,500 years ago.[2]

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[1] J.J.Honigman, "Are There Nahani Indians?", Anthropologica, Vol.3 (1956), p.37

Even before the white traders reached Dené territory, their impact had been felt. Crees, trading at posts on Hudson Bay acquired guns, and proceeded to use them on the defenceless Dené bands, forcing them to move north and west of their original homelands. The Cree fought primarily with the Slave Indians, who inhabited the Athabasca-Slave River region until they were forced down the Mackenzie River. The Slave, in turn, forced back the Dogrib and Yellowknives who had occupied the southern sections of the Mackenzie Valley. Some Slave Indians also moved into the Liard drainage system, and today, Slavey is the most commonly spoken dialect in the region.

The Indians inhabiting the mountains near the Nahanni River found themselves between the coastal tribes and their new neighbours along the Mackenzie, and with time, assimilated elements of both cultures, to the extent that anthropological studies have been chiefly concerned with determining complex tribal relationships and attempting to develop a standardized culture classification system. The plethora of proposed tribal divisions attests to the problem of imposing a white man's analysis on the physically interrelated groups which not infrequently shared their hunting territories with a neighbour one year and became bitter enemies with that group the next.

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[2] National Museums of Canada, The Athapaskans: Strangers of the North, (Ottawa, 1974). p.18.

Possibly the earliest reference to the so-called Nahanni Indians by a white man occurred in a report submitted by W.F.Wentzell of the North West Company to Roderick Mackenzie in March 1807:

> I am told this mountain [Rocky Mountains north of Liard River] is inhabited by several tribes of Savages,namely Nahanies, Dahoteena, and Nombahoteenais, besides many others who are unacquainted with white people.The only information I can get concerning these Natives is that they inhabit these rocks, live upon carribou and goat flesh and make war upon each other.[3]

However, these unknown groups were to remain elusive for almost two decades, until John McLeod of the Hudson's Bay Company contacted a group to which he referred as "Nahanys" in the mountains near the Nahanni River in 1823-24, as will be discussed. These Indians are not to be confused (as they frequently are and were) with the so-called "trading Nahannis" encountered by Samuel Black along the Dease and Stikine rivers. "Trading Nahannis" were active and eager participants in the fur trade and in fact held a "jealously guarded monopoly...

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[3] L.R.Masson,Les Bourgeois de la compagnie nord-ouest,Vol.1,first published 1889-90,(New York,1960 edition),p.78

which controlled the middle waters of the Stikine, sharing the valley below the present settlement of Telegraph Creek with the coast Tlinkit."[4] On the other hand, the bands hunting along the Nahanni were extremely reluctant to become involved in the white man's world, as will be discussed.

The Kaska bands inhabited the lower regions of the river,[5] while the Mountain Indians, sometimes called the Goat Tribe, lived farther north. John McLeod's "Nahanys" told him they did not fish; nor had they ever seen a boat, and all were greatly amazed by the canoes in his party.[6] This evidence further suggests that these people were not strictly speaking inhabitants of the river valley itself, but lived in the adjacent mountains. They had contacts with the coastal tribes, possibly indirectly through a middle tribe, for they knew of the Russian traders on the Pacific, although they had never actually met them, nor had they apparently traded for any Russian goods.[7]

These Indians lived a basic migratory hunting existence.

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[4] E.E.Rich, introduction to A Journal of a Voyage From Rocky Mountain Portage in Peace River...[By Samuel Black], (London, 1955), p.lxxiv. See also Appendix 1.

[5] These Indians more readily succumbed to the dictates of the white fur trade methods and migrated to the post centres such as Forts Liard and Halkett soon after contact, and thus are not considered as inhabitants of the Nahanni by this period.

[6] Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), B.200/a/5, fo.38d.

[7] HBCA, B.200/a/4, fo.10

They cultivated no crops and travelled in the country with small bands of 12 to 20 hunters with their families. Although each band acknowledged relationships with a larger unit, they seldom met together. John McLeod's Nahannis claimed they had not hunted with their "tribe" for "three winters".[8] There were no formal leaders or "chiefs" in the sense used by the whites. Female babies were often considered undesireable and frequently left to die, although some groups seem to have traced family lineage through the female members in accordance with the custom of some of the tribes to the west.[9]

Life along the river was demanding, with the inhospitable terrain and cyclical food supply failures, but the Mountain Indians appeared to be well adapted. John McLeod was particularly impressed. In searching for them, he had discovered they had

> ascended the fourth Range of Mountains. We had some difficulty in obtaining the Summit. Still the Nahany Indians made no scruple in climbing up precipices with their Women and Children, when none of my men, and very few of the Indians would... [10]

Upon finally encountering the elusive band, he noted,

> They appeared to me, to be much more prompt in their use and application of their bodily

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[8] HBCA, B.200/a/2, p.11

[9] See A.G.Morice, "The Fur Trader in Anthropology", American Anthropologist Vol.30, n.s. (1928), p.73. "The Nah-ané and their Language", Transactions of the Canadian Institute (1902-03), pp.522 ff./ Also, National Museums of Canada, op cit., p.24

[10] HBCA, B.200/a/2.p.8

> faculties, than any of the Northern Tribes that I have yet seen...a manly race of men and good hunters, are smart, active and quick in their motions, and although conscious of their free and independent State, are yet not haughty, but desire to be peaceably inclined... They are Cleanly, Hospitable and Sociable. [11]

In spite of their friendliness, however, these people were reluctant to divulge much specific information to the whites as to their territory and relationships with other tribes. They remained polite but distant, frustrating the Company's plans for rapid expansion to a certain extent. Partly because of the apparent reluctance of this particular group to instigate hostilities with neighboring bands or to enter into commercial intercourse with the whites, and partly because of the inaccessibility of their territory, the Mountain Indians remained something of a mystery to other Indians as well as to whites. Legends have developed confusing mythical figures with real Mountain tribesmen, so that a healthy fear of them was bred into many an infant. Frequently, the "Mountain Man" is portrayed as an "eater of men" who steals women from other tribes, grows to enormous proportions, and is endowed with numerous magical powers. In fact, these legends may be the source of the name "Nahanni". Variously translated as "The People Over There Far Away", or the "People of the West",[12] or "Bad People",[13] the name may very well have been mistaken by early traders for the name of an actual tribe, when it was meant only in a general, mythical sense as the forces of evil lurking in unknown parts.

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[11] Ibid., p.11

[12] according to R.M.Patterson, The Dangerous River, (London, 1954)

[13] J.J.Honigman, op cit., where "na" is translated as "bad".

Legends aside, the first "Nahannis" encountered by fur traders were reticent and cautious, but by no means quarrelsome or dangerous. Nevertheless, the stories persisted into the 1920's, when lone white prospectors and independent trappers approached their first encounters with the South Nahanni's natives with considerable trepidation.[14] Of course, the truth was invariably far from the fiction.

The Mountain Indians could not maintain their distance indefinitely, for stories of rich fur country led other groups of Indians up the Nahanni into previously forbidden territory, and rifles from the white men were undeniably useful,particularly when increased population meant increased competition for a limited food supply. Gradually the Mountain hunters emerged from their isolation so that today, after the passage of time, in the settlement at Nahanni Butte it would be impossible to find an Indian who could claim full "Nahanni" blood.

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[14] Patterson,op cit.,pp.249-250

CHAPTER 2

THE EXTENSION OF THE FUR TRADE

1800-1851

Anthropologists are able to provide clues about the culture and life cycles of the Athapaskans during the period before the arrival of the Europeans, but little can be determined with accuracy about the actual history of the area. Not until the arrival of the white fur traders in the region are concrete, recorded details available to the historian. Following the pattern evident throughout Canadian history, the fur trade was the harbinger of the era of European domination, and the journals of the traders provide records of that first contact and interaction. It was not until relatively recently in the history of the trade that interest was demonstrated towards the far north-western regions of the continent. Until 1766, the Hudson's Bay Company was content to trade with the Dogrib and other tribes of the north indirectly, through the Chipewyan middlemen who brought the Dogrib furs to Fort Churchill and other H.B.C. posts on the Bay.

The Dogribs, however, were not satisfied for long with trade through the intermediary Chipewyans, and in 1766 a group undertook the arduous and lengthy journey from their lands in what is now the Northwest Territories to the post at

Churchill. The H.B.C. responded by commissioning Samuel Hearne to undertake an exploratory journey into the unknown territory of which the Dogribs had spoken. At the same time, Quebec based traders were undertaking explorations further west and north. The Frobisher brothers of Montreal commenced construction of a post at Sturgeon Lake in the Saskatchewan River. The H.B.C. in turn commissioned Ferdinand Jacob of Fort York to establish a post in the area now known as The Pas (1773).

The pace of movement quickened,inspired by competition. Peter Pond, Alexander Henry Senior,Charles Patterson and the Frobisher brothers, all of Montreal, formed a loose association and in 1775 reached the site later known as Cumberland House. Two years later, H.B.C. agent Charles Isham apparently wintered on Beaver Lake in the Athabasca District, and in 1778 Peter Pond conducted his well-known "Athabasca Expedition" for the Montreal group.

In 1779, the loose association of Montreal fur traders formally agreed to joint operations under the name of the North West Company. It was to undergo several transitions during the first few years of its existence, but by 1784 its organization was sufficiently complete that it promised to be formidable competition for the H.B.C. Financial backing from Montreal businessmen McGill and McTavish (among others) combined with the expertise of men who were familiar with the country like Pond and the Frobishers, enabled the once-independent traders to broaden their horizons dramatically.

The strongest thrust of the fur trade's northward expansion resulted as a natural consequence of the fierce competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the newly-formed North West Company. The need to exploit new districts led Peter Pond of the N.W.C. to establish Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake in 1786, and in 1789 that same company commissioned Alexander Mackenzie to explore the north country in order to find a river route to the Pacific. The result was his famous expedition that led to the Arctic Ocean rather than the Pacific, but which was probably just as beneficial to the N.W.C. in the long term, as it was their first indication of the extent of the northern fur country.

It is from Mackenzie that we have the first "official" view of the Liard River. He passed it first on July 1,1789, and noted,"It appears to be a large River upwards of 1/2 Mile over, at the Entry."[1] On its return from the Arctic, the party camped near the Liard's mouth, and on August 14, travelled a couple of miles upstream, passing several Indian camps. Mackenzie named the stream "River of the Mountains".

That year, Laurent Leroux of the same company moved to Lac la Martre to open trade there, in an attempt to prevent the Great Slave Lake Indians' furs from reaching the

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[1] T.H.McDonald(ed.),Exploring the Northwest Territory: Sir Alexander Mackenzie's Journal of a Voyage by Bark Canoe,(University of Oklahoma Press,1966),p.46

H.B.C.posts on Hudson Bay through their Chipewyan middlemen. In 1791, Philip Turnor of the Hudson's Bay Company visited the rival post at Fort Chipewyan and reported in glowing terms the vast extent of the trade carried on at that place, claiming 20,000 fine beaver were taken there annually.[2]

In 1796, the first post was raised on the Mackenzie River by Duncan Livingston. It was apparently located about eighty miles west of Great Slave Lake, and lasted only a year. But the company was not deterred. In 1799, its agents reached Great Bear Lake, and at the turn of the century, the first Rocky Mountain Fort was built by John Thompson at the mouth of the North Nahanni, and the post later to be known as Fort Franklin was opened at Great Bear Lake's outlet.

In 1803-04, competition in the area was becoming keen, as there is evidence suggesting that the X.Y.Company had penetrated the Mackenzie District.[3] The North West Company commenced trade at "Fort of the Forks", later known as Fort Simpson, at the confluence of the Liard and Mackenzie. The following year, Forts Good Hope and Norman were also established. The amalgamation of the N.W.C. and X.Y. Company was effected in 1805, and the new company was able to continue its expansionist drive. Under the direction of Wentzell at Fort of the Forks, a post was built up the Liard River.Its first location is thought to have been somewhere near the mouth of the South Nahanni.[4] However, when George Keith undertook its management in 1806, the post was moved upriver to somewhere near its present site.

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[2] E.E.Rich,The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857,(Toronto, 1967),p.180

[3] John K.Stager,"Fur Trading Posts in the Mackenzie Region Up to 1850",Occasional Papers in Geography,No.3,(June, 1962),p.40.The X.Y.Company had been formed in 1799 to compete with the N.W.C. It is sometimes referred to as the "New North West Company".The two merged in

Those who are concerned with "firsts" will be disappointed to discover that it may never be known who was the first white man to see the South Nahanni River, but doubtless one of the first was George Keith. As manager of the North West Company post up the "Rivière aux Liards" (as it was now known), he reported to Roderick Mackenzie in 1807:

> About a day's march above the rapids, the river presents a fine view to the traveller; the Rocky Mountains to the north, and a fine level country all along to the south, interspersed with small rivers and islands, neither of which of any note, except the Bis-kag-ha River, or Sharp Edge River, not far distant from the Fort, and so called from the flint stones very commun in that place, and which the old inhabitants, the Na-ha-né tribe, made use of as knives and axes.[5]

Almost immediately, Keith encountered problems in his new territory. The various tribes with traditional enmities continued their warring with the new competition for trade. A group of Beaver Indians from the fort attacked a group of Mountain Indians and "barbarously slaughtered" twenty-two of the strange tribe in the spring of 1808. Sickness, probably smallpox, was another problem so that "Trade at this post is decreasing considerably" according to Keith's 1808 report.[6]

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[4] Frederick Merk (ed.), Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal, (Cambridge, 1931), p.128.

[5] L.R.Masson, Les Bourgeois de la compagnie nord-ouest, Vol.II, first published 1889-90, (New York, 1960 edition), pp.67-68. All further quotations will use the original spelling etc., and the use of [sic] has been avoided.

Fort des Liards was not the only trouble spot for the North West Company. In fact, the second decade of the nineteenth century was something of a disaster period throughout the company's northern posts. In 1810, the major food source, rabbits, almost vanished. In 1814, a surprise attack occurred at Fort Nelson in which the Indians destroyed the fort and killed its European inhabitants. Wentzell reported despairingly in 1814,

> Athabaska itself is in fact dwindling down to nothing. The Indians complain of want of beaver,(the Iroquois having ruined the country) [the N.W.C. imported Iroquois as post hunters] and they formed a conspiracy last Spring to massacre all the Whites of Fort Chipewyan and Big Island, in the Peace River, as well as Moose Deer Island establishment at Slave Lake...we are still alive to the most painful apprehensions for the safety of our lives.[7]

There have been several theories proposed to explain these Indian attacks. It has been suggested that the Indians resented the invasion of the traders into their country; there is also evidence to suggest that the North West Company treated the Indians harshly, and that the Indians were merely attempting to protect themselves and their families.[8]

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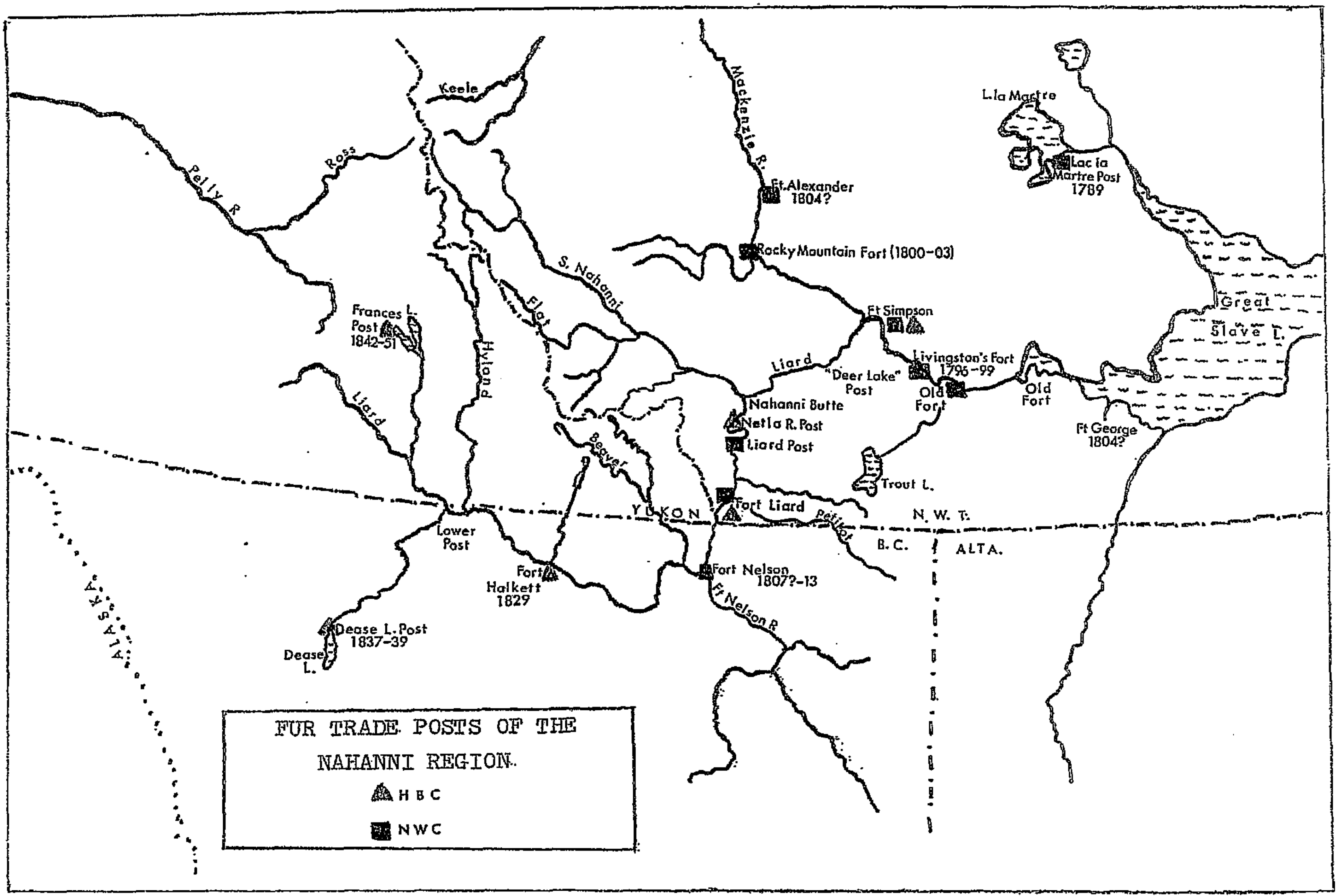
[6] Ibid.,p.74

[7] Ibid.,Vol.I,p.109

[8] see discussion by W.L.Sloan,"Native Response to European Traders", Canadian Historical Review,(Sept.1979),pp.281-299. Sloan claims that the N.W.C. seized Indian women and sold them to pay their husbands' debts.See J.B.Tyrell,(ed) Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor,(Toronto,1934),p.440


FUR TRADE POSTS OF THE NAHANNI REGION
HBC
NWC
Keele
Mackenzie R.
L. la Martre
Lac la Martre Post 1789
Ft. Alexander 1804?
Rocky Mountain Fort (1800-03)
Ross
Pelly R
S. Nahanni
Flat
Hyland
Frances L.
Post 1842-51
Liard
Ft Simpson
Livingston's Fort 1796-99
"Deer Lake" Post
Old Fort
Old Fort
Great Slave L.
Ft George 1804?
Nahanni Butte
Netla R. Post
Liard Post
Beaver
Trout L.
Fort Liard
Petitot
YUKON
N.W.T.
B.C.
ALTA.
Lower Post
Fort Halkett 1829
Fort Nelson 1807?-13
Ft Nelson R
Dease L. Post 1837-39
Dease L.
ALASKA

SOURCES: J.K.Stager,"Fur Trading Posts in the Mackenzie Region Up to 1850", Canadian Association of Geographers, B.C. Division, Occasional Papers in Geography, (June, 1962)
E.Voorhis, "Canadian Historic Forts and Trading Posts", typescript (1932)

In addition, increasing competition with the Hudson's Bay Company in a land of very limited resources, and continuing problems of lengthy transportation, communication and supply routes (particularly during the 1812 war with the States), finally compelled the N.W.C. to order the evacuation of its Mackenzie posts in 1815. This time the fort Indians, realizing their means of support was about to disappear, "had formed the design of destroying us on our way out," according to Wentzell, who later recorded:

> Notwithstanding that no promises had been made of returning at a futture period to trade with them, I was sent the following summer[1816] with six Canadians in a large canoe and a small supply of goods to renew the intercourse...[I] was welcomed by them with extravagant demonstrations of joy. [9]

He promised that the company would do its utmost to re-open trade, and by 1820, three posts were once again in operation: Alexander, Good Hope and Nelson.[10] Ultimately, however, the North West Company officials realized the advantages to be gained by amalgamation with their arch-rival, and in 1821, the North West Company joined the Company of Gentlemen Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay.

The H.B.C. had not been spectacularly successful in the north either during this period of competition. In 1804, the first Company post was built on Great Slave Lake (Moose

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[9] As quoted in H.A.Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, (Toronto, 1956) p.274.

[10] Merk, op cit., pp.135-136. Some sources give the third post as Liard.

Island), but heightened competition after the union of the North West and X.Y. companies forced the H.B.C. to withdraw from the Athabasa District in 1806.[11] By 1815, however, the Company had returned and built Fort Wedderburn "at no greater distance than a single mile"[12] from the rival Fort Chipewyan. This attempted coup failed miserably, for that year the H.B.C. post obtained only five packs of furs in contrast to the 400 packs garnered by the N.W.C.

The H.B.C. apparently remained confident, however, largely because the governors firmly believed their charter granted them exclusive rights to the new territory, and anticipated that the N.W.C. would eventually be forced to withdraw on the legal issue. Plans for expansion continued. In a letter dated August 1819, Colin Robertson announced,

> My next attempt will be New Caledonia and McKenzie's River, but as those countries are new and the natives independent, we have nothing to apprehend from the timid disposition of the Indians, as they will boldly trade with those who have property to give in exchange. 13

These plans were more specifically stated a year later by George Simpson who reported to Governor Williams that three new posts were to be established, one at "the Forks of Rivierre aux l'ior [Liard] another in the Rocky

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[11] Innis, op cit., p.154.

[12] George Bryce, The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company, (Toronto, 1900), p.385.

[13] E.E. Rich (ed), Robertson's Letters, 1817-22, (London, 1939), p.103.

Mountain River, and the third at Bears Lake."[14] These plans were never brought to fruition, for the union of 1821 made them unnecessary.

Simpson's immediate concern with the new Northern Department after union with the N.W.C. was to re-organize it such that an effective monopoly could be enforced and the most economical distribution of posts be arranged. He made a careful study of the area, and among the old posts, Fort Liard caught his attention immediately.

> ...the Trade is however very profitable as it is conducted at a triffling expense, few Men and Goods being required, and the standard very high. Starvation is the only danger to be apprehended in this District; the resources of the country are so limited...The principal post now in this District is called Wintzells Fort about Eight Days March up the River O'L'Orr (called in the maps the River of the Mountain)... It is situated in the heart of a very rich Country, abounding with valuable Fur bearing animals...I think it would be very desireable to make a beginning at Riviere O'L'Orr which would no doubt produce handsome returns...Riviere O'L'Orr is the only part of the Country where Gardening can be attempted with any probability of success and there to a very limited extent.[15]

Simpson's interest in the new country was encouraged by the company's parent committee in London. There were fears that Russians trading along the Pacific coast threatened the newly unified traders and it appeared to be a primary concern that the company consolidate its hold over the new territory. Directives were sent to Simpson in February, 1822 urging him "to extend the company's establishment" in New Caledonia, Mackenzie and Columbia.[16]

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[14] E.E.Rich (ed.),Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson, 1820 and 1821,Vol.I, (Toronto,1938),p.135.

[15] Ibid., Appendix A,pp.394-395.

Meanwhile, W.F.Wentzell had been sent to the fort at "McKenzies River Forks", charged with the task of rebuilding the post. Shortly after his arrival, he noted the following encouraging news in his diary.

> Late in the evening [August 22,1822] Grand Cheveux with Ehoulais and a Party of 12 men and Boys arrived...In the course of conversation I had with them, they informed me that they had met with the Nahannies, a tribe who had never yet seen White People, although within a few days march of their Hunting Grounds.[17]

Again in December, more rumours of the mysterious tribe arrived. This time, Alexander R. McLeod, who was assisting Wentzell, resolved to take action. McLeod spoke to the Indians who had brought the tales, and encouraged them to accompany him on a proposed trip into the Nahanni country at some later date. The Indians thus approached seemed receptive, and further encouraged the H.B.C. traders with a report that beaver had indeed been found in the mountain country.[18]

There is some doubt as to whether the initiative for attempt. McLeod had indeed discovered beaver and plenty of game for "great quantities of Provisions."[22] The Company was undaunted, and in the spring, the promising young John McLeod was appointed to return to the new country in search of the Nahannis.

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[16] Nicholas Ignatieff, "The Influence of the Fur Trade of the Pacific Northwest in Anglo-Russian Negotiations, 1821-1825", unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Manitoba, (1963), p.6.

[17] HBCA, B.200/a/1, p.5.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp.21-22.

John McLeod, who is not to be confused with another of the same name serving in the Swan River district until retirement in 1824, (or a third who joined the H.B.C. as a "writer" in 1811), was a forty year old clerk at the time of his first expedition. He had joined the North West Company in 1816, and had served as a clerk at various northern posts. He spoke Cree and some Chipewyan. In 1822 he had travelled with George Simpson from York Factory to Fort Chipewyan, and had captured the famous man's admiration. In the well-known "Character Book", Simpson was later to write that McLeod was "A very steady active well behaved Man of tolerable Education... is an excellent Trader...selected by me [for the Nahanni explorations] on account of his steady habits of business and correct conduct."[23]

A.R.McLeod was instrumental in organizing the party. There was a considerable delay while the party waited for the arrival of an Indian known as "The Prince" who was to act as a guide, but eventually, on June 5,1823, John McLeod, three H.B.C. men, seven Indian men and an Indian woman embarked on the journey.

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[22] _Ibid._, p.31

[23] Glyndwr Williams (ed.), _Hudson's Bay Miscellany_, (Winnipeg, 1975), p.220.

His commission was to both "explore the Nahanny River" and contact "the Natives of that Name, who inhabit the borders of that stream or that may be in the neighbourhood of the Mountains." He took with him "a selection of Sundry articles of Trade etc. etc." in order to "conciliate a friendly reception from them and to ensure future confidence."[24]

The small party reached the Nahanni River on June 10, encountering heavy rains which almost destroyed the camp. McLeod was encouraged by the sight of beaver and moose. Rather than following the main course of the river, they branched into a tributary now known as the Meilleur.[25] A number of mountain "ranges" were crossed and still there was no sight of the Nahanni Indians. The Indians of the party became restless, and decided there was no hope of finding the little-known tribe. McLeod also began to suspect his interpreter of treasonous translations, but firmly resolved to carry on. Finally on June 19 after crossing the sixth "range", traces of an unknown tribe were found. Optimistically,McLeod decided that he was at last on the Nahanni's trail and made several large fires as signals. There was no reply.

Several deserted camps were found on subsequent days, more fires were lit,provisions ran low, and still there was no response. McLeod decided the party must somehow have bypassed the Indians and determined to retrace his steps toward the Liard River. His journal at this point seems dismal indeed. Scarcely a day passed when it did not rain, and the "musquitos" were almost intolerable.

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[24] HBCA, B.200/a/1,p.47.

[25] R.M.Patterson investigated this route and described it in Patterson,"The Nahany Lands",Beaver,(Summer,1961), pp. 41-46. See the map following page 27.

Then on July 2, definite tracks were discovered between the third and fourth mountain "ranges" and the party set off with renewed energy. Finally, at a point on what is now known as the Jackfish River, they reached a group of Nahannis who were "Yelling, Singing and Dancing as they advanced."[26] McLeod discovered that two of his party, whom he had sent on ahead to explore, were already with the Nahannis. Thus the problems of a first encounter were eased somewhat. McLeod reported:

> The strange Tribe consisted of Fourteen men apparently all connected with the same leader. They are generally speaking of Middling Stature, good Shape and fresh Complexions. The enunciation of their language is fluent and harmonious, but they vociferate it out with such [incredible?] force, that it is upon the whole disagreeable. They appeared to me, to be much more prompt in their use and application of their bodily faculties, than any of the Northern Tribes that I have yet seen. 27

McLeod duly presented the "Leader of the Strange Tribe" with numerous presents, including a flag, a cotton shirt, coal, a knife, an axe and a small kettle. Combs and awls were distributed among the others. Then McLeod sought more information from the group about their country. Apparently there was sufficient similarity in language that the H.B.C. interpreter encountered few communication difficulties. The Nahannis told McLeod that they belonged to a large people, and inhabited the country to the west, although they had not seen their people for three winters. They admitted knowledge of beaver in their land, with some reluctance. They also admitted knowledge of two tribes in the west which spoke a different language from their own. However, there was some hesitation in divulging this information for the Nahannis had apparently been at war with one of these tribes (the Beaver, as noted earlier), and feared that the strange H.B.C. men "might mis-apply any information from them, to disturb the Security in which they seemed to live."[28]

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[26] HBCA, B.200/a/2, p.9.

[27] *Ibid.*, p.9.

The Nahannis had few furs with them, which the Indians in McLeod's party promptly traded for some odd articles, including an old gun. McLeod explained the H.B.C. system of trade, and presents were exchanged. The band leader was described by McLeod as "tall, strong and robust", with a rather lengthy beard that gave him the appearance "of an old Roman Sage."[29]

> The Ceremonies being concluded I recommended him to visit his Tribe, and show to them what I had given to him, and to persuade as many to follow him as he could, and meet me the ensuing year in or about the same place, where I should

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[28] Ibid., p.11.

[29] Ibid., p.11.

> have a supply of the most necessary articles they wanted[,] to give in exchange for any furs they would bring. 30

And always the businessman for H.B.C. interests, he added, "And besides to endeavour to Communicate to the two Strange Tribes he mentioned to be acquainted with."[31] The party returned to the fort on July 10.

A year later, as promised, McLeod prepared a second expedition to meet the Nahannis. With a small group, he left Fort Simpson on June 8,1824, and picked up an Indian party along the Liard whose members expressed considerable dismay at the idea of entering Nahanni country with such a small group. McLeod's skills at diplomacy (and probably bribery) succeeded in overcoming their objections. It was not until June 24 that the group finally encountered a Nahanni -- a young boy who had wandered into McLeod's camp in error, believing it to be his own. The next day, the youth returned with his four companions, gifts were given, then one was sent to inform White Eyes ("leader" of the group) of the arrival of the white men. McLeod recorded:

> At 4 they made their appearance...they expressed great satisfaction at seeing me, and told me they were on their way to the appointed randesvous, I was much disappointed that finding they had made no hunts worth mentioning in the Course of the Winter. 32

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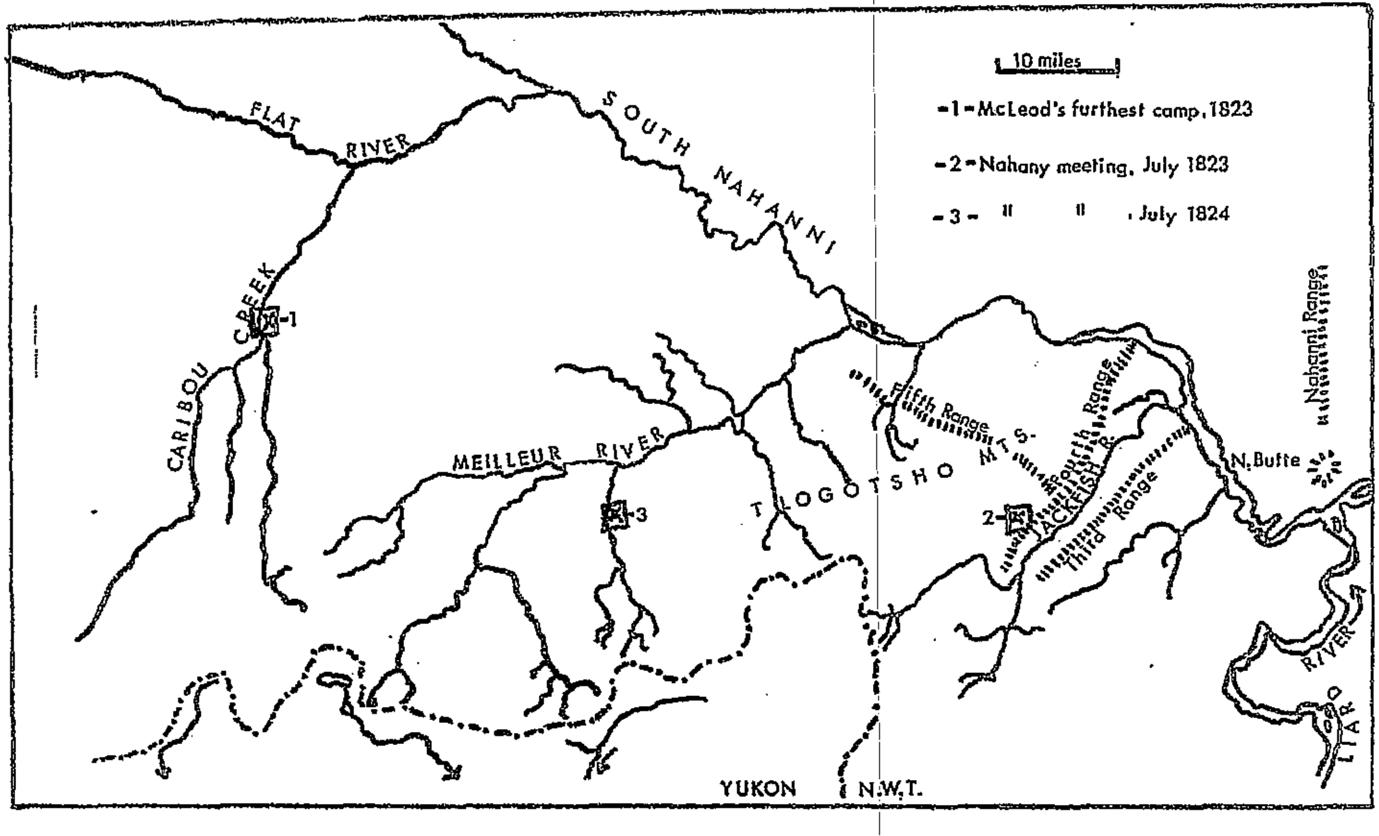
[30] Ibid.,p.12.

[31] Ibid.,p.12.

[32] HBCA,B.200/a/5,fo.37.

JOHN McLEOD'S "NAHANY" EXPLORATIONS


10 miles
-1-McLeod's furthest camp, 1823
-2-Nahany meeting, July 1823
-3- " " , July 1824
FLAT RIVER
SOUTH NAHANNI
CARIBOU CREEK
1
MEILLEUR RIVER
3
TLOGOTSHO MTS.
Fifth Range
Fourth Range
JACKFISH R.
Third Range
2
Nahanni Range
N. Butte
LIARD RIVER
YUKON
N.W.T.

Source:
Patterson, Beaver,
(Summer, 1961), p.42.

McLeod gave White Eyes a present of "Chiefs Clothing", but found the Indian very unwilling to divulge any information about his country. McLeod then changed his tactics and invited White Eyes to accompany him out of the mountains. Much to his surprise,

> I could not however prevaile with the Leader Himself nor would He allow any of His party to accompany me, owing to their apprehensions of the Fort Liard Indians, whose presence they had last summer discovered on or about the Beaver River...after a great deal of persuation [I] prevailed on the Old Leader and two of his family to accompany me to the establishment.[33]

Part of the reason White Eyes changed his mind was that many of the families (who had remained carefully hidden from the white men) were starving, and McLeod proposed the Nahannis accompany him in a hunt. It is also interesting to note that when White Eyes, his son, and a nephew parted from their families, McLeod reported, "I witnessed a Scene of affection which would not have disgraced a place nearer civilized life."[34]

McLeod yet had use for his powers of persuasion. The following day, White Eyes announced that he had suffered a bad dream and was returning to his family. McLeod convinced him to stay. Two days later, White Eyes was again prepared to turn back; this time McLeod bribed him with the promise of food.

At the Liard River, the party found their canoe, and prepared to embark, much to the surprise of the Nahannis who had apparently never seen any sort of water craft before. Then when the Indians were told they were approaching Fort Simpson, "their minds appeared to be much agitated." And, "for some time after entering the House, they seemed lost in astonishment and surprise,"[35] at the sight of the European establishment.

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[33] *Ibid*., fo.37

[34] *Ibid*., fo.37d.

Wentzell was pleased indeed to see some Nahanni Indians at last, and spent a great deal of time questioning White Eyes through an interpreter. This time, the traders learned that the Nahannis were acquainted with the Carrier Indians and were, in fact, aware that trade was being conducted with whites on the coast, probably the Russians. White Eyes reported that his people were at war with the Fort Liard Indians, for which reason they remained "concealed in the Mountains." He also revealed the existence of a large tribe called the "Dahadinnais" who lived west of the mountains and were on friendly terms with his people. Indeed, there had been some intermarriage between the groups. White Eyes promised to bring some of these people with him to Fort Simpson when next he came. Already he was convinced of the value of contact with the whites.

> We never could believe there was whites so near our Lands [he explained] else we should long ere this have traded with them. If it had not been for an old Gun from you last summer, we should have starved to Death last Winter. 36

But he also warned, "Don't ask us to go to Fort de Liard to

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[35] *Ibid.*, fo.39

[36] HBCA, B.200/a/4, fo.10d.

Trade, we will not go."[37]

White Eyes and his party had collected a small number of furs, but they were not cleaned and stretched in the proper fashion, so Wentzell demonstrated to the Indians how he wanted the furs prepared for trade. He was somewhat disappointed in the information obtained from White Eyes as well.

> Notwithstanding the Leader's apparent candour and frankness, yet he could not be prevailed upon to trace out a kind of a Chart on the floor with a coal, of his Country.[38]

The company traders were flattered by the interest these Indians took in the post. Wentzell commented on the Nahannis' particular enjoyment of the buildings and the music they encountered. The following day, the small party departed with trade goods and several presents, "with which as well as our behaviour towards them they were pleased and elated beyond description."[39]

H.B.C. officials were also "pleased and elated", and John McLeod received the credit. Chief Factor Edward Smith who replaced Wentzell, wrote to George Simpson some time later describing McLeod as the faithful servant

> ...who has in such a modest and Gentlemanly manner conducted the Parties whose labours have extended the limits of your favorite McKenzies River District, so far beyond its usual boundaries...[40]

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[37] HBCA, B.200/a/4, fo.10d.

[38] *Ibid.*, fo.10d

[39] *Ibid.*, fo.11

[40]

Curiously, however, the minutes of the H.B.C. Council do not record any reference to either plans to send McLeod out, or acknowledgement of receipt of his report, although there was considerable interest in Samuel Black's trip through the Rocky Mountains.

A clue to this apparent omission may be found in a letter written by W.F.Wentzell in 1824 on the eve of his departure from the north, expressing his private convictions to an old friend.

> Many plans are suggested for exploring the unknown parts of McKenzies river, and none have yet been digested, excepting that Mr.Samuel Black is to start this Spring...This plan appears to me to be wild and injudicious...In my humble opinion, I think he should have taken his route down MacKenzies River and cross the Rocky Mountains...But unfortunately this quarter is less known than it ought to be, and as I intend leaving it this year forever, I feel little interest in trying to persuade my employers of their erroneous information, convinced as I am of the little attention that would be paid to any suggestions from my little knowledge of the country. [41]

Wentzell probably supported McLeod's expedition because it was more in keeping with his personal approach to the exploration of the unknown country. His interest in, and knowledge of this area had been aroused during his days with the N.W.C. The H.B.C., on the other hand, was primarily concerned with finding useful routes through the mountains from the south, probably primarily to cut deep into the sources of the Russian coastal traders. Hence, McLeod's efforts were not of great use to the Company, except insofar as they induced new groups of Indians to enter the trade. Perhaps it is not surprising, then, to find that McLeod's voyages created great excitement at Fort Simpson, but relatively little interest in London.

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[41] Masson, op cit., Vol.I, p.151.

Other explorations into surrounding territory were also underway in the early 1820's. P.W.Dease travelled to the "Main West Branch" of the Liard in 1823 in search of Nahannis, but failed to find any.[42] Murdoch McPherson travelled from Fort Liard to the Beaver River in July,1824, and found traces of old Nahanni camps.[43] These explorations were extended into the 1830's as part of the search for a safer route through the mountains to the furs of what is now the Yukon Territory. The Liard River, with its numerous rapids and deep canyons was considered too dangerous for efficient passage of the fur brigades. Hence the search for a new fur country was coupled with the search for a new transportation route. In 1834, John McLeod journeyed from Fort Halkett along the Dease River, and two years later, Robert Campbell volunteered to continue the "mission", as well as to assist in settling the problem with the hostile Indians around Dease Lake.[See Appendix 1].

Of course, once John McLeod had allayed the fears of the Fort Simpson Indians as to the dangerous natures of the Nahanni Indians, trips for furs and provisions into the Nahanni region became more frequent. One Indian in particular, named Ehcalais, led his party in a number of highly successful expeditions.

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[42] Merk,op cit.,p.149.

[43] HBCA,B.200/a/5,fo.29d.

Scarcely had contact been made with the Nahannis, and a profitable trade promised, when a rumour began to circulate throughout the district that threatened to undermine any hope of expansion. Murdoch McPherson at Fort Liard received a report in the fall of 1824 that one of his post Indians had killed one of the Nahannis sometime in July. The Indian in question readily admitted that he had killed someone, but vehemently denied that it had been a Nahanni. McPherson apparently had reason to believe that the victim was actually one of White Eyes' sons. The reaction at Fort Simpson was vigorous:

> If this is really the case our trouble and expense the two preceeding Summers first in offering an intercourse with this Tribe--and last summer in bringing them to the Fort--from whom at some future period something might have been expected to augment the Annual returns of the District--is at once blasted from the rash Actions and hellish Rascality of an Untruthful scamp. [44]

On the other hand, it was beginning to appear that little hope for a lucrative trade with the Nahannis existed. They were "only few in number as far as we know, timerous in the extreme, and afraid of their neighbours. That until some further discoveries in the Mountains are made and their number collected at a Post for themselves little can be expected from them."[45] Besides, the increased geographical knowledge had indicated the Nahanni River was not to be a passage through the mountains. Edward Smith at Fort Simpson reported in 1825, "It does not flow from the Westward of the Mountains as at first expected: it takes its rise in the 9th range of Mountains."[46]

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[44] _Ibid._, fo.15d, entry for October 25, 1824.

Nevertheless, the chief factor at Fort Simpson was not prepared to lose the Nahanni trade without a fight. Learning that a group of Indians trading at the post was likely to meet the Nahannis that winter, Smith gave the group some small presents to give to the Nahannis, with the intention of encouraging them to come to the fort in March in spite of the alleged murder. Sure enough, on April 14,1825, three Nahannis arrived at Fort Simpson with the news that the band had suffered a difficult winter. But best of all from the Company's viewpoint, it was discovered that, "The Story of one of them having been killed last summer is fortunately a lie, that youth being now here."[47] Besides, the Nahannis had collected over fifty beaver skins for trade, and the news was presented that a group of "Dahontines" had agreed to join the Nahannis in their hunts, and bring their furs to Fort Simpson. Chief Factor Edward Smith was pleased with both the news and the beaver, writing of the latter, "These Beaver altho very ill stretched was very fine and look uncommonly well furred."[48] The promise of more Indians participating in the trade also gave rise to proposals for a new post to be established in the Nahanni country at some future date.

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[45] HBCA, B.200/a/5, fo.2.

[46] *Ibid.*, fo.3.

[47] HBCA, B.22/a/6, p.6. Entry for April 14, 1825.

That "future date" arrived sooner than expected. Two months later, a group of Indians who had been hunting in the Nahanni territory brought along with their furs more tales of fear between tribes, so Edward Smith mentioned the possibility of opening a post in that country. The Indian response was overwhelmingly in favour, so on July 13, 1825, the official decision was made to send one Mr. John Bell "to go to the Nahanny River to pass the Summer with Two Men. He is [illegible] and collect as much provisions as possible, and if we find that the Nahanny and Dahantione Indians are able to support a regular establishment, it is promised as soon as they prove themselves worthy of that favour."[49] Accordingly, John Bell was sent out.

When Bell joined McPherson of Fort Liard on the Mackenzie River brigade in the fall, he had only disappointing news. There had been a severe scarcity of animals in addition to a strange disease which had attacked the "Moose Deer". It was decided to make arrangements with the Nahannis so that they would travel to Fort Simpson to trade, and the post was abandoned.

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[48] Ibid., p.7.

[49] Ibid., p.25.

For the first time in 1826, post journals record the arrival of "Dahodonie" Indians at Fort Simpson. Small groups of Nahannis also began to trickle in, although more often they traded with other Indians hunting up the river, who in turn brought their furs to the H.B.C. post.

During George Simpson's famous journey of 1828 to the Pacific, the "little emperor" stopped at Fort Chipewyan to discuss the affairs of the Mackenzie District with Edward Smith. Later, Simpson reported,

> I have made arrangements with Mr.Smith, that a new Post shall be settled on the Nahany River, for the convenience of the Nahany Tribe, and with the view of drawing some more of the Umbahatony and Toohechatony Tribes, which will require an Establishment of Six Men besides the Clerk in charge, with an outfit of Twenty Five pieces Goods, and may be expected to yield about 20 to 25 Packs Furs, value about 2000.[50]

However, the somewhat grandiose proposal seems to have melted away, probably in the interests of economy. Besides, the timid Nahannis seemed to have gained confidence in their position, for by 1830 they were known to have occasionally visited Fort Liard, which, according to Smith's report, "they find more conveniently situated." In fact, the previous summer,

> ...there was an unusual influx of them which as none of them came empty handed had increased the Returns of that place before the middle of

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[50] E.E.Rich (ed.), Simpson's 1828 Journey to the Columbia, (Toronto, 1947), p.12.

> October to more than was there the preceeding year in March... 51

The demands of the fur trade had finally overcome traditional conflicts; the Nahanni Indians who had once been so afraid of their enemies at Fort Liard were now willing to trade at that post.

Throughout the 1840's and 1850's, the Nahanni bands became fully integrated into the fur trade system. Post records at Simpson and Liard indicate a number of regular traders listed as "Nahanys" who were allowed to keep accounts at the forts as part of the famous "credit" system, which was really a method of creating perpetual debt and ensuring that the Indians would return to the fort with more furs at regular intervals. The travelling habits of the bands changed to accommodate the trade, so groups that had previously wandered in the mountains adapted to river travel and were known to have covered enormous distances in search of furs. The old fear of Fort Liard and its inhabitants seems to have largely disappeared for by 1850, the Fort Simpson record books indicate the arrival of a "Nahanny chief" and his son,who named Fort Liard as their primary residence.[52]

The Nahannis had entered the fur trading system at a rather insecure period in its development. Beaver was losing its popularity in Europe in the late 1830's and 1840's, so

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[51] HBCA,B.200/e/11,fo.2.

[52] HBCA,B.200/d/91,fo.127d.

the Company was attempting to encourage the trapping of other animals. And unfortunately at the same time, a severe shortage of large game animals was being encountered in the Mackenzie River District.[53] Experiments in farming were conducted at Forts Simpson and Liard, and there is evidence Simpson encouraged the Indians to be less nomadic. In 1841, a stricter "quota system" was introduced in the north.

Governor Simpson was sufficiently astute to respond to the changing situation of the fur trade by instituting a variety of conservation methods. Beginning in 1824, a number of posts were closed and others moved in an attempt to be more responsive to local conditions. The Company also encouraged the Indians to trap animals other than beaver and to avoid trapping beaver in the summer when the skins were of relatively low grade. Finally, in 1826, the first "quota system" was introduced in the Northern Department. Average returns for the 1823-1825 seasons were calculated, and a limit placed on the number of furs the Indians were allowed to trap based on the previous takes. Apparently the method succeeded in reducing the Company's intake from 1/5 to 1/2.[54]

There was widespread disapproval of this system from Indian trappers throughout the west and the north, and the Mackenzie District was no exception. John Lee Lewis at Fort Simpson wrote to George Simpson that as "the McKenzie is still rich in the article of Beaver and our forbidding the Indians killing only makes them generally discontented."[55] It has been argued that the Company's attempts at conservation "played a major role in changing the Indians' way of life in some fundamental ways."[56] On the other hand, the embittered company servant John McLean, who spent the winter of 1843-44 in the Mackenzie District, disagreed vehemently that the H.B.C. was following any sort of a conservation policy, in spite of its official pronouncements. According to him, the country was being laid waste, and only through the "indolence of the natives" and the fact that the physical nature of the land made much of the beaver "inaccessible to the hunter", was the Mackenzie still the richest fur country in the territory.[57]

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[53] A.J.Ray, "Some Conservation Schemes of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1821-50", Journal of Historical Geography, Vol.I, No.1 (1975), p.62.

[54] See *ibid.*, pp.51-55. A stricter system was attempted in 1841.

It seems more likely that in the Mackenzie District, the life of the Indians was changing through necessity. Life had always been tenuous in an area where it depended on the cyclical supply of rabbits; but now the starving people believed they could rely on the white traders for support. In many cases, of course, the traders were suffering from hunger themselves. But where an attempt to grow food had been undertaken, there was some relief. Cattle were imported to Forts Liard and Simpson[58] and in 1852, 700 bushels of potatoes, 120 bushels of turnips and 180 bushels of barley were harvested at Simpson, with a smaller harvest of similar crops at Liard.[59]

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[55] As quoted in ibid.,p.65

[56] Ibid.,p.68

[57] W.S.Wallace(ed.),John McLean's Notes of a 25 Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory,(New York,1968),pp.351-3,345.

[58] E.E.Rich,(ed.),Rae's Arctic Correspondence,1844-55.(London 1953) p.96

There is ample evidence to suggest that these crops did, indeed, make a difference. John McLean wrote of the early 1840's:

> For these three years past the distress of the natives in this quarter has been without parallel; several hundreds having perished of want--in some instances even at the gates of the trading post...With the produce of the farm, Mr. L[ewis of Fort Simpson] was enabled to save the lives of all those who resorted to his own post; but at Forts Good Hope, Norman [both without farms] no assistance could be given. 60

And again, some ten years later when another famine struck, Chief Factor Rae at Fort Simpson could report that although "At Fort des Liards the people were living from hand to mouth all winter and the Indians suffered much privation, a number of them [were] fed at the Fort," so that the few recorded deaths were due to an influenza virus, and not starvation.[60a] Hence it may be concluded that the Indians were drawn to the posts out of desperation and want, for the resolution of an ever-present problem in the north. The presence of the H.B.C. did indeed cause changes in the habits of the Natives, but it was less because of any half-implemented conservation policy than because of the H.B.C. farms, without which the native population would undoubtedly have continued to suffer annual losses from starvation when the rabbits ran short.

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[59] Innis, op cit., p.300.

[60] Wallace, op cit., p.313.

[60a] E.E.Rich(ed.), Rae's Arctic Correspondence, (London, 1953), p.125.

Attention continued to focus on the Liard-Nahanni area until 1851, when Robert Campbell discovered the Porcupine River could be used to reach the Yukon River. Consequently, the dangerous and somewhat dreaded Liard-Frances Lake route to the Yukon district was dropped, and the focus of attention shifted to the Mackenzie River itself, and its much easier route north and west as Wentzel had predicted. Fort Simpson retained its importance, but Fort Liard began its drift into obscurity, as a rather remote outpost of the H.B.C. monopoly in the north. But the changes wrought by its presence were not to be undone.

The encounter with the Indians of the Nahanni River region has been relegated to a mere historical footnote, although it warrants more attention. The records of that contact period provide some interesting clues to the complex relationship between the H.B.C. and its suppliers.

First, "White Eyes" indicated to John McLeod that his people were aware of the existence of white traders to the west and understood the nature of their business. Why then were the Nahannis not involved in this trade? The obvious initial response is that they did not care to participate. Between them and the coast were the Carrier and Tahltan people who had set themselves up as middlemen in the trade. For an unknown reason, the Mountain Indians preferred the isolation of their country to dealing with these tribes.

Perhaps a long-standing animosity existed between them, dating from their acquisition of white man's weapons. Perhaps too, the Mountain Indians saw no real need for goods of white manufacture. It is quite possible that the Carriers kept only the best for themselves, and did not care to provide the most useful items to other tribes so that the isolated Nahannis might not have been aware of all the potential advantages of trade. It was not until an old H.B.C. gun had saved the Mountain people from starvation that any desire to trade was demonstrated.[61] At any rate, it is interesting and fully in accord with patterns observed elsewhere in North America, that knowledge of white men had penetrated at last to this isolated group even before actual contact.

A second important aspect of this initial contact was the determined reluctance of White Eyes and his band to reveal any information about the country they inhabited. The Indians were polite but distant; they took advantage of what the white traders could offer, but refused to place themselves in a vulnerable position. It is now a cliché to state that the Indians of North America did not share the European concept of property. Further it has been argued that

> ...recent historical research has suggested that band territories were not sharply delimited at the time of initial contact throughout most of the subarctic and northern plains regions, and the notion of trespass was not well developed.[62]

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[61] See note 36, page 29.

[62] A.J.Ray and D.B.Freeman, "Give Us Good Measure", (Toronto, 1978), p.17.

However, as has been stated, White Eyes would not divulge information because he feared the white strangers might use it to help his enemies. Clearly, this group had a sense of "territory"; the mountains provided safety from the Slave Indians to the south. Wisely, too, they were unsure of the white traders and probably suspected they might prove to be enemies as well, as indicated in the Indians' extreme reluctance to travel to Fort Simpson. Security was of vital importance to this group, and the Mackenzie Mountains provided the necessary barriers.

Subsequent dealings with the "Nahanni" Indians developed in accordance with a pattern which has been observed in many other cases. The Indians were not to be flattered by useless presents; once they learned what was useful to them, they demanded it. And contact with the H.B.C. gradually eroded pre-existing differentiation between tribes and bands. The Nahanni overcame their fear of the Slave Indians to the extent that they became the dominant group at Fort Liard for a time. The trade also drew them away from their traditional home in the mountains and led them to travel further and spend more time at central gathering points--the H.B.C. posts. The fact that Forts Simpson and Liard also offered a more stable food supply came to be an important factor as well, in a country where survival was forever the primary concern.

It must not be concluded that the H.B.C. deliberately encouraged the existence of "sedentary and dependent groups of hunters and gatherers."[63] In fact, it was decidedly not in the Company's interest. It did not want to be burdened with the support of these groups camped about the posts; it was more interested in trappers who were free to move about to the best fur country and bring in valuable skins as well as efficient hunters who could support the Company employees by their efforts. On the other hand, it is clear that groups of just such "sedentary hunters" were developing around the posts in the mid-nineteenth century. The Mountain Indians,too, fell into this pattern. Some moved to live more or less permanently at Simpson and Liard; others became dependent on the Company through the "credit" system. The Honorable Company had become an integral part of the region.

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[63] As described by Wallace Smith,"The Fur Trade and the Frontier: A Study of an Intercultural Alliance",unpublished essay for Parks Canada (Winnipeg,1961),p.21.

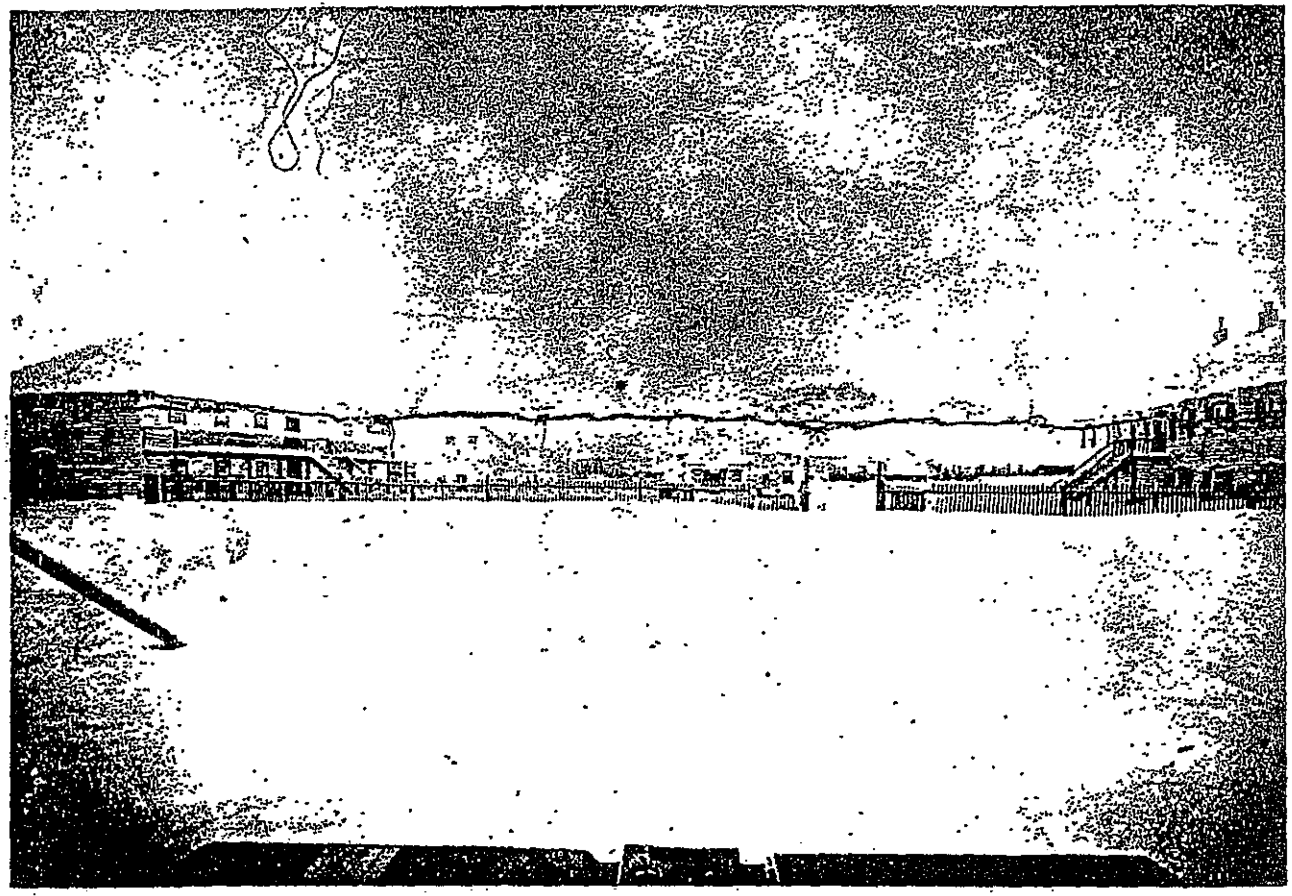

PHOTO A: The Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Simpson, circa 1890[?]. Courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

CHAPTER 3

THE MISSIONARY INVASION

1850-1896

Once the Hudson's Bay Company had firmly integrated itself into the north, a second group of agents from "outside" began its invasion. The advance guard consisted of a scattering of itinerant missionaries, but once the initial ground was broken, they came in greater numbers, and theirs was to be an even more profound impact than that of the fur traders. It was in the interest of the Hudson's Bay Company, of course, to encourage the Indians to maintain a life closely related to their life before contact; the Company wanted furs, not farmers or industrial workers. The churches, however, were to actively promote changes in the Indian way of life,partly because it simplified teaching the Gospel, but largely because they believed these changes were part of the civilizing mission of the church.

From the Christian church's viewpoint, the opening of the Canadian north could not have occurred at a more appropriate time. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a wave of evangelism rushed through the established churches. Fundamentalism attained widespread popularity. Probably the most important result of this movement was the development of the missionary spirit. It was the duty of the Christian to spread his knowledge of the word, and the nineteenth century saw it spread as never before. Groups like the Church Missionary Society proliferated, raising funds and training men (and later, some women) to travel to all the corners of the globe with their joyful tidings.

It was not a purely religious message that was spread, however. Christianity and western civilization were equated so that peoples of other lands should not merely adopt Christian beliefs to save their souls: they must also learn to be Europeans. African tribesmen must wear "decent" western clothing rather than exist semi-naked. Thus, many analysts have described the work of the church as part of the general thrust of imperialism and colonialization.

The interior of North America presented a new field for these proselytizers. At first, men went to areas like the Red River Settlement to minister to the white settlers, but gradually moved on to more distant parts where Indians and a few H.B.C. employees made their homes. And it was through the funding and encouragement of two main groups, the Church Missionary Society and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, that the Mackenzie Basin was finally gained.

The Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) was founded by a group of Anglican evangelicals in 1799. Before 1820, its efforts were centred primarily in Africa, India, New Zealand,

and the Far East. Henry Venn, of the Parent Committee of the Society, provided most of the ideas which lay behind its approach to missionary work. The missionaries were to educate the natives in the broadest sense -- Christian knowledge alone was insufficient. Native trade and industry were to be encouraged. But above all, Venn proposed that the Society's aim was to promote self-sufficiency in the native congregations. He believed that it would be impossible for the Society to provide leadership forever, so that the best way to encourage the spread of Christianity was to train native ministers. Thus, a few trained Society missionaries could educate larger numbers of native adherents who in turn could train even larger numbers.[1] This concept was expressed in rather idealized terms by one of Venn's adherents in this manner:

> Beyond the boundary line of the more settled districts, if possessed of a true Missionary spirit, he [the European] will go forth to break new ground, and, leading forth his band of native catechists, extend the husbandry of the Lord. On the native churches in his rear he will look back from time to time. Regarding them as his base of operation, he will occasionally visit them; and by communicating to them Missionary intelligence, and placing before them interesting sketches of his work, he will kindle and cherish amongst them a Missionary spirit, and so lead them on to Missionary action. They will begin to help...and at their expense, to itinerate with the European evangelist, until, becoming more and more interested, they take up Mission work on their own account...But beyond them...the European evangelist will be found... [in] some new field of labour. [2]

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[1] Jean Usher, William Duncan of Metlakatla, (Ottawa, 1974), pp.18-22.

[2] Church Missionary Society Intelligencer, (1867), p.268.

The Society established a school in England to train its people before they travelled overseas, and once they reached the mission fields, close contact was maintained through correspondence. Each missionary was required to submit an annual letter and journal listing his daily activities. These papers served as a means for the parent society to ensure its men were following the regulations, but they also provided a fertile source for public information. The Society published a number of magazines, of which the most widely circulated was the C.M.S. Intelligencer (founded 1849), which was used to publicize the Society's activities and served as an appeal for funds from the general public. In fifty years, the Society had become a highly organized and effective institution, described recently in these terms:

> By the late 1850's these Evangelical missionaries were far less the romantic idealists who longed only to preach the Gospel to the heathen. They had themselves become a national institution, organized a vast network throughout England, with agents whom they supervised throughout the unconverted world. They had had years of experience in dealing with non-Christian peoples, and by mid-century approached their mission in a systematic, scientific manner. 3

The first proposal to work among the Indians in North America appears to have arisen early in the Society's history. According to one report, a member of the North West Company approached the C.M.S. Committee requesting a mission for the Indians somewhere beyond the Rockies. The committee

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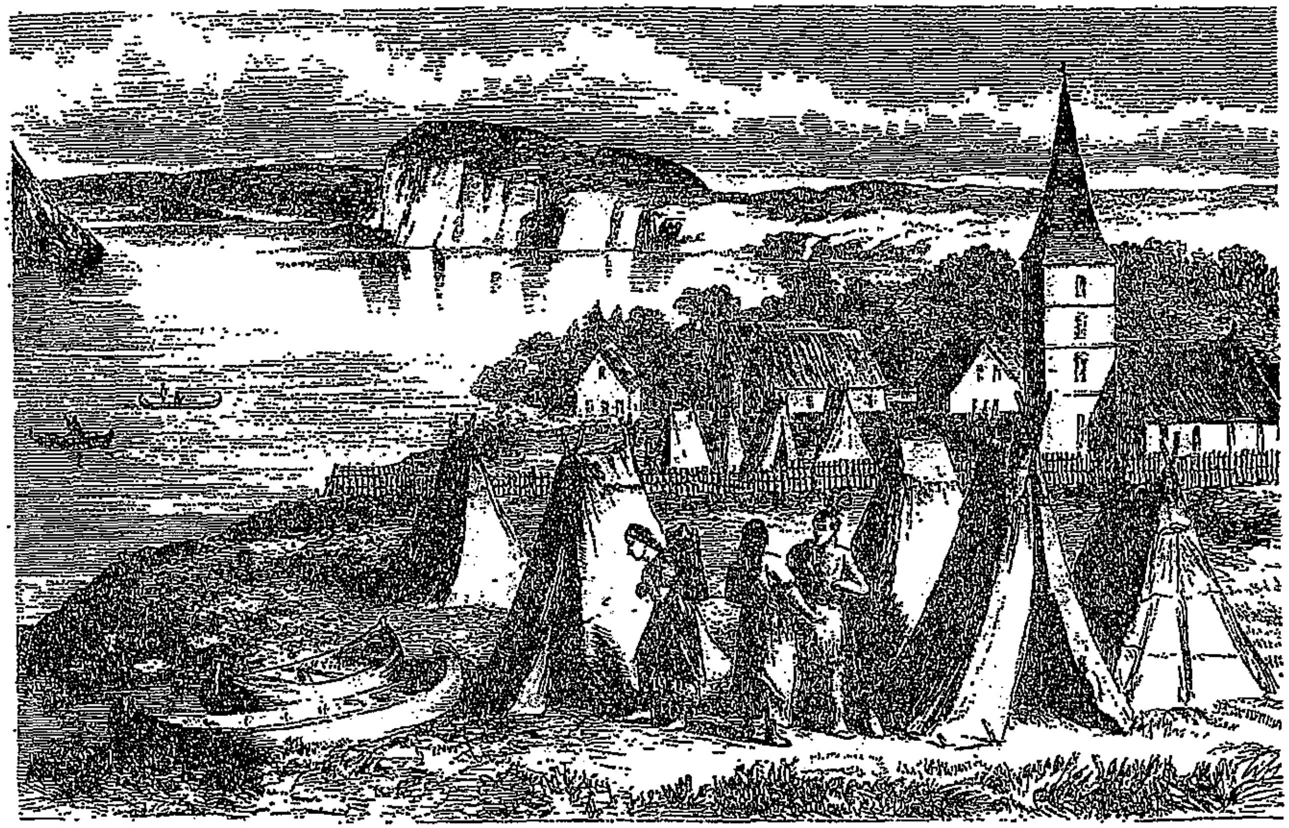
[3] Usher, op cit., p.5.



FORT SIMPSON, MACKENZIE RIVER.

PHOTO B: The Church Missionary Society Mission Station,
Fort Simpson, circa 1875. Courtesy P.A.M.

moved to investigate the possibility, but little seems to have come of it.[4] Movement into the north west was to come more gradually.

St. John's church in what is now Winnipeg was established in 1823 by Reverend John West. In 1840, the first mission to the interior was begun at The Pas, under the Native minister Henry Budd, in accordance with the native-ministry theory of the C.M.S. By 1849, there were enough clergy operating in Red River and north that the Society determined the time had come to create a full-fledged diocese, and David Anderson was duly appointed first bishop of Rupert's Land. The diocese contained all the land specified in the H.B.C. charter, but was to end at the 49th parallel. In one of Anderson's first letters to the Society in his capacity as bishop, he demonstrated an interest in the north.

> The sailors of Sir J.Richardson's overland expedition were present [at a gathering in Red River]...They give a good account of the civilization of the Indians on the Mackenzie River--they seem as civilized, according to their statement, as those around this place--and said it was quite a pity they had no Minister. [5]

However, it was not until the Society was faced with the threat that the Roman Catholics might reach these Indians first that a move was made to visit this distant land.

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[4] S.Gould, Inasmuch:Sketches of the Beginnings of the Church of England in Canada,(Toronto,1917),p.83. The date is given as 1819,but a misprint is possible.Could it be 1809?

[5] Church Missionary Society Intelligencer,Vol.I,(1850),p.178, letter dated August 27,1849.

The Catholics who seemed to threaten the C.M.S. were an order of French priests known as the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. They had been formed in 1816 also as a result of the evangelizing fervour, and their specific mission was to minister to the poor. In 1841 they expanded overseas to Canada on a request by Mgr.Bourget of Montreal, to take up the "ministry initiated among the Indians by the Recollet Fathers, carried on by the Jesuits and suspended by the cession of New France."[6] At that time, the entire order consisted of only 40 priests and nine lay brothers, yet four priests and two lay brothers were spared for Montreal.[7]

At the same time, Mgr.Provencher of Red River was anxious for some "professional" religious men because of a number of problems he was encountering with his "secular priests". Apparently most of these volunteers were unwilling to conform to the ideology of the church as interpreted by Provencher.[8] He approached Mgr.Bourget who was about to embark on a journey to Rome, with the request to bring back some Jesuits, but Bourget was unsuccessful. In 1844, Provencher repeated his request to Bishop Signay of Quebec and on August

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[6] Oblate Services, Gazeteer of Indian and Eskimo Stations of the Oblate Fathers in Canada, (Ottawa, 1960), p.v.

[7] F.E.Banim, "The Centenary of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate", Canadian Catholic Historical Association Report, (1941-42), p.29. See also Lionel Groulx, Le Canada francais missionaire, (Montreal, 1962), p.35.

[8] A.G.Morice, History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, Vol.I, (Toronto, 1910), pp.189ff.

25,1845, Reverend Casimir Aubert, O.M.I., accompanied by lay brother Alexandre Taché arrived at Red River. Within a year, the O.M.I. had expanded their field north to Ile à la Crosse, and in 1847 Taché visited Lake Athabasca.

The rivalry between the Roman Catholics and Anglicans became the primary impetus for expansion northwards. It was a bitter, hostile battle in which both sides felt not the least compunction in using the Indians as pawns. In fact, the competition in many ways paralleled the competition in the fur trade that had earlier determined the opening of the north to Europeans. This aspect of missionary enterprise was recognized early by Donald Ross at Norway House, who wrote to George Simpson in 1842,

> Mr.Evans [Wesleyan missionary] made a very extensive tour last winter, married and baptized a great many people, but the priests and church missionaries have been stirring themselves actively of late and both seem equally hostile to the Wesleyans. Wherever they go they re-marry and re-baptize those who previously had undergone the ceremony...There will soon be as hot a religious opposition in the country as we had formerly about the fur trade. [9]

Both sides believed they offered the only Truth; the Anglicans were critical of the Oblates' veneration of the Virgin Mary and their view of Jesus Christ symbolized in the crucifix, while the Oblates did not believe the Anglicans had the right to call themselves ministers of the Gospel for they were married men. To a certain degree as well, there was an element of English-French rivalry, for the Oblates were French-speaking almost to a man, while the Anglicans were English-speaking from Britain. It must also be noted that this suspicion and distrust was not merely a manifestation of individual personalities competing for souls in a lonely environment. Many articles in the C.M.S. Intelligencer were devoted to the threat of "Romanism" while official writing of the Oblate press frequently concerned itself with condemnations of Protestant activity. Nor was this form of argument and attack limited to the nineteenth century. In 1949, an Oblate historian summarized the era with these words:

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[9] As quoted in Frank A.Peake,"Fur Traders and Missionaries: Some Reflections on the Attitudes of the H.B.C. Towards Missionary Work Among the Indians.",Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology,Vol.3,No.1,(1972), p. 62, source not cited.

> Such was the battle which was fought during this period against Protestantism. Protestantism propagated by ministers often without heart, without principles, without loyalty. It was perhaps one of the greatest obstacles which the missionary Church in western Canada had to surmount.[10]

Of course, both sides also believed that they would ultimately be successful in winning Indian souls to their version of Christianity, so initially, both sides charged energetically and optimistically into the vast northern country in the rush to find more, fresh fields of souls, much as the competing traders had driven northward for ever more furs.

There were a number of early attempts to reach the Chipewyan Indians, and missions were established along the

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[10] Joseph-Etienne Champagne, Les Missions catholiques dans l'ouest canadien, 1818-1875, (Ottawa, 1949), p.99.

H.B.C. route to the northern interior. In 1858, the push northward began in earnest. Archdeacon James Hunter of Red River heard that the Oblates were planning to reach the Mackenzie that season, so obtained permission to travel there with the Portage la Loche brigade.

The Catholics saw the voyage as a dramatic thrust into the very heart of the north, and responded immediately. Father Pierre Henri Grollier and a lay brother were hastily dispatched to Fort Simpson, "to follow, and if possible overtake the Protestant minister."[11] They arrived August 16,1858.

Hunter spent the winter at Fort Simpson, visiting Fort Liard briefly in September and Forts Norman and Good Hope in the spring. Father Grollier, however, was unable to secure permanent lodgings and was forced to return to a base at Great Slave Lake for the winter. The Catholics blamed hostility on the part of the H.B.C. officer and clerks for the poor reception. The Indians, however, seemed responsive, and the Oblates were much encouraged.

Contact with the Nahanni or Mountain Indians was made almost immediately, according to C.M.S. records. These people were among the first to be baptized by Archdeacon Hunter during his year at Fort Simpson. Somewhat enthusiastically, Hunter wrote in his diary for March 7,1859,

> Baptized two Nahannee Indians.It is quite pleasing

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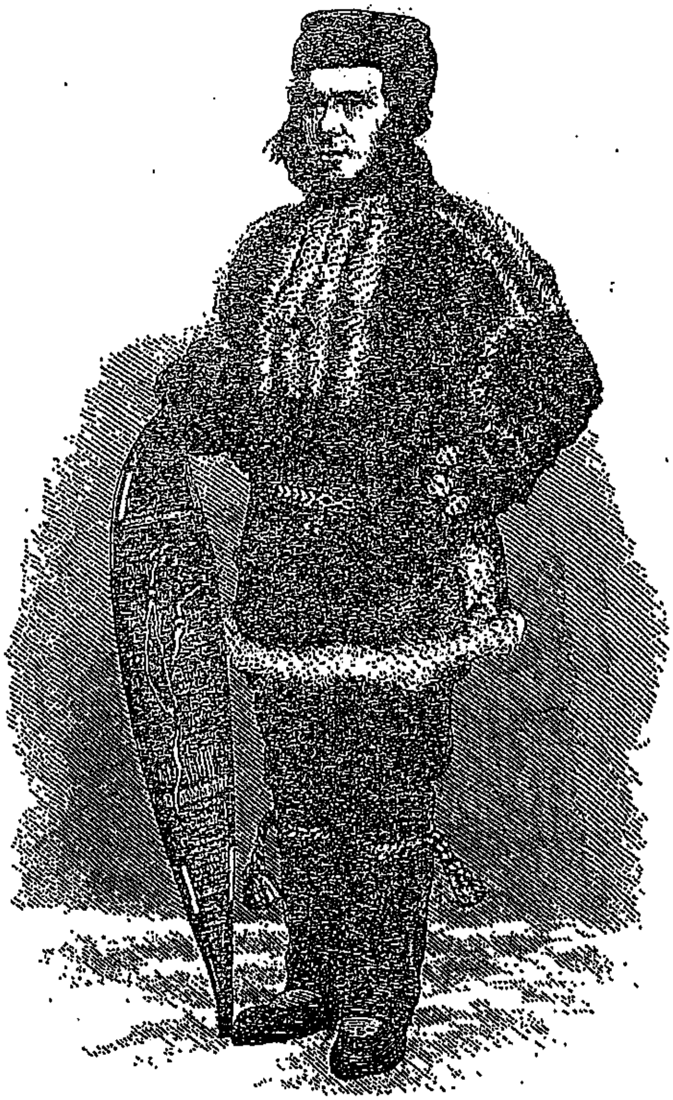
[11] Gaston Carrière,"Fondation et développement des missions catholiques dans la Terre de Rupert et les Territoires du Nord-Ouest,1841-61",Revue de l'université d'Ottawa, Vol.41(1971),p.409.



REV. W. W. KIRKBY IN TRAVELLING DRESS

PHOTO C: Reverend W.W.Kirkby (C.M.S.) circa 1875. Courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

> to see the simple and childlike faith manifested by these Indians...They were anxious to impress these glad tidings upon their memories,that, returning to their camp among the Nahannee mountains, they might relate to their friends the wonderful things they had heard.[12]

The following year, James Hunter left Fort Simpson and sent in his place William West Kirkby, who was instructed to establish a permanent mission at Fort Simpson. Kirkby was described by the Catholics as "very zealous, but less of a friend of the Catholics [than Hunter] and equally a bigot."[13] The fiery personalities of Father Gascon and Reverend Kirkby clashed to such an extent that Gascon ended one of his letters to Tache in Red River with the declaration,"Guerre à Satan, guerre au petit Kerby!"[14] The battle was conducted to the point of utter ludicrousness when each tried to deceive the other over a departure date from Fort Simpson, and finally agreed to leave together after H.B.C. Factor Hardisty intervened as mediator.

With Kirkby's assistance, the H.B.C. constructed a church and mission house at Fort Simpson. The house was also intended to serve as a school. The Anglicans seemed more concerned with consolidating their position at Fort Simpson than indulging in much expansion; with only two missionaries in the vast northern district, they had little choice.

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[12] C.M.S.Proceedings,(1859-1860),p.216.

[13] Carrière,op cit.,p.409.

[14] as quoted in ibid.,p.414.

However, they were effective in creating a stronghold at Fort Simpson; indeed one disgruntled priest described that place as "the capital of Protestantism in the north."[15]

The Catholics, on the other hand, travelled extensively from the beginning. Father Grollier spent the winter of 1859-1860 at Fort Good Hope inside the Arctic Circle. In September 1860, Father Gascon (who reached Fort Simpson on his own initiative after being refused passage on an H.B.C. barge),[16] travelled up the Liard River and ministered to the Indians at Fort Liard, among them several Nahannis. He named the spot in honour of Saint Raphael, although it would be several years before a permanent mission could be established. It was originally intended to use St.Raphael's as a base for visiting Fort Simpson, since it seemed highly unlikely at the time that the O.M.I.'s would be able to penetrate the H.B.C./C.M.S. bastion and be allowed to build a mission there.[17]

Father Gascon reported that he was not the first Catholic at Fort Liard. During his visit there, he was assisted by a Métisse woman known locally as "la bonne femme Houle":

> She had been for long the Company's chief 'bully' on the Simpson-Liard route.She was a terror both to whites and to Indians. She stood erect in the bow of the barge, and gave her orders to the crew, as one who must be obeyed,or she would know the reason why.[18]

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[15] Morice,op cit.,p.314

[16] P.Duchaussois,Mid Snow and Ice:The Apostles of the Northwest, (London,1923),p.129.

[17] Carrière,op cit.,p.413.

[18] Duchaussois,op cit.,p.239.

She had subsequently travelled to Red River where she had been taught by the Grey Nuns. When she returned home, she became "as bold for religion as ever she had been for the fur trade, or paganism."[19]

Gascon travelled frequently through the area for three years. Kirkby, too, made several trips from his home base at St. David's mission, as it was called, including a planned trip to the Yukon. In 1862 he was joined by the Reverend Robert McDonald, a "country born" minister from Point Douglas, Red River, who accompanied him to the new territory and remained there when Kirkby returned to Fort Simpson.

That same year, the O.M.I. created the Vicariate of Athabaska-Mackenzie to facilitate administration of the expanding mission. The priests in the north had urged the vicariate because they believed a central direction in the area was needed to help combat the spread of Protestantism.[20] The Anglicans had no equivalent organization on the local level; indeed, with only two missionaries in the area, there seemed little need for it.

The first Vicariate-Apostolic was Mgr. Fauraud. His staff consisted of eight priests: Fathers Evnard, Gascon, Tissier, Clut, Grouard, Séguin, Petitot, and Genin. The priests were assisted by lay brothers Salarse, Kearney, and Boisramé.[21]

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[19] Ibid., p. 240.

[20] Anon., Oblate Fathers' Centenary in Western Canada, pamphlet, (Winnipeg, 1945).

In spite of the larger number of Roman Catholic missionaries present in the district, they complained of certain disadvantages. There were charges that the wealthy Anglicans "bribed" the Indians with tea and tobacco which the Oblates lacked the financial backing to provide.[22] The priests also spent a great deal of time travelling in order to reach as many Natives as possible, and thus were unable to spend much time at any one location.[23] Others complained that too often precious time was consumed in hearing confessions and making peace between bands or families so that actual teaching of catechism was relegated to a secondary position.[24] Nevertheless, the number of men and the very fact that they did travel gave the Catholics definite advantages over the Protestants.

In spite of their comparatively sedentary approach, the C.M.S. missionaries at Fort Simpson were in frequent contact with the once-remote Nahannis, since the latter visited the post at Fort Simpson often during the 1860's according to missionary records. It is interesting to note that women now accompanied the men instead of remaining at the base camps, a signal that the European attitude towards women was indeed influencing the Indians. A second possible explanation is that the Mountain Indians no longer felt threatened by the white presence, and were not forced to keep their families hidden to protect them. A typical encounter in June, 1860 was recorded in this way:

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[21] Champagne, op cit., p.170.

[22] See, for example, Morice, op cit., p.327.

[23] Champagne, op cit., p.170.

[24] Mgr. Fauraud, "Rapport: Missions de l'Amérique du Nord," Annales de la Propagation de la Foi, (Sept. 1864), pp. 390-391.

> ...a large party of Nahanni Indians from the Rocky Mts. came down the river in small canoes, each one manufactured from a single piece of pine bark...They had their wives and families with them...They were not bad looking, & were all of them dressed in cloths manufactured from the kid of the mountain goat...They finished their trade by 4 o'clock and at 6 they all attended Divine Service with the other Indians, where they heard for the first time in their lives the glorious news of Salvation.
>
> At night they had their usual dance which was performed by both men and women...[25]

However, there was some difficulty with the language, as Cadieux, the missionary's paid interpreter who spoke Chipewyan, could not always make the Mountain Indians understand. Kirkby had attempted to solve the problem by procuring the services of a boy from each tribe that traded at Fort Simpson to teach as interpreters. Of the six boys selected, two spoke the "Nahannie" dialect,[26] a fact which indicates the increased importance of the Mountain Indians at the post. These two boys were of French-Indian marriages, so one must assume that by this point, the Mountain Indians and the white traders had reached a degree of cultural interaction similar to that which formed the Métis societies on the Prairies. Little seems to have come of Kirkby's translation scheme however.

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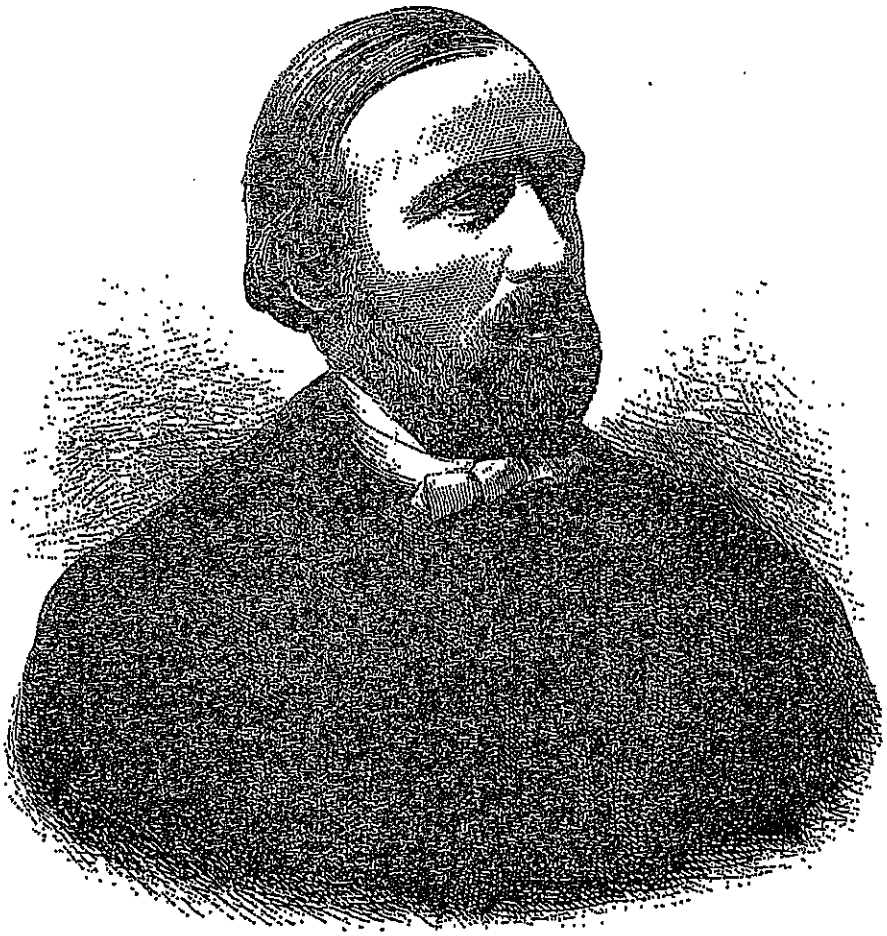
[25] C.M.S.Correspondence (Incoming),from W.W.Kirkby,microfilm P.A.M.

[26] Ibid.

1865 was a pivotal year for the Mackenzie district (and indeed for the entire north), for that year marked the arrival of William Carpenter Bompas to join the C.M.S. team. He was to become perhaps the best-known individual associated with the north during this period, and tales of his adventures have worked their way into countless versions. Originally he had volunteered upon hearing that Robert McDonald of the Yukon was in poor health, only to arrive and discover that the latter had recovered. So instead of travelling on to the Yukon, it was decided he should remain in the Mackenzie basin and travel to the outposts where the Catholics were already at work. The adventurous Bompas accepted the commission, although he continued to long for the magic of the Yukon. It was probably hoped that the C.M.S. could now compete more directly with the O.M.I., with the increased manpower to undertake the extensive travel involved. Not only were more Indians to be reached in this manner, but greater frictions between opposing sects were to be generated as a result.

Early work at Fort Simpson involved primarily the



THE RIGHT REV. W. C. BOMPAS, BISHOP OF ATHABASCA.

PHOTO D: Bishop W.C.Bompas (C.M.S.)
circa 1875. Courtesy Provincial
Archives of Manitoba.

establishing of trust and communication, for both sects. Preparation for missionary work did not include training in the language of prospective converts (for either the Oblates or the C.M.S. men), so translators who could be trusted had to be found. During the winter, when few Indians except the fort hunters remained at the posts, the missionaries devoted their time to preparing catechisms in native syllabics, writing reports to headquarters, and some travelling if a dog team was available. The missionaries appear to have been highly dependent on the services of others for food, clothing and travel, while the H.B.C. and Indian hunters appear to have considered helping the missionaries to be very low on their list of priorities, so the priests and ministers spent a great deal of time simply waiting for transportation or food. Once the weather warmed and the ice broke, the Indians began arriving to trade the results of their winter hunts, and the churches would spring into activity. The missionaries would visit the Indian encampments, invite the Indians to their services, offer medical aid and other tokens, and do as much preaching as possible. The Roman Catholics were eager to perform baptism as soon as possible, as part of the conversion process, while the Anglicans tended to deny that rite until the Natives had demonstrated their faith by learning basic prayers and creeds, and conforming to certain western behavioural standards. Once the Indians had left the fort, however, they would be out of reach for many long months, so much intensive work had to be done in the short time available to the missionaries.

There was also intense competition between sects at every mission. Both priest and minister would talk to the same group of Indians, each cursing the other. Many Indians were convinced by one or the other, and before long, two separate Indian camps would be set up annually at Fort Simpson: one composed of Protestant Indians and the other of Catholics. Other Indians faced the choice by simply abandoning both groups.

Initially, the missionary work at Fort Simpson was approached with great optimism. The Indians were described as "simple and confiding".[27] Physical hardships like near-starvation and frequent battles with the winter storms were faced as part of the Christian's trials; indeed, this aspect of martyrdom was positively savoured, particularly by the Roman Catholics. Reports of these difficulties frequently found their way into the societies' official publications, as they captured the imaginations of readers, and often their financial support as well.

In 1869, hopes were still high for the conversion of the Fort Simpson district Indians. That year, William Day Reeve arrived to replace Kirkby at the St.David's mission.

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[27] C.M.S.Proceedings,(1859-60),p.215.

Reeve was to devote most of his life to service in the district. He had been born in Lincolnshire, England in 1844, and like many other C.M.S. missionaries, came from humble beginnings. He attended the village school then worked on a farm for two years before becoming a local Sunday School superintendent. From there, the decision to join the C.M.S. was very natural. He attended the Society's Islington College, where, like his fellow students, he learned the basic theories upon which the C.M.S. had founded its system. Kirkby was in England on a speaking tour in 1868 to raise interest (and money) for the Mackenzie District; when he visited the college looking for assistants, Reeve caught his attention. In April 1869, Reeve married, then four days later, departed with his bride for Fort Simpson.

Reeve believed that the C.M.S. presence was firmly established at Fort Simpson and began to look further afield. One of his first concerns was Fort Liard. Besides the cursory visits of Hunter and Kirkby, the C.M.S. had not demonstrated a great deal of interest in the area. On the other hand, the O.M.I. priests had considered it important from the date of their arrival in the north with the result that they had apparently been successful in firmly rooting Catholicism along the Liard River. The fort hunters and others who came regularly to Fort Liard to trade were spared the religious conflict for over a decade while it was inflicted daily on their Fort Simpson relatives. Reeve was determined to make a beginning for the Protestants, making new converts,and encouraging the many Nahannis who had initially been Protestants to return to the fold. He was convinced the Anglicans had lost these people,"with scarcely an exception."[28] One possible explanation could be that the 'Nahannis' traded at Fort Simpson during the period of initial missionary contact, and were persuaded by the strong presence of the C.M.S. Gradually,however, the Mountain Indians were moving the bulk of their trade to Fort Liard, where the Catholic presence dominated, and were thus "lost" to the Protestants.

Reeve was assisted by Eliza Leask of Fort Liard, who lived at Fort Simpson and knew several of the Indian dialects. During the summer of 1870, she instructed him while he devoted much time to the preparation of a collection of prayers and short sermons which Bompas had begun. Reeve hoped to take these to Liard upon completion, but learned on the eve of departure that no Indians would be at Liard until the river froze over, so that the visit was postponed.Not until the following autumn (1871) was the excursion finally launched. He arrived on September 15, and spent only nine hours at Fort Liard. The visit was a great disappointment."There were several Indians there who all shook hands with me on landing," he reported,"but as soon as the priest appeared they all crowded around him and left me to myself."[29]Reeve decided to continue to Fort Nelson, where he found the natives "still in a heathen state."[30] He was the first Protestant missionary to visit the post although a Catholic priest (probably Father Gascon) had apparently been at the remote site twice before. Reeve reported to his great satisfaction, "From what I hear I think he has not done much amongst them."[31]

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[28] C.M.S.Correspondence (Incoming),Journal of W.D.Reeve,1870.

[29] *Ibid.*,Annual Letter and Journal,W.D.Reeve,1871.

Reeve was not able to accomplish a great deal either. On two of the five days spent at the fort, no Indians arrived. He had difficulties with language, and the Indians were polite but completely disinterested in the proffered salvation. Reeve later reported:

> ...I spoke to them telling them I had come to teach them about God and to instruct them in those things which belong to their everlasting welfare. One of them replied that as many of them were sick they would have felt very grateful if I had brought some medicine to do them good, and they would also be very thankful for some tobacco. [32]

In spite of the obvious indifference, Reeve remained somewhat optimistic. He was able to write to the London society that although the Fort Liard Indians were already Roman Catholics, "they are growing tired of the priest, and are beginning to think his teaching does them more harm than good." And besides, he added, it appeared to him that a small group of Loucheux trained in the Protestant beliefs were adhering to their faith even after they had moved to Fort Liard, so there was hope for a Protestant community at that place yet![33]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

In reality, such a community seemed unlikely. The year Reeve visited Fort Liard, St.Raphael's was granted permanent mission status and the Catholic position there consolidated.

In 1874, the Anglicans responded to the increasingly organized Catholic mission with the creation of the Diocese of Athabasca under the direction of the inimitable Bishop Bompas. Bompas was an energetic and enthusiastic missionary, who was determined to extend the boundaries of his diocese, and was constantly concerned with the winning of new souls. He wrote more often than any of the other northern missionaries to the London headquarters, and frequently composed articles describing northern life for readers of various religious publications.

Bompas,too, was a man of relatively humble beginnings, scanty education, and a fundamentalist religious upbringing. He was born January 20,1834. His father, a "Serjeant-at-law", died when William was ten, and he was brought up by a strict Baptist family. He attended a village school and was articled with a firm of lawyers for a brief time before he announced that poor health would force him to give up the law. He turned to the Church of England for a career. His ordination as deacon in 1859 followed fast upon his confirmation in his newly adopted church. He was anxious to travel to India or China, but the C.M.S. considered a man his age too old to begin learning the difficult languages of those countries. Thenin 1865, he volunteered his services for the North. The Yukon was ever his personal goal, and the policies he expressed as bishop frequently reflected his preoccupation with that field.

Bompas directed most of his energies toward expansionism. He had travelled extensively throughout the diocese before receiving the bishopric, and continued to do so, leaving his wife to conduct the work at Fort Simpson in his absence. Agriculture was central to this idea. First, farming was needed to aid basic survival, as the meat supply was insufficient to support even a small population with any certainty. Secondly, and most important for Bompas, farming would be an excellent example and training for the Indians; by example they would learn to abandon their migrations and "settle down" to providing for tomorrow. The mission farms would also be "on the job training" in a sense, for Bompas believed his Indian charges would learn far better by doing than by sitting in a classroom, listening to ideas and theory. The Roman Catholics were developing gardens at Forts Liard and Simpson, but Bompas' plans sound more extensive. He was realistic enough, however, to admit it would never be possible to produce for export.[34] At one point, he also proposed that although the climate of the north was too hostile for immigration from Canada, it would be an ideal place to re-settle Indians who were being displaced by expanding settlement in the south.[35]

In 1884, just ten years after he had been consecrated bishop, the C.M.S. agreed that the Mackenzie District was now developed sufficiently to be created a diocese in its own right. Bompas retained the bishopric of the new diocese of Mackenzie when it separated from the diocese of Athabasca to the south.

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[34] W.C.Bompas, Diocese of Mackenzie River, (London, 1888), p.100.

[35] Ibid., p.102.

Because the Liard River was one possible route to the Yukon, and because it had proven it contained areas suitable for agriculture, it drew considerable attention from Bompas. In 1885, he mentioned his concern that no work had been done there since the earlier brief visits. Accordingly, the following year, Bompas sent out young David Kirkby (son of W.W.Kirkby) with Allen Hardisty as interpreter. The pair reached Fort Nelson where they spent a fortnight preaching, dispensing medicine and teaching the children of the H.B.C. post officers. They reported the Indians "seemed interested", but could not claim any great success.[36]

Bompas was undaunted, and wrote to London with a request for a farmer to establish himself at Fort Liard and break the ground (literally and figuratively) for a new mission. There was also some hope that a permanent mission school might be built at that site.

It was nearly a full year from the date of the original request that the C.M.S. agreed to send another man, and accordingly dispatched Mr.John Hawksley. It appears that he was a carpenter rather than a farmer, and Bompas was somewhat disappointed. Nevertheless, he assigned Hawksley the task of constructing the buildings to be occupied by the farmer whom Bompas confidently expected at some future date.

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[36] C.M.S.Correspondence Inward, Report of a visit to Fort Nelson, by David Kirkby, June 1886.

Bompas was not the only one who saw the Liard mission as a key project for the Society. Robert McDonald, long a missionary in the Yukon, wrote the following somewhat visionary letter to his bishop in 1888:

> It is surely time that a Mission Station should be established at Fort aux Liards where the Natives have for some time been asking for a missionary of the C.M.S....Should not an effort be made to reach all the tribes that inhabit the country to the headwaters of the western branch of the Liards River? ...The contemplation of it is to me fascinating; it is exhilarating.
>
> Thus a chain of Mission Stations might be formed beginning at Fort aux Liards...onwards to the Upper Youcon, and all that country would be encircled with the light of the Gospel. [37]

However, there was simply insufficient manpower available, so John Hawksley constructed the buildings required and then returned to Fort Simpson, where he was later to be made Indian agent.

In 1891, the diocese of Selkirk was created, composed of what is now the Yukon Territory. Naturally, Bompas became its first bishop. William Day Reeve was consecrated bishop of the remaining Mackenzie Diocese. Reeve was much more realistic than his predecessor, and although he recognized Bompas' plan, he gave up the attempt to further it after a year. Perhaps his own dismal failures in the past to win the Liard region, tempered with the less virulent approach of an older man, less driven by the idealism of youth, contributed to his willingness to practise a less dynamic approach. He sent out a Mr.March, who had been trained at Wycliffe Theological College, to teach the children at Fort Liard for the winter of 1892-93, but had decided by November that ultimately the plan would have to be abandoned for "the place is too much out of the way for a school, & the difficulties of navigation are too great for it to be of benefit to the diocese at large."[38] At that time, he reported the more or less permanent population at 219 Indians, every single one of whom was Roman Catholic, at least nominally. Herein lies the real reason that the post was again abandoned by the Protestants.

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[37] C.M.S.Correspondence Inward, 1888.McDonald to Bompas.

The Roman Catholics were not as daunted by the distances or the rapids, largely because they had more priests and assistants in the form of devoted lay brothers. Finally in 1894, they were able to make substantial inroads into the main Anglican stronghold, when Father Laurent Brochu became the first resident priest at Fort Simpson.[39] The following year, the Oblates were able to purchase their own steamship for use on the Mackenzie. It was the beginning of a new era for the missionaries and for the north.

To what degree were the missionaries successful in achieving their "conquest" of Indian souls in the nineteenth century? As has been noted, the initial contact was approached enthusiastically by the priests and ministers. The Indians seemed docile and responsive. The Catholics claimed that the Protestants were undisputed masters at Fort Simpson while the Protestants envied the Catholic position at Fort Liard. However, the enormous difficulties quickly became only too obvious, and privately each missionary society admitted failures. The attempts to establish a school at St.David's were futile because the Anglicans could not collect a large number of children or adults for any length of time. W.D. Reeve claimed he was unable to accomplish much with the Indians who appeared at the post only once or twice a year, and even less could be done with the permanent residents because of the evil influence of the "godless" white and Métis traders.[40] The ravages of smallpox and venereal disease also hampered the spiritual work.

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[38] Ibid., Reports of W.D.Reeve, 1892.

[39] This is not to say that Fort Simpson had not been visited by the Catholics. See Appendix 2.

The Catholics lamented because they felt they were supplied with insufficient funds to compete successfully with the "wealthy" Protestants. Their financial support came primarily from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and indeed, it was considerably less than the C.M.S. was able to provide for its men.[41] The priests also lamented that their

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[40] C.M.S.Correspondence Inward,Annual.Letter of W.D.Reeve,1870.

[41] In 1863, for instance, for the entire western missions,funding was as follows:

£1,330	S.P.F.
400	Tithes,gifts
200	Incomes
100	H.B.C.

(based on Champagne,op cit.,p.137)

On the other hand, the C.M.S. supplied all its western missions with £5,935 in 1864. Note that this involved only 13 clergymen. (C.M.S.Proceedings.1864-65.p.242) gospel teaching often reached the Indians in a twisted form. Father Gascon at Fort Liard noted that, "Many hunters, for example, refused baptism for the only reason that once they were Christians, they would no longer be happy to hunt." [41a] Clearly, the misunderstanding lies more on the part of the missionaries. The "Christianity" of which the Indians were afraid was the culture changes that the evangelists were demanding alongside the spiritual conversion. The Indians rightly recognized that what the priest had to offer would radically alter their way of life if they accepted it. Gascon also noted that the women, who were so badly treated by the nineteenth century European standard, would scarcely believe that they were even eligible for salvation.[42] The priests also felt that they were at a disadvantage because the Indians seemed to prefer to adopt Anglicanism in order to please the Anglican H.B.C. officials.[43] And of course, there were charges in the early days of favoritism on the part of the H.B.C. officials toward the Protestant ministers. As has been noted, these charges were often justified. Although the official company policy was to assist both sides, individual employees in the north allowed personal prejudices to direct their actions.

The C.M.S. attempts at recruiting a native clergy in the north were not as successful as they had apparently been elsewhere. Allan Hardisty, although of English-Indian blood, was referred to as a "native catechist".W.D.Reeve complained that he approached his duties at Fort Simpson and along the Liard River only half-heartedly. But after some consideration, Reeve added,

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[41a] Champagne, op cit., p.119.

[42] Champagne, op cit., p.119.

[43] Ibid., p.134.

> I sincerely hope,however, that this has been owing more to his position than his disposition. There are several young men about his own age, & others, who remember that but a few years ago he was as ignorant as themselves, & who, instead of being pleased to be taught by him, resent the idea of him 'setting himself up' as a teacher. [44]

Probably one of the greatest reasons for the initial failure was the intense rivalry between the sects. The Indians may well have been willing to listen to these new white men if it put them in a more favorable trade position by helping them to understand the traders' way of thinking, but the presence of two warring factions served only to confuse and then alienate the prospective converts.

Kirkby's attacks on the O.M.I. clergy were the most frequent and virulent. In a letter of May 22,1860, he wrote:

> The worst is their zeal so completely overlaps all sense of truth and justice that the most unscrupulous means are used to accomplish their purposes. The most extravagant falsehoods and frauds are freely laid under tribute. [45]

And his predecessor, Hunter, had perceived the struggle in the north in highly dramatic terms.

> Here, in the far north-west, the Gospel finds, at the first time of its publication, representatives from two opposite and diametrically

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[44] C.M.S.Correspondence Inward,Reeve's Annual Report,1874.

[45] C.M.S.Intelligencer,(1865) pp.119,120

> opposed churches,Protestantism and Popery, the true and false Gospel coming in contact at their extreme outposts... [46]

Sentiments of equal ferocity were expressed on the other side, as has been noted. The Protestants accused the Catholics of idol worship, stealing Protestant Indian souls, and baptizing those who had no concept of Christianity. The Catholics drew the Indians by capitalizing on the fact that the Protestant ministers were married men, and hence not qualified as spiritual counsellors. Apparently, this idea had some appeal for many Indians, whose own shamen and spiritual leaders were men out of the ordinary as well.

It was not until the 1890's that the battle began to dissipate somewhat, perhaps partially as a reflection of the diminishing concern for mission work in Europe and the gradual disappearance of the fierce evangelistic approach to religion. Bishop Reeve conceded in 1892 that "we are scarcely acting wisely in seeking in vain to obtain a footing where the priests are already established...& neglecting those who either belong to us or wish to do so."[47] It was at this point that the churches began to effectively make their presence felt in the north.[48]

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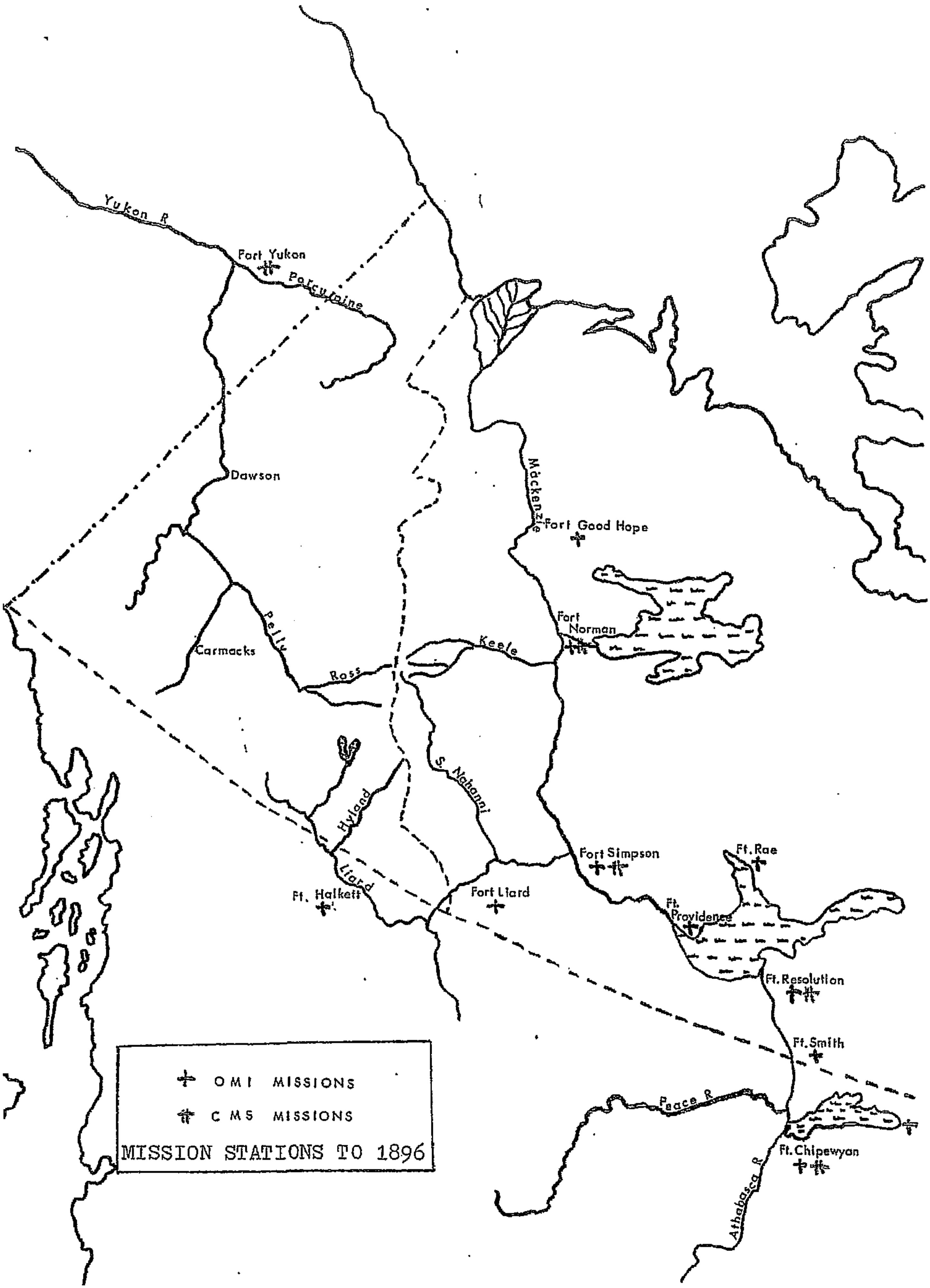
[46] Ibid.,p.119,diary entry for August 17,1858.

[47] C.M.S.Correspondence Inward,Annual Report of W.D.Reeve,Nov.1892.

[48] Supported by the recollections of old people at Fort Norman who reported "It took people a long time to give up the way they were living" after the arrival of the missionaries. C.B.C. television presentation,We Remember,broadcast August 4,1979.


MISSION STATIONS TO 1896

Yukon R
Fort Yukon
Porcupine
Dawson
Mackenzie
Fort Good Hope
Fort Norman
Pelly
Carmacks
Ross
Keele
S. Nahanni
Hyland
Liard
Ft. Halkett
Fort Liard
Fort Simpson
Ft. Rae
Ft. Providence
Ft. Resolution
Ft. Smith
Peace R
Athabasca R
Ft. Chipewyan
OMI MISSIONS
CMS MISSIONS

Before an analysis of the impact of the churches on the north is undertaken, it is important to examine the relationships between the missionaries and the Indians, including the role of the Hudson's Bay Company in that interaction.

The idea of the "Noble Savage" as expressed in the eighteenth century seems to have evaporated rather suddenly with the reality of race relations in India and Africa.[49] But the missionaries could still face their fields in North America with a certain degree of optimism. Some accepted the notion which curiously enough still surfaces in popular pseudo-science-- that the Indians of North America were one of the lost tribes of Israel. Others disagreed and by the mid-nineteenth century were proposing the more modern theory that the Indians had migrated from Asia over "Bherring's Straits."[50] Either approach, however, was based on the idea that civilization was indeed possible for these people, since all men had a common ancestor in Adam, and what had been achieved by one group could be passed along to another. All that would be required was to teach them the ways of European Christian civilization, or to guide them as a father would guide his children.

Individual missionaries reacted in personal ways to the Indians they encountered in the Mackenzie District, but many exhibited the tendency to assume that a lack of concept of God in the Christian sense meant a complete lack of spirituality among the Indians. This lack would be easier to work with, since superstition had to be eradicated before the new spiritual notions could be implanted. Typical of these attitudes were the following phrases used to describe the northern Indians in mid-century. They were "entirely ignorant of every art and science," although not "deficient in natural talent." They had only "a vague idea of a Supreme Being", but they also exhibited "a bravery and noble independence" and were "less degenerate than [their] brethern of the border."[51] Such descriptions presented the Indians as childlike, amoral and often immoral but fundamentally capable of being saved. The missionaries' work was thus depicted as challenging and difficult, but ultimately worthwhile.

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[49] Christine Bolt, Victorian Attitudes to Race, (Toronto, 1971), pp. x-xi.

[50] B. Slight, Indian Researches, (Montreal, 1844), pp. 14 ff.

Often the missionaries were quite deliberate in their approach. Mrs.Bompas recorded that her husband advocated "method,quiet and discipline" for his Indians.

> It is well for the Yukon Indians to be thus wisely and tenderly brought under control. In no other way could the haughty,defiant spirit be broken or tamed. Our present relations with the Indian race are such that Christianity and civilization must be taught simultaneously.[52]

She has summarized the entire mission approach very effectively.

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[51] S.Tucker,Rainbow in the North,(London,1851),chapter 1.

[52] S.A.Archer,A Heroine of the North:Memoirs of Charlotte Selina Bompas,(Toronto,1929),p.177.

What effect, then, did this determined assault have on the Mackenzie Indians? Initially, the conclusion appears to be that great changes were set in motion by the missionaries. Their attempts to encourage the Indians to remain at the posts and mission stations to facilitate their proselytizing were to some extent successful. The H.B.C. officers complained that the Indians were growing "lazy" and lounged about the posts all day. There were fears of food shortages because the small mission gardens could not provide an adequate supply while hunting was abandoned. Bishop Bompas was encouraged by the changes he observed about him; women came to the forts with the men, and ate meals with them instead of being segregated; fewer female babies were being abandoned; superstitions about death were disappearing; the health of the Indians was showing an improvement.[53]

Nevertheless, on closer examination, it may be argued that the Indians were indeed highly resistant to the missionary advances. In 1912, a full fifty years after the initial contact at Fort Simpson, Reverend C.E.Whittaker reported,

> A great improvement is noticeable in the personal appearance of the people, and there are many other signs of progress. Nearly every man carries a watch and most houses have clocks; many have sewing machines, washing machines and

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[53] Bompas, op cit., pp. 93-94.

> Thermos bottles, and they own steel traps by the hundreds. In almost every aspect the life of the converts has undergone a marked change. Still, much remains to be done. Only the rudiments of Christianity -- faith in God, separation from the old life and habits, gratitude for God's mercies -- have yet been instilled in them. [54]

Clearly, the Mackenzie Indians had adopted those elements of western culture that served their needs: the steel traps and sewing machines, for instance. But obviously, few profound cultural changes had occurred, if after two and a half generations of intensive campaigning, the few Indians who had "converted" could accept only the very basic idea of faith in God, which bore at least some resemblance to the traditional Athapaskan concept of supernatural power. Everywhere there is evidence that the changes which did occur were consciously determined by the Indians. For instance, the Athapaskan treatment of women and female babies which particularly angered the Roman Catholic priests, was changed because the Indians believed it would lead to more favorable treatment by the H.B.C. officers in the conduct of trade.[55]

It may thus be concluded that the missionary efforts among the Mackenzie Indians did not cause any great changes in the spiritual or moral attitudes of the native people. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that material changes were successfully introduced in a way that some fur traders had initially dreaded, although perhaps they had unknowingly assisted in instigating these changes themselves. In 1853, Chief Factor Anderson at Fort Simpson wrote to the H.B.C. officials in London expressing his concerns.

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[54] C.M.S. Proceedings, (1912-1913), p.235. Report dated December, 1912.

[55] For instance, the Nahanni leader White Eyes informed Wentzell at Fort Simpson, "Our nation cast away infants of both sexes occasionally, but since you forbid us to do any more, I shall not do it again, and will use my endeavour to prevent my Party from doing so too." (H.B.C.A. B.200/a/4, Fort Simpson Post Journal 1824, fo. 10d)

> I must say that these missions do anything but improve either the minds or morals of the Indians--that McK^{s} Rr.Dist. can sustain no additional burthen [of population]-- that the estab't of a R.C. mission where all the officers and most of the Servants are protestants would create great discontent -- at the same time the poverty of the District will permit neither a protestant or R.C. mission being established... Now were a mission established there [Big Island], the whole of the Indians who hunt on the upper part of this River and about Hay River then would congregate there, fishing, gambling and w'ling away their time. [56]

There were also fears that the H.B.C. would lose its badly-needed and hard-won monopoly in the north if a second force were present in the territory. Bernard Ross explained:

> As to them [mission posts] being self supporting it is entirely out of the question, if they are not to trade provisions...Moreover, if by the refusal of the Company to sell them what they require, the Protestants were obliged to purchase Meat & Grease from the Natives, the effect would be very bad, as tending to open another market for the Indians, and one over which we could have no controul. [57]

The Company's fears of food shortages with the extra population burden and the tendency of hunters to remain at the missions were not unfounded. One case occurred in the summer of 1860 when an Oblate missionary called his flock of Rat Indians to meet him at Peel River. The Indians complied, and hence made no provision hunts that season. It was reported that winter to Bernard Ross at Fort Simpson that "The LaPierre's House Indians have starved like rats in consequence," and the H.B.C. employees, dependent on the results of the neglected hunt, also went hungry.[58]

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[56] HBCA, E.37/10, fo.27d. Letter to Eden Colvile, July 12, 1853.
fo.33d. Letter to George Simpson, November 24, 1853.

[57] HBCA, D.5/47, fo.639d. Ross to George Simpson, November 28, 1858, from Fort Simpson.

In spite of the objections of individual company servants, the H.B.C. official policy was to permit the missionaries to operate in the north, and indeed, to co-operate when required. Probably the primary reason for this open policy was the fact that several prominent members of the London Committee were themselves members of evangelical religious groups.

In the long run, settlement was encouraged by the missionaries, but the effect on the fur trade was probably not as disastrous as initially feared. The Indians came to settle at Forts Liard and Simpson, but continued to trap and hunt. Rather than spend an entire season in the bush, the pattern of spending a few weeks on a trapline and then returning home to a small settlement was established. This style of trapping continues in existence in northern communities today.

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[58] Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, Correspondence of William Hardisty, copy of a letter by J.Lockhart to B.Ross, December 27, 1860.

A second important change brought about by the missionaries was the establishment of residential schools. As has been noted, early attempts to create small local schools were not greatly successful because of the mobility of the population. As early as 1867, a school was opened in Fort Providence by the Grey Nuns. It was hoped that the children, away from the influence of their families, would be more receptive to the ideas of western society. For residents of areas like the Nahanni, this meant great personal and social disruption as for a time, children were sent far away from their parents, and many learned to reject their own culture and values. Indeed, it was difficult for them not to, for the children were punished for speaking their native languages,[59] were dressed in western clothing, and were drilled according to western time schedules. Many of these children could not re-adjust to the old life when they finished school, and often moved permanently to the larger white centres where many lived lives of unhappiness and poverty because they could not fit into white society either. It was a process which has been observed well into our own times.

Another effect of the missionary work which is often forgotten was the spread of disease. With more white men wandering further afield in the north, the chances of disease spreading were greatly multiplied. The worst epidemics in the Mackenzie-Liard district occurred after the arrival of the missionaries. The spread of scarlet fever in 1865-66 decimated the Indian population, which, according to the missionary reports, never fully recovered. The missionaries devoted much time and energy to medical work among their charges, but they were gravely hampered by the lack of knowledge and the lack of supplies. One C.M.S. minister at Fort Simpson made urgent requests for medical supplies from London for three years in a row before finally giving up and making do with whatever was available.

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[59] Charles Hendry, Beyond Traplines, (Toronto, 1969), p.23.

Perhaps one of the most important effects of the missionary presence in the north was the dissemination throughout Europe and North America of a great deal of information about a hitherto largely unknown territory. Apart from the vague tales of adventure at the fur trade posts in northern forests, Europeans and Canadians knew very little about the area. The missionaries, in their detailed reports and frequent, dramatic requests for assistance, contributed a great deal toward arousing interest in the North, and particularly the relatively accessible areas like the Mackenzie-Liard. Father Emile Petitot's studies of the Loucheux Indians gained world-wide attention. Father A.G. Morice travelled and worked with the Indians of northern British Columbia, and his writings remain an important source of information today. Of course, missionaries frequently knew a great deal about the geography and natural resources of their districts both from personal observation and from Indian stories. This sort of knowledge possessed by a priest at Fort Liard was to prove to be of vital importance in the rush to exploit the Nahanni Valley in the early twentieth century.

The keen competition between the Anglicans and the Roman Catholics was a phenomenon observed throughout the north. The Anglicans apparently can claim the victory among the Inuit,if mere statistical data can be used as a measurement of "success" in the sense desired by the churches. However, the Roman Catholics dominated the Mackenzie-Liard district.(See Appendix 2). There are a number of possible explanations. Sheer numbers of workers probably account for much of the O.M.I.'s effectiveness. Besides having more priests, the Catholics were also assisted by a devoted group of lay brothers. There do not appear to have been any Grey Nuns in the Nahanni region during the period under consideration, but the sisters were active at Fort Providence. Secondly, although the Catholics did not receive as much financial support as the Anglicans, they did not require it. The O.M.I. priests lived under a vow of poverty, while the Anglican missionaries and their families attempted to live as comfortably as possible. Finally, it is conceivable that the Catholic approach to religion bore a greater resemblance to the Indians' own spirituality and hence was more appealing.

The traditional interpretation of native religion forms the basis for Morris Zaslow's support for this last argument:

> ...the stress upon religious observances and ceremonies, the colour and pageantry of the ritual, were better suited to the particular situation than were the vaguer concepts of personal revelation and spiritual regeneration taught by the Protestant missionaries.[60]

Although such an interpretation does not allow much credit for the Natives' ability to think in complex terms, there may be some truth in the point that the "colour and pageantry" of Catholicism were closer to the Indian concept of what a religion should be.

The role of the churches in the north has frequently been interpreted as that of a powerful agent of colonialization. However, it is important to note that the north was becoming a colony of Western Europe, not Canada. The C.M.S. agents, almost to a man, had never even been to Canada. They reported to London and received instructions from that place. Indeed it was not until 1921 that the C.M.S. suspended its financial aid and administrative control of the northern missions and turned over the burden to a hesitant Canadian church, as the Society considered most of the inhabitants of northern Canada were then at least nominally Christian, and the funds could be better spent elsewhere.[61] The O.M.I., as well, were initially men from France who had merely passed through

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[60] Morris Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870-1914, (Toronto, 1971), p.65.

[61] See Philip Carrington, The Anglican Church in Canada, (Toronto, 1963).

Quebec on their way north. As with the Hudson's Bay Company, the missionaries were agents of an overseas metropolis, and the people of Canada were not as yet particularly concerned with the far north. The dream of John A. Macdonald for Confederation was "from sea unto sea": a great east-west commercial system that as yet had not discovered the potential of the North. But the agents of evangelical Christianity had prepared the way.

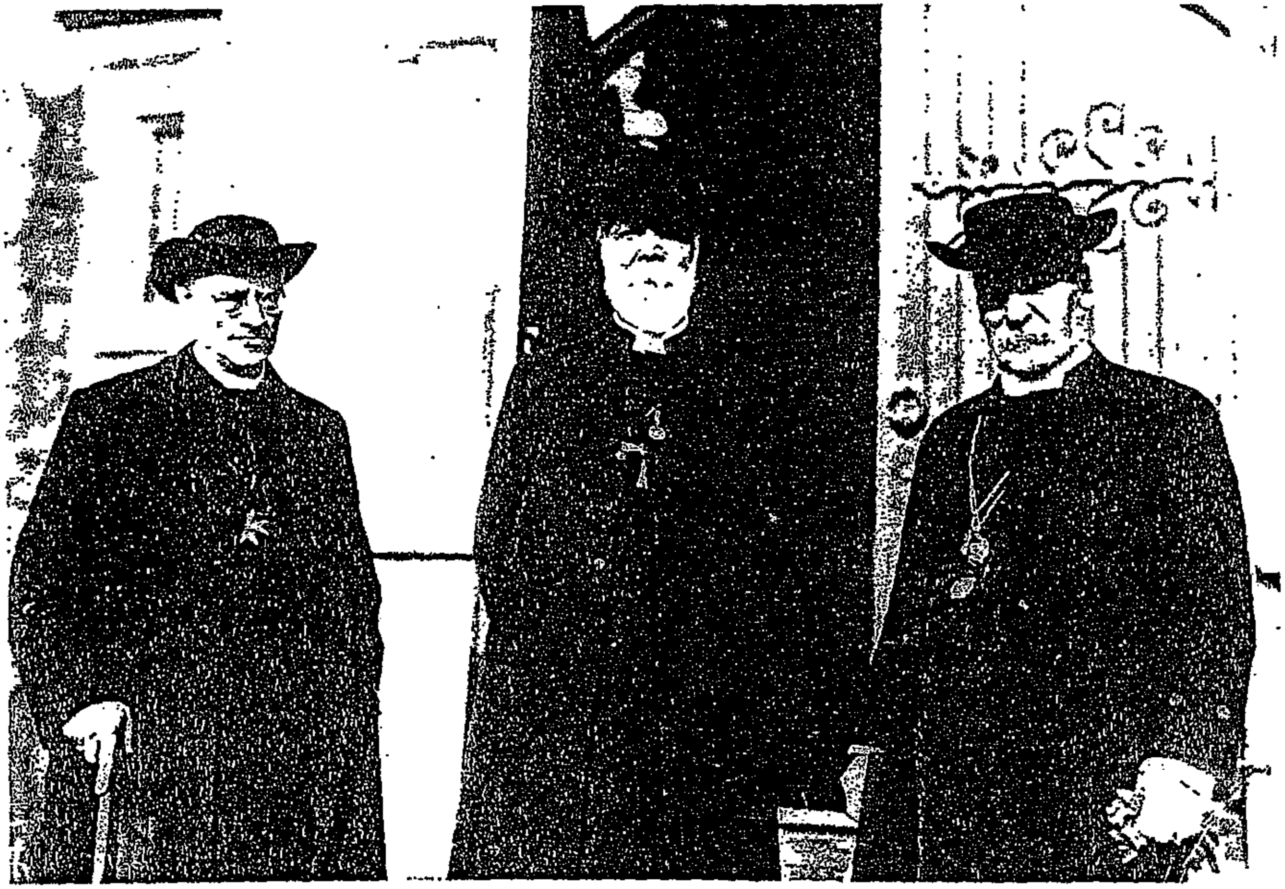

PHOTO E: Reverend W.D.Reeve (centre) of the C.M.S. in 1920.
Courtesy the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

CHAPTER 4

CANADIAN INTEREST AROUSED

1896-1922

The idea of the North as a barren wasteland disappeared almost instantaneously in July of 1897 when ships carrying over a million dollars in gold arrived at San Francisco and Seattle, and the last great North American gold rush was underway. Canadians and Americans alike shifted their east-west focus northward, and for the first time, the north became an important concern for Canadians.

Actually, the Canadian government had already undertaken several projects indicative of growing interest in the north well before the announcement from the Yukon. And it was the Mackenzie District which received the initial attention. In 1888, Senator John Christian Schultz initiated a discussion of the natural food product potential of the little-known areas of Canada. A Select Committee of the Senate was formed, and numerous witnesses were called to answer a wide range of questions on fur production,agricultural potential,climactic conditions and transportation difficulties. Although the commission was originally concerned with northern prairie land, it soon extended its discussion to include the Mackenzie Basin. The Senators carefully examined every potentially exploitable resource, dwelling heavily on the central problem of effective transportation,without which the development of the resources was obviously not feasible. No attention whatsoever was paid to the native inhabitants of the Mackenzie District, and the Senators displayed an abysmal ignorance on the subject of anything northern. Their initial "wasteland" image was quickly replaced by an equally false but amazingly optimistic scenario of a vast northern factory, pouring out lumber, materials for energy,and minerals, while supporting its industrious population on the fruits of a great farming area located in the fertile lowlands along the Liard and Mackenzie. They dwelt heavily on the reports of successful farms at Fort Liard and Fort Simpson, and accepted every rumour of potential mineral deposits. In answer to their central concern,"In what respect can the basin of the Mackenzie be considered of value to the Dominion?",[1] they heard what they wanted to hear, and were well pleased.

Of particular interest to the Committee were reports of gold findings in the area. Mr.William Christie, formerly of the H.B.C. testified:

> It is a known fact that all the streams from the mountains,south of the Saskatchewan even, and going north, are auriferous - that is to say, indications of gold are found in them.I make that statement from what I am told by the miners who have gone up as far north as the Liard into the mountains...[2]

Bishop Isadore Clut responded,"In the Peace River and the

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[1] Third Report of the Select Committee of the Senate, The Resources of the Great Mackenzie Basin,(Ottawa,1888),p.94.

[2] Ibid.,p.94

Liard River certainly there is gold in large quantities," in spite of the fact that he personally had never seen any gold.[3]

At the same time, R.G.McConnell of the Geological Survey was undertaking a long and arduous journey down the Liard to Fort Simpson, then down the Mackenzie, across to Fort Yukon and up the Yukon River and finally over the Chilkoot Pass. McConnell found the Liard particularly treacherous, and concluded, as had the H.B.C. before him, that it was too rough to be used successfully as a trade route between the Cassiar region and the Mackenzie. However, he did report that this area of the Cordillera "has been found rich in minerals and particularly in the deposits of precious metals", and thus he had every expectation of a large find at any time.[4] In the course of his trip, he remained at Nahanni Butte for a time to investigate rumours of a large salt or mineral springs at that site,[5] but discovered nothing of particular interest and made no mention in his subsequent report of any mineral potential in the Nahanni country.

In the midst of this exciting news from the Mackenzie, the Canadian government of 1887-88 received a third, and very different call from the north. Bishop Clut, O.M.I., petitioned Ottawa for financial assistance after the area had struggled through one of its most difficult winters. Clut requested that a meagre $500 be sent annually for the purchase of fish hooks and twine for nets to enable the Indians to collect a more stable and reliable food supply. After considerable discussion, parliament voted in May 1889 to supply the money.[6]

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[3] Ibid., p.156.

[4] George M.Dawson, Report on an Exploration in the Yukon District, N.W.T., G.S.C.Bulletin No.629 (Ottawa, 1898), p.24.

[5] Charles Camsell and Wyatt Malcolm, The Mackenzie River Basin,

Clearly, however, the public imagination of a young nation blindly preferred to hear optimistic reports of unlimited resource potential rather than gloomy stories of starving Indians, and the Mackenzie region began to be approached as one of the keys to greatness for the Canadian nation. Between 1888 and 1890, the trail from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing was widened and improved to the status of "wagon road".

The next step was the movement of the North West Mounted Police into the Yukon. In 1893, Bishop Bompas of the C.M.S. wrote a strongly worded letter to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs requesting some regulation of the liquor trade in the north, which he felt was destroying "his" Indians.[7] The problem had intensified with the recent influx of prospectors, largely Americans, who were roaming about the countryside with little restriction. Until that time, the only northern work carried on by the N.W.M.P. had been an 1890 patrol from Norway House to York Factory in search of a possible land route to Hudson Bay.

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[6] René Fumoleau, As Long as this Land Shall Last, (Toronto, 1973), p.38

[7] William Morrison, "The Mounted Police on Canada's Northern Frontier, 1895-1940", Ph.D. Thesis, U. of Western Ontario (1973), p.27.

In spite of these earlier contacts, the Klondike rush itself was mostly a surprise in Ottawa. Obviously Canadian sovereignty had to be asserted over the new goldfields, order had to be maintained, and more information had to be garnered. The North West Mounted Police, which had been undertaking this kind of work in the west, were dispatched hastily northward. Ottawa was particularly interested in developing an "all-Canadian" route to the Klondike, and in September 1897, a patrol departed from Edmonton to assist in its formation. Part of the group reached Fort Simpson on February 7, 1898 under the leadership of Inspector W.H. Routledge. It was the first contact the people of the Nahanni region had with the authority of the Canadian government.

The Klondike rush had other effects on the Nahanni region immediately after it commenced. In 1897 the Alberta Plaindealer of Edmonton published a map of the Yukon goldfields marked with the various routes from Edmonton. The South Nahanni River (spelled "Nahami") was marked as an insignificant creek less than an eighth of its actual length, draining a large blank spot marked "unexplored". However, it was correctly shown as a tributary of the Liard, one of the more popular routes to the Yukon,[8] and judging from the lie of the land, an adventurous soul might well have proposed to ascend it as a potential shortcut.

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[8] In spite of years of H.B.C. experience and McConnell's report regarding the treacherous nature of the Liard route!

There is considerable speculation as to whether the Nahanni was ever actually used as a river route through the mountains to the Klondike. Charles Camsell, his brother and a friend camped in the area en route, but do not appear to have attempted to ascend the Nahanni. Pierre Berton claims some hardy Edmontonians attempted the Nahanni Valley, but offers no proof.[9] Various remains of cabins along the river (at Nahanni Butte,[10] near Deadmen's Valley,[11] and near Irvine Creek[12]) have been ascribed to Klondikers as well. However, it is nearly impossible to determine the date of construction of these buildings, or to name their builders in an area where men came and went without reporting or registering anywhere.

The most commonly repeated and most feasible story circulated among the local people involves Jack Stanier, who returned to the Nahanni in later years. In 1897, he apparently hired an Indian guide to take him upriver and managed to get as far as Rabbitkettle when his guide dreamed his wife was ill and demanded to turn back. The following year (1898), Stanier hired another guide and managed to travel somewhat further when again the guide turned back. Determined not to fail, Jack and his partner Joe Bird continued alone to the source of the Nahanni where they used an old Indian trail to cross the divide to the Ross River and eventually reached the Klondike fields. However, the good creeks were thickly staked by then and Stanier was out of luck. According to one story, "He says the best he got out of the whole thing was about twenty-five dollars worth of gold."[13]

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[9] Pierre Berton, Klondike, (Toronto, 1972), p.6

[10] Bill Addison interview with Gus Kraus, August 1974. Typescript in Parks Canada, Historic Resources Inventory, No.196, Vol.I, p.150.

[11] R.M. Patterson, "Nahanni Revisited," Beaver Outfit 283 (June 1952), p.18. See also interview of Bill Clark, PCHRI, Vol.II, p.260.

[12] Interview with Bill Clark, op cit., p.285.

The other, more widely circulated stories, suggest some Klondikers actually wintered and began prospecting in the Nahanni. R.M.Patterson, who has written a whole body of "wilderness literature" on the area, claims he found the remains of some very old cabins in Deadmen's Valley between the Wheatsheaf and Meilleur Rivers. "They are built of upright logs, and have fireplaces of clay and stone set in the centre of their floors,"[14] he recorded in his diary, suggesting that this upright log concept was a feature of the "Russian style" of construction. Another old-timer, Bill Clark, reported that he and his partner Gus Kraus found a cabin of similar curious style above the mouth of Irvine Creek. He believed that the men who had built there had proceeded up the Flat River and thence into the Yukon.[15] Patterson also believed that the rotted remains of a corduroy (log) portage around Virginia Falls was the product of Klondike labour, but some time later, it was reported by

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[13] Interview with Gus Kraus, op cit., pp.151ff.

[14] Patterson, op cit., p.18

[15] Interview with Bill Clark, op cit., p.285.

Albert Faille (another Nahanni old-timer) that he had spoken to a man at Fort Simpson who had claimed he had built the portage at a more recent date after coming over from the Pelly River with a group of Indians.[16]

At any rate, the point remains that the Klondike brought large numbers of white prospectors into northern Canada (according to the Dominion Land Agent at Edmonton, over 2,000 left that point between August 1897 and June 1898).[17] Many were disappointed and left the north, never to return. Many others were disappointed, and left the Klondike still convinced that there was gold elsewhere in the north. The fast rivers of the mountains were popular places to search, and the Nahanni attracted more white men with its promise of gold than it ever had for furs or souls. This influx of prospectors brought with it the N.W.M.P.(designated "Royal" in 1904), the authoritative presence of the Canadian government in the north.

The Nahanni Valley itself might have remained merely a name on the map for many years if it were not for the disappearance of William and Frank McLeod. There are as many versions as narrators of this tale, and it has become synonymous in the public mind with the Nahanni itself. But the effects of this seemingly insignificant event have been far-reaching indeed. It brought the R.N.W.M.P. into the area, which in turn aroused interest in Ottawa. It also circulated widely and brought on the two Nahanni gold rushes of 1922 and 1934. The obvious impact on the Native people was another important consequence to be considered.

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[16] Interview with Albert Faille(May,1972),PCHRI,No.196,Vol.II, pp.397-398.

[17] Morris Zaslow,"A History of Transportation and Development of the Mackenzie River Basin,1871-1921,"M.A.Thesis, U.of Toronto(1948),p.44. Note that Edmonton's total permanent population in 1897 was somewhat under 2,000.

The McLeod brothers were two sons of Hudson's Bay Company trader Murdoch McLeod, who had served a lengthy career at a number of Mackenzie District posts. He had three other sons and two daughters; all the sons appear to have been employed in the fur trade at one time or another. William and Frank, however, were lured by rumours circulating among local Indians of gold in the Nahanni Valley, and in 1903 or 1904 the pair abandoned the fur trade and travelled to the valley, probably up the Flat River, a major tributary of the Nahanni. At least two trips were made into the country, the second one being in 1905. When nothing was heard of them after a third season, a third brother ("Charlie") determined to search for them, and set out with four companions. Some ninety miles upriver, two badly decomposed bodies were discovered, along with a gold watch and case clearly identifiable as the possessions of the McLeods. Charlie became convinced of foul play and reported the discovery to the R.N.W.M.P. detachment at Fort Smith. Corporal Arthur H. Mellor was charged with the case. He departed with a small patrol to investigate and returned with an official report in August 1909.[18] Charlie argued initially that his brothers had been murdered by Nahanni Indians, but when a fourth brother Fred ridiculed the idea and Corporal Mellor was satisfied that the Indians knew nothing of the case, Charlie began to insinuate that his brothers had been killed by a mysterious third man named Robert Weir who had allegedly stolen their gold and escaped through the Yukon to Vancouver. However, Corporal Mellor was forced to conclude in his 1909 report that there was no evidence of foul play and the brothers had possibly starved to death after losing their equipment in a boating accident. The case was re-opened briefly in 1921 when Charlie McLeod reported he had seen Weir in the north again, but nothing could be proven against this third man. Weir readily admitted he had contacted Willie and Frank up the Flat River, but had moved on when he realized they had little hope of success in their gold seeking adventures.

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[18] See T.E.G.Shaw, "The Valley of no Return", North Vol.VII/no.1 (Jan-Feb,1960),pp.17-18. See also R.N.W.M.P. Annual Report, Sessional Paper Number 28,1910.

The facts of the case are neither romantic nor unusual. Two greedy white men travel into an unknown country on the basis of rumours, lose their equipment in an accident, and starve to death, unable to fend for themselves. The elaborate myth eventually woven about them, however, disguises the reality so effectively that the story becomes a magical magnet, drawing its listeners into the spell of a mythical northland. Most of the versions report that the bodies were headless, giving rise to incredible theories of wild mountain men or mysterious spirits, stories borrowed somewhat from tales long in circulation among district Indians. It has been quite effectively demonstrated that in a decomposing body, one of the first pieces to crumble is the tenuous link between the skull and the backbone. Animals are known to be attracted to the tender meat inside the skull and may very well have helped themselves. At any rate, there are quite acceptable explanations for the "headless" motif which has been repeatedly associated with the Nahanni.

The McLeod story might well have been forgotten if it had not been followed immediately by a third death and subsequent investigation by the R.N.W.M.P. In 1915, the skeleton of prospector Martin Jorgensen was found seventy miles upriver from the site of the McLeod deaths. The men who found the remains buried the body before reporting the find to the police. They also noted that the skull was missing. Corporal D.Churchill and Special Constable Hope left Fort Simpson in August 1916 to investigate. They spent considerable time searching for the bones, and dug through the ashes of Jorgensen's cabin, but ultimately concluded that the cause of death could not be determined.[19] It appeared likely that the death was accidental, and connected with the fire in the cabin. Many local people were convinced the death was murder, and the fact that it occurred so soon after the other mysterious deaths, was sufficient to give the Nahanni River a reputation as an evil place, a reputation which remains secure today.

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[19] Shaw, op cit., pp.18-19.

As a result of the increasing white activity in the area, the government decided that police patrols out of Fort Smith were insufficient, so in 1913, an R.N.W.M.P. detachment was opened at Fort Simpson. It consisted of one corporal, one constable,one supernumary constable, and several dogs. Until this date, police activities in the north had centred in the Yukon and along the Arctic coast, where American whalers were creating problems for the Eskimo and Indian inhabitants.

The R.N.W.M.P. did not act so much as law enforcers in the north during this period, as they were present to ensure the safety of the residents, conduct explorations for the benefit of the Canadian government, and assert Canadian sovereignty. The Fort Simpson detachment spent considerable time on short patrols to check that no-one was going into the mountains with insufficient supplies. They were also busy in 1913 regulating the growing illegal liquor traffic and curbing the use of poison bait (usually strichnine) among the white trappers. They were involved in administering the relief money for the Indians, as Bishop Clut had arranged in 1889. Police also investigated alleged cases of destitution and issued the supplies for the ill and poor where needed.[20] Because of these police activities as "protector and benefactor" to the Indians, many white observers have concluded that relations between the Indians and the R.N.W.M.P. were excellent. In fact, the police were a product of a system of colonial paternalism, often failing to understand the Indians and their unique situation in the north. Many firmly believed that the Indians starved because they were lazy, not realizing that game ran in complicated cycles of famine and plenty, even without the presence of white men. Lack of sympathy was also evident in Corporal Mellor's report of 1909, when he recorded that,

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[20] R.N.W.M.P.Annual Report,Sessional Paper No.28,1912,p.146. Report of Sup't.A.E.C.McDonell for "N" Division, October 1,1915.

> Between Providence and Simpson,on the Mackenzie river,huge forest fires were burning on both sides,mostly some distance inland. Some,and probably all,of these fires were set out deliberately by the Indians in order to make good moose country. There are,however,no justices of the peace in the country, so what can I do about it? [21]

Not until recently have whites begun to realize that this age-old custom was beneficial in the long term for the Native food supply. For years the main concern was that these fires were burning potentially valuable timber lands--valuable for whites in southern Canada, that is. Mellor was also quite unimpressed with the Indians in his district. "The Liard Indians are certainly the most squalid impoverished lot I have yet met," he wrote,even stooping to ridicule their names:"The chief of the Simpson Indians,rejoicing in the name of 'Norwegians'," was one of his targets.[22]

Relations between the churches and the police were, like the relations with the Indians, peaceful and polite on the surface, but less than cordial in private. Inspector Constantine of the Yukon complained constantly in his reports of the "arrogant Bishop"Bompas ,whom he suspected of "encouraging some Indians to occupy land which the Police had reserved as a site for a possible detachment."[23] Further indication of government-police attitudes was a number of highly sarcastic comments pencilled around a newspaper clipping describing church activities in the north, as found in government files.[24]

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[21] R.N.W.M.P.Annual Report,1910,p.185.

In addition to the police presence in the district, the federal government decided the time had come in 1911 to further emphasize its interest in the north by establishing Indian Agencies. Men were sent to Fort Smith and Fort Simpson that year "to distribute relief and carry out experiments in farming."[25] The agent at Fort Simpson was supplied with two horses, four oxen, and ten tons of supplies and implements. The Fort Smith Indians had signed Treaty 8, but in 1911, the Indians at Fort Simpson had not yet agreed to any treaty, so the position of the Indian Agent there was somewhat unusual. T.W."Flynn" Harris was the first agent at Simpson, where he was to serve for over twenty years. He had moved west in 1881 with the N.W.M.P. and after ten years had left the police to serve with the H.B.C.. His father was Chief Justice of Nova Scotia for some time, and Flynn Harris was also involved with the law, in the capacity of Justice of the Peace at Fort Simpson. By 1922, his jurisdiction covered 1,400 miles and over 4,000 Indians.[26]

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[23] As quoted in T.Morris Longstreth, The Silent Force, (New York, 1927), p.77.

[24] P.A.C., RG 85/file 568/item 20, vol.2, "Missionary Matters".

[25] Fumoleau, op cit., p.139.

[26] Edmonton Journal, Wednesday November 15, 1922.

It would appear that most of the federal government dealings with the Nahanni District Indians worked through the Fort Simpson Indian Agency, for the period of R.N.W.M.P. influence was short-lived. Funding and manpower dwindled drastically with the onset of the first World War, and by the end of that struggle, the Canadian government had urgent reason to change its foothold in the north. Oil was discovered at Fort Norman (now called Norman Wells) in 1920.

As early as 1891, the Canadian government had considered the idea of a treaty with the northern Indians "with a view to the extinguishment of the Indian title in such portions of the same, as it may be considered in the interests of the public to open up for settlement."[27] Probably as a result of the Select Committee of 1888 report, the Privy Council believed that large areas of the Athabasca and Mackenzie River Districts were ripe for development. However, when Sir John A.Macdonald died shortly after this advisory was prepared, the subject was temporarily shelved. It was the Klondike rush that provided the final impetus for Treaty Number 8. The decision was made at that point to leave out the Indians along the Mackenzie because "their territory so far as it is at present known is of no particular value and they very rarely come into contact with Whites..."[28]

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[27] Privy Council Report, 1891 (O.C.52), as quoted by Fumoleau, op cit., p.41.

[28] P.A.C./RG10/file 75, item 236-1. April 25, 1898. Letter from Indian Commissioner Forget to Secretary, Indian Affairs, as quoted in Fumoleau, op cit., p.59.

Agitation for an extension of Treaty 8 into the Mackenzie District followed soon after the official signing. In 1907,H.A.Conroy reported on the miserable conditions in the district and proposed that a treaty might assist the Indians. He formed the argument in terms of expediency for the Canadian government: treaty would be cheaper than relief payments, and it would protect white mining interests.[29] Bishop Breynat of the Oblates also contributed arguments for establishing a treaty with the Mackenzie Indians, but the government was flatly unresponsive. Duncan C.Scott, Chief Accountant of the Department of Indian Affairs squelched the idea because of a lack of funds. It was not until the discovery of oil in 1920, when the government generously began to issue land leases, that H.A. Conroy bluntly brought it to their attention that the land had never been ceded by the Indians, and the government had no legal right to allow further leasing. This time, reaction was swift. A document was prepared in Ottawa and Conroy was requested to form an official party to "negotiate" with the Indians. Obviously, the government had no intention of negotiating, since Conroy's commission was instructed merely to obtain Indian signatures and adhere strictly to the terms of the treaty,not making any "outside" promises.

Conroy became the Treaty Commissioner for Treaty 11. He was assisted by W.B.Bruce,an R.C.M.P. inspector,Constable Wood of the R.C.M.P.,[30] and Constable Campbell who acted as the Party Clerk. Dr.A.L.McDonald of the Indian Department was present at several signings, and Bishop Breynat was invited to join the group, largely because the government recognized the respect with which many of the Indians regarded him. He was to be a powerful ally, and later, a strong opponent of what was to occur. The Indians were requested to nominate a chief and headmen at each major post along the Mackenzie. These men were to be their representatives in treaty negotiations and were also warned that they would be responsible for their band's actions in adhering to the terms of the treaty.[31] "Scrip", or payment of a lump sum of $240, was offered to the Métis of the area if they chose to live outside the Treaty.

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[29] Fumoleau,op cit.,p.135.

The treaty itself clearly stated its purpose:"the said Indians do hereby cede, release, surrender and yield up to the Government of Canada, for his Majesty the King and His Successors forever, all their rights, titles, and privileges whatsoever to the lands within the following limits..."[32] The Indians were to be allowed hunting and fishing rights only so long as the land was not required "for settlement, mining, lumbering, trading, or other purposes."[33] In return, the Indians were to receive the standard considerations: a square mile of land for each family of five; annual payments of $5 per head (cash); supplies of axes,saws,augers,files and hunting equipment to the value of $50 per family; and for the chiefs,"a silver medal, a suitable flag and a copy of this Treaty" as well as "a suitable suit of clothing" every three years in order to set the chiefs apart from the rest of the band. Clearly,from a contemporary viewpoint, it was a terribly unfair exchange for the Indians. The Mackenzie Natives (accustomed to dealing with whites for many years), were extremely reluctant to sign, although they believed that ultimately, some written agreement with the Canadian government would be desireable. The "negotiations" took considerably longer than anticipated as the Indians attempted to understand what the whites intended and to gain more advantageous conditions.

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[31] Dept. of Indian Affairs, Treaty Number 11 and Adhesions, with Reports, reprinted from the 1926 edition(Ottawa, 1957)

[32] Ibid., p.6

[33] Ibid., p.6

Treaty 11 was basically a similar document to the previous Indian Treaties, but there were some important differences. Treaty Six, signed in 1876 with the Plains Cree in an area south of Treaty 8, proves an interesting comparison. Both Treaty Six and Treaty Eleven were considered necessary because of the increasing white population in their respective territories, and the desirability of opening the land for settlement. Treaty 11 was considered particularly urgent because of the oil discovery at Fort Norman. Both treaties extinguished all Indian title to the land, and agreed that the government would supply educational facilities, agricultural supplies and hunting equipment(excluding guns). Both treaties permitted the Indians to continue hunting and fishing on Crown lands that were not required for other purposes. Both guaranteed annual treaty payments to chiefs, headmen and others of $25, $15 and $5 respectively.[34] Treaty Six cost the government $47,269 at the time of signing, and Treaty Eleven cost $24,820.

Both treaties also made provisions for reserves, allowing one square mile per family of five on land that could be sold by the government with the consent of the Indians, or expropriated by the Crown if it were needed for another purpose. However, in the case of Treaty 11, these reserves were never established, and further mention of them was not made until 1959. Treaty 6 contained several additional provisions, which did not appear in Treaty 11, including guaranteed medical supplies to be distributed to each chief, the prohibition of liquor on reserves, and the promise of special assistance in case of widespread famine or disease.

The most striking difference between the two treaties, however, was the manner in which they were written. Lieutenant-Governor Alexander Morris met with the Indians at Forts Carlton and Pitt with a predetermined notion of the government's position, but he was open to some negotiation, and a certain amount of bargaining did indeed occur. For instance, the Indians requested more extensive assistance for agriculture than was first offered; Morris complied, but would not agree to special provisions for the poor and sick, or annual food supplies for the others as the Indians had also requested.[35] On the other hand, as has been noted, Conroy received strict instructions that he was to make no changes or promises in connection with a predetermined Treaty 11. Even the length of time required to obtain agreement to the treaties is indicative of the difference in approaches. Morris required a full six days at Fort Carlton to negotiate, while Conroy stopped at Fort Providence for only two days of what amounted to "questions" rather than "negotiations."

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[34] Note also that the value of $5 in 1922 was not what it was in 1876.

A final important difference between Treaty 11 and the earlier treaties lay in the intention behind the treaty. Treaties 1 to 7 were clearly designed to encourage the Indians to adopt an agricultural life. Buffalo, the traditional support for the Plains Indians, were rapidly disappearing, and Ottawa did not want tobe burdened with welfare and support payments. Teaching the Indians to be farmers seemed a logical solution, and the principal points in the treaties were aimed toward this end. The Indians, on their part, realized what was happening to the buffalo and were willing to listen to the government proposals, although they clearly resented the original cause of the problem: the invasion of their country by white men. In some cases, in fact, the Indians made the initial approach for an agreement.[36] However, there appears to have been very little understanding on the part of the Mackenzie Indians of what the proceedings for Treaty 11 were really intended to be. They had few definite demands to make of the Treaty Commissioner (in contrast to the long list of specific demands presented by the Crees of Treaty 6).[37] Nor were the northern Indians particularly organized when meeting the treaty party, but they did at least manage to voice their concerns. Conroy's "negotiations" did not succeed as smoothly as he and the Ottawa government seem to have anticipated.

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[35] Alexander Morris, The Treaties of Canada with the Indians, first published 1880(Coles Canadiana Edition,1979), pp.214-219.

In his official report, Conroy mentions only briefly the complications, and brushes them lightly aside. At Fort Providence,

> The Indians seemed afraid,for one thing, that their liberty to hunt, trap and fish would be taken away or curtailed, but were assured by me that this would not be the case, and the Government will expect them to support themselves in their own way. [38]

According to Métis observer James Lafferty at Fort Simpson, the discussion was "laborious" and lasted three days."First, the Indians didn't want to," he recalled,"They were afraid of future restrictions, like now in the springtime we may not shoot ducks."[39]

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[36] For example, the revisions to Treaties 1 and 2(1871-75), Treaty 6(1876) and Treaty 7(1877).

[37] Morris,op cit.,see chapter 9.

[38] Treaty 11 and Adhesions, op cit.,p.3.

[39] As quoted in Fumoleau op cit., p.175

Finally the Simpson Indians conceded to the request to sign, in large part because of the promised assistance from the government. One witness, Baptiste Norwegian, later alleged that not all the Indians agreed to the idea and they were, in fact, tricked by Conroy into signing. Just what the Indians signed is not completely clear either, for several of them claimed they never actually saw a copy of the treaty, nor did the chiefs receive their promised copies, and Oblate historian René Fumoleau believes that the marks on the original treaty were made by a single hand, probably that of a white man.[40]

The treaty party was so delayed by these prolonged discussions which had not been anticipated, that it was unable to reach Fort Liard before freeze-up, so it was not until the summer of 1922 that the government sent its representatives there. H.A.Conroy had died suddenly the previous winter, so Indian Agent Harris from Fort Simpson headed the Treaty Party. He found upon arrival that not all the Indians from the area were present, but was not particularly concerned.

> The Indians of this place were all awaiting us, except the band from Trout Lake, which band is composed of about ninety persons, who are the most uncivilized of the district, and who have come in contact with the Whites less frequently than the others.

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[40] See Fumoleau, op cit.

[41] Simpson Agency Report(1922), DIAND file 191, item 28-3, Vol.I, as quoted in Fumoleau, op cit., p.202

Apparently, little was explained to the Indians at Fort Liard. Baptiste Dudan(Dontra) reported,"They did not make any promise or nothing, just give money to the people." Until the year of his death(1972), he still believed that he received government money because he was poor,[42] and not because of any land agreement his people had made with the Canadian government.

The problems were not over for the government representatives once the treaty was signed. In 1922, Chief Antoine at Fort Simpson was unwilling to accept the second annual payment because "he had been promised by the Commissioner, that whatever he asked for would be given him, and that this promise had not been kept."[43] In 1923, three families at Fort Simpson declined altogether to accept the treaty money, and again in 1925, Antoine complained he had received no supplies for the sick and destitute and requested the promised goods be forthcoming. It was a later boycott at Fort Resolution in 1937 that received more attention in the southern press, but it was the Indians of the Fort Simpson agency who began the protest.[44] It is interesting to note as well, that the white squatters in the area were apparently quite unaware of any Indian concern. Bill Clark, who lived up the Nahanni in the summer and wintered at Fort Simpson, recently recalled that he believed the local Indians "figured it was a good deal." He was aware that some preferred to take the lump-sum payment (or "scrip") offered, but "there was no trouble. The Indian agents were few and far between, and no, there was no trouble at all."[45]

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[42] Fumoleau, op cit., p.202

[43] Flynn Harris' Report, DIAND file 191/28-3, Vol.I, as quoted in Fumoleau op cit., p.227

[44] It is also interesting to note that the three signatures on the treaty from Fort Simpson are the only three signed in syllabics rather than a single 'X', with the exception of Yendo at Wrigley, who was a Mountain Indian.

In 1921, the government had been more than anxious to have Bishop Breynat accompany the party, because it realized the influence the Bishop held over many along the Mackenzie River. In this belief, it was correct, for many Indians later recalled that they did not trust the white agents, and it was only because of the Bishop's assurances that they were finally induced to sign. The government did not, however, anticipate that its useful ally would shortly become their primary opponent. Bishop Breynat was gravely disappointed with the results of Treaty 11, for according to him, Commissioner Conroy had made a number of verbal promises which were never included in later copies of the treaty and were thus never implemented. These promises included assurance that the Indians could continue their traditional life with the protection of their hunting and trapping activities, and that care would be provided for the old and destitute. Breynat actively campaigned for the

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[45] Interview with Bill Clark, op cit., p.298.

Indian cause in the 1930's with a series of letters to Ottawa officials and a strongly worded article which appeared in the Toronto Star Weekly and Montreal Le Soleil. "I gave my word of honour that the promises made by the Royal Commission 'although they were not actually included in the Treaty' would be kept by the Crown," he lamented.[46] Government officials responded by saying that they knew nothing of any such promises, and since Conroy had died, they were fairly safe in saying so. However, Flynn Harris had reported his knowledge of these promises in 1925 after the problems that had occurred at Fort Simpson on Treaty Day,[47] so either his letter had never been read, or the department had a conveniently short memory! Breynat collected a series of signed affadavits from witnesses to the signing of the Treaty, and even obtained the support of the H.B.C., which expressed its concerned opinion to the Department in 1937:"There are plenty of Indians and Eskimos in the north to absorb all the wealth the fur resources of the county can afford, so there is every reason to restrict trapping activities to them alone,and exclude white trappers entirely."[48] Yet the government, safely in the possession of a signed and binding agreement, was not particularly concerned. White Canadians had control of the lands, and all that remained was to exploit their potential.

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[46] As quoted by Fumoleau,op cit.,p.216

[47] DIAND file 191/28-3,Vol.I. Harris to Secretary of Indian Affairs dated August 15,1925.Quoted by Fumoleau,p.234.

[48] P.A.C./RG 85/file 1003-2-1,Parsons to Crerar,Jan.7,1937, as quoted in Fumoleau,p.276.

During this period, a curious transformation in the work of the missionaries in the north was completed. As observed in the previous chapter, the missionaries originally approached the north as powerful agents of the colonial society, determined not only to convert the "pagan" Athapascans to their various versions of Christianity, but also to re-direct the Indians' lives to conform with western concepts of "civilization". Yet once the Canadian government began to make its presence known in the Northwest Territories, the Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries were prompt to defend the interests of their native adherents. Bishop Breynat was particularly vocal in this respect. Although he had assisted the government in obtaining signatures for Treaty 11, he did so in the belief that the treaty would serve to protect the Dené from the threatening influx of southerners. When the treaty promises were not kept, the Roman Catholic bishop actively campaigned for the protection of the "traditional" life of the natives. The hunting and fishing economy which the churches had once attempted to supplant by encouraging agriculture and settlement was now defended by the same churches. What had happened in the interim?

Clearly, more study is warranted, but there are a number of possible explanations. The original approach of evangelical fervour, with its narrow-minded concept of spirituality and its fierce competitiveness also lent it to the attempts to transplant secular as well as religious values to the northern soil. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the attitudes of the crusading missionaries were tempered somewhat by both local conditions and a more general drift from evangelism in the European parent societies. The Anglican and Roman Catholic priests were content to work in separate areas rather than engage in their fanatical and destructive conflicts over souls. Men who spent most of their lives living and working with the Dené could not remain blind to the real beliefs and needs of their neighbours, and tended to lose some of the attitudes they had developed in Europe, far from the actual field. True enough, there remained many residential schools which punished children for speaking their own language, and the missions continued to work small farm lots as an "example". But there was less of the earlier crusading zeal, and the more open-minded (like Bishop Breynat) were forced to admit that when faced with the choice of hunting, farming or being exploited by white resource-takers, the Indians would be infinitely better off as hunters, the most traditional of the alternatives. Much as many whites would like to believe, farming on a large scale in the north was simply not feasible, and by the dawn of the twentieth century, it was obvious to those experienced in the north that agriculture and settlement was not to be the answer. The churches could minister to the spiritual needs of the Indians, and serve as paternalistic protectors without acting as secular colonizers as well.

The mission workers now perceived their activities more as work to facilitate the contact and inevitable conflict between the native culture and the encroaching white men. As well, by the twentieth century, many Indians had indeed been affected by the churches and the H.B.C. to the extent that those institutions no longer felt as threatened by the native differences and could afford to be more tolerant. The mentality of cultural warfare could be replaced to some degree by a sense of spiritual concern and subtle cultural suasion. Either form of confrontation poses a hazard to the native culture, but somehow the more recent attitude seems more useful for the well-being of Canada's Indian population. But beginning with the generation at the onset of the twentieth century, the church became the spokesman and intermediary in the new conflict between the native people of the north and the Canadian government in distant Ottawa.

The period 1896-1922 was a crucial one in the Nahanni region. In the excitement of the Klondike rush, the Canadian government's interest in the north was aroused, and the first police patrols headed north instead of west. The deaths of William and Frank McLeod, and Martin Jorgensen brought them deep into the Nahanni Valley. Geological explorations and a trickle of disappointed Klondikers prepared the way for others with sketchy (but tempting) information which slowly filtered south, culminating in the discovery of oil at nearby Norman Wells and the hasty "negotiation" of Treaty 11 in 1921-22. The Nahanni had finally been drawn into Canada with the signing of that infamous treaty. The valley's impact on the Canadian consciousness was about to begin.

CHAPTER 5

PROSPECTORS AND INDEPENDENT TRADERS

1922-1940

The second and third decades of the twentieth century were years of intense excitement in the Nahanni country. An epidemic of gold fever swept the region, affecting both whites and Natives equally. Stories were conveyed by the Edmonton press to Ottawa and beyond; a rapid influx of white prospectors ensued, somewhat to the concern of the Canadian government. For a time, the Nahanni was being proclaimed the Second Klondike. Unlike the Klondike, however, there never was much more than a few showings of placer gold, with no sign whatever of the great "motherlode". But the individual prospectors who invaded the region were full of hope. Their optimism never really died, for after they had failed, they were replaced by larger operations with corporate organization and financial backing in distant places which continued to search for the undiscovered wealth of the Nahanni.

A boom was evident in the area not only for prospectors, but also for the fur trade, the area's previous economic base. Prices for furs continued to rise during the 1920's throughout Canada during the post-war boom, and for the second time in its history, the Nahanni experienced a determined and often bitter competition between the Hudson's

Bay Company and its rivals. The principal opponent in the area was Northern Traders, but this was also the era of the independent trader (see Appendix 5A). These men obviously could not hope to match the powerful organizational network of the H.B.C., but although they lacked size and money, they hoped to compensate for these shortcomings with flexibility and determination. It was the era of the individual, a period which was to be immortalized in the legendary image of the "frontier man", as will be examined later. Between the traders and the prospectors (often the same men), life on the Nahanni in the 1920's and 1930's was exciting and full of promise.

After the first World War, the north finally became an integral part of the Canadian economic system. In 1920 the first winter mail was arranged between Edmonton and the Mackenzie District, and the Alberta and Great Waterways railroad was opened between Edmonton and Fort MacMurray. By 1922 the Alberta and Arctic Transportation Company was operating a regular steamer service from Fort Simpson up the Liard to Fort Nelson, which included a regularly scheduled stop at Nahanni. Thus it was possible to utilize public transportation to travel from Edmonton to Nahanni Butte with relative ease. A steady stream of adventurers from the south began to flow into the area, many coming from the newly developing Peace River settlement. The stories of the lost McLeod claim (as described in Chapter 4) continued to circulate and act as a magnet.

By the twentieth century, the migratory existence of the Indians in the South Nahanni valley had been considerably modified. Two distinct groups now worked the area for furs. The Mountain Indians continued to hunt and trap in the northern reaches of the valley around the headwaters of the river, living in much the same manner as they had in John McLeod's day. They would come down the Keele River in moosehide boats (until the last generation or two) and trade at Fort Norman or Wrigley at the end of each summer, but otherwise maintained very few contacts with whites and established no permanent settlements. Charles Camsell recorded these impressions of the group:

> These Indians, who were the most intelligent and resourceful of all the Indians trading at Fort Norman, always came in to the Post early in July to meet the steamer Wrigley on her first trip north...The country was then entirely unexplored, and as far as I know no white man had ever entered it.[1]

A second group of Indians (mostly Slaves) congregated in the southern part of the valley near the mouth of the Nahanni. Many maintained summer cabins at both Netla(a few miles up the Liard) and at Nahanni Butte. In the fall, these Indians would gather their entire families and head upstream with pack dogs. During the winter, they would build skin boats from their "trappings" and use these boats to transport the furs out at the end of the season.[2] Once their purpose had been served, the boats themselves were dismantled and these furs would also be sold.[3] It was these Slave Indians who readily accepted the idea of prospecting for gold, and numerous white visitors to the area in the 1920's reported seeing them at work on their diggings. Unfortunately, many of the white prospectors did not take these Native miners very seriously, and the Indians lived in constant fear that they would be discovered, and some white man would take over their claims. Gus Kraus, in recounting his version of the McLeod brothers mystery, noted that a band of Indians had been prospecting in the area now known as McLeod Creek for a number of years before William and Frank arrived.

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[1] Charles Camsell, Son of the North, (Toronto, 1954, 66), p.48.

[2] Details according to Ole Loë, Parks Canada Historic Resources Inventory (PCHRI), Interview August 1976, cassette 3, side 2.

> They had their families there, all this whole bunch...They had this sluice run on this blooming creek, so they [the Indians] made it clear with them [the McLeods], you don't tell anybody, because [if] white people ever come in they would just take it over, again.[4]

There also appears to have been considerable competition between the South Nahanni Indians and those from Dease Lake, further west. This conflict, which originated at least as early as the nineteenth century fur trade period (if not sooner), was transformed with relatively little change into a conflict over prospecting rights. Nahanni resident Bill Clark recalled hearing a number of tales circulating among the older generation of Indians. Apparently the Dease Lake Indians,

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[3] Interview with Bill Clark, PCHRI, July 31 and August 1, 1974. Manuscript Report Number 196, Vol. II, p. 238.

[4] Interview with Gus Kraus, PCHRI, August 1974, Manuscript Report Number 196, Vol. II, pp. 23-24. Emphasis mine. Interestingly enough, the Indians did trust the missionaries, and would approach them as intermediaries if they discovered a potential gold creek. See Father Turcotte, PCHRI, August 1977, cassette 1, side 1.

> came over and were working on the creeks around the present location called McLeod Creek and Bennett Creek...there was always a sort of no-man's land in there,because there was a trouble over their trapping territory. Also they had to watch their women. If they left their camps unguarded, they'd raid each other. [5]

Some of these Slave Indians apparently continued to travel the old circle route of the fur trade: up the North Nahanni, down the South Nahanni, out to Fort Simpson, and north again to Fort Wrigley. It seems likely that they would encounter the Mountain Indians on such a voyage, and indeed, distinctions between the various groups in the area were quickly becoming obsolete. However, according to Métis resident Ted Trindell, the days of such extensive travel had essentially passed. "They used to go to Whitehorse, Dawson Creek and Dawson City," he recalled."It takes them a year or two,sometimes three years. They used to go in from Wrigley,Fort Norman,Simpson.Across the mountains and back."[6] Thus the travelling patterns of the Mountain and Slave Indians had changed from the pre-contact local trips, to extensive travel (even to the point of crossing the dreaded Yukon divide) for the sake of furs during the nineteenth century, and then had reverted again in the twentieth century to more limited trips. It is frequently assumed that the introduction of the fur trade caused a single transition in Indian habits, but it is clear that changes have continued to occur even during the fur trade era itself. The relatively sedentary life of remaining at a settlement for the larger part of the year with brief sorties to local trap lines was becoming more attractive to the Slave Indians by the 1920's. Unfortunately, this type of trapping leads to intensive use of small areas of land, so that the furbearing animals are rapidly depleted. The consequences of this change will be examined below.

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[5] Interview with Bill Clark,op cit.,p.280.

[6] Interview with Ted Trindell,PCHRI.,JULY-August 1977, cassette 3,side 1.

In a number of other ways, however, daily life of the Nahanni region Indians in the 1920's was not much modified from that of the early contact period. The Mountain and Kaska Indians continued to prefer small band units; at Netla in 1929, for instance, just eight families would congregate with their furs.[7] These bands were composed of kinsmen, but were not stable units, as individuals and families appear to have drifted away to related bands with some frequency. There does not seem to have been much formal interaction between bands of Mountain Indians, but there is evidence to suggest that the Slaves travelled considerable distances in summer to congregate at a large social assembly of other Slave groups.[8] The Slaves would also meet occasionally to discuss crisis situations, although these infrequent gatherings appear to have ceased by the 1920's. George Keith of the North West Company recorded one such congregation of Fort Liard Slaves in 1810 for the "judgement" of one of their number who had been accused of killing his hunting companion,[9] but evidence of these gatherings in more recent times is lacking.

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[7] Interview with R.M.Patterson, PCHRI., Manuscript Report Number 196, Vol. I, p.76.

[8] June Helm MacNeish, "Leadership Among the Northeastern Athabascans," Anthropologica Vol. I (1955), p.137.

None of the Indian bands of the region had any formal leaders or chiefs. Men would serve as advisors or shamen, but the bands felt no obligation to follow their suggestions. The fur trading companies succeeded in creating the position of "fur trade chief" for the purposes of trade only, but as anthropologist June Helm MacNeish has noted,

> To all knowledge (Honigman 1946);(Jenness 1937); (MacNeish, J.H.);(Osgood 1931) even the government invention of regional 'chiefs' and councils, appointed or elected, has so far effected no significant change or innovation in the political orientation of these Athabascans at the regional or tribal levels.[10]

Early observers such as Father Petitot and A.G.Morice attributed this lack of leadership to the lack of cultural attainment and lack of strength of character among the northern Indians. MacNeish, however, provides a more acceptable explanation, suggesting that this lack was a manifestation of the Athabascan personality. These Indians were highly oriented towards personal freedom, and enjoyed a strong distaste for any form of authority.[11]

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[9] See ibid., pp.139-140.

[10] Ibid., p.135.

[11] Ibid., pp.154-155.

By the 1920's, the bands were still largely migratory, and their camps had changed little since contact. Many continued to construct lodges or tents covered with brush or spruce bark for summer dwellings; in winter the traditional pole cabin was made more substantial in imitation of the "European" cabins.[12] Changes had occurred, however, in methods of dress, cooking and hunting. The original moose or goat skin dress had been largely replaced by clothing manufactured by the women of purchased yard goods, or clothing that was completely "store-bought", for both men and women. Metal cookware had been substituted for the traditional spruce root woven pots. Many Indians also possessed sewing machines. Steel traps and guns were a useful substitute for the twisted sinew snares of earlier years. Apparently these Indians continued to use their dogs as pack animals rather than adapting them to sled animals, and the women pulled the toboggans in winter, as they always had. The Mountain Indians still preferred the overland routes to learning the techniques of canoing, but the Slave Indians made frequent use of the rivers and streams for transportation. Moosehide canoes were being used by the 1920's as a modern adaptation of the original spruce bark canoes which were fragile and could not hold much cargo.[13] Rafts were also used if there was a particularly large catch of furs or meat to handle.[14]

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[12] Interview with Ted Trindell, op cit.

[13] Diamond Jenness, The Indians of Canada, 7th Edition (Toronto, 1977), p.398.

Life continued to be difficult and tenuous for the Indians of the Nahanni even as late as the 1920's, but the women were still able to produce some artwork in the form of specially woven birch baskets[15] and quill ornamentation for headbands and special clothing.[16] Men valued a wife who could dress herself "neatly and well."[17]

Infanticide, particularly of female children, was almost completely abandoned by the twentieth century. Many young children were away from their families during the extended periods when they attended mission schools. Among the more remote groups, the custom of isolating girls at the onset of puberty persisted, but there is no evidence of an equivalent ceremony for boys. Marriage continued to be a fairly informal arrangement, although changes were occurring. Polygamy was once common, (including a woman with more than one husband) but had apparently disappeared by this point.[18]

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[14] Interview with Bill Clark, op cit., p.250. Clark also describes in detail the construction of a spruce canoe, pp.238-250.

[15] Bill Clark refers to this dying technique, ibid., p.243.

[16] Jenness, op cit., p.76.

[17] James Teit, "Kaska Tales", Journal of American Folk-Lore Vol.30 (1917, part 2), p.456.

[18] A.G. Morice, "The Nah-ane and their Language," Transactions of the Canadian Institute (1902-03), p.254. Also James Teit, ibid., p.461.

Kaska stories also include the idea that "men sometimes take a fancy to their sisters,and even cohabit with them";[19] clearly this arrangement was also disappearing under the missionary influence.

As late as 1929, according to the recollections of several white residents, most Indians in the Nahanni Valley itself did not speak English well. At Nahanni Butte, a Yukon Indian named Barney was relied upon to act as interpreter.[20] It should be noted,however, that because of the impact of the Roman Catholic missionaries, a number of the Indians could speak French.

By the 1920's and 1930's, as has been noted, some of the South Nahanni Indians were involved in prospecting activities as an income supplement. Also, the emphasis in trapping had shifted from beaver in the nineteenth century to variety furs such as marten, muskrat and fox in the twentieth, because of changing demand in the market as well as changing supply cycles in the Mackenzie District. In spite of the competition from white trappers, the Natives continued to be the principal suppliers of furs from the N.W.T. fur regions.(See Appendix 5B). Women were also active participants in the hunt if they were needed,[21] although they generally continued to perform their traditional chores of carrying the meat back to camp and preparing the skins and food. Berry gathering has never been an important part of their lives.

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[19] Teit,op cit.,p.460.

[20] Interview with R.M.Patterson,op cit.,p.93.

[21] For instance,interview with Gus Kraus,op cit.,in which Kraus makes numerous references to the hunting activities of his Native wife,Mary.

Far from being improvident, as a good number of their detractors have suggested, there is ample evidence surviving from the 1920's and 1930's that the South Nahanni Indians planned carefully for the low periods of the game cycle by constructing caches of some size for the storage of dried meat. Bill Clark reported the discovery of a clearing with a number of these caches,

> ...made like little cabins, only they were I'd say about four feet wide and about [three feet high] and they were built just with logs roughly 8 to 10 inches in diameter. Then they had logs on top lengthways and those caches would be about 12, 10 to 12 feet long.[22]

The period 1922 to 1940 may not have seen radical changes in the lives of the Indians under treaty in the South Nahanni, but for the Métis, life became increasingly difficult. Many lived the lives of full-blooded Indians, but had chosen to accept the scrip payments, and so were not considered eligible for assistance by most government officials. This fact, of course, left the Métis in an awkward position as the "forgotten" people of the Mackenzie.[23]

Disease was a major factor in the lives of the Mackenzie Indians, but the population estimates and counts show relatively little fluctuation in the Nahanni District population over time.(See Appendix 5C) The fact that these people were somewhat isolated from the Mackenzie populations, even at this late date, may be a significant factor. Fort Simpson itself,of course, was not isolated, but medical care was available at that site. As well, it is always possible that the estimates of the numbers killed in the frequent epidemics were somewhat exaggerated. At any rate, the period of white independent traders and prospectors saw a native population leading a life essentially unchanged in its major aspects from the life of the early contact years. Significant modifications in clothing and tools had not yet introduced radical social changes.

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[22] Interview with Bill Clark, op cit.,p.255.

[23] See discussion by Richard Slobodin, The Métis of the Mackenzie District,(Ottawa,1966).

Until the 1920's, the fur trade economy had concerned Indian trappers and white traders almost exclusively. In 1920-21, the Alberta and Great Waterways railroad from Edmonton reached Fort McMurray, Treaty 11 was signed, and with the opening of the 1922 season, the Edmonton *Bulletin* reported,"This year an unusually large number of white trappers have gone down stream...The Indians being the weaker people are gradually being forced to the wall."[24] There were isolated reports of considerable friction in the Simpson area between the Indian trappers and the newly-arrived white competitors.[25] The concurrent discovery of oil at Fort Norman meant dramatic changes for the north. Many of the new adventurers were men who had been displaced by the first World War, and the Canadian government was encouraging their migrations to the "empty" lands of the north. More often than not, they had tried to find a place for themselves homesteading in Peace River, but had been lured onward by the promise of faster wealth and unique adventure. Booming fur prices in the 1920's were a further encouragement. Because of this northward movement,competition between the newcomers and the H.B.C. was to become the primary characteristic of the Nahanni fur trade activities between 1920 and 1940.

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[24] As quoted in René Fumoleau,*As Long as this Land Shall Last*, (Toronto,1973),p.237.Dated Nov.14,1922.

[25] For instance,report of Indian Agent T.W.Harris,Edmonton *Journal*,Wed.Nov.15,1922,in which Harris confirms rumours in circulation at Edmonton.Also Fullerton Waldo,*Down the Mackenzie through the Great Lone Land* (New York

In 1926,the Hudson's Bay Company was operating posts at Forts Liard and Simpson, with an outpost at "South Nahanni" (now Nahanni Butte), although their actual headquarters for the Mackenzie District had been moved from Fort Simpson to Fort Smith in 1915. Also in operation at Fort Simpson was a post belonging to Northern Traders. This company was to prove the H.B.C.'s principal threat in the twentieth century fur trade. Formed originally in 1894 as Hyslop and Nagle, the name was changed to Northern Trading Company Limited when Peace River pioneer Colonel J.K.Cornwall and some Edmonton financial associates took it over in 1910. The company did well during the first years of the new century and became involved in transportation on the northern river systems. It encountered financial difficulties in the early 1920's and was forced into receivership in 1924.

The H.B.C. almost purchased its assets at that time, but instead they went to the Winnipeg Fur Auction Company. The name was changed slightly to Northern Traders Limited, and in just three years it had expanded from ten to twenty-five posts in the Athabasca-Mackenzie region. The new company was not as concerned with the transportation business, and concentrated its efforts on furs, so that by 1929 its volume of trade in the north was almost as much as that of the Hudson's Bay Company. Unfortunately, Northern Traders was badly affected by the Depression and the concurrent slump in fur prices, so it was in no position to oppose a takeover bid by the H.B.C. in 1939.[26] But during the period in question, it was a decisive force in the north.

In 1926-27, following receipt of complaints from both the mission workers and the H.B.C., the Department of the Interior instituted a system of licensing in an attempt to control the increasing number of independent traders in the north. As Minister Charles Stewart explained, transient traders were interfering with the established "credit" system by taking furs from trappers that should have gone to the individual or company which had loaned the trapper money in the first place. The transient traders would then leave the country. The established companies would not be paid the money they were owed, and the trappers would often be unable to obtain credit for the following year's work.

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[26] See Edmonton Bulletin, Sept.28, 1938; Morris Zaslow, "The Development of the Mackenzie Basin, 1920-1940," Ph.D. Thesis for U.of Toronto (1957); M.J.Robinson, "Exploration and Settlement of the Mackenzie District, N.W.T.," part 2,

Stewart explained that the purpose of the trading license was to discourage transience and encourage these traders to "settle down at one point."[27] Licenses would be granted if the department was satisfied with the trader's intentions. Trading posts were to be kept open for eight months of the year, and "outposts" had to be open for three months. The system was intended to benefit both the native trappers (by giving them a more certain source of supplies) and the established fur trading companies,notably the H.B.C. and the Northern Traders (by ensuring that their customers paid their debts).

Consequently, in February 1927, Northern Traders applied for a license to operate a post at Fort Liard, and the following year applied for a post at Netla, a few miles up the Liard River from Nahanni Butte, and frequented by Indians trapping in the Nahanni Valley. So confused was the Department of the Interior when it came to the geography of the area, that it undertook a lengthy investigation to determine just where this Netla was. Erroneously, a permit had already been issued to one George Boudah for a post on the "Natla", a tributary of the Keele (Gravel) River.[28] At any rate, the Netla license was eventually granted and Northern operated there until the spring of 1933.

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[27] House of Commons Debates,June 6,1928.

[28] P.A.C.,RG 85/file 777/item 5686,part 1. Dated April 25,1928.

In direct competition with the Netla post, the H.B.C. also operated at Nahanni Butte, albeit in a somewhat novel fashion. A World War One veteran named L.D. ("Slim") Vibbard ran an outpost at that place, purchasing goods on his own credit, but ultimately trading with the H.B.C., somewhat after the fashion of a franchise dealer. An H.B.C. employee, Bill Clark, later explained, "To ourselves, employees, it was a Hudson's Bay outpost. But to the Indians at large, or the customers, it was so-and-so's trading post."[29] After just a single season, Vibbard closed the post and moved. His position was immediately filled by Poole Field who had been trading and prospecting in the area for about ten years. With his arrival at the Butte, an open battle commenced.

Field's opponent, Jack LaFlair, was a completely independent trader who was already feeling the effects of the Northern post at Netla and that of J.H. Mulholland and N. Epler further up the Liard. He had arrived as a trapper in the area during the 1915-1916 season. Very little was known about him, and of course, rumours circulated wildly. It was believed that he was an American, and had come north after a brush with the law. At any rate, he trapped for a couple of years, then opened a small store at The Splits. Sometime in the mid 1920's he moved to the mouth of the Nahanni and obtained a license to trade there.

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[29] Interview with Bill Clark, op cit., p. 302.

In July 1927, Poole Field applied for permission to open a post some thirty five miles up the Nahanni. The license was granted, but Field apparently decided to operate right at the Butte because the river was too low to navigate by the time the permit was received from Ottawa, and of course, Vibbard had just vacated a prime location. He correctly re-applied for a modified permit. O.S.Finnie received the application accompanied by a telegram from an enraged LaFlair demanding to know why Field was being permitted to encroach on his territory, and insinuating that Field was not being honest with the government. Finnie's office conducted a brief inquiry which concluded by issuing Field with the required license. It appears that in 1927-28 Field himself did not operate the post, but sent in Ernest Roulier and C.E.McNeil as employees(Field was also operating a post on Trout Lake at the time). In the summer of 1928, Field attempted to gain permission to move the post some two hundred miles upriver to the mouth of the Flat River, probably because it was more convenient for his prospecting activities. However, the government did not respond soon enough, and again, low summer waters prevented removal to the new site. So Field remained at the Butte and tempers erupted. The following spring, Finnie received a long, angry letter from LaFlair, arguing that there were already enough posts in the area. Besides, he complained, Field's post was not in the correct location according to his issued permit, and Field was actually an agent for an unnamed fur trading company, and not an independent trader as he claimed to be. Clearly, the system of licensing was being interpreted by LaFlair as a means of restricting the number of traders in a given location to assist the traders and keep prices up.

The result of these persistent complaints was that O.S.Finnie ordered an R.C.M.P. investigation. The constable concluded in his final report that LaFlair's complaints were unfounded, and that in fact, the Indians benefitted from the competition. The report also suggested that,

> FromLaFlair's written and verbal remarks it may be gathered that exploitation of the surrounding Indians is LaFlair's main object in endeavouring to be the only trader in the Nehanni district, for that reason I think the privilege should be extended to at least one other trader. [30]

It must be noted, however, that the opinion of this R.C.M.P. officer does not appear to have been shared generally by the federal government or (obviously) the H.B.C. The northern police departments were increasingly siding with the missionaries in attempting to "protect" the natives (as will be noted in the following). Long interaction in the north between police and Indians had possibly transformed the earlier attitudes of suspicion and distrust to sympathy and an attempt at understanding, although strong evidence of paternalism exists. Although the Department of the Interior permitted Field to continue operations at the Butte, there is no evidence to suggest that its officials agreed with the police report's conclusions. The report was filed and apparently no action taken.

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[30] P.A.C.,RG 85/file 778/item 5708.

LaFlair did not concede defeat. His constant complaints compelled yet another investigation in 1931 as to whether Poole Field was acting as an agent for Northern Traders or simply buying goods from them on credit. Once again, Field was cleared of all charges. LaFlair was apparently not suffering badly from the competition, however, for when he died in 1950, his estate was reputed to be worth $33,000.[31] But the battles of the new fur trade did serve to inform an ignorant Ottawa of the conditions of that trade, and to bring to attention an area of the country hitherto little recognized in Canadian politics.

The Hudson's Bay Company did not remain passive when confronted with this new threat to its monopoly in the north. A number of techniques were introduced after the first World War with which the Company hoped to counter its competitors. While the situation was general throughout the fur trading regions of Canada, the Mackenzie River District was described by one analyst as the "front-line trench in the present competitive struggle."[32] The most competent Company traders were transferred to the posts in the highly competitive areas, although free traders who could be trusted were also equipped by the H:B.C., as in the case of

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[31] Interview with Bill Clark, op cit., p.303.

[32] H.A.Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada, revised edition (Toronto, 1970), p.371.

L.D.Vibbard at Nahanni Butte. Company employees were also directed to prevent competing traders from using H.B.C. transportation facilities, and strangers were not permitted to establish residence at H.B.C. posts. Attempts were also made in some areas by the H.B.C. to raise fur prices to force smaller companies out of business, or indeed to buy out competing firms directly.[33] At one time, a system of sealed bidding for furs between various companies was attempted, but the system proved unworkable when the firms began to accuse each other of collusion in bidding.[34] The competition of the twentieth century was as bitter in many ways as the original struggle between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company.

The federal government became increasingly involved in regulating the northern fur trade in a number of attempts to satisfy all concerned parties. Game regulations were originally part of the 1906 Northwest Territories Act (which had provided for the government of the "new" Northwest Territories after Alberta and Saskatchewan became provinces). In July 1923, an Order in Council was declared in an attempt to discourage some of the white arrivals in the north by levying heavy license fees on trappers who were non-resident, non-British subjects ($150 annually as opposed to $2 for

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[33] Ibid.,pp.371-73.

[34] Ibid.,pp.364-65.

for N.W.T.residents and $75 for British subjects who were non-residents.) It was a highly unpopular move in the north where many of the trappers were indeed recent arrivals, who did not plan to take up residence, but the Department of the Interior upheld the principle of the fees and dismissed the complaints because they came (naturally enough) from the "foreigners".

The next government move was an attempt to introduce a tax on furs in the N.W.T. in 1923 as a source of revenue to assist in paying for the administration of the game laws, but the bill failed in parliament because none of the provinces was collecting a fur tax. By 1927,however, all provinces except Prince Edward Island had begun to collect a fur tax, and Alberta was encountering difficulties because a number of traders had only to claim that their furs came from the N.W.T. to avoid paying the tax. An Alberta delegation brought this state of affairs to the attention of the Department of the Interior, so on March 8,1927, Charles Stewart introduced a bill in Parliament to levy a tax on furs being exported from the Territories. Furs used within the Territories were not taxable, and collection was to be made at Herschel Island,Fort Smith or any other police post where furs left the N.W.T. The taxation rate was designed to fluctuate with the value of the furs, and in 1927 it amounted to about 5% of the value of each pelt. There was some opposition in parliament to the bill on the grounds that it amounted to taxation without representation for the people of the N.W.T., but the bill to amend the N.W.T.Act was eventually passed. It did not come into effect until May 1929,however, because an error was made by the revision committee, which entered the year as 1929 rather than 1928 in the official record. The minister decided to let the error stand, for in the meantime, he had received "a very largely signed petition"[35] against the tax proposals. The Department of the Interior and the Department of Indian Affairs sent representatives north to investigate conditions with the circulation of a questionnaire. Nevertheless, the amendment remained in force, as Stewart was convinced that the protesters were largely ~~te~~ transient traders whom he was attempting to discourage.

Also in 1929, extensive amendments to the N.W.T.Act were made for the protection of game. Stewart's informers in the north warned him that most species of fur bearers were being severely over-trapped, so the Department of the Interior established a series of closed seasons on the various species.(See Appendix 5B) Game preserves were created along the Peel River, in the Arctic Islands and at Slave River and Yellowknife. Indians and "Half-breeds leading the lives of Indians" were permitted access to these lands, and prospectors working in the regions could hunt for food, but other commercial trapping was prohibited. The Thelon

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[35] House of Commons, Debates, June 6,1922.

Game Sanctuary was also created, but even Indians were forbidden to enter this area.[36]

When these changes were first introduced by P.C.807, dated May 15,1929, the closed seasons were intended to apply to both natives and whites in the north. Particularly difficult was the three year closed season on beaver. In 1928, a disastrous influenza epidemic swept through the Mackenzie Region killing an estimated 10 per cent of the population among native communities, according to Diamond Jenness.[37] Other sources place the figure as high as 15 per cent. Many natives had apparently been unable to harvest enough meat and fish for survival even without the added burden of the new restictions. The concerted efforts of Roman Catholic Bishop Breynat, Indian Agent Card, and some R.C.M.P. officers brought the plight of the Indians to the attention of the Department of the Interior, and on November 29,1929 the order was amended such that "Treaty Indians, who are the heads of families, and Half-breeds leading the lives of Indians," would be permitted to trap ten beaver each in the season between November 1929 and March 1930.[38] The period was later extended and the quota increased to fifteen beaver.

In order to control the Indian take, the Indians were required to take their pelts to designated centres where they would receive "issue of a supply order of stated value redeemable at any trading establishment to those Indians who turned in beaver pelts to the department."[39] Oblate historian René Fumoleau claims that the amount was $25, paid by the R.C.M.P., and he argues that because the beaver pelts were worth $40 on the open market, the government was once again taking advantage of the native peoples.[40] However, statistics presented in the Canada Year Book indicate that if the government was indeed paying $25 per pelt, the price was certainly a fair one, and might in some cases be something of a subsidy.(See Appendix 5C)

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[36] Regulations Respecting Game in the N.W.T., (Ottawa,1930)

[37] Jenness, op cit., p.253

[38] Fumoleau, op cit., pp.280-81. It is interesting to note that once again, the church was acting as the "protector" and champion of the

The H.B.C. appears to have agreed with Ottawa that measures were indeed necessary to protect the game, for no official complaint was lodged by the Company. However, reaction among the white trappers was vigorous and angry, sufficient even to overcome the self-proclaimed individualism of the white "frontiersmen". Twenty three trappers of a variety of backgrounds, who all considered Fort Simpson their headquarters, prepared a petition to Ottawa to protest. According to the signatures, at least half were regular trappers in the Nahanni. The document arrived in Ottawa in 1932, and demanded that white trappers be granted the same permission to take beaver and muskrat as the Indians and Métis. They also proposed that the export tax on fur be reduced to 5%, and that an end be made to the system of charging high rates for non-resident licenses. A final complaint was that river-front lots at Fort Simpson were not available for public building and certain persons were wrongly permitted more than one lot.[41] This was specifically an attack on the Roman Catholic mission at Simpson, which was resented not only because it held much of the prime land in that place, but also because the missionaries were seen as allies of the Indians. The Anglican mission was not particularly active at that time, which probably explains why it was not mentioned in the petition. Government response to these grievances was hesitant: the six complaints were "under study".

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[39] O.S.Finnie, Report, Director of the Yukon and N.W.T.Branch, Department of the Interior,(Ottawa,1928-29).

[40] Fumoleau, op cit., p.282.

On the other hand, the remoteness of the Nahanni country made it ideal territory for circumventing the game regulations,because they were almost impossible to enforce effectively. One white resident later recalled,

> See in those days,as I tried to explain to you before, is the fact that nobody was legally entitled to trap there...You only had to go--just get 30 miles up the Nahanni and you were in the Yukon [as far as the law was concerned] ...As long as you got out of sight...If he's got enough guts and if he'd go up and do it, let him do it,because he wasn't hurting anybody. There was no Indians trapping in that part of the country then. [42]

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[41] P.A.C.,RG 85/file 835/item 7745.The petition was signed by the following men('N' denotes a Nahanni trapper):
A.F.George
R.George
S.Jon[e]s
Geo.Boudah-N
Ole Loë-N
Ole Lindberg-N
Hans Rorwich-N
Ejnar Pearson
Carl Arhus-N
Charlie McNeil
George Turner-N
Poole Field-N
W.Epler-N
J.A.LaFlair-N
S.Crombie
W.S.Turner-N
D.Derosier
J.E.Rolier
C.Whitlock
H.Carlson
J.H.Mulholland-N
Pete McEwan
Dan Sullivan

[42] PCHRI interview. Name withheld at the request of Parks Canada.

The Department of the Interior was not completely oblivious to the problems of administering and enforcing such regulations in the north, although its concern lay more with enforcing the act among the Indians than among the whites. It was hoped initially that collective action on the part of the Indian Agents, the R.C.M.P., and the justices of the peace would be sufficient to keep the law, but it was soon obvious that such would not be the case. The Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch of the Department sent inspector J.F.Moran to comment on the situation in 1928. He reported,

> From my personal enquiries I learned that almost every R.C.M.P. post or detachment had a different interpretation [of the 1922 Game Act]...Found proof that nearly all detachments favoured their friends...The big trouble in my days was that the young R.C.M.P. were not trained in any kind of administration of game laws, fishing,handling dogs,etc.etc. [43]

In addition, it was reported to O.S.Finnie of the Department of the Interior in 1928 that:

> It would appear that the Indian Agents...are not fully co-operating with us in regard to matters pertaining to the administration of the game laws inasmuch as they make mis-statements to the Indians regarding the same...Mr.Card,giving the Indians permission in and out of season when hungry. [44]

The Department was particularly concerned with the situation at Fort Simpson, where Indian Agent Flynn Harris also served as the district justice of the peace. Finnie informed his assistant Richards in October 1927 that,

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[43] J.F.Moran,Confidential Notes,Vol.I,Fort Smith Archives. As quoted in Fumoleau op cit.,p.242. In the course of his investigation,Moran interviewed 120 persons,not one of whom was Indian. See Fumoleau,"The Treaties: A History of Exploitation,"Canadian Forum,(Nov.1976),p.19.

[44] Richards to Finnie,Nov.8,1928. P.A.C.,RG 85/file 6276,as quoted in Fumoleau,As Long as this Land Shall Last,p.203.

> The leniency with which Mr.Harris,J.P., of Simpson, has dealt with the Indians and Half-breeds coming before him for contraventions of the Game Act, has led us to the conclusion that where Indians and Half-breeds are involved it would be better if they appeared before another Justice of the Peace who is not an Indian Agent.[45]

It seems highly likely that a large part of the problem was a conflict of policy and interest between the Department of Indian Affairs under Charles Parker and the N.W.T. and Yukon Branch of the Department of the Interior. Inspector J.F.Moran was particularly unsympathetic to the needs of the Native population.[46]

The Nahanni,however, had a reputation as good marten country, and its remoteness served to insulate it from the legal requirements for trapping, so it remained an attractive area for white trappers as well as natives. In fact, many of the whites were trapping primarily to raise funds for their prospecting activities. The legend of the McLeod brothers gold discovery had never really disappeared.

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[45] Finnie to Richards,memo dated Oct.7,1927.P.A.C.,RG 85/ file 5809,as quoted in ibid.,p.244.

[46] See discussion in Fumoleau,p.268.

On March 9,1922, a brief article appeared rather inconspicuously in the Edmonton *Journal*.

> Mr.A.Raftos Canning,chief forest ranger for McMurray and the district to the north,has received word from a very reliable source that a placer stike has been made in the South Nahannie river, a tributary of the Liard river. At the present time it is impossible to state the exact extent of the find, but it is thought by men who know the country that it will be of considerable importance. This information confirms a rumor that has been in circulation in the north for some time. 47

The news may have been slow to reach the outside, but it spread quickly in the district, and a number of hopefuls departed immediately from Fort Smith.[48]

Two weeks later, Ottawa received independent news of the stories. L.T.Burwash, mining recorder for the N.W.T., wrote to O.S.Finnie (of the Department of the Interior) from Fort Smith that "no definite word has reached us here concerning it and any reports you may hear now have reached the outside by letters of which we know nothing...We hear that our friend Dr.Ings [?] of McMurray has received news of a strike and has spread the word outside."[49] This was only one of a number of instances in which government officials stationed in the north seemed to be the last to discover the local news. One wonders at the amazing lack

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[47] Edmonton *Journal*,March 9,1922,dateline Fort McMurray.

[48] Waldo,*op cit*.,p.83.

[49] P.A.C.,RG 45/file 46/item 2694. Burwash to Finnie,March 25,1922.

of communication which is demonstrated time and again. At any rate, the content of Burwash's letter was apparently news to Finnie and his department in Ottawa, but he was pleased and responded,"It is hoped, however, there may be some truth in the rumor."[50]

The cause of the excitement, as finally reported to Ottawa by R.C.M.P. inspector G.Fletcher at Fort Fitzgerald, was Poole Field. Field, who appears as the central character for the larger part of the Nahanni's recent history (his participation in the fur trade has already been described), was an independent trader and part-time prospector who had come into the Nahanni region sometime between 1916 and 1920. He had been born at the family ranch near Duck Lake,Saskatchewan and had joined the R.N. W.M.P. when only nineteen years old. He was sent to Dawson City as his first assignment in 1897, but remained with the police only three years before he bought his way out with the assistance of funds from his father.[51] He attempted to do some prospecting in the Yukon, but most of the good property had been claimed, so Poole turned to trapping. He affiliated himself with the firm of Hyslop and Nagle(later known as Northern Traders), and travelled to the confluence of the Ross and Pelly rivers to establish a base.[52] Here he lived and travelled with a band of local Indians, and appears to have married Tanny (or Tanya), one of their number.[53] Because of his close association with the Indians, he learned to speak their languages and was apparently quite respected by many of them, according to several of his acquaintances.[54]

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Details according to his son,Dick Field,PCHRI Interview, August 1976,cassette 1,side 1.

[52] Interview with Bill Clark,op cit.,confirmed by A.S.McNeil, PCHRI Interview March 1977 cassette 1 side 1

Poole's wife died at some point prior to the first World War, and Poole developed a relationship with Mary Atkinson (née Lafferty) who was the wife of his neighbour, Billy Atkinson. The two men knew and worked with Martin Jorgensen, who was the first of the group to travel over the mountains into the Nahanni Valley. He is the same Jorgensen whose death contributed to the evil reputation of the area. While Jorgensen was still alive and prospecting, a message intended for Atkinson from Jorgensen reached Poole Field claiming the prospector had found some interesting rocks in the Nahanni. Field and Mary Atkinson immediately headed over the mountains to find Jorgensen. All he eventually found was the latter's body and burned cabin. Field sold out his connection with Hyslop and Nagle, married Mary Atkinson, and began his long association with the Nahanni country.[55]

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[53] Interview with John Dewhurst, PCHRI, August 1976, cassette 1 side 2.

[54] Interview with Ole Loë, op cit., cassette 2, side 1.

[55] Details according to Bill Clark, op cit., pp.258-59.

In 1922, Field claimed to have discovered placer gold about sixty miles upriver from Nahanni Butte. He also collected a number of samples of what he believed to be gold-bearing quartz and returned to Fort Simpson to send them out for assay.

The first real news of the find was forwarded to Ottawa by the R.C.M.P."G" Division. Inspector Fletcher of Fort Fitzgerald reported,

> There has been quite a little local excitement about this strike and all the local people have either been up to stake or are going up to stake in the near future.
>
> There will probably be a small local rush in the Spring and of course there is a possibility of this news getting outside and causing a large rush but you will be in a better position to estimate the possible size of a rush from the outside than I am.
>
> Sgt. Thorne [Fort Simpson detachment] informs me that Field is confident that he has made a big discovery.[56]

The Commanding Officer of "G" Division forwarded this report to Ottawa, but with considerably less enthusiasm. "I have not allowed this information to become public," he noted,"as I do not wish to create a rush into that country upon such meagre evidence."[57] The Northwest Territories and Yukon Branch of the Department of the Interior in Ottawa was equally cautious. According to its own studies and reports, there was little likelihood of a big strike, so the news was filed away.

The Edmonton Journal, however, did not feel similarly constrained, and continued to publish stories of the strike on page one (albeit the articles were not long nor the headlines large). On Saturday April 8,1922 a story was printed confirming the Nahanni strike. The following week, the *Journal* interviewed Superintendent Jennings of the R.C.M.P. to determine why the Mounties had decided against sending a special patrol into the area. Jennings made the reason perfectly clear:

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[56] P.A.C.,RG 85/file 587/item 613,Fletcher to Commanding Officer,"G"Division,April 7,1922.

[57] Ibid.

> It is almost an annual story, this one about placer gold on the South Nahannie and vicinity...there may be a lot in the story, or there may be nothing at all. Last year we had a big report of placer gold, not on the South Nahannie, but on the Liard, and it proved to be nothing beyond a little yarn.[58]

The following week, news leaked that the government was sending a survey party to the headwaters of the Sikanni River to locate a base line for further surveys. The *Journal* interpreted the move to be a result of the recent gold "findings" (even though many of these claims had never been recorded) and announced,

> The activity of the dominion government in surveying the far north is taken by many old timers in the country as an indication that the enormous value of the mineral and other possibilities of the area are now being given official recognition.[59]

A number of prospectors from the Yukon and Fort Smith headed into the area, but results were disappointing and Edmonton's interest in the area waned temporarily.

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[58] As quoted in the Edmonton *Journal*,April 15,1922,page 1.

[59] *Ibid*.,April 20,1922,page 1.

In the midst of this activity, O.S.Finnie's department was receiving more news from the Nahanni, this time in the form of a scientific survey. Since the Geological Survey was preoccupied with what it considered more urgent and pressing work, Charles Camsell of the Department of Mines was pleased when a wealthy American acquaintance named Fenley Hunter wrote suggesting that he would like to undertake some exploratory journeys in the Northwest Territories at his own expense, and would be more than pleased to supply the Canadian government with copies of his maps and any data he might gather. Several alternate routes were proposed, and Camsell suggested a trip along the Nahanni itself. Camsell had always been interested in this little-known area since his boyhood at Forts Liard and Simpson, and was particularly interested in substantiating the persistent rumours of placer gold. Hunter readily agreed to the suggestions, and on July 24,1928 he arrived by canoe at Fort Simpson, where he spoke to Poole Field with whom he was much impressed.[60] Hunter was accompanied by George B.Ball, a prospector and guide from Telegraph Creek, B.C., and the small party carried a number of mining tools. The original plan was to ascend the river, portage overland to the Gravel(Keele) and return via the Mackenzie.

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[60] P.A.C.,RG 45/file C 95/item F-7[?],Fenley Hunter's Report, February 25,1929.

Sometime in August, Hunter reached the great waterfall on the Nahanni, which he named "Virginia" in honour of his daughter. Excited by its size, he sent a telegram out via Fort Simpson. When it was received by F.H.Kitto in Ottawa, considerable enthusiasm and interest in the area was created. It was both amazing and thrilling to realize that areas unexplored by Europeans still existed in the Dominion, and many remained confident that these held great promise, so the discovery of a large and beautiful waterfall with hydro-electric potential as well as scenic value was savored to the fullest. Hunter himself, although delighted with the natural beauty, was not particularly enthusiastic about the other aspects of the trip; in particular, the prospecting was not going well and late summer travel meant low water and hence arduous canoeing. So he turned back at the falls after recording detailed data and taking a number of photographs. He also brought back a sample of water from the lower hotsprings for analysis and submitted a sketch map to officials of the Geological Survey.[61]

On March 16,1929, a large headline in the Edmonton Journal proclaimed,"Gold Stampedes to Rush Nahannie Area in Spring." Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration Limited (N.A.M.E.) had made use of aviation technology to fly a number of prospectors into the South Nahanni to investigate the reports of gold and claims that had been staked in 1922. The Toronto-based company built a station at Nahanni Butte,[62] and conducted a number of aerial surveys along the Flat River based primarily on advice received from Poole Field. Fenley Hunter had spoken with R.D.Adams and W.J.McDonough of that company during his stop-over at Fort Simpson in August, 1928. He reported:

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[61] P.A.C.,RG 45/file 46/item 3018.

> I understand, with two aeroplanes these people located and supplied three separate outfits of two men each at different points on the upper reaches of the Flat River, where each party was to prospect and be picked up by plane in time to make the last steamer up the Mackenzie River. The results of their work are unknown to me, but their entire operations seem to be carried out in a very business-like manner. [63]

The results of their work did not long remain unknown, for the Edmonton Journal broadcast its largely fabricated report as soon as it received the news. It was eventually obvious that there really was no gold discovery, and the only significant point about the whole venture was the fact that it was one of the earliest uses of the airplane to overcome the major problem of northern exploration: distance and difficulty of travel. The Nahanni region would never again be truly isolated.

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[62] F.H.Kitto,The Northwest Territories 1930,(Ottawa,1930),p.46.

[63] Hunter's report, op cit.Other sources allege the party included Charlie McLeod and Harry "Doc" Oaks,one of Canada's most famous early pilot/geologists.See Philip Godsell,The Vanishing Frontier,(London,1939) and a pamphlet pubished by Canada's Aviation Hall of Fame,Calgary Alberta.(n.d.)

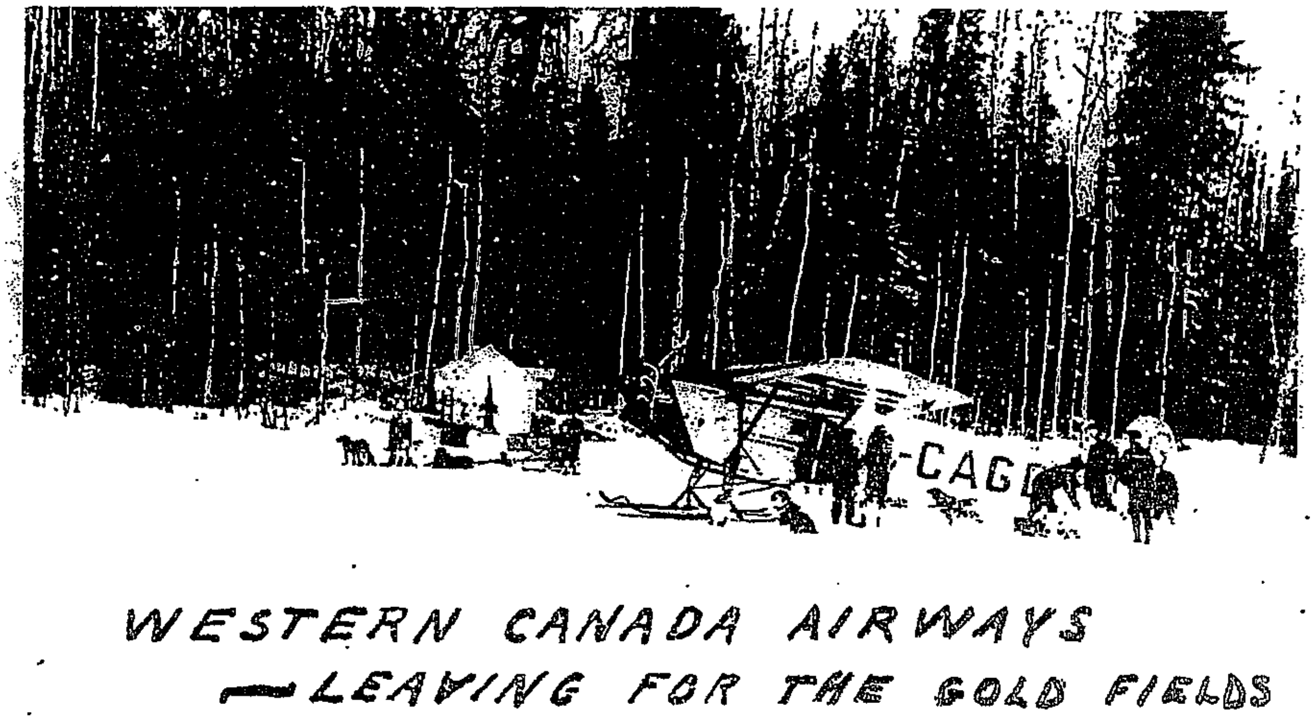
-CAG
WESTERN CANADA AIRWAYS
—LEAVING FOR THE GOLD FIELDS

PHOTO F: A bush plane expedition of the type common in the Nahanni Valley,1928-1930. The plane is a Fokker Universal, which later belonged to Grant McConachie, who served as president of C.P.Air for a time. Courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

The other important point about the venture was the fact that for the first time, southern money was being systematically channelled into the area, whereas individual initiative and rather haphazard exploration had characterized the previous work. However, the era of the individual was not quite over, for N.A.M.E. had hired local people as prospectors and guides.

In spite of the fact that the "discovery" existed exclusively in the minds of some old time prospectors and Edmonton boosters, the Journal was thrilled with the promise of gold, and its first report captures the giddy tone of its optimism.

> Land of terror and mystery, where the bones of slain prospectors have lain bleaching in the snow and sun for two decades, land haunted by horror and strange tales of witchcraft and torture, the Nahanni is to have the veil which has shrouded it for 25 years, torn aside by the thousands who will stampede into that country this summer in search of the gold which is said to be in the gravel in the creeks and rivers.
>
> Even now the stampede is underway, according to W.H. 'Professor' Wrigley, who has hunted gold across the 'top o' the world' for the last 30 years, and who arrived in the city from Toronto on Friday to take part in what he says is going to be the greatest stampede in mining history.
>
> Wrigley was two months in that country last summer, as a prospector for Northern Aerial Minerals Exploration limited...
>
> 'Why,' Wrigley went on, his eyes blazing with excitement, 'we got 48 colors in one pan. The dust was such big stuff that you could hear it tinkle when we dropped it into the pan'...
>
> 'Maybe you're wondering why I'm spilling all this stuff to you?' Wrigley asked. 'Well, the country is rich and big enough to have 10,000

> men go in there.'

This incredible article goes on to relate the McLeod story (claiming in the process that the brothers took out $8,000 worth of gold dust before their murders -- complete nonsense, of course), and speculates that already prospectors "on the coast" were heading north.[64]

Ottawa was alarmed. Memos filled with proposals for new R.C.M.P. detachments, a Nahanni mining recorder, and extra forest fire equipment circulated rapidly from office to office. But after a month with no claims actually filed at Fort Smith, the Department of the Interior grew more cautious. Just what was going on? O.S. Finnie finally cabled the district agent at Fort Smith for details, and wrote the director of N.A.M.E. in Toronto requesting verification of the stories.[65] Fort Smith replied that although N.A.M.E. had staked some claims the previous summer, it had decided not to bother recording them after a mining engineer named [R.D.] Adams had inspected the findings. And the president of N.A.M.E. squelched all the rumours definitively:

> Our party was got up in rather a hurry and the men were not the best we might have picked for the work...Their talk with the Edmonton Journal is about 100% 'bunk' and so little truth in it, that the Nahanni country is not included in this season's work at all, so you can pretty well see what we think of their discoveries there last year.[66]

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[64] Edmonton Journal, Saturday March 16, 1929.

[65] P.A.C., RG 85/file 587/item 613, Finnie to Fort Smith Agency, April 8, 1929.

The second Great Nahanni Gold Rush had again dissipated as quickly as it had begun, somewhat to the relief of officials at Ottawa, who no longer faced the prospect of expensive expansion of services into a remote area.

Nevertheless, there were long term effects on the valley. Rumours of gold had reached as far away as England, and the 1920's saw a steady stream of white adventurers who came to prospect, liked the life and decided to remain, usually supporting themselves as trappers or traders. Among these was R.M.Patterson, an Oxford graduate, who read a book by Michael Mason entitled The Arctic Forest and decided to leave his position with the Bank of England for a life of adventure. He subsequently wrote a whole library of northern travel literature, including several books on the Nahanni country.[67] Another arrival was Albert Faille, an American wanderer who spent forty years alone in the valley, travelling annually upriver in search of the lost gold. He was the subject of an award-winning N.F.B. film and has since become something of a legend himself.[68] Also during this period, Bill Clark, (an engineering graduate of Scotland's Aberdeen University) arrived as an H.B.C. employee dropped off in error at Fort Simpson in 1923; he had been destined for Port Simpson,

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[67] The Dangerous River (1954), Finlay's River (1968), Far Pastures (1963), The Buffalo Head (n.d.), Trail to the Interior (n.d.), plus numerous magazine articles.

[68] Produced in 1961, won second prize at the Berlin Film Festival. See also the chapter on Faille in Moira Farrow, Nobody Here But Us, (Vancouver, 1975).

British Columbia. Dick Turner wandered in and out of the area as well. One of the few native-born Canadians to settle in the district, he has since become a vocal proponent of "white rights" in the north.[69]

A surprising number of these men either brought their wives with them or sent for them once they were settled in the area. Others lived with native women.[70] The number of women resident in the Nahanni area during the 1920's and 1930's is "surprising" because the recollections of the men seldom include references to the women, perpetuating the image of an all-male frontier community and endowing the life of the frontiersman with an aura of strength, hardiness and other "masculine" virtues. The mythical image does little justice to the frontier women, who worked as partners in the fur trade and prospecting as well as being solely responsible for the maintenance of the home and any attempts at creating a more comfortable existence without the advantages of southern conveniences.

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[69] _Sunrise on the Mackenzie_ (1977), _Nahanni_ (1975).

[70] Couples identified include (with earliest date noted):

Annie and John McPherson	Born there	(Indian)
Tanya and Poole Field	Born there	(Indian)
Mary and Poole Field	1915	(white)
Mary and Gus Kraus	Born there	(Métisse)
? and Ernie Southerland	1920	(white)
Bella and Ted Trindell	1930	(Métisse)
Vera and Dick Turner	1933	(white)
Lodema and Art George	Before 1933	(white)
Anna and Ole Lindberg	Before 1934	(white)
Kaye and Stan Turner	Before 1938	(white)

The final, and perhaps the largest, Nahanni Gold Rush began in 1933. Stories of the lost McLeod diggings continued to circulate, and it was the last dream of an aging Klondiker which initiated the final search.

Jack Stanier came to Canada from England for the Yukon rush of 1898. After an arduous trip up the Nahanni and over the mountains, he reached the Klondike too late for any real money. Reluctant to turn away empty-handed, he lived near Whitehorse for a number of years. Some time around 1920, his trapping took him back to Fort Liard, where ten years later he made the acquaintance of the new Oblate missionary there, Father Turcotte. The priest later recalled, "He was so taken with the gold, discovering gold, nothing else interfered with his thinking."[71] For the ten years he had been based at Fort Liard, Stanier had combed the Nahanni and Flat River country on foot, with little success. But Father Turcotte was to provide the all-important clue.

During their many discussions, Father Turcotte recalled that the Oblate at Fort Liard during the days of the McLeod brothers had been Father LeGuen, who had spoken of a map given to him by the famous pair. Stanier was fascinated, so Turcotte wrote to LeGuen (who was at Providence) and after various delays, a map finally arrived at Liard. Stanier asked Bill Clark, the ex-H.B.C. employee to be his partner, and they were "staked" (i.e. provisioned) by Gerald Hansen at Fort Liard.[72] They were flown into the area by Stan MacMillan, a well-known bush pilot in the district, and at various points along the route encountered a number of other prospectors looking for the McLeod gold.

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[71] Details according to Father Turcotte, PCHRI, August 1977, cassette 1, side 1.

On July 19,1933, the pair reached a creek where they supposed the gold had been found. Clark recorded in his diary that he did indeed pan a few colours, and also found the remains of an old claim. They staked two new claims, and it was decided that Stanier should fly out to get a small company organized so more money would be available to work the remote spot. Freeze-up was fast approaching, making it difficult to dig through the creek gravel to the bedrock beneath. The pair were pleased with the discovery but seem not to have been particularly excited until September 10, when pilot MacMillan returned to pick up Stanier, bringing with him Poole Field, whose curiosity had been aroused. Clark recorded,"Poole Field, who had been through the Klondyke rush said surface indications were better than some of the best creeks there, so our find looks to be a breadwinner." The ecstatic party flew out to Fort Simpson with the news,[73] and carried with them a tiny bottle of "washings".

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[72] Father Turcotte, ibid.

[73] Bill Clark Diaries,pp.10-12,30,53. University of Alberta Archives,MG 7, item 1.

Back at Fort Simpson, the prospectors formed a syndicate of local people, including Gerald Hansen, Father Turcotte, several wireless operators from Simpson, "Wop" May (Canada's most famous bush pilot) and several other district trapper/prospectors. For its first few years, it remained a small,local group, but was later to gather financial support and legal advice from Ontario mining interests and Toronto lawyers. Its function as a large company will be examined in the next chapter. But in the early 1930's, it was essentially an agglomeration of the individuals who had been working the area for years. The group apparently kept fairly quiet about the find, but the news was bound to leak.

On December 8,1933, the Edmonton Journal once again boasted an enormous headline across the top of page one: "New Gold Rush Excites North":

> Sensational rumors of fabulously rich gold deposits in the mysterious Nahanni country, prevalent since the McLeod brothers,prospectors, died mysteriously in Deadman's valley 29 years ago, are finally expected to crystallize in an important gold strike in the vicinity of McLeod creek, some 250 miles west of this fort [Simpson] ...It has been discovered that the recent 'mystery flights' of W.R.'Wop' May have been in connection with the reported strike.

Just ten days later, Ottawa was already receiving inquiries about the Nahanni "Gold Fields", and the Journal began its research into the story. On January 3,1934, it printed a lengthy article on the recent activities in the Nahanni, with Jack Stanier's own version of the McLeod mystery.[74] It was a piece full of excitement and adventure, the very fabric of the traditional American frontier legends. It caught the imagination of the public, and continues to do so to this day. It was one of the last tales of a romantic, lone figure picking his way through a wild country in search of an Eldorado. In a country still struggling through the desperation of the Depression, the Nahanni gold was almost a promise of salvation for those individuals who could demonstrate sufficient initiative. The "pioneer spirit" of Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier had not yet completely faded. Needless to say, the last great gold rush failed to materialize, although the stories of gold continued to draw attention to the area for the next three decades.

Gold was not the only opportunity for individual achievement in the Nahanni. It was still, for most North Americans, an unknown, blank spot on the map, demanding exploration and discovery. It also held great promise for the application of a growing popular interest in wildlife preservation and conservationism, a concept just then gaining widespread acceptance in the rest of North America.

Harry Snyder, a wealthy American, first flew over the Nahanni country in 1934, and returned in 1935 by air and boat. He was accompanied by his daughter Dorothy, George Goodwin of the American Museum of Natural History, and S.J.Sackett of Chicago. The purpose of the expedition was ostensibly to collect specimens and take photographs of the unique wildlife. Snyder's particular interest was the "black-tailed white sheep".[75] Local residents were suspicious,however. Gus Kraus recalled that Snyder planned to build a cabin at Dal Lake and even flew in a large quantity of hardwood flooring:

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[74] Edmonton Journal, January 3, 1934. "Lost Map Revealed Location of McLeod 'Mystery' Mine in Deadman's Valley Region."

> He was going to make a resort for him and his cronies, because he had a hunting lodge at Dorothy Lake [B.C.]...He's a nice guy, nice man to talk to, awful interested in wildlife, no matter if it was plants or anything. But he was really a hunter. He's not a conservationist...So then every year, the only way he could come in was by asking for, getting permit for research...That was his excuse to get the permits, to kill five more sheep. 76

The second, better known Snyder Mountain Expedition was more clearly a bona fide research trip. In fact, Snyder joined the party for only a few days, although he was the sole financial backer. The group consisted of H.Fred Lambert of the Canadian Geodetic Survey and his field assistant Karl Stein of New York; Colonel A.J.McNab of

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[75] Harry Snyder,"Exploring the Upper Nahanni River and Snyder Mountains in 1937," Canadian Geographical Journal,Vol.XV,no.4(October 1937),pp.169-189. These sheep were supposed to be a type of ovis dalli, a variety for which the Nahanni is now famous.

[76] Interview with Gus Kraus,op cit.,pp.107-109.

Chicago; Jim Ross, a Peace River outfitter; Ted Boyton, the cook; and Joe Callao, an assistant. Specimens were collected for the New York Museum of Natural History and Ottawa's Victoria Museum, and sketch maps were prepared.[77] The expedition was widely publicized in both Canadian and American naturalist magazines. The group also made the first recorded impressions of the power potential of Virginia Falls.

By the end of the Depression Decade, two events occurred in the area which were to change forever the direction of events in the Nahanni region.

On May 3,1938, an Order in Council created the Mackenzie Mountains Game Preserve, a mountain area of 69,440 square miles covering all the South Nahanni drainage system and surrounding mountains.[78] The Game Act of 1929 had already established four other preserves in the N.W.T. intended primarily to encourage the preservation of wildlife. Natives only were permitted to hunt in these preserves. In addition, a second Order in Council[79] for the Mackenzie Preserve enacted some unique measures, in that the use of airplanes for any trapping activity in connection with the Mackenzie Preserve was prohibited. In a sense, the creation of the preserve was a concession to the needs of the Dené, for any conservation measures would mean an extended lifetime for the trapping economy and the traditional native way of life. It should be stressed, however, that the pressure for these preserves did not come from native groups or their defenders. Representatives of the Department of the Interior believed that game was being severely over-trapped, and thus some conservation measures were necessary to save what was then an important Canadian industry.

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[77] H.F.Lambert, "The Harry Snyder Canadian Expedition, 1937." Canadian Alpine Journal, Vol.25(1937?), pp.1-18.

[78] O.C.Number 976, May 3, 1938

[79] O.C.Number 2470, Oct.4, 1938

For many legislators, the preserve system was simply wise resource management. Others, however, believed these preserves were land set aside "for the exclusive use of natives." This latter interpretation opened a fundamental debate on northern policy. According to Charles Camsell,

> If we are not going to reserve our northern regions exclusively for the use of the natives, but are looking to encourage the opening up of these regions to the people of Canada generally, then I think we must limit the extent of the preserves to meet the pressing needs of the natives, but no more. Also the preserves should not include country capable of being opened to the whites by reason of its agricultural or mineral resources.[80]

The Nahanni region had not yet proven its resource worth to southern Canada, so it could safely be given to the Indians. Besides, if it were true that ,as one resident recalled, (see note 42) few Indians used the valley much by the 1930's anyway, the government's "generosity" seems very limited indeed.

One also questions whether any long term policy or strategy for northern development and conservation had even been envisioned at this point. Conflicting opinions on priorities and uncertainty over the handling of native people necessitated broad policy statements with which no-one could really disagree. These "motherhood" policies suggested the existing need to develop the north for the benefit of all Canadians (including the natives), but the lack of specific suggestions for dealing with the Indians, even so far as simply honoring the terms of Treaty 11, and the ambivalence over game management and conservation, indicate a lack of specific direction. Conflicts between government ministries, as described, also contributed to the problem. Lack of communication between Ottawa and its northern field workers further enhanced the difficulties of formulating realistic policies.

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[80] P.A.C.,RG 45/file 46/item 2694. Camsell to R.A.Gibson, September 14,1935. Emphasis mine.

The second important event of the latter 1930's was the failure of Northern Traders in 1939. The Depression had produced a sudden, drastic slump in the price of furs, and the smaller companies like Northern lacked the capital resources of the Hudson's Bay Company to sustain them through such extended periods when demand was lacking. All Northern's stock was purchased by the H.B.C., and the second period of free trade and competition in the north was brought to an end.

In summary then, the period 1922-1940 was one of great activity. Three gold "rushes" and a fur trade competition earned considerable attention for the area throughout Canada and reached even to the United States and Britain. Men of independent tendencies flocked to the area, visualizing it as one of the last true frontiers on the continent: a frontier in the sense particularly that a man could make his own way without the hindrances of society or government regulations, in a land where Nature herself was the prime opponent. Interestingly, many of these people reached the Nahanni via the Peace River district, which was perhaps the more widely recognized "frontier" of the 1920's. It was not a case of the Peace River settlement achieving maturity and developing into a metropolis with a Nahanni hinterland. Rather, it may be suggested that for many, the Peace River was a "failed frontier". It offered a settled, agricultural life, whereas the wilder Nahanni region offered the opportunity for individual initiative and reduced life to its most basic terms. Men could (and did) disappear into the valley alone for a year at a time. And although governments were attempting to regulate life in the N.W.T., the Nahanni was sufficiently distant from administrative centres that social and legislative restraints were easily avoided. It is also interesting that although Nahanni society during this period has been described as the typical shifting, loosely connected, all-male frontier community, many of the men were married, and collective action was not unheard of.

A second important aspect of the Nahanni "frontier" was the role of the Edmonton newspapers, and particularly the Journal. Clearly, Edmonton was in a position to gain considerably from northern development as it was located at the terminus of the only major transportation route into the Northwest Territories. Because Edmonton itself remained something of a frontier town in the 1920's, its exploitation of the Nahanni gold rumours amounts to an interesting case of the frontier boostering itself. The alleged gold finds in the Nahanni area were never reported in other major Canadian newspapers at the time. The northern frontier found it necessary to proclaim its own virtues to the world during this formative period.

As more whites were attracted to this last frontier, inevitable conflicts arose between the newcomers and the Natives. The churches, particularly the Roman Catholics, became ardent defenders of their native parishoners. As yet, the Dené were uncertain of their position with regard to white trappers and white governments, and not yet able to express or direct their own desires, so the churches were not defending any organized Indian political platform. Their defence was produced rather as a result of their continuing attitude of paternalism. The missionaries still regarded the Indians as children entrusted to the church's care and as such, requiring protection against these new threats. The churches interpreted what they believed to

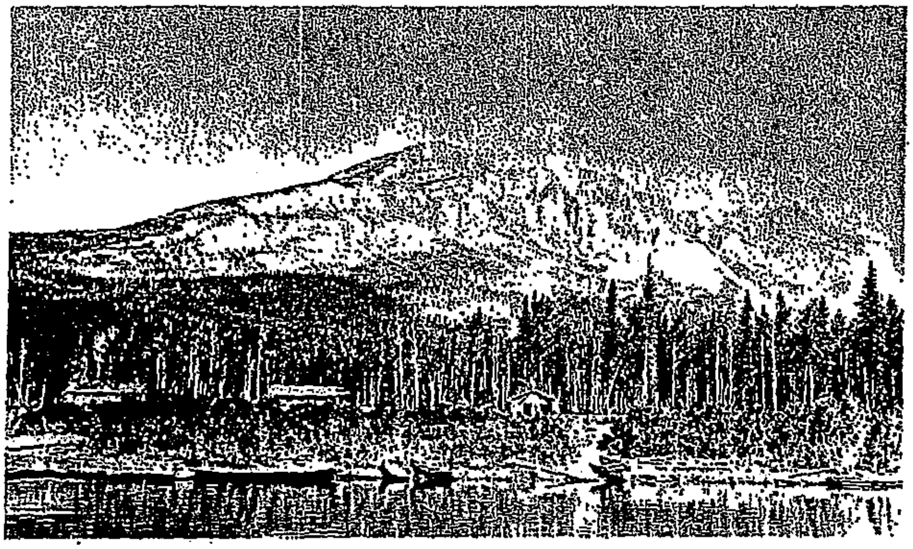

PHOTO G: Nahanni Butte as seen by A.E. Cameron, 1936. Courtesy University of Alberta Archives.

be best for the native people and actively campaigned to keep them from harm.

On the other hand, Ottawa was more inclined to encourage natural resource exploitation than to concern itself with human resources, so the Dené were increasingly allocated a secondary position when policy decisions were made. It was assumed that these people could continue to live as they always had, while gradually learning the white ways, and that the organized missionaries would rescue them in case of extremity. It would not be until after the second World War that the Canadian government would realize the blindness of such an attitude.

The most important characteristic of activity in the Nahanni region during the period under consideration, then, was the individualistic nature of the prospecting activities among both natives and whites. Increasing realization of the difficulties and expenses involved with resource exploitation on such a small scale,however, laid the basis for the larger corporations of the post World War Two period to move in and attempt development on a much larger scale. But the individual prospectors and adventurers had succeeded in drawing attention to the area's potential as well as facilitated the removal of Indian rights.

The period was also one in which the romantic tales of the frontier flourished. The McLeod story, which until the Depression, was simply another wilderness death, was publicized and glorified to the stature of a legend, modified and expanded with every telling. Many Canadians who are entirely ignorant of the Nahanni region can still recall hearing tales of a "Headless Valley" and tropical vegetation in the North. The role of this type of northern mythology in the formation of the Canadian psyche will be considered in a later chapter. Suffice to say, this period experienced the growth of some local stories into national myths. The lure of gold drew the Nahanni into the mainstream of Canadian life in a way that the fur trade and the work of the churches had been unable to accomplish. Now the more powerful ammunition of corporate development and government administration from southern society could be sent in.

CHAPTER 6

CORPORATE RESOURCE EXPLOITATION

1940-1972

The declaration of war in 1939 marked the beginning of a new era for the world as well as for the Nahanni, although it is conceivable that the Nahanni would have undergone a major transition during the 1940's in any event. Individual local prospectors were beginning to realize that courage and initiative were insufficient for successful exploitation of that difficult territory. Money and professional expertise could no longer be considered inconvenient and unnecessary. Thus, these local men began to form companies with "outside" backing and support. Larger southern corporations also began to recognize the potential of the north for their ever-increasing demands for war supplies, and the Nahanni did not escape notice. Because this corporate interest developed in war time, the Canadian government also maintained a high profile in assisting the private sector to overcome the problems of northern work. In the later 1950's, this government concern attained a new intensity when Prime Minister Diefenbaker announced his faith in a great "Northern Vision", and for a time, the north was drawn even closer to the mainstream of Canadian politics and ideology. Once again, however, the Nahanni failed to produce riches in quantities significant enough for southern concern (with one exception), and proposals were developed to convert the area to a great wilderness national park. There was considerable debate over the concept, but ultimately the park was created, and a new type of resource was available for exploitation. It was the era of big ideas and big money; the local native population (both Indian and Métis) were almost forgotten in the process. Ultimately, these patterns are common to much of the north during the period in question, so an examination of their development in the Nahanni might well form the basis for such a broader study.

When Bill Clark and Jack Stanier returned to Fort Simpson in 1938 after finding traces of gold in McLeod Creek, they formed a syndicate composed of local men. Extensive discussion apparently ensued as to whether the group should "get somebody else outside" to develop the mine. Bill Clark and a number of the men wanted to attempt to raise the money themselves, but it was eventually agreed to hire a consulting engineer.[1] Carl Falcon, then working for Hollinger Mines near Timmins, Ontario, was contacted.

Falcon made his first trip into the Nahanni in 1938, finding a few "colours", but nothing very exciting. Nevertheless, the Liard-Nahanni Syndicate was incorporated with three million shares in 1939. The problem remained, however, that under Canadian law, at least $100 of assessment work had to be undertaken each year on a mining claim in order for that claim to be retained. The Syndicate had managed to file 150 claims on various creeks (notably McLeod, Grizzly, Bennett, Lee and Lodema) and thus required the substantial sum of $15,000 per year. The penny stocks of the company were not as yet offered on the market, so the money had to be obtained elsewhere. Carl Falcon's wife had an uncle who was chairman of the board at Kraft Foods and Kraft was looking for likely mining investments at the time, so Mrs.Falcon obtained a promise for $500,000 to $750,000 from that quarter, on the condition that war did not break out. The problem was that Kraft owned several plants in Germany and feared that Hitler might be inclined to expropriate them in case of war. This was not an idle excuse; the takeover did eventually occur.

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[1] Interview with Father Turcotte, PCHRI, August 1977, cassette 1, side 1.

The other source of financial assistance resulted from a contact of Father Turcotte's, the Oblate priest at Fort Liard who had been granted a share in the syndicate for his assistance in retrieving the alleged McLeod Map. Turcotte was originally from Val Gagné, Ontario (about sixty kilometers from Timmins), where he and his family had developed a friendship with a local entrepreneur named Bilodeau who had some cash he wanted to invest in mining ventures. Bilodeau was contacted by Turcotte and the former agreed to finance the syndicate's initial operations on the condition that the consultant Falcon work for no wages until the project began to pay. Falcon eventually agreed, although this condition meant that his wife and young family would suffer considerable hardship. They apparently later moved to Toronto to live with relatives for the duration of the project.

In 1941, Carl Falcon returned to the claims with Bill Clark and Jean and Wilfrede Dumon (sons of another Val Gagné contact). After a summer of hard labour constructing the necessary flumes and shutes, the small party returned to Fort Simpson, forced to acknowledge failure. The money from Kraft did not materialize because of the war, few new financial backers could be found during war time, and after the war, the primary financers (Bilodeau and his wife) both developed cancer and lost interest in their speculative ventures. The syndicate paid the assessment fee on some of its claims for one year only, and then failed to meet the requirements.

This endeavour, with local initiative supported by outside money and expertise, was not an isolated example of this type of transitional approach to resource exploitation. In 1945, Bill Clark formed a company known locally as the Clark-Easson Corporation to investigate galena deposits up the Nahanni at Prairie Creek. It consisted of Clark, Carl Falcon, J.M.Easson (a Bay Street broker), Duncan Derry (geologist), Gus Kraus and G.R.Gibson of

Timmins, Ontario. Financial backing was provided by Conwest Exploration Company, Cochrane-Red Lake Mines Limited, and K.L.M. Carter.[2] However, this endeavour was not particularly successful either.

The significance of these ventures lies in the fact that they provided a transition from the local prospector's explorations to corporate resource development of a larger scale. Often the impression is created in histories of the north (and the Yukon in particular: see Pierre Berton and Morris Zaslow, for instance) that individual prospectors worked an area until it was stripped of placer gold, then the large corporations moved in with their dredging equipment to reach the bedrock beneath the creeks. Obviously the transition was not nearly as abrupt. Local prospectors in the Nahanni finally realized the need for money and expertise, and were willing to accommodate themselves to a changing situation. It should also be noted that although there is indisputable evidence that the Native people of the Nahanni actively participated in the early stages of prospecting, there is almost nothing to suggest that any Indians were involved in this transitional stage, even as guides or outfitters for the exploration parties. The use of aircraft made the guide's role obsolete, and the Dené did not have access to the amounts of cash necessary to become integrated into this new form of prospecting. They were being forced further and further from the centre of attention in the valley in a continuing process that has been traced to the beginning of the twentieth century.

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[2] Interview with Carl Falcon, PCHRI, March 1977, cassette 2, side 2.

With the onset of the second World War, the attention of the Canadian government was quickly focussed on the north, primarily because of its strategic importance and resource potential. In 1934, the R.C.A.F. had taken a number of aerial photographs of the Nahanni,[3] and in 1937 the hydro-electric potential of Virginia Falls had received official recognition,[4] but the government had otherwise taken no direct steps to integrate the region into the Canadian economic system. The provinces of Alberta and British Columbia were more astute in recognizing the area's potential; petitions were sent to Ottawa in 1938 requesting that this area of the N.W.T. be annexed to the provinces.[5] It was the Americans who provided the impetus for the first large-scale invasion of the North: the Canol Project.

Basically, four stages were planned for Canol. The first involved further drilling at Norman Wells to increase petroleum production for the use of troops along the Alaska Highway. A pipeline was planned to carry 3,000 barrels of oil a day between Norman Wells and Whitehorse. Third, a refinery would be built at Whitehorse, and finally, storage facilities would be constructed at Prince Rupert to facilitate distribution of the petroleum to Skagway. An agreement was signed between Canada and the United States such that the Americans would bear the costs while the Canadians would provide the personnel and clear the rights of way. The U.S. would own the finished pipeline and refineries, and Canada would continue to hold title to the land. It was intended from the beginning that once the war was over, the Canol facilities would be sold or otherwise disposed of by the Permanent Joint Board of Defence.[6]

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[3] Interview with Milton J.Campbell,PCHRI,July 1977,cassette 1, side 2.

[4] W.C.Bethune, Canada's Western Northland,(Ottawa,1937),p.162.

[5] C.A.Dawson (ed.), The New North-West,(Toronto,1947),p.33. Alberta repeated the request at the 1945 Dominion-Provincial conference.

The pipeline, 577 miles in length, was to be built from Norman Wells across the Mackenzie Mountains to the Yukon, a route which did not lie directly through the Nahanni country, but which was close enough to have an effect on the area for the duration of the war. A road was to be built alongside the pipeline to assist in the building and maintenance. It had been hoped that this road in particular would be of great value in peace-time as a means for opening the great "treasurehouse" which many continued to believe existed in the unexplored areas of the North. In fact, the road and the pipeline operated only from April 1944 to May 1945, and both fell into disrepair after the withdrawal of the troops. The Yukon side of the road was maintained for a number of years, but the portion through the Mackenzie Mountains scarcely resembles a trail today, except for the abandoned equipment scattered through the land.

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[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 31 ff.

While the project was underway,however, there was a great deal of excitement along the Mackenzie Corridor, one of the primary supply routes. A steady stream of Americans flowed through the country; many Indians later recalled it had been their first sight of black men. Not a few of these American soldiers were quite unprepared to cope with the demands of the northern environment, and it seems that the locals were quite willing to assist wherever possible. Bill Clark recalled his principal activity during those years:

> Well, I did a lot of flying when the planes started coming in, when Canol Project started. They were flying from Fort Nelson down to Fort Simpson and to Norman Wells. They were getting lost and I flew a lot over the Nahanni country searching for missing planes. [7]

It was also in 1942 that the most obvious impact of war was experienced in the Nahanni valley. Japanese "fire balloons" were occasionally spotted, drifting over the mountains. It was rumoured that one was found at the source of Birch River, another at Poplar River, and another had allegedly been brought down right at Fort Simpson's airport.[8] That year, a devastating forest fire swept through the Nahanni valley. Local people were convinced it had been set by the Japanese bombs.[9] Gus Kraus and his wife were living at Nahanni Butte in 1942, and Gus later recalled:

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[7] Interview with Bill Clark,PCHRI,ManuscriptReport 196,Vol.II, p.277.

> Fire! For a week,Mary and I, I think close to a hundred fires we counted. You couldn't count, just see all the spots, spots, spots, spots -- all over the country from the top of the Butte... There was no aircraft flying for over a month. Everybody's eyes in the country were bloodshot from smoke. And ashes!...No rain, because it can't rain because of such a thick blanket of smoke.[10]

The fire terminated local trapping for a couple of seasons, and quelled the optimism of government timber surveyors who were undertaking a study in the southern Mackenzie District.

Meanwhile, other survey and study work continued. By 1943, Imperial Oil was completing its exploration projects in the district. It had been Imperial which first began drilling at Norman Wells in the 1920's, and was largely that company which continued to undertake exploratory work in the region. In 1943, employee A.W.Nauss conducted a survey along the Liard, with a stop at Nahanni Butte in late May and early June. The party did not travel far upriver. The following year, a survey party from the G.S.C. made a "traverse run" up the Nahanni as part of their work along the Liard. The party consisted of C.D.Hage, David Robertson and James F.Davies; their primary concern was to investigate rumours of coal seams in the area.[11] The same year, F.S.Nowosad of the Agrostology Division, Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa, travelled down the Liard from Fort Nelson to Fort Simpson, taking soil samples and making botanical observations.[12] His itinerary included a stop at Nahanni Butte where he observed and commented on the successful vegetable garden maintained at that site by Mary Kraus. It is interesting to note that a detailed survey of the entire river was not undertaken until 1963-65 (the G.S.C.'s "Operation Nahanni"). Until that time, maps were compiled from aerial photographs and the piecemeal information obtained from people like Fenley Hunter, Alan Cameron and these brief G.S.C. studies.

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[8] Interview with Gus Kraus,PCHRI,Manuscript Report Number 196, Vol.II,p.63.

[9] See interview with Bill Clark,*op cit*.,p.276/ interview with Milton J.Campbell,cassette 9,side 2/ interview with Gus Kraus,*op cit*.

A less scientific survey was undertaken in 1947, when Pierre Berton flew into the area, stopping briefly at Deadmen's Valley and Nahanni Butte. The excursion was part of his research for The Mysterious North, one of his early efforts at popularizing Canadian history, which was published in 1956.

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[11] See G.S.C. Paper Number 45-22 (1945).

[12] Dawson, op cit., p.172.

Although the war years brought a decade of relative inactivity to the Nahanni Valley, the return to a peacetime economy promised great changes for the north. As one commentator suggested in 1947, "The war years have been years of Canadian awakening."[13] The army left behind a modern system of radio communications, airports and roads. As had occurred after the completion of the railroad on the Prairies, the support structure was complete; all that was required was the population to fill it. This situation, coupled with the post-war mood of progress and achievement, naturally focussed attention on the North. One commentator recorded:

> The war threw into sharp perspective the great fallow areas of Canada. Areas above all in the North-West, where the best aspirations of generations, lie buried and defeated, the greatest unexploited region of the world. 14

Of particular interest was the little-known Nahanni region. The Nahanni mountains, described as a "giant's grip" holding the great Mackenzie River, were not perceived as threatening landforms, but rather as positive features of "fine silt, the fruit of aeons of erosion. They cry out for the explorer, the scientist, the settler."[15]

But by the early 1950's, the Nahanni was clearly no longer "virgin" territory. The lives of the Dené had undergone extensive change, and even the natural features of the area had been affected. R.M.Patterson, long-time observer of the region, recorded rather sadly that,

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[13] R.A.Davies, The Great Mackenzie, (Toronto, 1947), p.(v).

[14] Ibid., p.4.

[15] Ibid., p.33.

> The Nahanni,too, is no longer young. The same stretch of the plateau was covered with sheep droppings in 1928: in 1951 there was not a sign of any kind except a very occasional old track. The wild game, from observation and from all reports, has been cut, in twenty-five years, to one third of its former plenty -- probably even less. [16]

Government attitudes toward the place of the native people in the north were also changing. The old belief that the Indians would probably eventually abandon their "traditional" life in favour of assimilation into white society was finally being replaced by a recognition of the existence of a strong native culture and the realization that native trapping contributed to a substantial portion of the Territorial economy. In 1948, the federal parliament passed the N.W.T.Act, which replaced the old Northwest Game Act (as well as others). The Northwest Game Ordinance took effect in 1949, and was intended to "continue the policy of conservation of wildlife resources for the use and benefit of the resident aborigines."[17] The Ordinance reduced the export tax on furs, but more importantly, introduced a system of trapper registration whereby each trapper would be granted exclusive rights to trap in a clearly defined area. Registration certificates were to be issued from Fort Smith after application to the district warden. Some areas could be registered to more than one trapper if the individuals concerned chose to work the territory collectively. No fees were charged for Indian and Eskimo licences. During the first year of the program (1949-50), 310 certificates were issued to register 425 trappers, of whom 257 were Indian, 107 were Eskimo, and 61 were "Others", presumably whites.[18] Once such a system was in effect, the Mackenzie Mountains Game Preserve was clearly no longer required, and it was abolished in 1953 with no public fanfare.

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[16] R.M.Patterson,"Nahanni Revisited",Beaver,Outfit 283 (June,1952),p.20.

[17] Department of Resources and Development,Development Services Branch,Annual Report, 1950,p.33.

In spite of these concessions to the needs of the Dené, the federal government was increasingly concerned with a bolder approach to resource development as its paternalistic protection of the natives gradually diminished. This change in emphasis was reflected clearly in the bureaucratic re-organization of 1950 in which the old Department of the Interior (N.W.T. and Yukon Branch) became the Department of Resources and Development.[19] In 1953 the name was changed to Northern Affairs and National Resources.

The approach to northern development in the 1950's was similar to that of the 1920's in its optimism, but it was very different in a number of significant ways. The first involved the role of government. No longer was the North perceived as the "Last Frontier" which could simply be thrown open to settlement. The need for planning and direction was evident, and the role of planner was to be assumed by the federal government. The expenses of transportation and communication over the great distances involved could be government subsidized (a proposal to which private enterprise readily agreed!), and the government could also provide the overall leadership in the support fields of agriculture, research and social services.[20] In 1955, the first of these new concepts was applied in the formulation of a federal school policy. A plan was initiated to provide sufficient educational facilities in the Territories such that by 1970, all school age children could be taught at federal schools. The responsibility for education was removed from the church missions, although many school residences continued to be staffed and supported by the missions.[21] Clearly, a government school would provide an education that differed in many ways from that of a mission school. Whites in the north reacted favorably as they expressed hopes that the quality of a standardized education would improve their children's opportunities in southern Canada. The reaction of the Native people to a system that removed their children from home (as before), and through standardized curriculum, taught ideas that were irrelevant and often incomprehensible for northern youngsters ("C" is for Cow, but how many Dené children have ever seen a cow?), has been documented elsewhere. Once again, Ottawa politicians and bureaucrats were aptly demonstrating their support for a system by and for the white population. It was not to be until the late 1960's that the Department of Indian Affairs began to recognize the need for a curriculum geared to the Dené culture.

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[18] _Ibid_., p. 32.

[19] For a summary of the rather confusing changes of name and authority of these government departments, see a useful "Finding Aid" prepared by the Public Records Division, P.A.C.

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[20] Davies, op cit., p.124.

[21] Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, The Northwest Territories Today, (Ottawa, 1965), p.68. For an outline of developments in Indian education prior to 1940, see H.J. Vallery, "A History of Indian Education in Canada," unpublished M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, Kingston (1942), especially pp.157-185.

The second factor which is a significant difference in the approach to development between the 1920's and the 1950's is the role of the corporation. Several large companies expressed an interest in the Nahanni during this latter period, including Imperial and Shell Oil. Wescan Development Company of Edmonton obtained licences for a number of dredging operations in the river valley in 1958, the same year that an unnamed Toronto company recorded several placer claims there.[22] By 1960, a number of corporations were known to be operating at various locations within the Nahanni drainage system: Phelps Dodge Corporation, Mackenzie Syndicate, Canex Aerial Exploration, Centennial Mines, Magnum Copper, Triad Oil Company, the Nahanni 60 Syndicate, California Standard Company, and Pan American Petroleum Corporation.[23]

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[22] P.A.C., RG 22/file 397/item 330-12-1. Memo from B.G.Sivertz to Deputy Minister, D.N.A.N.R., November 7,1958.

It was one of these corporate attempts that finally managed to discover and successfully exploit a mineral resource in the region. In 1959, the Canada Tungsten Mining Corporation announced the discovery of a large ore body on the west side of the Flat River valley. A sampling taken in 1960 suggested 1.5 million tons of commercially useable ore were available at a site covering 4,280 acres.[24] Considerable excitement was aroused over the discovery.

> The major tungsten occurrences along the Flat River plus the tungsten occurrences reported by other companies would indicate that a major tungsten metallogenic province is being developed. This province would extend from Frances Lake north-eastward to the Nahanni River and from the Canol Road south-eastward to the British Columbia border, and promises to be of great importance. [25]

Although the top world producers of tungsten continued to be China and the United States, the find at Flat River enabled Canada to move into the role of a major exporter.

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[23] Bill Addison, PCHRI, Manuscript Report Number 196, Vol. I, pp. 39-41.

[24] W.K. Buck and J.F. Henderson, "The Role of Mineral Resources in the Development and Colonization of Northern Canada," in V.W. Bladen (ed), Canadian Population and Northern Colonization, (Toronto, 1962), p. 94. Tungsten is primarily used in light bulb filaments.

[25] C.J. Brown, "The Geology of the Flat River Tungsten Deposits," Canadian Mining and Metallurgical Bulletin, V. 54, no. 591, (July, 1961), p. 512.

Canada Tungsten faced the enormous difficulty of getting supplies into the mountainous country, and shipping the concentrates out for market. Arrangements were made with Ventures Limited, Dome Mines and American Metal Climax Incorporated for loans and stock purchases, but these were insufficient to meet the requirements. Negotiations were undertaken with the Canadian government, and eventually the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources agreed to construct an eighty three mile road to the Hyland Valley from Watson Lake in the Yukon, and to cover two thirds of the cost of the remaining fifty mile road into the mining site itself.[26] The original equipment was carried overland to the mine in winter, and by 1961 a concentrates plant was under construction. The mine began production in 1962. A world slump in prices forced a temporary shut-down in 1963,(and a severe fire in the mill necessitated further closures for an entire year in 1967)[27] but otherwise the mine has proven a successful venture, and a pleasant community for the miners has been established at the site.

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[26] Buck and Henderson, op cit., p.95.

[27] The Northwest Territories Today, op cit., p.31; D.I.A.N.D. Annual Report, 1967-68, p.33.

The federal government facilitated the development of the region in other ways besides financial assistance with transportation problems. E.F.Roots of the Geological Survey travelled through the Flat River area in 1953 and submitted a number of field notes to the Survey.[28] A.C. Patterson,Parks Superintendent from Edmonton explored the river in 1953-54. The Forestry Branch conducted an aerial survey of the Nahanni timber in 1955. The Canadian Wildlife Service sponsored a trip which was undertaken by R.C. Stewart and company in 1955-57. The largest project of the Geological Survey during the 1950's was "Operation Mackenzie", an attempt to survey the hitherto unmapped regions in the Mackenzie District. Their work included Fort Liard, Virginia Falls, the Root River and Sibbeston Lake areas (1957) as well as the northern part of Frances Lake and the southern section of the Nahanni River (1960). One of the most interesting aspects of government involvement was the production of a National Film Board film based on the travels of Albert Faille, as has been described. The film developed an image of Faille similar in many ways to the popular image of the American frontiersman: individualistic, hardy,courageous and solitary. The northern life was perceived in terms of basic survival in the struggle of man against nature. The film reinforced a popular image rather than attempting to approach the subject from a new perspective, but it did succeed in publicizing a little-known area of Canada. The Geological Survey undertook "Operation Nahanni" in 1963-65 to map the remaining sections of the valley, and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources investigated the power potential of a number of sites throughout the region, notably along the Flat River in 1964.

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[28] Brown,op cit.,although these notes were never published.

What caused this flurry of government involvement in the Nahanni area (and indeed throughout the North) in the later 1950's and early 1960's? Partially, it was the mood of the country -- one aspect of the search for new horizons to conquer after the challenge of the second World War. The Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects noted in 1957,

> There is widespread recognition in Canada that the northern reaches of the country, including the northern sections of the provinces as well as the Yukon and Northwest Territories, constitute a new economic frontier. Northern Canada today and tomorrow may be what the West was in the earlier period of our history. It not only offers attraction to those in search of adventure and fortune, but it has seen industry become interested in these areas as a long term source of basic materials. [29]

These vague, optimistic scenarios of northern potential almost achieved the status of a new "National Dream" when they were manipulated by John George Diefenbaker in an election speech presented to a Winnipeg audience of 5,000 on February 12,1958. He proclaimed,

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[29] Royal Commission on Canada's Economic Prospects, (Ottawa, 1957), p.413, as quoted in F.H. Underhill (ed), The Canadian Northwest: Its Potentialities, (Toronto, 1959), p.83.

> I think of a vast program on Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic, hiding resources that Canadians have little realization of...We intend to start a vast roads program for the Yukon and Northwest Territories which will open up for exploration vast new oil and mineral areas--thirty million acres! We will launch a seventy-five million dollar federal-provincial program to build access roads. This is the vision! [30]

The Winnipeg Tribune recorded ecstatically,"Mr. Diefenbaker's announcement of the $1,185,000,000 public works program--probably the biggest such project ever planned in Canada--burst in the middle of his speech without warning."[31] The speech outlined a six point program of Conservative proposals. Seventy five million dollars would be expended for development at Frobisher Bay. A one billion dollar roads program would be initiated for the Territories. In addition, seventy five million dollars would be spent on joint federal-provincial road access development. Federal aid would be made available to rail lines which were a means of access to Canadian resources. A ten-year, $105 million plan for thermal power plants in the Maritimes would be prepared. And finally, Diefenbaker promised a determined exploration of the Arctic Islands would be undertaken. In addition to the proposed program, the Conservatives promised to place considerable emphasis on plans for a national conservation policy.[32]

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[30] As quoted in Peter C.Newman, Renegade in Power:The Diefenbaker Years,(Carleton Library Edition,Toronto,1973),p.218.

[31] Winnipeg Tribune,Thursday February 13,1958,"PM to Open North Wealth",p.1.

These proposals for northern development formed what the Conservatives had referred to as "The New Frontier Policy" in the 1957 election, and which they had expanded and made more definite for the 1958 election. The program had three objectives. The first was to develop a "continuing inventory" to determine just what resources were available in the Canadian north. The second was to develop a program for exploiting the nation's energy resources. The third objective was to utilize a "conservation approach".[33] Specific aspects of the plan (announced in detail later) included the "Roads to Resources" program, exploration of the Polar continental shelf, a ten year magnetic survey of the Canadian Shield, and the introduction of changes to the oil, gas and mining regulations.

There is some question as to whether this "Northern Vision" was Diefenbaker's personal creed, or if it was presented to him as an electioneering device. Peter C. Newman, in his journalistic report, Renegade in Power, claims that the idea originated with Alvin Hamilton, who had "for years been preaching the North's potential."[34] Newman argues that Diefenbaker was prepared to present a national development speech in Winnipeg, but that it was Hamilton who composed the specific ideas on the North.

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[32] Winnipeg Free Press, Thursday February 13, 1958, "Jammed Hall Hears PM Blast Liberals," p.1, p.16. It is perhaps significant to note that both Winnipeg papers were far more concerned with the plans for tax concessions and railroad subsidies than with the "Northern Vision", the Tribune headline notwithstanding.

[33] John G. Diefenbaker, One Canada, Vol. II (Scarborough, 1978 paperback edition, first published 1976), p.236.

Nevertheless, the Vision did manage to combine an interesting array of concepts, both old and new. Diefenbaker had personally always been concerned with the process of Americanization in Canada (indeed, he has been accused of strong anti-American sentiments). He was later to explain his 1958 concerns in this manner:

> I was, I explained, concerned not with American investment in Canada *per se*, but with the degree to which the investment in Canada by foreign corporations was uncontrolled...What was needed was a *national policy* to provide a dynamic influence on the economy, and a sense of *national* purpose and *national* destiny.[35]

Clearly, the concept of northern development would fit neatly into these outlined requirements. The North was uniquely Canadian (at least, the Americans had only Alaska), and a policy to extract its riches could easily attain the status of a national dream and sense of purpose, at least as far as the Conservatives were concerned. Perhaps even more importantly, however, such a program fit completely with traditional Conservative policy in Canada. Diefenbaker himself clearly approached the idea from this viewpoint. "In emphasizing the question of northern development and northern vision," he recalled,"I advocated a twentieth-century equivalent to Sir John Macdonald's national policy, a uniquely Canadian economic dream."[36] During the Winnipeg speech, Diefenbaker implied that he was perhaps going even further than Macdonald could have anticipated. "We are fulfilling the vision and dream of Canada's first prime minister--Sir John A. Macdonald. But Macdonald saw Canada from East to West. I see a new Canada: a Canada of the North!"[37] The "Roads to Resources" program was to replace the building of the C.P.R. as the twentieth century equivalent of Canada's "National Dream".

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[34] Newman, *op cit*., p.217.

[35] Diefenbaker, *op cit*., p.8.

This renewed interest and excitement for the North lasted for about seven years, and accounts largely for the burst of activity evident in the Nahanni region from 1958-1965. Yet in spite of their great optimism, the administrators of the Northern Vision programs achieved very little of what had been intended. The value of mineral production in the Yukon and Northwest Territories actually decreased during Diefenbaker's term of office, for instance.[38] Probably the most important aspect of the program was "Roads to Resources". Under this plan, over 4,000 miles of highway were actually constructed by 1963 (although 6,800 miles had been promised). One might question the utility of many of these roads, however; Peter Newman suggests the only really productive project was that from Watson Lake to the tungsten deposits at Tungsten in the Flat River Valley.[39]

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[36] _Ibid._,p.9.

[37] Newman,_op cit_.,p.218.

[38] _Ibid._,p.218. Figures quoted place the value at $35 million in 1957 and $20 million in 1962.

Although the interest in northern economic development dominated the headlines in the late 1950's, other issues were also raised. It was finally brought to the attention of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources that the provisions in Treaties 8 and 11 for the establishment of the reserves had never been honored. One suspects that D.N.A.N.R.'s concern was not so much for the fact that Ottawa had not fulfilled its obligations but that the Department sensed the opportunity to gain further concessions from the Indians regarding this increasingly valuable northland. As the preface to the appointment of the "Commission Appointed to Investigate the Unfulfilled Provisions of Treaties 8 and 11" put the issue,"There is doubt whether it is in the interests of the Indians to have reserves set aside for them in the Northwest Territories in proportions provided for by the treaties."[40]

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[39] Ibid.,p.219.

[40] Preface to the Commission's Report, seen as a typescript, Queen's University Document's Library.

On June 25, 1959, an Order in Council created the commission particularly to investigate the situation as it applied to the Indians of the Mackenzie District. The members of the Commission were Walter H. Nelson, a Prince Albert lawyer (chairman), V.F.Valentine of the D.N.A.N.R., L.L.Brown of the Indian Affairs Branch, James Koe (a resident of Aklavik), and Baptiste Cazon (a resident of Fort Simpson). The group met with the Indians and some whites at fifteen locations along the Mackenzie River, including Fort Liard, in July of 1959. Mr.Nelson reported that at each meeting, the commission explained to the Indians that they were entitled to land under the agreement of Treaty 11, and that the federal government wished to learn their views on what arrangements for honoring the treaty they would prefer. Several alternatives were suggested by the commissioner. The Indians could take all of the 567,000 acres to which they were entitled; they could retain some land plus a cash settlement; they could hold the mineral rights but otherwise sell the land to the government; they could negotiate a flat cash settlement; or they could negotiate any other agreement they might choose to propose.

The results of these meetings came as a real shock to the Commissioner. Although he had been informed that previous discussions had prepared the Indians for his visit, he found "few of the Indians had any clear understanding of the reason for the Commission's visit and the subject matter under discussion."[41] Further, the Indians were reluctant to contribute to the hearings because they were highly "suspicious that the Government's interest in the matter heralded some undesireable change in their way of life."[42] Indeed, few of the Indians realized that reserves were part of the Treaty. Even those who had been present at the signing were unaware of any land entitlement promises.

Most importantly, however, Nelson discovered what may well be the real reason that the Mackenzie Indians agreed to the treaty in the first place. Because of their concept of the land, they did not believe that they were losing anything by agreeing to sign. Nelson recorded that,

> Some bands expressed the view that since they had the right to hunt, fish and trap over all of the land in the N.W.T., the land belonged to the Indians. The Commission found it impossible to make the Indians understand that it is possible to separate mineral rights or hunting rights from actual ownership of the land. 43

As a result of the hearings, the Commission concluded that "A large proportion of the Indians are not interested in any change and merely wish to be allowed to continue to live as they do now."[44] Little interest in reserves, mineral rights or cash settlements was indicated. In fact, the primary reaction elicited by the Commission was deep distrust of the government's motives. Only the non-Indians consulted by the Commission seemed interested in its activities; Nelson reported this fact was primarily the result of the whites' anxiety to "force the Indians" to move off valuable land which they currently occupied.[45]

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[41] *Ibid.*, p.3.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*, p.4.

[44] *Ibid.*, p.5.

With little input from the Dené, the Commissioner drew his conclusions and recommendations largely on the basis of his personal opinion. The decision to establish reserves would be, in his words, "unfortunate", since the government must end its paternalistic policy of protecting the Indians during periods of transition, and must give them more responsibility in managing their own affairs. To that end, Nelson recommended that the Indians be granted title to any land they then used for housing plus additional land around settlements. The remainder of the entitlement should be settled with a cash payment of $20 per acre to be held in trust by the government for each band. In addition, Nelson suggested that the government make an annual payment of half of one per cent of Crown revenues derived from mineral, gas and oil exploitation on Treaty land.[46]

The work of the commission received relatively little attention in southern Canada, and D.N.A.N.R.

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid., p.7.

responded to the conclusions with non-action. However, a few years later, a commission appointed to investigate political organization in the N.W.T. was the recipient of considerably more attention. The Carrothers' Commission, as it has become known, investigated a situation which was of very little concern to the native people of the N.W.T.. It was a white men's commission appointed to investigate white men's grievances, and it is a sad commentary on Canadian interest in the north, that it was this commission and not the Nelson commission which received the publicity and interest.

The Carrothers' Commission was composed of three participants: A.W.R.Carrothers,Jean Beetz and Mr. J.H. Parker, the mayor of Yellowknife. Fifty nine public hearings were staged in fifty one communities, including Nahanni Butte. There had been growing concern among the whites in the Territories over control of development plans. The traditional resentment of northerner against southerner, coupled with increasing independence of white newcomers, was being expressed in terms of demands for self-government and even provincial status. The settlers of the Mackenzie Valley and Yellowknife were particularly vocal.

This new political concern has been analyzed in terms of a colonized people gaining political awareness and maturity and demanding that their new status be recognized, much the same pattern as had occurred in

Ontario and later, on the Prairies. This analysis seems somewhat inappropriate when translated to the Canadian north, however. First, the population of the Northwest Territories in 1965 was still largely Native, and the Dené were far more concerned with retaining their hunting and fishing rights than with gaining provincial status. They are, however, more properly to be considered a "colonized people" than are the whites in the north. On the other hand, the white minority is basically not concerned with questioning the validity of assumptions underlying southern institutions and southern policy for the North; they want development as much as any southerner, but they want to control its direction themselves. The whites in the N.W.T.today are not a colonized people rebelling against the institutions and mentality of their colonizers. This description applies far more appropriately to their Dené neighbours. In 1965, when Carrothers conducted his hearings throughout the Territories, the Dené were not sufficiently organized to express their opinions and concerns as a cohesive group. Perhaps too, they recognized that there would be little meaningful difference for them between a white government in Ottawa and a white government in Fort Smith. The commissioner's attitude at these local hearings also clearly illustrated his condescending paternalism toward the native people. An observer reported, "The residents received what amounted to a short course in civics."[47] Was the commission intended to lecture or to listen?

At any rate, Carrothers' primary recommendations were intended to provide a compromise between the demands for self-government and the federal government's interest in maintaining a hold in the north. He concluded that the N.W.T. should not be divided into two entities along the tree line (one of the proposals which had gained considerable attention prior to the hearings) and that Yellowknife should be established as the capital city. Many northerners reacted negatively to the naming of Yellowknife; Fort Smith was the traditional centre of administration and communication while the gold-mining centre of Yellowknife was regared by oldtimers as the hub of recent southern exploitation and was believed to be settled by people who came north for a year or two to make money and then leave, never to return. The "real" northerners preferred to utilize Fort Smith as their base. The commission also made a number of minor recommendations intended primarily to pacify the restless white northern residents rather than to institute any real changes. The governing body of the Territories should henceforth be named the "Legislative Assembly" and the Territorial Commissioner should live in Yellowknife rather than Ottawa, which had heretofore been his residence. Carrothers suggested further that a Development Board should be created to act in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner, and a Department of Local Government should be formed to assist the communities in their local affairs.[48] The proposals of the Carrothers Commission (released in 1966) were quickly adopted by Ottawa, but clearly most of the political innovations have signified very little for the Territories. In the long term, the transfer of the Assembly to Yellowknife has been the most important change. It had meant the huge influx of civil servants (invariably whites imported from the south) with a corresponding increase in cash flow in the North, alongside a widening income gap between whites and Indians.

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[47] W.O.Kupsch,"The New N.W.T.",Canadian Geographical Journal Vol.75,no.4 (November,1967),p.11.

At the same time as the government was searching for ways to develop and exploit the north, another group was attempting to preserve part of the last virtually untouched wilderness region of North America. Ironically, the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources was commissioned to handle both the exploitation and the conservation.

The idea of national parks was not a new one by the mid-twentieth century, but the Canadian parks system was not experiencing dynamic growth either. Since the creation of Banff National Park in 1885, and the formation of the Dominion Parks Branch in 1911, there had been only eighteen national parks developed in Canada by 1957. The Parks Act of 1930 had dedicated these areas to the people of Canada for their "benefit, education and enjoyment", but it was not until the mid 1950's that the Parks Branch undertook a major policy review. It was decided that the parks system ought to reflect each of the country's major natural regions as well as its population distribution.[49] Accordingly, the Parks Branch began to direct its attention to areas hitherto unrepresented by a park.

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[48] See ibid., and L.-E. Hamelin, Nordicité canadienne, (Montreal, 1975), pp.208-211.

By the late 1950's, the American government was examining several proposals for a wilderness region to be set aside in northeastern Alaska. One of the suggestions included a plan known as Brooks Range, which was to be a joint venture with the Canadian government. In the course of the discussion, the Canadian parks branch began to toy with the idea of establishing wildlife refuge areas in the Canadian Arctic zone. From the outset, it was made clear that these areas could not be zones of potential mineral development, or areas required by the Eskimo for their hunts.[50] Several sites were proposed by a variety of sources, and interest gradually moved southward into the sub-arctic. The earliest reference to the Nahanni as a potential park appears to have been made in March, 1958, when a civil servant noted in a memo to the Deputy Minister of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources:

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[49] "National Parks of Canada" in J.S.Maini and A.Carlisle (eds.), Conservation in Canada, (Ottawa, 1974) p.151.

[50] P.A.C., RG 22/file 330/item 33-24-12, Proposed parks, N.W.T. and Yukon.

> This area had considerable beauty and satisfies the other requirements for a national park with the exception of accessibility. However if established it is suggested that it be treated and publicized as a wilderness type of park suitable only for the skilled voyageur and outdoorsman. It should remain in this category at least for many years.[51]

In October 1958, at the Roads to Resources conference, the Nahanni was again discussed as a potential park. Those in attendance at the conference were not overly enthusiastic, however, for news of renewed mining interest in the area (particularly the tungsten at Flat River) was just then beginning to reach Ottawa.

A month later, the Parks Branch laid plans to conduct a survey in the Northwest Territories to study possible park sites more thoroughly in accordance with the new policy of regional representation. A second meeting was held in February the following year with "unanimous agreement on the valley of the South Nahanni and the East Arm of Great Slave Lake as the two outstanding areas which should be investigated."[52] The Nahanni seemed an ideal location for a number of reasons. It had been well-known for some time for its scenic beauty, and there was plenty of wildlife because the country had remained "virtually untouched". It appeared that the country was no longer used extensively for trapping as the Indians allegedly preferred the Liard River area. Finally, it seemed unlikely that mineral claims would be registered in the valley. There was some concern that oil and gas might be found along the lower reaches of the river (below the Hot Springs), but that problem could easily be solved by eliminating this area from the park boundaries.[53] The Parks Branch decided to defer a field survey until the summer of 1960 or 1961. There was particular concern over the power potential of Virginia Falls.[54]

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[51] P.A.C., RG 22/file 397/item 330-12-1, memo to Deputy Minister, D.N.A.N.R., "Wilderness and National Park Reserves." March 14.

[52] *Ibid.*, memo to Deputy Minister, Parks Branch D.N.A.N.R., April 6, 1959.

A thorough study as a preliminary step towards establishing a national park did not, in fact, commence until 1969.[55] During the early 1960's however, a wide variety of other studies were conducted by several other government departments and a number of private individuals. It is conceivable that the "threat" that the area might be set aside for a park acted as incentive for many of these groups to attempt to prove with finality the resources which many firmly believed lay hidden in the mysterious valley. The Department of Agriculture surveyed the soils along the Liard in 1961 with an expedition under the leadership of J.H. Day; Nahanni Butte and the area a few miles up the South Nahanni River received some attention. In 1963, a group composed of local residents and other interested people made an aerial survey of the Nahanni Valley (including Hole-in-the-Wall and Brintnell Lakes) to determine the feasibility of a big-game hunting operation.[56] A second study of hydro-electric potential was sponsored by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources in 1964. Based on earlier explorations for galena at the mouth of Prairie Creek, Cadillac Explorations Limited constructed a work camp and brought a number of bulldozers and airplanes into the area in 1966-68, to test for lead/silver/zinc deposits.[57] In 1968, the Department of Indian Affairs conducted their "Economic Survey of the Lower Liard Region" under the supervision of G.M.Higgins,Industrial Division. The following year, a third study of the hydro-electric potential of the Nahanni was undertaken by an Ontario firm, and yet another survey of the forest resources was completed.

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[53] Arguments in favour of Nahanni Park according to ibid.. The list in this memo bears a remarkably close resemblance to the description of the South Nahanni River found in John Buchan, Sick Heart River, (Toronto: Musson Book Company, 1941), pp. 124-125. This book is Buchan's last novel, and takes place not far from the Nahanni river.

[54] P.A.C., RG 22/file 330, op cit.

[55] There was a preliminary study in 1962 by Lloyd Brooks, Harold Eidsvick and W.H. Baker of the Parks Branch according to chronology prepared by W.D. Addison, Parks Canada Manuscript Report Number 196, Volume I, p. 44.

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[56] Nahanni Chronology, ibid., p.45. According to Addison, the participants included:
Stan Burrell & Elmer Kure of "Northern Safari"
Claude Brewster & Donald Edge of "Brewster Buffalo Hunts"
Don Turner of Nahanni Butte
Glen Bigalow, Fort Liard Forestry Management Office
Robert Douglas, Fort Norman Game Management Office
D.R. Flook, Canadian Wildlife Service.

[57] University of Alberta Archives, Alan Cameron Papers, MG 77-100, file E-3. Problems were encountered with the supply planes, grizzly bears put in frequent appearances, and a very thick gravel layer in the creek bed

Meanwhile, the Parks Branch was working towards a definitive policy position. In 1964, Arthur Laing (Minister of D.N.A.N.R.) officially presented the Cabinet with a statement of National Parks policy, based on the discussions of the preceding years.[58] The "Zone System", which had been loosely defined in the past, became more specific. National parks were to be created and administered on the basis of their representation of certain categories of land use. Zone 1, which included the Preservation Areas, was to have strictly enforced limited access to assist in the preservation of wildlife, the primary purpose behind the classification. Zone 2 was to include Wilderness Areas in order to preserve natural environments hitherto little affected by man. Access would be by non-motorized means only. The Nahanni proposals fell into this area. "Natural Environment Areas" constituted Zone 3. These were areas which could not be strictly considered wilderness because of their proximity to heavily used areas, but access was also to be restricted as for Zone 2. Zones 4 (Outdoor Recreation) and 5 (Intensive Use) were more directly recreational areas, where the preservation of wildlife or the natural environment was not the first priority.[59]

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[58] Maini and Carlisle, op cit.,p.151.

The period 1968 to 1972 thus became the most active in Parks Branch history, as ten new parks were created.[59a] In 1969, the first definite park proposal for the Nahanni was tabled following a Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (D.I.A.N.D.) study. There was immediate reaction from all concerned parties. The Dené refused to acknowledge the federal government's plans until discussions of the land claims issue had been concluded. Ottawa had no right to arbitrarily set aside a piece of land for a park when Canada had not yet established clear title to the territory. The Dené were becoming increasingly organized and militant with their arguments against the validity of Treaty 11 and their claims of aboriginal land rights. Among the members of the Nahanni Butte band, opposition to the park was based on more immediate concerns. A local newspaper reported:

> The federal government wants to turn their land into a national park. Charlie Yohin says the people are very much against the park, but they feel pressured with no-one to speak for them. The people are afraid of losing their right to hunt because of the park. 'We have been making our living out of the Nahanni River for a long time,'he says, 'and it wouldn't be fair to us to set up a national park. We will starve. We use the

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[59] *Ibid.*,pp.155-56.

[59a] Pacific Rim,Baffin Island,Nahanni,Kluane,Pukaskwa,Forillon, La Mauricie,Kouchibouguac,Kejimkujik and Gros Morne.

> river every summer--that's where we hunt for moose. If they make it into a park, we'll starve!' [60]

The whites, too, were concerned, but for very different reasons. Many white residents of the N.W.T. were (and are) just as anxious for economic development as are the southern corporations which would like to move into the area to exploit all available resources. One commentator explained their concerns recently,

> Paradoxically, the park proposal was not exactly welcomed in the Northwest Territories. Many Territorial residents, who had so much wilderness and no parks at all, were deeply concerned that legislation to create the park might stand in the way of lucrative mineral strikes or mammoth hydro-electrical power developments. To them, the destiny of the Territories was rapid economic development, which should not be impeded by establishment of a national park. [61]

In Ottawa, opposition to the proposals was based largely on the issue of native land claims. When Minister Jean Chrétien was questioned in the House of Commons as to whether the government intended to settle the aboriginal rights case before setting aside parkland in the N.W.T., Chrétien replied that representatives of his department were meeting with the N.W.T. Indian Federation in order to reach some sort of an agreement.[62]

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[60] Native Press, April 10, 1974, p.2, "Nahanni Butte to be a Separate Band?" This is an extremely disturbing statement, as it is dated two years after the creation of the park, yet neither the reporter nor Mr. Yohin seem to realize the park is already a reality! Have the people at Nahanni Butte ever been consulted on the full extent of the park proposal?

[61] N.W. Simmons and G.W. Scotter, "Nahanni: wilderness revealed, legend preserved," Canadian Geographical Journal Vol. 90 (May, 1975), p. 35.

Indeed, so common were the complaints that once the proposal for the park was official, D.I.A.N.D. felt compelled to conduct a cross-country advertising tour to "sell" the idea of a northern wilderness park to a public more concerned with economic development than conservation or abstract ideals of natural beauty. The proposals for Nahanni park were justified in D.I.A.N.D.'s annual report with the argument that,

> This expansion is part of Government policy to acquire new areas of natural significance before they are exploited or priced beyond the public purse. This policy also serves to better accommodate the rapidly increasing number of visitors to the national parks. [63]

In 1970, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau visited the area, ostensibly on a vacation, and the following April an Order in Council prevented further development of the area within the proposed park boundaries (a total of 870 square miles) until such time as a final decision was reached.

M.P. Erik Neilson of the Yukon protested vigorously against this move on the grounds that the Yukon Territorial Council had not been consulted. Yet even at this late date, Minister Jean Chrétien would not commit himself publically as to whether the Nahanni Park would definitely be established.[64]

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[62] House of Commons Debates, March 11, 1970. Thomas Barnett (Comox-Alberni) to Chrétien.

[63] D.I.A.N.D., Annual Report, 1970-71, p.8.

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When, in 1972, the Speech from the Throne announced the government's intention to creat three new parks in the north (Kluane, Nahanni and Arctic), reaction among most M.P.'s was favorable.[65] On February 22, the lower reaches of the South Nahanni river were officially set aside as a Wilderness National Park.

Opposition to the government's action did not cease with the official creation of the park. The issue of native land rights became an increasing embarrassment in Ottawa, as the Dené gained supporters even in parliament. Erik Neilsen of the Yukon was particularly persistent in his attempts to discover just what consultations the D.I.A.N.D. had held with the N.W.T. Indians prior to 1972. In one exchange, a department representative would acknowledge only that "...there were indications to Mr.Wah-shee of the N.W.T.Indian Brotherhood that there was an interest in the Nahanni park," and further that D.I.A.N.D. felt justified in establishing the park because there were no Indian settlements within its boundaries, and "on the basis of research of the Hudson's Bay Company records,[the Indians of Nahanni Butte] rarely use the resources in the Nahanni Valley."[66] A few weeks later, another D.I.A.N.D. representative admitted that the last formal consultation with the Indians regarding the park had been held in 1960. The only discussions with N.W.T. residents had been a meeting between the Minister of the Department and the N.W.T. Commissioner before the establishment of the park. The Commissioner had in turn discussed the proposals with the Territorial Council. However, Mr.Lesaux reported on behalf of D.I.A.N.D. that,"There has been no concern, to our knowledge, expressed about the setting aside of the Nahanni as a national park by the native people."[67]

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[65] The push to create the park was initiated by civil servants, and was apparently not viewed as a party politics type of issue among the M.P.'s. Indeed, some M.P.'s seemed to regard the creation of national parks as one of the "motherhood" activities with which no-one could possibly disagree, and which would provide popular acclaim for the government. See,for instance, comments by Mr.Rod Thompson(Battleford-Kindersley),House of Commons Debates,February 17,1970.

[66] Standing Committee on I.A.N.D.,May 2,1972,Mr.Gordon.

Regardless of whether the N.W.T.Indian Brotherhood was consulted, the Indians at Nahanni Butte clearly were not informed at all. It was a horrifying discovery to read in the Native Press of April 1974 -- a full two years after the park was created -- that the settlement at the Butte had heard vaguely of the proposals, but were unaware that the park was already a reality.[68]

The newly aroused interest of the mid twentieth century in creating northern parkland was a manifestation partially of the second wave of "conservationism" in Canada. The first conservation movement had developed just prior to and immediately following the first World War,[69] and led to the establishment of Wood Buffalo National

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[67] Ibid.,May25,1972.Comments by McGilpr and Lesaux.

[68] Native Press,Yellowknife, April 10,1974,p.2.

[69] See a typical expression of the ideals of this group in C.Gordon Hewitt,The Conservation of Wildlife in Canada,Coles Canadiana Facsimile Edition(1972), first published 1921 (New York).

Park, among others. One analyst has suggested that the major difference between the 1909-1921 movement and that of the mid-1960's is the emphasis on economics.[70] The early conservationists based their arguments on the theories of classical economics, which preached the so-called "Doctrine of Increasing Natural Resource Scarcity". According to this analysis, natural resource availability is limited, but demand for the resources continues to increase, hence inevitable scarcity. The conservationists of the early twentieth century were not opposed to resource exploitation per se, but objected to the wastefulness and short-term planning evident in many undertakings. A parks system would assist in wiser resource useage by giving the government some degree of control over valuable tracts of land. There were, of course, aesthetics who preached conservation of Nature for its intrinsic merits, but it would seem that not only were economic considerations the primary basis for this early work, but they also formed the most convincing aspects of arguments used to sway the politicians.[71]

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[70] The following discussion is largely based on ideas developed in Thomas L.Burton, Natural Resource Policy in Canada, (Toronto,1972).

[71] For instance, Dominion Entomologist Gordon Hewitt wrote, "The Economic development of 'northern Canada is depenent upon the proper conservation of wild life...If adequate measures are adopted...there is no reason why the whole of the area should not be productive and contribute to the wealth of the country...it cannot be stated too often that conservation means the protection of natural resources from injudicious exploitation and their provident utilization."(Hewitt,op cit.,pp.10-11)

The conservation revival of the 1960's, however, placed (and continues to place) its emphasis more clearly on ecological and social concerns.[72] Indeed, as one analyst suggests,"The movement has led us to question the whole concept of economic growth as a primary national goal."[73] In our post-industrial society, people are perhaps more anxious to improve the quality of their lives through leisure activities rather than earning more money; clearly the concept of national parks as providers of the facilities required for such leisure periods can be adapted to the new demands. On the other hand, it might be suggested that this new outlook is potentially more opposed to the economic interests of society. If conservationists argue their case in economic terms, corporate and government developers may be more inclined to listen and perhaps be swayed. These same developers will have less sympathy for the aesthetic arguments we are hearing today, and can be expected to provide more determined opposition to conservation proposals. Hence it is not surprising that Parks Canada encountered considerable resistence from groups in southern Canada to its attempt to create the Nahanni wilderness park.

The Native people of the Nahanni region (and all of the N.W.T.) were confronted with a bewildering number of changes in the years from 1940 to 1972. Large scale resource exploitation changed the economy of the Territories radically, and the establishment of the bureaucracy of Territorial government attracted a new group of white settlers who held aggressive proposals for change. Initially, there was great optimism that these two changes would not only benefit the Indian, but would ultimately succeed in assimilating him where earlier efforts through religion and education had failed. Programs were developed to assist Indians with entering the labour pools required by the mining and other extractive industries, for instance, but the results have clearly not been what was anticipated by the companies and the government. Indeed, the spread of large corporations in the north has tended to polarize the native and white communities to a greater extent than ever. The Dené could cope with the influx of white trappers and prospectors during the 1920's because these white men came as individuals engaging in activities that the Dené could understand and to some extent, with which they could compete. On the other hand, the large corporations utilize new technologies with skilled workers and large scale enterprise; the Dené must struggle to even comprehend the mentality let alone wage a battle to overcome it. Indeed, how can they be expected to challenge these companies when white ecologists in the south cannot even win minor confrontations against the multinationals?

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[72] See for instance,Walter Firey's theories of resource management as expressed in his Man,Mind and Land,(Glencoe, Illinois,1960).He describes a "resource system" as being composed of three elements: biological, economic, and social.

[73] Burton,op cit.,p.143.

Quite apart from sociological goals, the availability of permanent employment in the North has actually been accompanied by a decrease in per capita Indian income,* and government welfare payments have continued to increase. Social problems resulting from the widening gap between Indian and white earning ability have become a major consideration for the Department of Indian Affairs. What has happened?

The first important aspect of this issue is the changing attitudes and ambitions of the Dené themselves. The young adults are asserting that they are a unique people who wishes to remain a distinct entity within Canadian society. They want the freedom to maintain the traditional values of their forefathers, and to make decisions for themselves. Behind the demands for native land claims lies this desire for removal of the colonial restictions and a return to self-determination. Many of the Dené are not opposed to development within certain restrictions, but they demand the right to control the direction of that development in their own lands. Clearly a people opposed to colonialism will not submit to the regimen of a white mining corporation or seek employment as civil servants.

The question of attitude is less clear among the middle and older generation of Dené. Many can still recall the days when "living off the land" was a necessity, and not a political statement. As Ted Trindell, a Fort Simpson Métis, explains very succinctly, "Well how many people would give up a nice bed and go and sleep on a snowbank?"[74] In one sense, many have willingly adopted the accoutrements of white society. On the other hand, some aspects of that society remain incomprehensible: "The government is civilization, economic and social. The three words that I just can't place yet because I don't see it happening with the people. To live with the time you've got to watch your money, which people in the north don't do."[75] In many ways, people like Trindell have ceased to hope. No longer satisfied to live by the hunt, they are forced to try and cope with a society they cannot comprehend. (Trindell says, "Today the natives lost that art[hunting] and they're dealing with a different kind of animal that they cannot outwit, so there they are."[76]) Many older people disagree with their more radical juniors and want to attempt to work with the system. Trindell represents an interesting position somewhere in between. He does not believe Indians and whites have anything in common in Canadian society ("You got a mink tag and I got a dog tag so they don't go together in the books.") but also believes the only way for the Indians to gain any ground is for them to learn to understand the white approach to life. Only then will the Indians be able to achieve their goals.

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*See G.M.Higgins, The Lower Liard Region: An Economic Survey, (Ottawa, 1969).

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[74] PCHRI Interview with Ted Trindell, July-August 1977, cassette 2, side 2.

[75] *Ibid.*, cassette 3, side 1.

[76] *Ibid.*, cassette 2, side 2.

> I think what we have got to learn in the north is how the white system is run -- get in and live with it rather than say it's no good. And my short interpretation of that kind of system is dog eat dog. You got to outwit, be equal, or you're out. 77

The conflicting desires lead to confusion, confusion leads to defeatism, and defeatism leads to the "welfare mentality" which the federal government has been attempting to eradicate. There is thus a deep-seated psychological and sociological aspect to the dilemma confronting the Dené today.

A second approach to the issue has led a number of analysts to describe the problem in terms of economics. Peter D.Elias utilizes this approach in his study Metropolis and Hinterland in Northern Manitoba.[78] He outlines the series of stages by which the northern Indians were drawn into the new economy: contact, increasing dependence on European goods, and eventually partnership in the trapper/trader fur system relation. After 1821, the colonial relationship began to be imposed on the north because of the monopoly position of the H.B.C., and finally the land was removed from native possession through the treaties. Once the native peoples formed an integral part of the capitalist

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[77] Ibid.,cassette 3,side 1.

[78] Peter D.Elias, Metropolis and Hinterland in Northern Manitoba,(Winnipeg,Museum of Man and Nature,1975).

system, they became susceptible to the decreasing demand for labour which Elias believes to be inherent in the system. An "economic hinterland" develops in which an unemployed "reserve army of workers" ensures a low cost for labour. But producers require consumers to purchase their goods, so it becomes necessary for welfare payments to be made in order to maintain the purchasing power of the unemployed consumers. As the northern Indians become part of this welfare group, a colonial relationship is replaced by a class relationship. As in southern society, the lower economic stratum is also relegated to a lower social position. According to Elias' analysis, the "metropolis" becomes the dominant exploitative force or class, while the hinterland is the exploited or underdeveloped area or class. Hence, for Elias, the problem of the Canadian Indian today is merely part of the problem of the entire capitalist society.

There are several difficulties with this analysis, but the fundamental concern is that Elias bases his thesis on the assumption that, "Clearly, Native people are now, and have been since the days of early contact with the Europeans, fully integrated as part of Canadian society."[79] Perhaps the Indians of Brantford,Ontario would not quarrel with that statement, but one suspects that the Dené would be incensed. The thesis fails to take into account what might be called the "cultural psychology" of the Indians, and assumes the Indians either wish to be integrated with the capitalist system, or that they cannot avoid it. Recent Dené protests make it clear that numbers of them indeed wish to remain apart from such a system. But the latter point remains. Is it even possible for these people to refuse to participate? If they choose to remain a part of Canadian society, it seems rather unlikely. Elias' argument may eventually be vindicated.

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[79] Ibid.,p.111.

The years from 1940 to 1972 brought particularly rapid change to the Indians in the Nahanni district. These innovations must have been especially bewildering because the area had remained unchanged for so long. Fort Simpson has been the headquarters of some of the more militant young people who have become extremely vocal with their grievances. Although the more isolated settlement at Nahanni Butte continues to remain outside the mainstream of these activities, it has nevertheless undergone a number of substantial changes in recent years. The development of a National Park assures the village that these modifications will continue at least in the immediate future.

The settlement at Nahanni Butte is not the result of native people congregating at a trading post, as was the case at Fort Liard. Rather, the Butte is an artificial creation of the federal government. Apparently, the decision to locate a village at the site was made as early as 1940,[80] although organized construction did not commence until somewhat later. In 1951, a one-room school was built to accommodate 25 pupils. A teacher was obtained in 1957 to "hold" the children while their parents moved out on the summer hunt.[81] A full-time teacher arrived in 1961. Meanwhile, between 1959 and 1961, the federal government supplied flat wood, window frames, doors, and so on for the construction of log houses for the Indians.[82] The settlement was created as part of the government's determination to hasten the integration of the native people. As Mr.Justice Thomas Berger discovered during his investigation of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline proposals,

> What occurred on the Nahanni River exemplifies much of what happened [in the N.W.T.] as settlements grew. In the past the Dené did not live at Nahanni Butte but in camps along the Nahanni River. The government brought them all into Nahanni Butte so that their children could be taught at the school...Nahanni Butte, though a beautiful place with an awesome view, is not a particularly good location for hunting,fishing or trapping. [83]

Even from the view point of the federal government at the time, the chosen site was a poor one. The houses were built on shifting sands so the community's airstrip is practically useless, and the village was built on the wrong side of the river for transportation and other services. In fact, one observer noted that, "Its one saving grace perhaps is that considering its present stage of development it could be relocated with a very minimum of upset."[84]

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[80] G.M.Higgins,The Lower Liard Region: An Economic Survey, (Ottawa,1969),p.24.

[81] The Canadian Indian - Yukon and N.W.T.,(D.I.A.N.D.,1973),p.49.

[82] Higgins,op cit.

[83] Thomas Berger,Northern Frontier,Northern Homeland,Vol.I of the Berger Commission Report (1977),p.87.

By the late 1960's, although the settlement remained small (see Appendix 6 C), it had attracted several white residents who lived at the Butte year round, including a teacher, radio operator, and Dick Turner, the manager of a general store and supply depot.[85] At the west end of the site were located a government building, a Roman Catholic church, and a community hall. A landing strip had been built behind the buildings, and a government wharf was located on the river. The trading store was located on the opposite bank, and was attainable only by boat. Electricity was available for all homes (the small local generator was operated by a native technician), but only the school and teacher's house had indoor plumbing.[86]

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[84] Higgins, op cit., p.24.

[85] Details according to adventurer Jean Poirel, in Pierre Mallen, Victoire sur la Nahanni, (Paris, 1968), pp.238 ff.

[86] Higgins, op cit., p.62.

Contrary to the situation in 1929, nearly all the Native residents can speak English in addition to Slavey and French. However, it has been noted that the younger people speak better English than their elders, and outside Fort Simpson, the fluency in English decreases rapidly.[87]

The seasonal rhythm of life has finally changed with the 1970's. Higgins, in his economic survey of the region, noted that only a small group of Indians based at Fort Liard continue to migrate for the summer hunt;[88] the Butte Indians seldom leave the settlement except for the occasional summer moose hunt (up the Nahanni River before the creation of the park).[89] During the 1970's, meat, fish, and furs from the country accounted for just 35% of the total earnings of the Mackenzie Valley natives,[90] and the figure for the Nahanni Butte settlement appears to be even lower (see Appendix 6B).

As noted in the previous chapter, the Indians continued to chafe against the artificial political structure imposed upon them by the federal government. In 1973 and 1974, the residents of Nahanni Butte complained at some length about the existing band arrangements. Half of their number was officially part of the Fort Simpson/Jean Marie River "band", while the other half was assigned to the Fort Liard/Trout Lake "band". Problems of transportation and communication were cited as arguments against the imposed band structure, and some of the Nahanni Butte Indians wanted to form a separate band to handle their own money and administration. Government intervention had caused other problems for these people as well. There were complaints that the elderly people were unable to obtain firewood because the young people who had traditionally filled that role were all "taken out to school" by the government.[91] On the other hand, a number of men from the village were hired by Parks Canada to work at unspecified jobs in the new park, and this employment seemed to be welcomed.[92]

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[87] _Ibid_.,p.61.

[88] _Ibid_.,introduction.

[89] _Native Press_,April 10,1974.

[90] J.K.Naysmith,"Changing Land Use Patterns in the North", _Canadian Geographical Journal_ Vol.90(Jan.1975),pp.11-18. It has been noted, however, that this figure is higher than generally expected by southern administrators.

It should be stressed, however, that wage employment is not a regular feature or long-term factor in native life in the area. In 1973-74, a gas pipeline was constructed from Pointed Mountain B.C., about fifteen miles from Fort Liard, to Fort Nelson B.C.. Even at the peak work period during construction, only 12.9% of the labourers were native people (about sixty men) and 90% of those native workers were hired for unskilled positions such as clearing brush. Income from the construction was estimated at $50,000 to $75,000 for Fort Liard natives, $40,000 for Fort Simpson, and $6,000 to $10,000 for those from Nahanni Butte. But in the long term, few benefits are evident for the native people. None of the eight permanent positions is held by an Indian (even the four unskilled positions are filled by white southerners), and Fort Liard was not even connected to the gas line.[93] The other permanent employer in the district, the mine at Tungsten, also has an almost exclusively white labour force. The benefits of northern resources are being channeled out of the area in more ways than one.

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[91] Native Press. April 10,1974.

[92] Ibid.,September 2,1977.

Mission work in the area also exhibits both continuity and innovation. One observer noted that in 1968, the missionaries continued to act as support and mediators on behalf of their parishoners "in the many little conflicts between the Indians and the Mounted Police."[94] The innovation is the appearance of a number of evangelical or fundamentalist groups in an area hitherto entirely dominated by the Roman Catholics and Anglicans. Of course, the fact that these groups are evangelicals is entirely within keeping of the original approach of the C.M.S. and O.M.I.. A Pentecostal mission was established in Fort Simpson in the 1950's, originally under the auspices of the Pentecostal Sub-Arctic Mission in Hay River.[95] The Northern Canada Evangelical Mission had also been active at both Fort Liard and Nahanni Butte for a number of years. Its current representative at Fort Liard explains that the N.C.E.M.is composed of about one hundred missions throughout the north. It is not a church, and he is not a "pastor" or minister; the aim of the group is to spread the message of fundamental Christianity in the hope that the Slave Indians will eventually begin their own church. Phil Howard of the N.C.E.M. worked out of Nahanni Butte for about ten years (until recently) where he studied the local dialect and conducted mission work. The mission at Liard also supported a pilot-missionary at one time, who was able to undertake work in the Nahanni by flying out of Fort Liard.[96]

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[93] Berger, op cit., p.124.

[94] Jean Poirel in Mallen, op cit., p.242.

Today at Nahanni Butte, all the Indians refer to themselves as Slavey. It is popularly believed that the "Nahani" Indians died out from smallpox at some point in the past, but the Butte Indians continue to identify themselves with the South Nahanni River. The settlement increasingly resembles a southern village with its church, school, store and permanent housing. Highly organized young leaders from Yellowknife are assuming the responsibility for encouraging the Nahanni groups (and others) to voice their concerns. The Native Press, published in Yellowknife, serves to unify the interests of the scattered bands to a greater extent than previously observed. The N.W.T. Indian Brotherhood sends representatives to these outlying communities regularly to note conditions and agitate for change. Although the Indians continue to identify with the local band (not the artificial political "bands" which were established by the federal government), they are increasingly looking towards their collective interests in a distinct departure from the traditional relationship between bands.

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[95] Personal Communication, Pastor Clarence Heyer, (Fort Simpson), November 15, 1979.

[96] Personal Communication, Wayne Friesen, (Fort Liard), November 12, 1979.

Generally, life is more comfortable today for the South Nahanni Indians insofar as material elements are concerned. A wider variety of foods, better medical care, labour-saving appliances and even electricity are all available. In 1968, Higgins was able to conclude in his economic report that the Lower Liard region was "unmistakably a growth centre with very considerable economic potential and influence,"[97] and in fact, trends today do seem to indicate that native income is generally increasing slowly. Unfortunately, this change is associated with a decreasing dependence on hunting and trapping, which usually means increasing dependence on government welfare payments.

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[97] Higgins, *op cit.*, p.237.

However, in spite of material improvements, there is considerable evidence of psychological and sociological dislocation among the native people in the area. Changes instigated by industrial development over which the Indians have no control, coupled with the problems of coping with an ever-increasing white bureaucracy (250 government employees in 1953 have expanded to 5,000 today)[98] have resulted in alcohol problems, family breakdown, and an alarming increase in the crime rate. Fort Simpson is a particularly sad case. In 1970, the Mackenzie Highway was completed to that point, and the problems began. Justice William Morrow of the Supreme Court of the N.W.T. reported that in 1975, the magistrate at Fort Simpson heard 70 cases of juvenile delinquency in a single week, and that year alone, the Territorial court was summoned to Simpson three times more than it had been in the previous eight years combined.[99] The Indians of the N.W.T. apparently discuss changes on the basis that they "don't want to become another Fort Simpson."[100] Theresa Villeneuve, who was born at Nahanni Butte and raised in the bush life, moved to Fort Simpson after her marriage, and explained the problem by saying,

> Since 1968, things have been happening too fast and people cannot put up with them. The Dené people are not involved in the things that are happening. They have never helped in planning for future development... [101]

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[98] Berger, op cit., pp.87,146. Eighty per cent of government employees in the N.W.T. today are white.

[99] Ibid., p.152.

Although the periodic starvation of the hunting-gathering economy has been eliminated, it has been replaced with an equally destructive psychological starvation, to which the natives of the Nahanni region, isolated for so long, have unfortunately succumbed at last.

The Dené themselves are suggesting the most obvious solution to these problems. Native people must be permitted to contribute to the determination of their own destinies. Paternalistic government policies are destructive as well as inadequate, as experience had proven. Dictating school curricula, building pipelines and roads, creating game preserves and channeling raw materials to southern Canada are all manifestations of a colonial attitude which has no place in Canadian policy-making. These activities directly affect the lives of the Dené population and the Dené must have a voice in such decisions. There is no sound reason why northern schools should follow the Alberta curriculum; native language, culture and values can easily be substituted for the southern attitudes which now accompany the basic teaching. As the Berger Inquiry so ably demonstrated, the Dené have not been consulted in crucial past decisions, but hopefully it is not too late to change.

In the future, the Nahanni Park will undoubtedly become the focus of the lives of the people who once lived

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[101] Ibid., p.149.

within its boundaries. It is possible that the park might prove to be a real asset for the Native people. Employment as expedition guides and outfitters is obviously more closely related to their traditional skills and interests than industrial or office work. Although it is outrageous that the park was created without greater input from the local people, it is to be hoped that the situation will prove advantageous in the long term.

It would be pointless to argue here whether the federal government was justified in creating the park in light of widespread opposition. Dené land claims, southern development interests and ecological concerns continue to be debated at length, whenever the topic of the north is introduced. It cannot be disputed, however, that the Nahanni Valley has much to offer visitors. Its physical features include a fascinating geology recently recognized by U.N.E.S.C.O. when it declared the river a World Heritage Site. The myths and legends connected with the valley make a curious study in themselves.

The primary significance of the history of the area, however, is to be found in the themes which emerge through time. The activities of the fur traders, the missionaries, and the resource developers are common to other areas in the north, and hence are crucial factors in any understanding of the whole issue of northern development, and the problems faced by that region today.

CONCLUSION

The study of Canadian history has long been limited to the concerns of east-west development. Recently, the idea of regionalism has dominated much historical analysis, yet even this approach usually defines Canada's regions as "The Maritimes", "Central Canada", "The Prairies", and "British Columbia". Seldom has interest been extended to include the Canadian North. The Yukon and the Mackenzie Basin in particular are worthy of greater attention because, contrary to the belief that the North is a wilderness with very little human involvement, this area has indeed experienced a profound impact under Canadian settlement and domination, and in turn has influenced Canadian development itself. The South Nahanni River region provides a particularly interesting field for study because, in spite of the fact that many Canadians have considered its reputation with interest and awe, very few reliable facts about the area's history and culture have received general notice.

The earliest recorded history of the South Nahanni River valley began, as elsewhere in Canada, with the incursion of the European fur traders. The nature of the trading system made it compatible to a great extent with the traditional hunting culture of the Mountain Indians, so they were quickly integrated economically with their white partners. The traderoutes established by the H.B.C. along the northern waterways provided convenient passage for participants in the second phase of Nahanni history: the European missionaries. These proselytizers were driven by an evangelical revival that swept traditional European Christian churches in the nineteenth century, and carried with them a theory of Christianity which included cultural as well as spiritual conversion. As had occurred elsewhere in North America, however, the Native inhabitants of the Nahanni were remarkably resistant to the changes demanded by the mission workers and it required nearly a century before any significant adaptation of Indian customs was evident. By that time, the Canadian government was beginning to usurp the churches' role as colonizing agent. The Klondike Rush for gold brought the North to the attention of Canadians suddenly and dramatically, so that the next stage in northern history was to be largely concerned with resource extraction. The Nahanni was the site of several of its own gold rushes in the 1920's and 1930's, with a relatively rapid increase in the white population of the valley. Little commercially exploitable gold was discovered and many of the newcomers trapped as well as prospected, so the fur-based economy continued to dominate.

The second World War maintained Canadian interest in the North, although concerns related to defence dominated the policy-making, and resource extraction became important only if it was directly related to the war effort. Although the Nahanni Valley was not at the centre of any wartime schemes, it was definitely, if indirectly, involved in the results. The post war period gave birth to John Diefenbaker's "Northern Vision", part of which (the Roads to Resources program) led to the successful tungsten mine project on the Flat River.

During the 1960's, many Canadians continued to look towards the resource potential of the North, but a new concern with ecology and conservation was also developing. As a result of growing popular acceptance of these concepts, the South Nahanni was declared a National Wilderness Park in 1972. However, the park was not created without a heated debate on the very issues which are central to northern concerns today: Native land claims, federal government jurisdictions, resource development policy, and conservation theory.

An examination of this sequence of events in the history of the Nahanni region necessitates recognition of a number of interesting similarities with the historical process in the rest of Canada. The progression from fur trade contact, culture change through agents such as missionaries, the incursions of explorers searching for natural resources, and finally, government involovement, all may have occurred more recently in the North than in southern Canada, but the process is essentially similar. The Iroquois, the Plains Indians, and finally the Athapaskans all encountered Europeans initially as fur trade partners.

The work of the Jesuits in the New France hinterland and later on the Prairies clearly parallels the later nineteenth century efforts of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate along the Mackenzie. The first truly Canadian efforts in the North were on the part of the Ottawa government, following much the same pattern as had been pursued on the Prairies.[1] A superstructure of police, surveyors, and transportation facilities was prepared in both regions before the advance of the next groups: the resource extractors. Politically, each region underwent a period of rule by an outside power (from Paris, from London, then Ottawa), and gradually came to demand greater degrees of self-determination. In the east, this process led to nationhood in 1867, and in the west developed into demands for provincial status thereafter. Although this sequence is not completed in the north today, definite signs of its unfolding are evident.

The factor of distance has been another similar feature affecting the historical development of each Canadian region, and again, the closest parallel can be drawn between the prairie west and the north. When the province of Manitoba was formed in 1870, it seemed immeasureably distant from central Canada. The terrain of the Shield contributed to the barrier, but the absence of convenient transportation links was also a factor. Not until the C.P.R. was completed as part of Sir John A. Macdonald's National Policy did the west become truly accessible and could settlement be attempted on any scale. The Mackenzie Basin was also remote from the rest of the country until railways were built into the Athabasca region and more importantly, once aviation technology could connect Edmonton and Fort Simpson in a matter of hours.[2] The airplane was to become the C.P.R. of Canada's north. In both cases, the factor of distance also served to assist in the creation of a regional mentality, by forming an actual as well as a psychological barrier.

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[1] Unlike the U.S.A., where the movement of settlers westward occurred before government "supervision" and preparation.

On the other hand, there are some differences in the sequence of events which occurred in the Canadian north. The opening of transportation facilities enabled large numbers of settlers to reach each new area of Canada, but the nature of that settlement has been quite different in the north. Throughout central Canada, the Maritimes, the Prairies and British Columbia, initial dependence on the fur trade economy was gradually replaced by agriculture with inevitable conflicts between the two during the early transitional phase. Farm production in turn encouraged more population because the supplies were available to support a non-farm labour force. In the north, however, agriculture is possible only on a very limited scale (at least with current technology), and the production of foodstuffs is quite inadequate to support a population of any size. Areas of the Canadian Shield and the Cordillera are thus forced to remain dependent on the agricultural south. And because the north could not attract agricultural settlement, it was also slower to encourage other forms of natural resource extraction such as mineral and oil development. Areas such as Northern Ontario were first to receive attention because they were more accessible; the South Nahanni was one of the last because of the distance factor and the difficulty of supporting even the few who did arrive to search for resource riches. The nature of development has been different in the north because of the nature of the land, but the process of development has been similar to other areas of Canada, and the result has been an economy across the country that is based on primary resource extraction, with limited secondary manufacturing and industry. The products of the Prairies are wheat and oil; the products of the Mackenzie Basin are minerals and oil. The north remains sparsely settled, however, while other Canadian regions are capable of supporting denser populations. Agriculture is the important factor.

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[2] See Morris Zaslow's two theses on the history of transportation in the Mackenzie Basin for a clear illustration of this process. (University of Toronto M.A.,1948; Ph.D.,1957).

How have Canadians reacted to their contact with this relatively recent unfolding of the North? People have maintained a fascinating "love-hate" relationship with the northern territories. During several periods in Canadian history, as has been noted, the north was viewed as a means to salvation because it was popularly believed to be a great storehouse of natural resource wealth. At other times, the attitude toward the north has been far less optimistic, as an almost supernaturally evil personality has been assigned to it as a place of danger and death. The rumours of gold, tropical vegetation and amazing hot springs attracted men to the Nahanni; tales of headless bodies, evil spirits and dangerous water made them profoundly afraid.

A second important aspect of the popular attitude towards the North is the role of frontierism. Frederick Jackson Turner's famous thesis that a frontier could mould the character of a nation was intended to apply to the American west, but the Canadian north was being "opened" at just the point when the Americans seemed to be running out of "frontier" land, and Canadians quickly adapted and exploited the original idea in terming their land the "Last Frontier". Not surprisingly, many of those attracted northward were Americans who had been infused with the belief that they required a new frontier for personal as well as national vigour.[3] The cult of the strong, courageous, independent frontiersman was transplanted to the northern forests, so the woodsman and trapper replaced the prairie homesteader and cowboy as figures of romantic idealism.

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[3] The American connection with the Klondike has been noted. A significant number of white trapper/prospectors in the Nahanni before 1950 were also Americans. See Addison,PCHRI,Manuscript Report Number 196.

The Klondike Rush of 1898 was responsible, to a great extent, for a wave of popular frontier literature that extolled the virtues of a free and simple life possible only in the wild northland. Much of this material was pure fiction; the tales were of heroism and adventure much like those associated with the older "tales of the Wild West". The plots and characters were essentially the same; only the locale was changed. One particularly prolific author, Hiram Cody,[4] had first-hand knowledge and experience of the North, and yet even his books fit neatly into the stereotypical descriptions of the northern wilderness and its dangers, mysteries, and beautiful scenery. Other popular works produced during the after-glow of the Klondike include Ridgewell Cullum's The Hound from the North (1904) and Way of the Strong (1913); Horatio Parker's Northern Lights (1909) and An Adventure of the North; and Edward Roper's A Claim on the Klondike: A Romance of the Arctic Eldorado (1898). Of course, Service's Yukon poetry also fits the mould. It is also interesting to note that these early works tended to concentrate on settings in the Peace, Athabasca and Mackenzie districts, in spite of the fact that the drama of the Yukon was receiving national attention.[5]

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[4] Author of The Frontiersman (1910) and The Chief of the Ranges (1913) among many others.

[5] See essay by Roper, Schieder, Beharriell, "Kinds of Fiction, 1880-1920" in Carl Klinck, Literary History of Canada, Vol. I, (Toronto, 1976).

So widespread was the popular appeal of this frontier interpretation of the north that critic Lionel Stevenson, in his Appraisals of Canadian Literature published in 1926, noted with some despair that," The whole of Canada has come to be identified with her northern-most reaches" in popular literature. He was sorry to report that in "modern folk-geography Canada means the North."[6] It is perhaps understandable, then, that Americans were also induced to see the Canadian character as one appropriate to the northern frontier. Early Hollywood movies about Canada produced during the 1920's largely reflected this attitude.[7]

Following these early interpretations, Archibald Belaney (known as "Grey Owl") made himself famous in 1931 with the publication of his tales of bush life entitled The Men of the Last Frontier. Grey Owl's frontiersman was typically resourceful, determined, able, industrious, and courageous. These lone heroes lived in a north country described as a "virgin wilderness" that, yet again, was both dangerous and promising. In keeping with the traditions of frontierism, Grey Owl envisioned the Canadian Shield as the front-line between order and chaos. "Side by side with modern Canada there lies the last battleground in the long-drawn-out struggle between the primeval and civilization," he wrote.[8]

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[6] Lionel Stevenson, Appraisals of Canadian Literature,(Toronto, 1926),pp.245,253. Quoted in Carl Berger,The Sense of Power,(Toronto,1970).

[7] Some examples: Out of the Silent North (1922)
The Call of the Wild (1923)
Kivalina of the Ice Lands (1925)
Where the North Holds Sway (1927)

The Nahanni, like the rest of the north, supplied a collection of frontier heroes, as defined both by others as well as conveyed by their own projected self image. These men and women prided themselves on their strength, independence, and freedom. When the federal government attempted to introduce various trapping restrictions in the 1920's, many of the Nahanni region settlers were outraged at the presumption of any group that dared to pose restrictions on individual freedom. They had often moved north to escape those very restrictions. The great popularity of the McLeod Brothers mystery as recounted first by the Edmonton newspapers and later by Pierre Berton,[9] is one indication of the frontier appeal. Even as late as 1961, with the National Film Board's record of Albert Faille, was this frontier outlook in evidence. The oral history tapes collected by Parks Canada reveal a self image as well as a portrait of the Nahanni residents clearly in line with the frontier tradition. Interviewer Bill Addison noted that, "If further work is carried out, it is important that the interviewer have the confidence of these people...An interviewer who has to some degree proven his/herself in the South Nahanni country and who is not a civil servant will have the greatest success."[10]

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[8] Grey Owl, The Men of the Last Frontier, first published 1931 (Toronto, 1978, paperback edition), p.29.

[9] In The Mysterious North, (Toronto, McLelland and Stewart, 1956)

A significant portion of the academic response to the north has been similar to the popular approach, particularly in regard to themes of environmental determinism. The belief that a cold northern climate creates a hardy, mentally superior race is an old one,[11] and has not been limited to popular belief,but has received serious and scholarly attention. Robert Grant Haliburton (son of the creator of Sam Slick) became an influential member of the Canada First Movement in 1869 with an address to the Montreal Literary Society entitled "The Men of the North and their Place in History," in which he predicted future greatness for Canada on the basis of her strong northern population. In 1884, W.H.Hingston published a work on The Climate of Canada and its Relations to Life and Health which expressed similar beliefs.

This theme of society and race formed by the physical environment surfaced again during the 1920's as an expression of northern faith. In an amazing work entitled The Northward Course of Empire,[12] Vilhjalmur Stefansson advanced the theory that the progress of world civilization could be directly equated with its northward movement, since the northern people were racially superior by the merits of their battle against the harsh environment. Each generation moved farther north than the previous generation had believed possible, and thus civilization progressed. The theory was, in a sense, similar to Turner's belief in the virtues of westward movement, but went beyond Turner in its sweeping conclusions about civilization itself. Stefansson admitted that he did not know how far north life could be conducted successfully, but he doggedly preached that men must not allow ignorance and misunderstanding to prevent progress, and translated his vision into specific directions for the colonization of northern Canada. However, he was haunted by a fundamental fear.

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[10] PCHRI,Manuscript Report Number 196,Vol.I,p.62.

[11] Carl Berger suggests the drawing of relationships between climate and race can be found as early as classical times when a distinction was made between the Mediterranean peoples and the barbarians to the north. See "The True North Strong and Free," in Peter Russell (ed) Nationalism in Canada,(Toronto,1966),p.5.

> The weakness of the argument may be that our people are no longer the same and will not be led far afield by the motives that lured their ancestors. All over our 'civilized' world is seen a tendency of the land folk to crowd into the cities. Tenement houses not remote from theatres are increasingly becoming the general idea...It is said that we are becoming a weakened and softened nation, not only because the frontier is not here any longer to struggle with, but also because we shrink increasingly from any sort of active struggle with Nature. [13]

Stefansson ultimately concluded with the consolation, "Whatever the general effeminacy of our time may be, we do still have among us a considerable number of men of the Roosevelt type."[14]

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[12] Vilhjamur Stefansson, The Northward Course of Empire, (New York, 1922).

[13] Ibid., p.239. [14] Ibid., p.241.

Even after World War Two had developed an anti-racism bias in world opinion, this faith in the north as a determinant of racial character resurfaced in a study by Griffith Taylor entitled _Canada: A study of cool continental environments and their effect on British and French settlement_.[15] The book was based on Taylor's theory that the globe is divisible into five latitude belts which correspond to belts of agriculture potential and belts of physical and mental development for man. Canada, of course, is ideally situated for both aspects. Although the concepts are expressed with the "scientific" precision afforded by graphs, maps and charts, the old idea of northern racial superiority emerges very quickly.

Contemporary academics have been far more restrained when analyzing the situation of the Canadian north. One of the most popular approaches has been the application of the metropolis-hinterland theory. Canadian historians in particular have found the theory useful to describe change and process, since it is not limited to description of a static state of affairs as an area develops from a hinterland serving a certain metropolis to becoming a metropolis in its own right, exploiting a new hinterland beyond itself. Even opponents of the theory would agree that the Canadian north (and particularly the Mackenzie Basin) is a hinterland for a variety of metropoli. The contentious issue, however, is whether the northern regions will ever outgrow their status as a hinterland. It is feasible that some unforeseen technological advance will enable northern areas once considered remote and unproductive to become more important sectors of the Canadian economy. However, given the current extreme costs of maintaining northern labour forces and transporting goods "out" to market, it must be conceded that the northern economy will continue to be based in the foreseeable future on limited extractive industries such as mining, timber and petroleum. It is not feasible to undertake much processing at the resource sites, and indeed, it is often not sound economics to extract the raw materials themselves if there is insufficient world demand to maintain a high market price.

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[15] Griffith Taylor, _Canada: A Study etc._, (London and New York, 1950), first edition, 1947.

Does this mean then, that areas like the South Nahanni are going to remain permanent hinterlands, economically and otherwise? There has been considerable debate of this issue within the context of Third World underdevelopment, and many of the themes and theories of this discussion are directly applicable to the Canadian North.

One analyst has defined the term "hinterland" in the contemporary sense as an area which has not been "directly affected by the growth of modern industrial society."[16] The process of industrialization may be slowed or accelerated by factors such as distance, the traditional culture of an area's peoples, the need for employment of local people in industry, and even the image an industrial society holds of its hinterland.[17] Based on this analysis, the northern Canadian hinterland will be slow, if not impossible, to completely "modernize" and be made an integral part of the southern society. Past and present transportation technology has lessened the degree of isolation in the North, but the fact still remains that much of Canada's land mass continues to be isolated not only in terms of distance, but the nature of the terrain also tends to maintain the northern regions as a separate unit. The Athapascan culture has proven remarkable resistant to imposed European values, and recent militant protests by the younger Dené indicate that the native culture is not yet prepared to submit. As for the labour force, unemployment and a sluggish economy in the south continue to ensure that there will be no shortage of imported labour for northern resource extraction. Coupled with this fact is also the traditional attitude of Euro-Canadians to the native people of the north. Having for several generations seen the Indians as child-like and slightly inferior mentally, it seems unlikely that the industrialized southerners will consider them suitable employees for positions requiring skill and reliability. Hence the Dené and other native people in northern Ontario and Quebec continue to be pushed aside from the process of modernization, even if they want to become a part of it. There may be a few who "succeed" on white terms, but most Dené remain unskilled, peripheral workers who continue to rely on traditional methods of livelihood or else accept government welfare payments. However, the very fact that some are willing to accept welfare is an indication of a certain degree of acceptance of the value-system associated with industrialization. Hunting for food may enable one to live, but it does not purchase refrigerators and television sets and other accoutrements of the modern life which has become highly desireable to many Native people today.

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[16] Ronald Cohen, "Modernism and the Hinterland: The Canadian Example," International Journal of Comparative Sociology, Vol. 12 (1966), p. 53.

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[17] _Ibid_.,p.54.

Hence, one must conclude that because of the nature of the northern economy and because of cultural orientations and attitudes, the Canadian North is likely to remain a permanent hinterland. A scarcity of natural resources and the difficulties associated with the successful exploitation of what is available, are only parts of the problem. Attitudes of the Dené toward the rest of Canada, and reciprocal attitudes of Canadians toward the Dené are the other, equally important, aspects to be considered. Unless radical innovations in technology are developed, it seems unlikely that the north will ever move from its position as hinterland. And unless "imaginative outside intervention"[18] materializes, the native peoples of Canada are virtually condemned to remain locked in the welfare system. New policy directions are badly needed; unfortunately most government departments continue to approach the problem on the old terms of progress and development in the modern sense of industrialization. The fact that the north will remain a hinterland must be recognized, and the "people problem" approached from that orientation.

Another academic approach to the study of the northern regions is proving to be very useful. Contemporary geographers and historians have rejected the extremes of the environmental determinists, but continue to acknowledge the important role of the physical environment in a more subtle approach which has been called "cultural ecology". The relationship between man and his natural surroundings is accepted, but the causal linkage is eliminated, so that although it can be admitted that the geographical realities of the north have to some extent limited or directed the possibilities of settlement and growth, it is also important to consider the role of culture and historical inheritance. Hence, as this study has demonstrated, any analysis of the northern ecosystem must take into consideration the interaction between the original people and their surroundings, between the original people and the European settlers, between the northern economy and the southern, and the changing attitudes of both northerners and "outsiders", as well as the traditional concerns of the physical environment and its dictates.

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[18] Ibid.,p.73.

Thus, it is true that rugged terrain prevented the growth of a large and prosperous Native community in the Nahanni Valley, and for a time, delayed the incursion of white traders and prospectors. But of equal importance in determining the composition of society in the region today is the sequence and nature of the cultural interaction. In spite of the cultural onslaught of the evangelical missionaries and the colonization methods of the Canadian government, the Athapaskan culture has proven quite resilient to these imposed values, and the recent protests indicate that the native culture is not prepared to submit, although evidence of personal and social dislocation is sadly evident.

What then is the significance of this northern factor to Canada? Would this nation be fundamentally different if it did not encompass the South Nahanni River region and other northern areas like it? The response must be affirmative. Canada is not a "northern nation" in the sense developed by Stefansson, Taylor and others who portray the Canadian character as a product of moulding by the northern physical environment. But there is clearly an undercurrent of northern awareness in Canadian culture which surfaces frequently enough that it ought not to be lightly dismissed.

Books, films, and other art forms continue to utilize northern backgrounds and northern themes. A plot will seem more "Canadian" if it is set in a northern wood than if it occurs in cosmopolitan Toronto. The Group of Seven artists produced works which are popularly perceived as the quintessence of Canadianism in canvas art, and their themes are invariably northern. Popular culture continues to express the ideology of the frontier. False as its assumptions may be, it offers a basis for national pride and perhaps for some, even as the source for a sense of purpose.

Economically, the country is still dependent on resource extraction industries; as the minerals, petroleum, and timber of the "south" are gradually exhausted, many continue to place optimistic expectation on the unproven areas of the north. With current concerns over petroleum supplies, Canadians continue to drive large automobiles and heat poorly insulated homes because of their confidence in the Arctic gas potential and the Athabasca Tar Sands.

Politically, too, the north frequently intrudes on the lives of southerners. The absolute control of the federal government is being challenged by the whites in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories as a result of the growth process evident throughout this study, and the Mackenzie Basin has become the contemporary focus for the country's greatest tragedy and social problem: the crisis of the Native peoples. This misfortune provides Canada with an ideal opportunity for innovative policy and progressive attitudes that could make Canada a world example in the end of colonial-imperialist domination of the Third World.

Interest in the North is not limited to English-speaking Canadians, either. One of the clearest expressions of the manner in which Canadians visualize and interpret their northland is a study, little known in Anglo-Canada, written by professor Louis-Edmond Hamelin entitled Nordicité canadienne (1975). And of the many articles written by modern explorers fascinated with the Nahanni as a wilderness area, it will be noted that a large proportion is written by French speaking adventurers.[19]

It must not be assumed that the northern factor is unique to Canada, for obviously the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., and the Scandinavian countries control significant areas of northern territory. However, the particular patterns of development in the Canadian north are unique because of the different cultures, different economies, and different political orientations. In addition, the particular response of Canadians to their northlands may be unique. Clearly, there is room for comparative study. While to date, some such work has been undertaken, it is primarily concerned with the impact of the environment and the role it has played in determining the direction of economic development. Greater emphasis is required on the other factors such as the cultural "inheritance" of each region, and the interaction between the various groups of colonizers and colonized. The patterns observed in the development (or lack of development) of the South Nahanni parallel the process discernable throughout Canada's north, and Canadian response to those changes, whether opinions are based on fact or myth, has played an important part in our changing perceptions of this nation. Processes which are now occurring in the north are part of processes which have occurred in the past in similar form in other parts of Canada; by understanding the similarities and differences, the processes might be directed in the desireable path to the mutual benefit of northern and southern Canada. Also, by examining first-hand the transitions in the contemporary north, it may be possible to reach a fuller understanding about the more distant past in Canada's other regions. The development of the Nahanni, like that of the remainder of the North, is thus at once both a reflection of Canadian experience in the past, and a shared Canadian experience for the future.

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[19] See bibliography section on "Travel Literature".

APPENDIX 1

Campbell's fascinating account of so-called Nahanni Indians which has become an integral part of the literature of the north, is actually irrelevant for the purposes of this study. He spent the winter of 1838-39 at Dease Lake, in a continuing attempt to establish a permanent post.Campbell referred to the Dease River as the "Nahany River"; the 1854 Arrowsmith map labels it the "Dease or Nahany R." and calls the South Nahanni the "Nahanni R." Campbell also referred to the Indians he encountered as "Nahany" or "Trading Nahany". His famous description of "Shakes", the feared chief whom he befriended, and the story of a Nahany tribe led by a woman (of pale complexion!) have since become popular tales. At first glance, it may be argued that these Indians may well have been Mountain Indians, but Campbell's description of their customs and language immediately dispels the notion. These Indians traded directly with the Russians on the coast,lived on salmon, were acquainted with the H.B.C. traders McLoughlin and Douglas on the Pacific side of the mountains, and the "chieftainess" wore silver bracelets.* Most likely,Shakes was a coastal Tlinkit,** and the woman's tribe Sekanni. It is interesting to note that although this woman traded for white man's goods, she claimed that Campbell was the first white man she had seen.Again, the pattern of influence before actual contact is repeated.

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*See Clifford Wilson,Campbell of the Yukon,(Toronto,1970),pp.25ff.

**As proposed by E.E.Rich,"Trade Habits and Economic Motivation Among the Indians of North America." C.J.E.P.S.,(Feb.1960).

APPENDIX 2

MISSIONARIES AT FORT SIMPSON

O.M.I.

1858-60	Fr.Grollier	(t.)
1860-64	Fr.Gascon	(t.)
1864-73	Fr.Grouard	(t.)
1873-94	Fr.de Krangue	(p.)
1894-1904	Fr.L.Brochu	(p.)

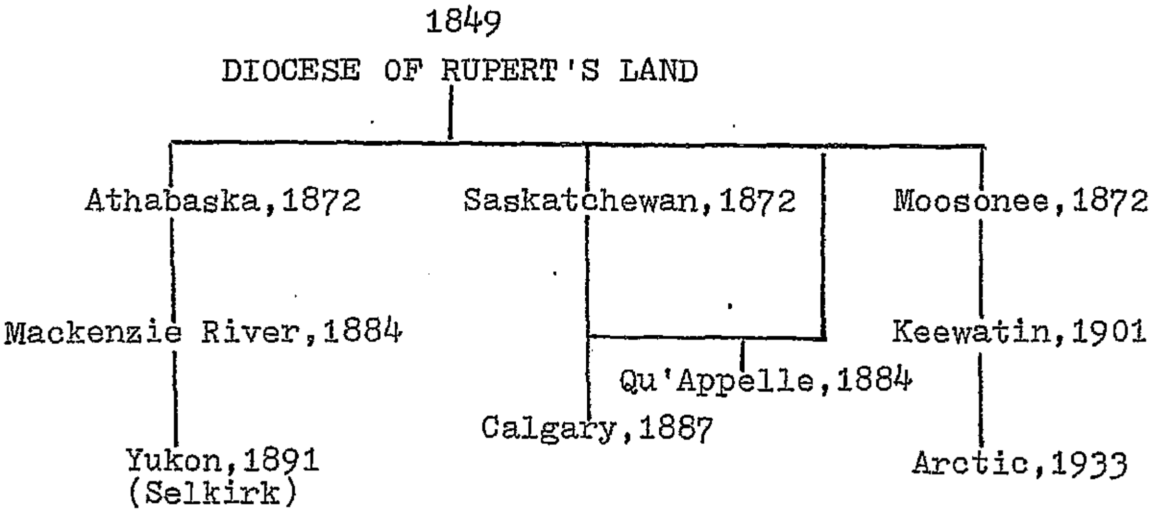
C.M.S.

1858-59	James Hunter	(t.)
1859-68	W.W.Kirkby	(p.)
1868-74	W.D.Reeve	(p.)
1874-84	Bishop W.C.Bompas	(t.)
1885- ?	J.Spendlove	(p.)

MISSIONARIES AT FORT LIARD

1860-63(64?)	Fr.Gascon	(t.)
1864-71	Fr.Grouard	(t.)
1871-93	Fr.de Krangue	(p.)
1893-1915	Fr.le Guen	(p.)

ANGLICAN ORGANIZATION


1849
DIOCESE OF RUPERT'S LAND
Athabaska,1872
Saskatchewan,1872
Moosonee,1872
Mackenzie River,1884
Keewatin,1901
Qu'Appelle,1884
Calgary,1887
Yukon,1891
(Selkirk)
Arctic,1933

APPENDIX 5A

INDEPENDENT TRADING SITES, NAHANNI REGION

FORT LIARD

1)Hudson's Bay Company	1805-present	(closed 1813-20)
2)Hislop and Nagle	1901?-1909?	
3)Northern Traders Ltd.	1915?-1938	(sold to H.B.C.)
4)Lamson & Hubbard	1921?-1924	(sold to H.B.C.)
5)J.H.Sime	1938-1956?	
6)George P.Turner	1958-1960	

LIARD RIVER POST (right bank)

1)Hans Rorwich	1936-1938

NETLA RIVER (right bank)

1)Northern Traders Ltd.	1928-1932?	(sold to Boudah)
2)George Boudah	1932?-1948	
3)George P.Turner	1945-1954	

NAHANNI BUTTE

1)Alvin John LaFlair	1915-1948
2)Northern Traders Ltd.	1918?-1924?
3)Poole Field	1928-1935
4)J.H.Mulholland	1935-1938
5)George P.Turner	1954-1970
6)Nahanni Trading Co.	1969-present

LIARD RIVER RAPIDS

1)H.B.C.outpost of Ft.Simpson	1928-1930?

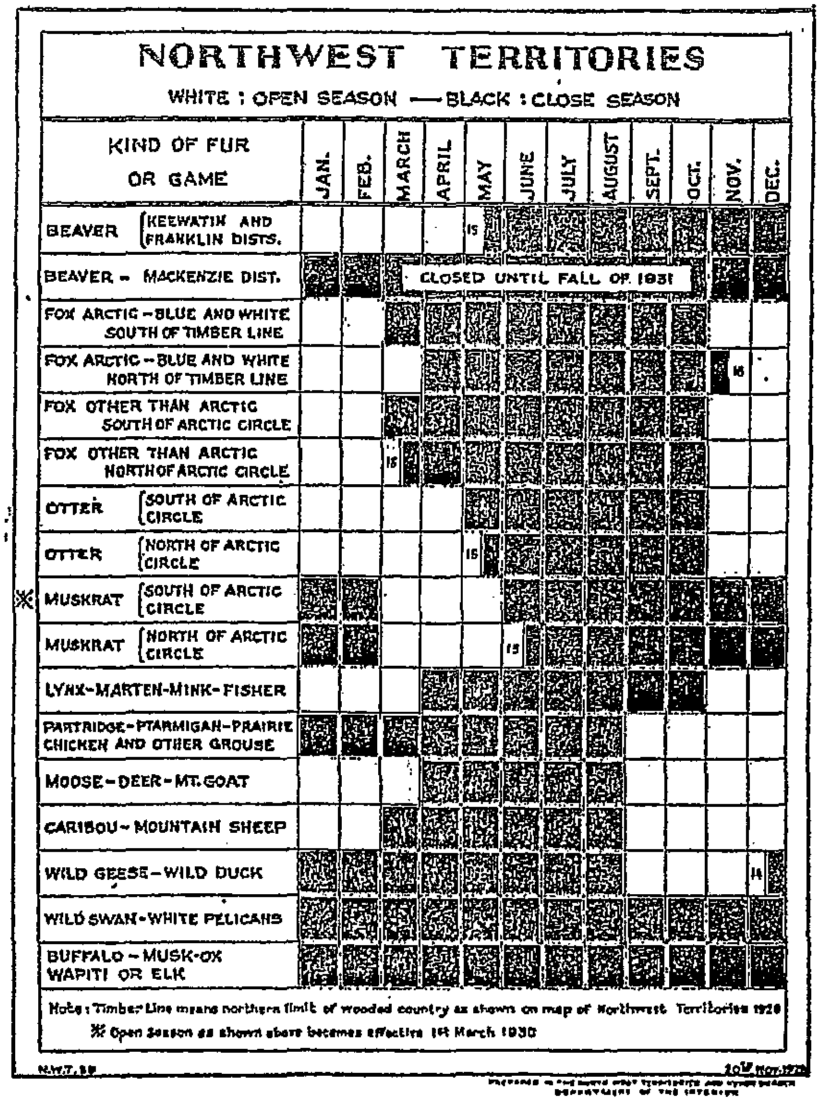
DEER LAKE (local name)

1)
2)}1936-1938

Source:P.J.Usher,Fur Trade Posts of the Northwest Territories 1870-1970,(Northern Science Research Group,DIAND, 1971).

APPENDIX 5B

1930 GAME REGULATIONS



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

WHITE : OPEN SEASON — BLACK : CLOSE SEASON

KIND OF FUR OR GAME	JAN.	FEB.	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
BEAVER {KEEWATIN AND FRANKLIN DISTS.					15 ■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
BEAVER – MACKENZIE DIST.	■	■	■ CLOSED UNTIL FALL OF 1931	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
FOX ARCTIC – BLUE AND WHITE SOUTH OF TIMBER LINE			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
FOX ARCTIC – BLUE AND WHITE NORTH OF TIMBER LINE				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■ 15	
FOX OTHER THAN ARCTIC SOUTH OF ARCTIC CIRCLE			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
FOX OTHER THAN ARCTIC NORTH OF ARCTIC CIRCLE			15 ■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
OTTER {SOUTH OF ARCTIC CIRCLE					■	■	■	■	■	■		
OTTER {NORTH OF ARCTIC CIRCLE					15 ■	■	■	■	■	■		
※ MUSKRAT {SOUTH OF ARCTIC CIRCLE	■	■				■	■	■	■	■	■	■
MUSKRAT {NORTH OF ARCTIC CIRCLE	■	■				15 ■	■	■	■	■	■	■
LYNX-MARTEN-MINK-FISHER				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
PARTRIDGE-PTARMIGAN-PRAIRIE CHICKEN AND OTHER GROUSE	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
MOOSE-DEER-MT. GOAT				■	■	■	■	■				
CARIBOU – MOUNTAIN SHEEP			■	■	■	■	■	■				
WILD GEESE – WILD DUCK	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				14 ■
WILD SWAN – WHITE PELICANS	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
BUFFALO – MUSK-OX WAPITI OR ELK	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Note: Timber Line means northern limit of wooded country as shown on map of Northwest Territories 192[illegible]

※ Open Season as shown above becomes effective 1st March 1930

N.W.T. [illegible] 10th Nov. [illegible]

Source: Government of Canada, Department of the Interior, Regulations Respecting Game in the Northwest Territories, (Ottawa, 1930).

APPENDIX 5C

VALUE OF BEAVER PELTS

Season	Average Value/pelt
1920-21	$16.31
1921-22	18.38
1922-23	14.04
1923-24	15.03
1924-25	20.22
1925-26	19.77
1926-27	22.85
*1927-28	26.78
*1928-29	26.61
*1929-30	21.46
*1930-31	14.77
1931-32	11.59
1932-33	9.74
1933-34	8.05

*For comparison with the $25 per pelt given to the Indians during the closed season,1928-1931.

Source:Canada Year Book

APPENDIX 5D

Average percentage of each fur-bearer taken by white trappers

TYPE	1932-35	1940-43
Red Fox	39%	42%
Lynx	29	23
Mink	22	23
Muskrat	15	20
Ermine	25	20
Beaver	12	19
*Marten	15	10

*Largest fur take from Nahanni

Source:M.J.&J.L.Robinson,"Fur Production in the N.W.T.", Canadian Geographical Journal,Vol.32,no.1(Jan.1946), p.38.

APPENDIX 5E

NATIVE POPULATION IN THE NAHANNI REGION

YEAR	LIARD DISTRICT	SIMPSON DISTRICT	SOURCE
1898	205	599	Indian Commissioner Forget (estimate)
1913	350	350	Indian Commissioner Conroy (estimate)
1920	217	364	Conroy (census)
1929	225	312	
1931	225	343	Dominion Census
1934	337	341	Dept.Indian Affairs
1941	208	378	Dominion Census

APPENDIX 6 A

FORT LIARD REVENUE COMPARISON

SOURCE		1967*	%total	1973**	%total
SALARIES	Government	$19,911	26.0	$103,000	49.4
	Private	7,019	9.2	23,400	11.1
TRAPPING		21,443	28.0	48,000	22.8
CRAFTS		1,105	1.4	1,000#	0.5
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE	Legislation	21,512	28.1	34,000#	16.2
	Assistance in goods	5,047	6.6		
	Other	600	0.8		
TOTAL SALARIES		$26,930		$127,300	
TOTAL ASSISTANCE		27,159		34,000	
APPROX.VALUE COUNTRY FOOD		57,500(?)		22,020	
GRAND TOTAL SALARIES & ASSISTANCE		76,637		210,300	

#Estimate
##Does this include all three categories?

*Source: G.M.Higgins, The Lower Liard Region,an Economic Survey,(D.I.A.N.D.,Ottawa,1969).

**Source: Gemini North,(Yellowknife,1974).

APPENDIX 6 B

NAHANNI BUTTE REVENUE (1967-68)

		ACTUAL	% OF TOTAL
WAGE LABOUR	Government	$16,524	48.5%
	Private (guides)	4,000	11.7
TRAPPING		7,282	21.4
CRAFTS		1,714	5.0
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE			
	Legislation	4,172	12.3
	Assistance in Goods	893	2.6
TOTAL		$34,045	

Average Household Income/year	$3,404
Average per capita Income	$ 558

Source: G.M.Higgins, The Lower Liard Region: An Economic Survey, (D.I.A.N.D., Ottawa, 1969).

APPENDIX 6 C

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION (1967)

		Ft. Liard	N.Butte	Trout L.	Jean Marie R.	Ft. Simpson
Permanent Population*	Native	219	62	44	50	469
	Métis	11	1	-	-	96
	White	-	4	-	-	45
Floating Population**	Métis	-	-	-	-	-
	White	8	1	-	1	220
TOTALS		238	69	44	51	830

*Non-mobile population by reason of type of employment.

**Labour mobile population (people who can easily move to another place of employment).

Source: G.M.Higgins, The Lower Liard Region: An Economic Survey, (D.I.A.N.D., Ottawa, 1969).

APPENDIX 6 D

SCHOOL ENROLMENT, SELECTED SITES MACKENZIE DISTRICT, 1967

SCHOOL	NO. TEACHERS	ENROLMENT BY STATUS						TOTAL
		ESKIMO		INDIAN		OTHER		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
Fort Liard	1	-	-	7	8	-	-	38
Fort Norman	2	-	-	12	14	15	9	50
Fort Simpson	19	17	11	101	129	72	55	385
Fort Smith	44	5	4	121	124	312	274	840
Jean Marie R.	1	-	-	8	2	1	-	11
Nahanni Butte	1	-	-	9	6	1	-	16
Norman Wells	2	-	-	-	-	21	17	38
Tungsten	2	-	-	-	-	11	14	25
Wrigley	2	-	-	13	18	3	-	34
TOTAL, Mackenzie District	257	526	524	680	743	1,167	1,062	4,702

Note: The total is given for comparison purposes only. It does not include the public and separate schools in Yellowknife nor the separate school at Hay River; these schools listed in the chart are only those administered by the Northern Administration Branch, D.I.A.N.D

Source: D.I.A.N.D., Annual Report, Ottawa, 1968

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society
D.I.A.N.D.	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
D.N.A.N.R.	Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources
H.B.C.	Hudson's Bay Company
N.F.B.	National Film Board
N.W.C.	North West Company
O.M.I.	Oblates of Mary Immaculate
P.C.H.R.I.	Parks Canada Historic Resources Inventory
R.C.M.P.	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
R.N.W.M.P.	Royal North West Mounted Police
S.P.F.	Society for the Propagation of the Faith
S.P.G.	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

A NOTE ON SOURCES

THE EXTENSION OF THE FUR TRADE, 1800-1851

The standard general work on the Canadian fur trade has been H.A.Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*. George Bryce's *Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (London,1900) contains some useful material, but E.E.Rich's intensive, three volume study of the H.B.C.(Toronto,1960) provides the basis for an understanding of the activities of that company. See also several works by John S.Galbraith. For the N.W.C., the documents collected in L.R.Masson's *Les bourgeois de la compagnie du nord-ouest* (reprinted New York, 1960) are important.

Most of the material for the first chapter was drawn from the fabulous collection at the H.B.C. Archives in Winnipeg. The Hudson's Bay Record Society has published a portion of the more important documents, but much exciting source material remains in its original form. Most useful are the post journals (in this case, Fort Simpson), but see also the post Indian Accounts and reports. The voluminous personal correspondence of Sir George Simpson has been indexed, which provides a considerable research short cut.

Recently, a number of excellent thematic studies of the fur trade have been published. These include Ray and Freeman, *"Give Us Good Measure"* (Toronto,1978); Heidenreich and Ray, *The Early Fur Traders:A Study in Cultural Interaction*

(Toronto,1976); Ray, The Indians in the Fur Trade (Toronto, 1974). For the period prior to 1857, Rich's The Fur Trade and the Northwest (Toronto,1967) provides the basic background material. The papers of the North American fur trade conference periodically provide a number of useful new studies.

THE MISSIONARY INVASION, 1850-1896

Gathering material for chapter three was greatly facilitated by the extensive collection of Anglican documents contained in the Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, held at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The general history by T.C.B.Boon, The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies (Toronto,1962) is a useful introduction from the Protestant viewpoint; the equivalent Roman Catholic publication is the History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada by A.G.Morice (Toronto, 1910). The standard work on the C.M.S. is Eugene Stock's multi-volume history published in 1899, of which volumes II and III were the most useful for this study. An enormous body of popular literature describing the "heroic" exploits of the northern missionaries exists. Factually, these works are frequently highly inaccurate, but the attitudes expressed indicate a great deal about the mentality of the early mission workers.

Primary source material is available in abundance, but much of it is very difficult to use. The field reports, annual letters and magazine articles of both the C.M.S. and O.M.I. personnel are more concerned with expressions of theology and pleas for funds than with accurate descriptions of the daily work. Reports of the inter-church rivalry certainly make lively reading, but after a point, do not provide much useful information. Nevertheless, if one has the patience, the C.M.S. Intelligencer and the Catholic Annales de la Propagation de la Foi are probably the best sources for details of the northern missions.

Surprisingly little scholarly work has been done on mission work in Canada. Jean Usher (Friesen)'s study of William Duncan of Metlakatla, based on her Ph.D. thesis (Ottawa,1974), provides a useful background and serves as an interesting comparison with other C.M.S. mission work in Canada. Several masters theses have also been produced at the University of Manitoba and elsewhere.

CANADIAN INTEREST AROUSED, 1896-1922

Material for this chapter was drawn from a variety of sources. Those who require further details on the R.N.W.M.P./R.C.M.P. will find the search frustrating. The few histories of Canada's police force are generally disappointing as they seem to approach the force either with a highly critical attitude based on recent revelations of R.C.M.P. activities, or else they are so sympathetic as to practically reinforce the Hollywood "Mountie" image. A Ph.D. thesis by William R.Morrison for the University of Western Ontario (1973) manages a more balanced approach, but its emphasis is on the police role in the Arctic region.

Searches at the Public Archives of Canada also produced material that was largely of interest to students of the region further north. Hence, material on the Fort Simpson detachment was primarily drawn from the police annual reports.

The Geological Survey publications provide a real wealth of information on the exploration and development of the north, and fortunately, all are readily available. For a good introduction to the organization and work of the Survey, see Morris Zaslow, Reading the Rocks: The Story of the Geological Survey of Canada (Ottawa,1975).

For information on Treaty 11, the case built by Oblate historian father René Fumoleau in As Long as this Land Shall Last (Toronto,1973) provides a good beginning, since Father Fumoleau fully documents his claims. The book requires careful reading, however, because it is intended primarily to defend the position that Treaties 8 and 11 are not valid agreements. To put these treaties in context, it is highly advisable to consult Alexander Morris' The Treaties of Canada with the Indians (1880), available as a Coles Canadiana reprint.

A good general introduction is Morris Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North 1870-1914 (Toronto,1971). Zaslow's M.A. thesis for the University of Toronto (1948) is a detailed and rather tedious study of transportation in the Mackenzie Basin during this period and will be useful primarily to those in need of specific information, not for general reading or theory.

PROSPECTORS AND INDEPENDENT TRADERS, 1922-1940

Chapter Five is based on material from two main sources: the Public Archives of Canada, and Parks Canada's oral history collection on the Nahanni. The use of the former should be clear in the footnotes and bibliography; the use of the latter requires some explanation. W.D.Addison was awarded a Parks Canada contract in 1974 to record on cassette tape the recollections of the older generation of Nahanni residents who were rich repositories of half a century of history that has never been written down. Typescripts of four interviews have been published in the Manuscript Report Series (number 196,volumes I and II), while the remaining twelve are currently being prepared for publication. Some of the interviews are excellent, and are accompanied by documents which verify many of the interviewee's statements. Other interviews do not really provide much useful information.

There are a number of shortcomings in the use of interviews prepared by someone else. Many of the questions posed and answered deal with subjects more appropriate to a hunter planning his fall safari than with historical reminiscing. This situation is to be expected; Mr.Addison's purposes in posing his questions were obviously not identical with those of a student researching a thesis. However, it is fair to criticize the collection on the limited variety of persons chosen to interview. All are white prospectors, with the exception of one Métis, Ted Trindell, and one missionary (Father Turcotte). Some of the men did a fair amount of trapping, but their primary interest was prospecting. There are no Treaty Indians, no women, no police officers (two whom Addison planned to interview had died, but no others were approached), no pilots, and no Indian Agents or other government administrators. Addison was primarily interested in the various versions of the McLeod Brothers story and other prospecting activities, so information on the fur trade, mission work, and Native peoples is necessarily scanty.

Of course, any oral history requires careful verification, since individual recollections of past events are notoriously inaccurate. The chronology prepared by Addison provided a useful starting point. Cross references to material searched in the P.A.C. also assisted in the process. Other sources used for comparative purposes included R.M.Patterson, The Dangerous River (1954); Dick Turner, Nahanni (1975); the Bill Clark diaries and Alan Cameron papers held by the University of Alberta Archives; and documents appended to two of the interview transcripts now being prepared for publication.

CORPORATE RESOURCE EXPLOITATION, 1940-1972.

Again, the Parks Canada oral history collection and material from the Public Archives were major sources for this chapter. Other useful sources include the Canadian Geographical Journal which has published over the years a large number of articles on the Northwest Territories. The best general work on the northern situation today is K.J.Rea, The Political Economy of the Canadian North (Toronto, 1968). A most useful article for theory is Ronald Cohen, "Modernism and the Hinterland: The Canadian Example," International Journal of Comparative Sociology (1966).

On the subject of native peoples, specific information regarding culture and culture change for the Nahanni region is rare. Most anthropologists who study the northern Indians can provide good general information on the Athabascan group, but invariably refer to the Mountain Indians as a "little known tribe", and give only scanty details of the Slave group. John Honigman's studies of the Kaska (Yale, 1949 and 1954) and June Helm MacNeish's research on the Athabascans are the most useful sources. Less helpful, but still containing some information, are older essays by James A.Teit ("Kaska Tales",Journal of American Folk-Lore, 1917) and A.G.Morice ("The Nah-ane and their Language", Transactions of the Canadian Institute, 1902-03).Unfortunately Father Emile Petitot's extensive observations do not continue far enough west to include the South Nahanni River region. From a methodological viewpoint, several of the volumes in the Mackenzie Delta Research Group series are helpful. Also for the purposes of comparison, see the excellent study by Robin Fisher, Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890, (Vancouver, 1977).

There is a considerable body of travel literature on the Nahanni, some of which is presented in the bibliography. It is particularly interesting to note the attraction that the area has held for the French Canadians. The river has been featured in Reader's Digest and is even the setting of a romantic novel! A study of this literature would make an interesting topic in itself.

Newspapers and government documents provided the basis for the remainder of the chapter. Queen's University Documents Unit is a particularly rich library of relevant material, including a copy of the little-known report of the Commission on Treaties 8 and 11.

For sources on the north in general, please consult the bibliography, following.

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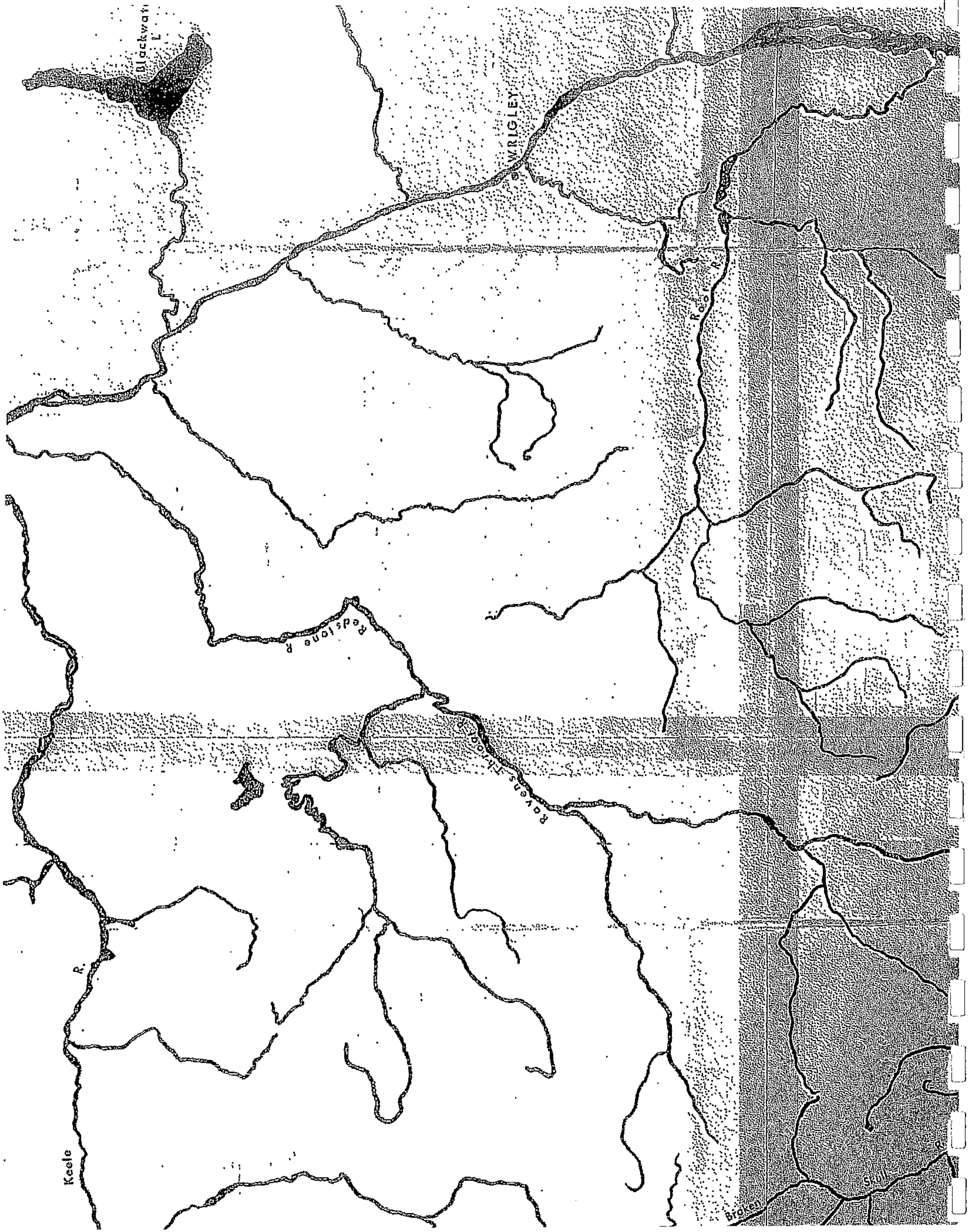

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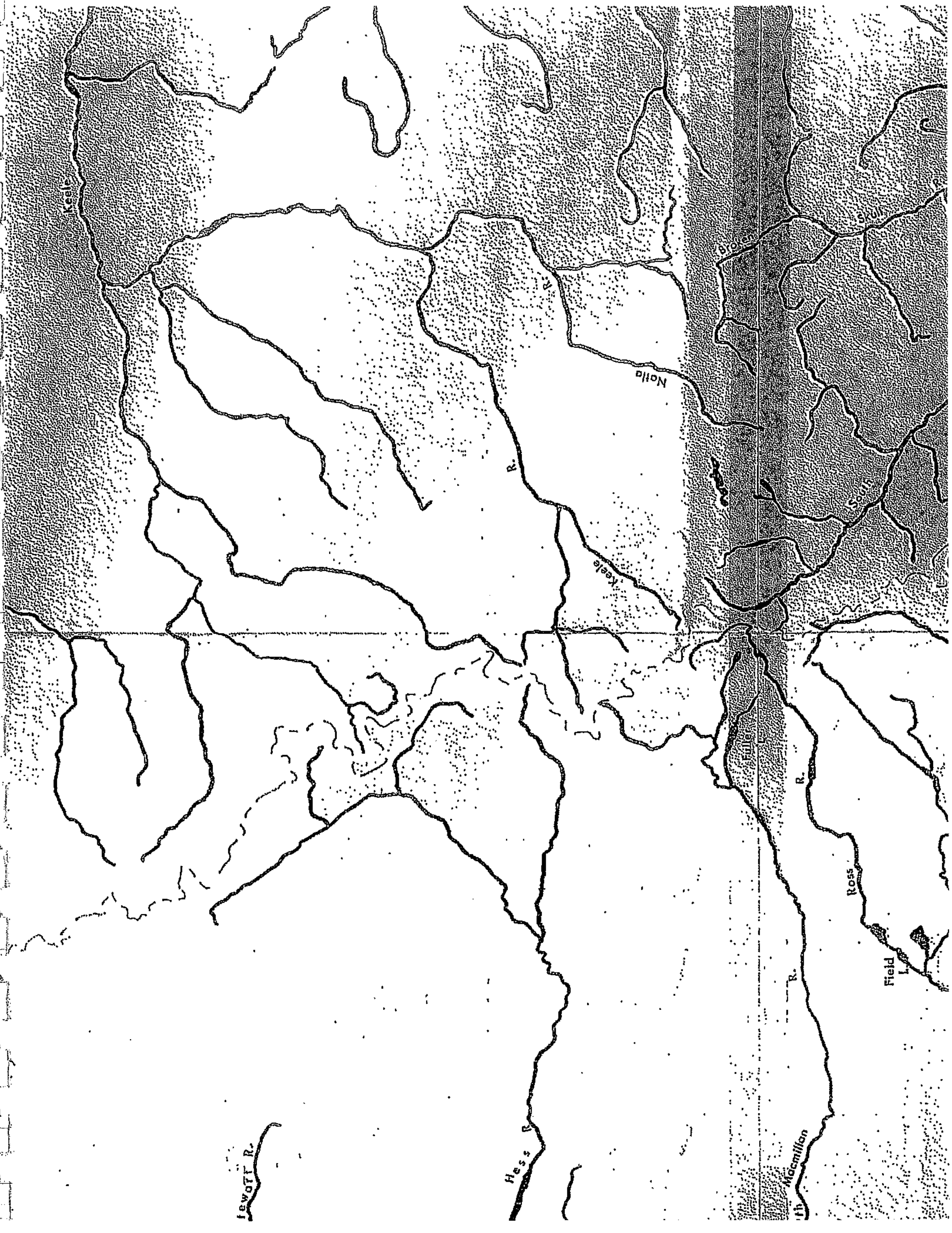
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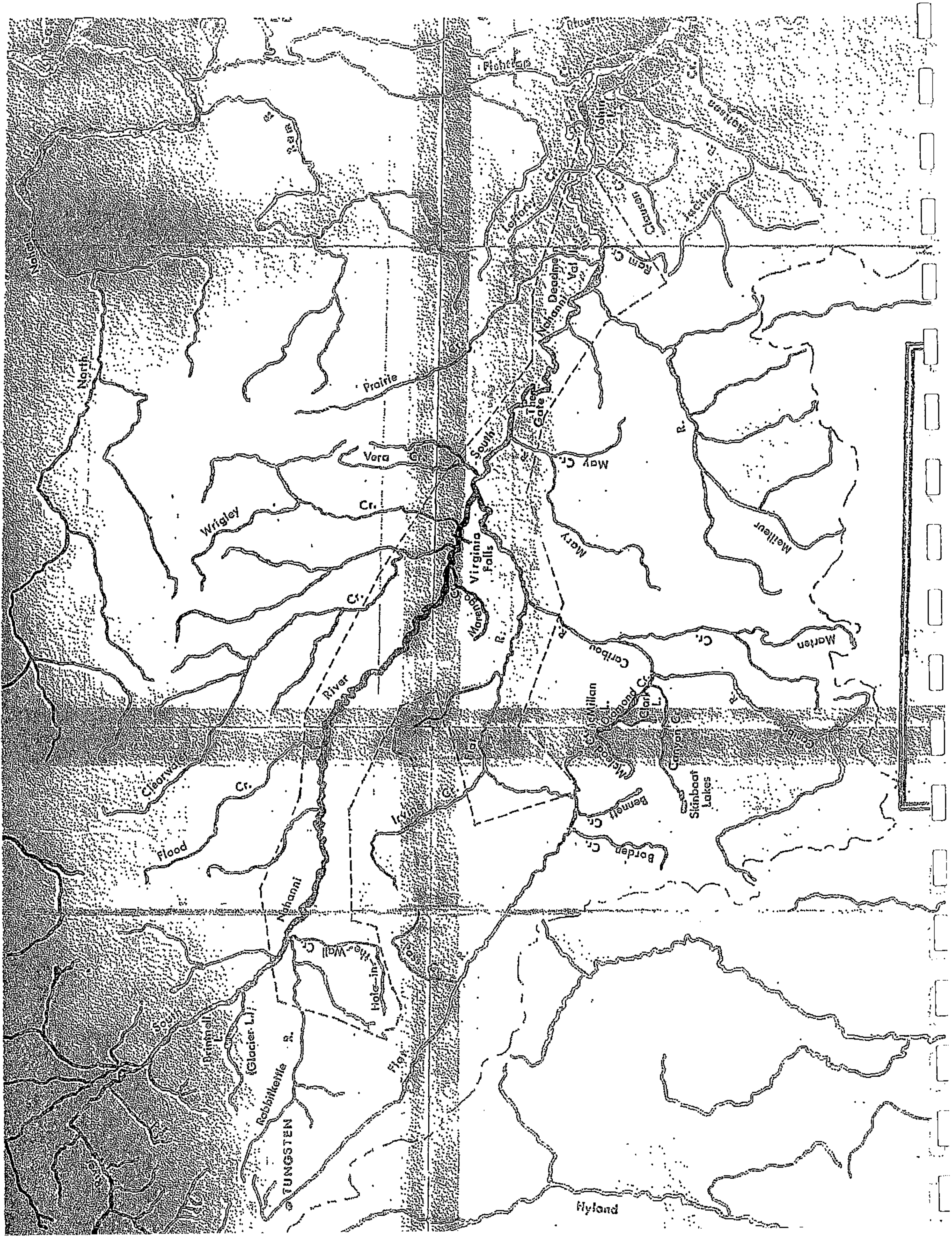
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Vera Cr.
May Cr.
Wrigley Cr.
Mary R.
Meilleur R.
Virginia Falls
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Diamond Cr.
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McLeod Cr.
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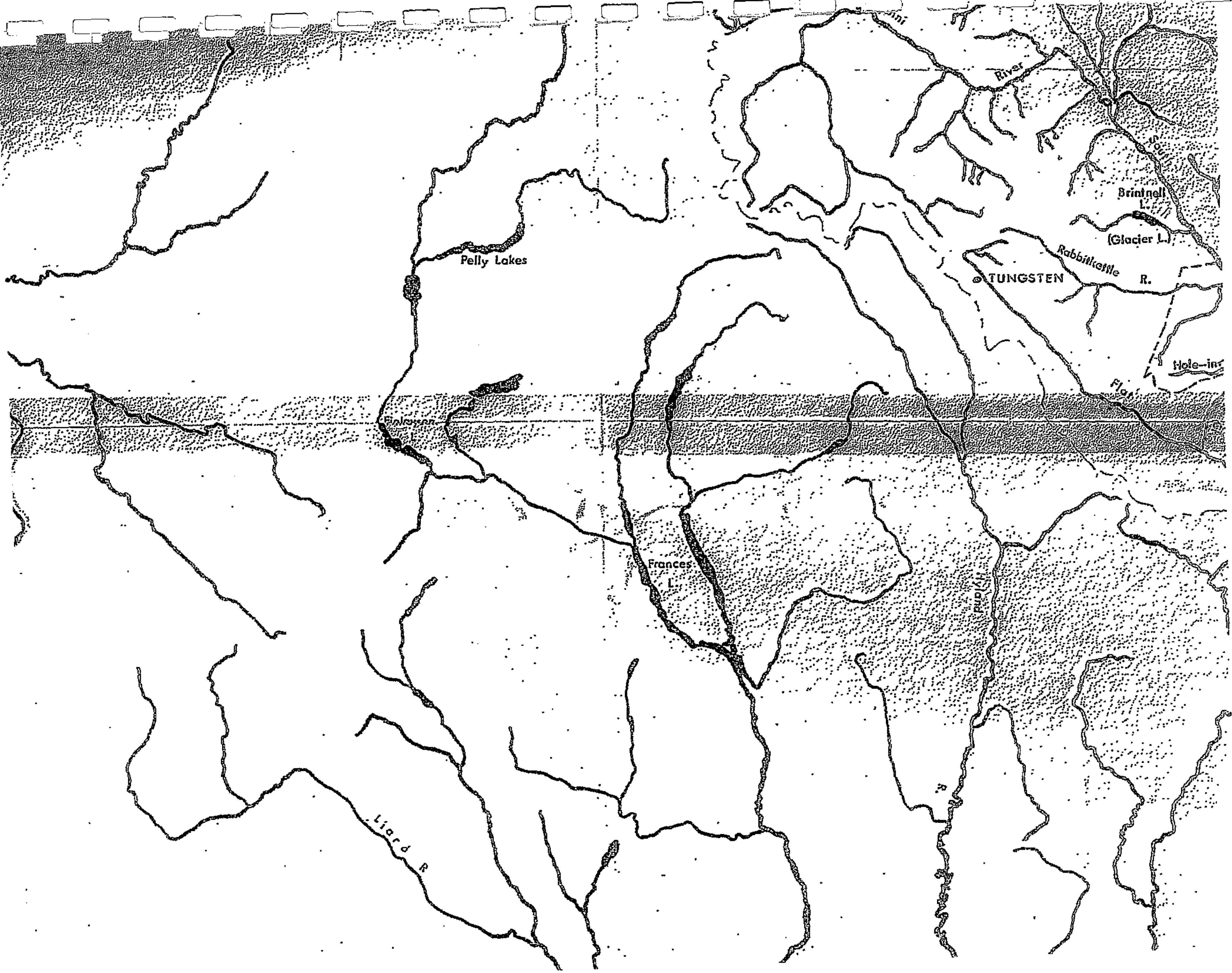
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Rabbitkettle R.
TUNGSTEN
Hole-in-
Flat
Pelly Lakes
Finlayson L.
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Liard R

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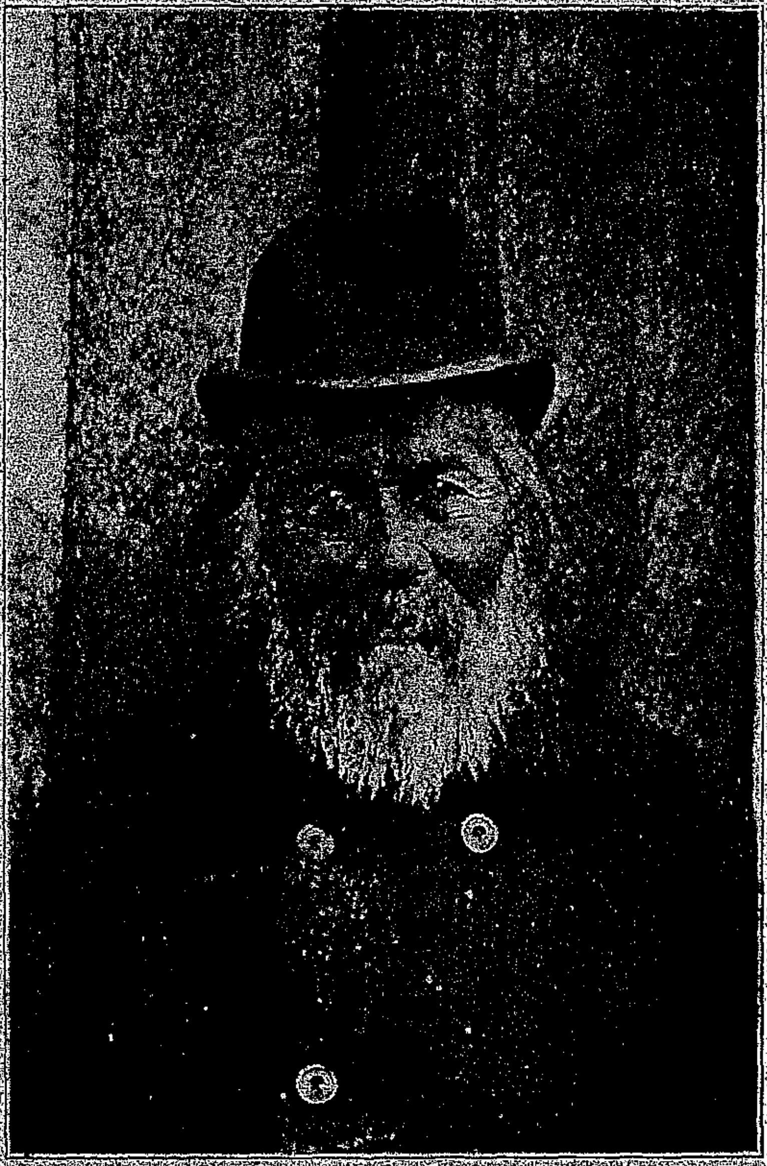
The Nahane and their language



A Nahqua Medicine Man in Modern Costume

THE NAH'ANE AND THEIR LANGUAGE.

BY THE REV. FATHER A. G. MORICE, O.M.I.

(*Read 4th April, 1903.*)

Of the twenty odd tribes which compose the great Déné family, few, if any, are so little known as the Nah'ane.

Many are the travellers who had passing references to them in the course of their writings, but exceedingly few are those who had as much as seen one of them. In fact, Dr. G. M. Dawson is the only author who can be said to have introduced them to us, and his information, fragmentary and at times inexact as it is, is confined to the limits of a few pages.

Writers are not even agreed as to their very name as a tribe. Thus while Pilling in his valuable Bibliography of the Athapaskan Languages has adopted the spelling Nehawni, Kenticott calls them Nahawney; Ross writes their name Nehawney; Richardson changes this into Noh'hanne; MacKenzie dubs those he met Nathannas; Campbell and Dawson alternate between Nahanie and Nahaunie; others prefer Nahawnie, and Petitot himself never speaks of them but as the Na"anne, his " being the equivalent of my upper dot, which stands for the hiatus.

He derives that appellation from Nari'an-o'tine, "people of the West" but does not state from which dialect the word is borrowed. All the western Déné who know of that tribe, as well as its members themselves, pronounce it Nah'ane, and there can be no doubt that Petitot is correct in the meaning he ascribes to that term, whatever may be said of its derivation. For sunset or occident, the Tsilkotin say *nare'i*N, the Carriers *naantan*, the Tsé'kehne *naren'o*N, and the Nah'ane themselves *naran*. The final e is expressive of personality and sometimes of plurality or collectivity.

On the other hand, Mr. J. W. MacKay[1] repeatedly calls the tribe Ku-na-na, the name given it by the Tlhinket, its neighbours in the south-west. But that he is somewhat mixed as to the ethnographical status of those Indians is shown by his remark that "the Ku-na-nas of the Stickine valley are closely allied to the Tlinkeets of that section,

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[1] B.A.A.S. Tenth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada, p.p., 38-39.

i.e., the Skat-kwan."[1] As a matter of fact, the latter are just as pure non-Déné as the former are undoubted Déné.

In common with all the Déné and many other aboriginal families, the Nah'ane recognize as their property no other vocable than Déné, "men," though the branch of that tribe best known to me, the Thalhthan, will occasionally call themselves Tcitco'tinneh or "stick-people," whereby they simply translate the name given them by outsiders, since, according to Dawson, and as I have myself ascertained, "the interior Indians are collectively known on the coast as 'stick Indians.'"[2]

So much for the name of the tribe. Now as to its ethnographical status. This seems even more of a mystery to the few writers who have ever referred to it.

It is now over nine years since I stated myself that the Nah'ane "hunting grounds lie to the north of those of the Tsé'kéhne. But I am not familiar enough with their tribal divisions to state them with any degree of certainty, nor do I sufficiently possess their technology to speak authoritatively of it."[3]

I am glad to be now in a position to say that, in the course of the present year, I have taken a trip to their chief village, Thalhthan,[4] in order to add as much as possible to my knowledge of that tribe and its language. I have succeeded in gathering, besides the material for a grammatical compendium, quite a goodly little dictionary, and not a few texts in its dialect which I intend shortly to publish. Yet I must confess that we must still fall back, for the details of their frontiers and some other particulars, on what the late Dr. G. M. Dawson wrote of them in 1887—Notes on the Indian tribes of the . . . northern portion of British Columbia.[5] Inaccurate as it is from a philological standpoint, his is the only account of the Western Nah'ane worth referring to.

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[1] Notes on the Indian Tribes of the Yukon District, etc., p. 2.

[2] Tenth Report, p. 39, note.

[3] Notes on the Western Dénés, Transactions Canadian Institute, Vol. IV., p. 31.

[4] Most writers spell this word Tahltan, when they do not have it simply Taltan, and Dr. Boas corrects them by changing it into Ta'ltan. All sin through ignorance of the Déné phonetics and of the meaning of that word, which is a contraction of *Tha-selhthan*, *tha*, the usual alteration of *thu*, water in compounds, and *selhthan*, a verb which has reference to some heavy object lying therein.

[5] Annual Report of Geological Survey of Canada.

I.

Broadly speaking the tribe consists of four main divisions. To my certain knowledge, its principal seat in the west is Thalhthan, a salmon fishery at the confluence with the Stickeen of a river of the same name, by about 58° 2′ of latitude north. From the new village in the immediate vicinity of that place, these aborigines radiate as far south as the Iskoot River, taking in all its tributaries and some of the northern sources of the Nass, and in the east to Dease Lake and part of the Dease River, extending also to all the northern tributaries of the Stickeen. Further north, we meet the Taku branch of the tribe, which claims "the whole drainage basin of the Taku River, together with the upper portions of the streams which flow northward to the Lewes, while on the east their hunting grounds extend to the Upper Liard River and include the valleys of the tributary streams which join that river from the westward."[1]

The third division of the Nah'ane is the so-called Kaska, about whom much misapprehension seems to exist among the whites I met in the course of my journey, a misapprehension of which Dr. Dawson constituted himself the echo when he wrote: "The name Kaska is applied collectively to two tribes or bands occupying the country to the eastward of the Tahl-tan. I was unable to learn that this name is recognized by these Indians themselves, and it may be, as is often the case with names adopted by the whites, merely that by which they are known to some adjacent tribe. It is, however, a convenient designation for the group having a common dialect. This dialect is different from that of the Tahl-tan, but the two peoples are mutually intelligible, and to some extent intermarried."[2]

In the first place I must remark that Kaska is the name of no tribe or sub-tribe, but McDane Creek is called by the Nah'ane KasHa—the H representing a peculiar gutturalo-sibilant aspiration—and this is the real word which, corrupted into Cassiar by the whites, has, since a score of years or more, served to designate the whole mining region from the Coast Range to the Rocky Mountains, along, and particularly to the north of the Stickeen River.

All the whites who mentioned the subject to me concurred in Dawson's opinion that the so-called Kaskas form quite a different tribe, and in a footnote to the latter's essay, a Mr. Campbell goes even so far as to state that the "Nahanies of the mountains (who correspond to a subdivision of the Kaskas), are quite a different race from the Nahanies of the Stickeen (Tahl-tan)"[1]. Now the Thalhthan Indians I questioned on the subject unanimously declared that those pretended foreigners spoke exactly the same language as themselves, with, of course, some local peculiarities. From a Kaska boy, with whom I travelled for a number of days, I ascertained that even such non-Déné words as *kùk*, paper, *khukh*, box, *kunts*, potatoes, which I thought proper to the Thalhthan Indians, who borrowed them from the coast, were the only ones current among his people to designate those objects.

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[1] Notes on the . . . northern portion of British Columbia, p. 5.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

The physique of the Kaska is somewhat different from that of the Thalhthan aborigines, inasmuch as I recognized in the former the thin lips and small, deeply sunk eyes of the Tsé'kéhne, while the latter resemble more the Carriers of the Coast Tlhinket, with whom from time immemorial they have more or less intermarried.

The sociology of the two divisions of the Nah'ane is as widely different, and their respective mode of life and social organization confirm my previous assertion in former papers that, to all practical purposes, the western Nah'ane are Carriers, while their eastern brethren are Tsekehne.

Another circumstance which has contributed not a little to the estrangement of the two tribal divisions, is the long-standing feuds arising out of difficulties concerning the hunting grounds, the making of slaves, and other causes. Even to this day the Kaska resent the Thalhthan's assumed or real superiority, and will not be confounded with them as co-members of the same tribe. Hence their declarations to the whites and the travellers' and traders' printed statements.

According to Dr. Dawson, the so-called Kaskas are sub-divided into the "Saze-oo-ti-na" and the "Ti-tsho-ti-na" and their habitat is in the neighbourhood of the Dease, Upper Liard and Black Rivers. His "Saz-oo-ti-na" may be Sas-otine or "Bear-People," while his Ti-tsho-ti-na's real name is no doubt Tihtco'tinne, or Grouse-People, an appellation which would seem to leave it open to discussion whether we have not in them rather the names of two different phratries or gentes than those of two genuine ethnical subdivisions of a tribe.

"Eastward they claim the country down the Liard to the site of old Fort Halkett, and northward roam to the head of a long river (probably

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[1] Notes, etc., p. 19.

Smith River) which falls into the Liard near this place, also up the Upper Liard as far as Francess Lake."[1]

This statement would seem to dispose of Petitot's Bad-People or *Mauvais Monde*, a "very little known tribe," he says, "which used to trade at the now abandoned Fort Halkett to the number of 300 or 400 souls."[2]

Father Petitot furnishes us with our fourth division of the Nah'ane when he states that "a little band of 300 Na"annes (Déné) roam over the mountains of the MacKenzie. They are the Nathannas of Sir A. Mackenzie. We can add thereto the Etaottines of the Good Hope mountains and the Espa-t'a-ottines of Fort des Liards in equal number."[3]

To the above certain divisions of the Nah'ane tribe, we should perhaps add the Ts'Ets'aut, an offshoot of some inland Déné, whom Dr. F. Boas discovered some years ago on Portland Inlet, on the Pacific Coast, somewhat to the southwest of the Nah'ane proper. That Dr. Boas would himself connect them with the Nah'ane tribe is apparent from the statement that "Levi (his informant) named three closely related tribes whose languages are different, though mutually intelligible; the Tahltan (Ta-tltan) of Stickeen and Iskoot Rivers, the Laq'uyip or Naqkyina, of the headwaters of the Stickeen, and the Ts'Ets'aut."[4]

This surmise is fully confirmed by Mr. MacKay, his annotator, who states that those Indians "belong to the Kunâna, a tribe which inhabits the lower Stickine valley and whose headquarters are at Tahltan."[5]

But here *scinduntur doctores*. According to Dr. Boas this handful of natives, which now consists of a mere dozen individuals, would have numbered about 500 souls sixty years ago, while Mr. MacKay has quite a different story to account for their separate existence as a tribe. He relates that, not more than forty years ago,[6] three or four families hailing from Thalhthan in the course of their wanderings made for Chunah, on the sea coast, but took a wrong direction and struck on the west shore of Portland Channel, where they were practically forced to remain in a subject condition by the Tsimpsians, among whom they had unwittingly tumbled.[1]

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[1] Notes, etc., p. 10.

[2] *Mémoire abrégé sur la Géographie de l'Athabaskaw-MacKenzie*, p. 46.

[3] *Ibid. ibid.*

[4] Tenth Report B.A.A.S., p. 34.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[6] It is now eight years since both statements were published.

Be this as it may, the language of the Ts'Ets'aut such as recorded by Dr. Boas himself, while it shows here and there undeniable traces of a Déné origin, has become so corrupt by the admixture of foreign terms and the alteration of its original lexicon, that the propriety of their being classified as Nah'ane is now quite problematical.

The population of the whole Nah'ane tribe must remain little more than a matter of guess. From the Iskoot, close to the Pacific, to the Mackenzie, across the Rocky Mountains, is indeed a broad stretch of land, and the very fact that it is so sparsely peopled renders it so much the more difficult to obtain anything like an exact computation of the tribesmen. I myself took some years ago a census of the Thallithan village, and my figures were in the close vicinity of 190 souls. The population has since decreased, so let us call it 175.

From native sources I ascertained that the "Kaska were more numerous, perhaps 200. Petitot puts at 600 the number of the trans-montane Nah'ane and allied subtribes. Allowing for the probable decrease and possible exaggeration, let us say 500. There remain the Taku, of whom I have no means of ascertaining the exact numbers. Probably 150 would be a conservative figure.

We thus obtain a total of 1,025, or, in round numbers, 1,000 souls for the whole tribe, and I believe this is as fair an estimate of its population as could possibly be had at the present time.

As already stated, the eastern Nah'ane somewhat differ in physique from their western congeners, the only portion of the tribe with which I am familiar enough to describe it *de visu*. Their stature would be rather below than above the average, the maximum height being five feet eight inches. Their feet and hands are small and well shaped, and their head is round and not so large as that of the neighbouring

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[1] In the course of his account of that adventure and the circumstances which lead to his getting acquainted therewith, Mr. McKay takes occasion to speak of an invasion by the Tsimpsian of the territory which is now the Tsimpsian peninsula, whereupon Dr. Boas remarks that "there is no traditional evidence of the invasion of the Tsimshian tribe to which Mr. McKay refers," adding that "it is probable that the Tsimshian were originally an inland people," two statements which, apparently difficult to reconcile as they at first appear, nevertheless are in no way conflicting. There may be no tradition of such an invasion among the Tsimpsian, but their very name betrays their origin. The Skeena River is known to them as the *K'sian*, and they call themselves *T'sem-sian*, people from the Skeena, or the river. To this day anybody can see, two miles from Hazelton, on the Upper Skeena, a prairie or ancient townsite, where one can distinguish the cavities over which were built their winter subterranean houses. Now the name of the locality is *Tamlarh-ion*, the beautiful place, in Tsimpsian, and those two words are still used in that connection by the inland Kitikson to the exclusion of any name in their own dialect.

Tlhinket. With them the nose, without being of the regular aquiline type, is not so squatty as among the Tsilhkoh'tin and other tribes. The lips are full, the eyes dark and not quite as large as is common with the Carriers. The forehead is low, broad and bulging immediately above the eyes. The hair is invariably black, coarse and straight.

Their beard is scanty, though a few, especially such as have taken to shaving—they are very progressive and great imitators—disport a fair quantity of dark, bristly facial hair.

As to their complexion, it varies considerably according to the individuals. Contrary to what I have noticed in other tribes, some of the eastern Nah·ane women have cheeks of a tinge which might almost be characterized as rosy, though the facies of others is quite swarthy.

All the adults above forty have the septum pendent and pierced through with a hole which held formerly a large silver ring, perhaps two inches in diameter. The leading men or notables wear likewise silver rings hanging from the lobes of the ear, and these are the only present remnants of the many ornaments which the helix was originally made to support.

Neither in blood, customs nor language are the western Nah·ane pure Déné. They are indebted to no small extent to the Tlhinket of Fort Wrangell for their present make-up. To them also they undoubtedly owe that lack of moral strength and force of character which has left them such an easy prey to the vices of unscrupulous white men. Very few are to-day the western Nah·ane who can be represented as bodily sane. Syphilis, a disease hardly known among the other Déné, is but too prevalent among them. Liquor is also slowly but surely killing them out.

I am bound to add, however, that adverse circumstances are a great deal to blame for the development of such pitiful results. Had missionaries established themselves among them before the rush of strangers to the Cassiar mines, the natives would not, in all probability, be the degraded beings they have become. Since the last few years, a representative of the Anglican Church has struck his tent on the arid hill of Thalhthan. But I am sure he could not well himself take exception to my statement that his influence has not been in the interest of temperance.

Though no other Déné that I know of have had to undergo the test of being left alone to wage their war against such a degraded foe as a majority of the Cassiar miners have shown themselves to be, it is difficult for me to imagine for a moment, for instance, the Tse'kehne tribe sunk to the low moral level of the present Nah'ane whom I have met or have been told about.

While the eastern Nah'ane lead the simple patriarchal life of the Tse'kehne, with hardly any sign of a social organization, their western congeners, with the remarkable adaptiveness proper to the Déné race, have adopted practically all the customs and some of the mythology of their heterogeneous neighbours on the sea coast. Thus it is that matriarchate or mother-right is their fundamental law governing and regulating all inheritances to rank or property.

Though they have no totem poles, they know of the gentes, which at Thalthan are those of the Birds and of the Bears. Each of these have several headmen or *tene-thie* (the equivalent of the Carrier *tœneza*), who alone own the hunting grounds, and on festival occasions, such as dances or potlatching, are granted special consideration. These ceremonial banquets are much in vogue, and as a result, almost every house in Thalhthan is now crowded with a quantity of trunks containing goods publicly received or to be likewise given away.

Those houses are now of rough unhewn logs, with stoves instead of fire-places. But the tribe's residences were originally much less elaborate, and consisted of brush shelters, sometimes with low walls made of long, slender poles. Therein they dwell, generally several related families together.

Marriage was never accompanied with any ceremony or formality. It seems to have been based principally on the bestowing of furs or other goods on the parents of the prospective bride.

Polygamy was known everywhere, but it is now practically abolished, the only exceptions being a very few cases among the present Kaska. As to divorce, it is obtained without any formality, and is often enough resorted to.

Shamanism was originally the only form of worship common to the whole tribe, and in the east witchcraft, and the social disturbances it entails seem even now quite prevalent. The Kaska boy I have already mentioned as a companion on part of my trip from Thalhthan was just being taken away from revengeful fellow-tribesmen who had already done to death two of his brothers under the plea that their parents were responsible for the sickness and ultimate death of some Indian or

Indians against whom they were believed to have exercised their black art.

As among the other Déné, such deaths were the cause of family feuds of long duration and bitter hatred, when they did not lead to reprisals and a series of murders. Thus would originate their internecine wars, which consisted merely in ambuscades, surprises and massacres, accompanied sometimes with the enslaving of the women and the children.

But their "wars" were more frequently directed against foreigners, such as the Tsimpsian of the upper Skeena, or against the Tlhinket of the coast. They had no war chiefs, or indeed any chief at all in our sense of the word.

In times of peace, their special avocation and means of subsistence are hunting and fishing, to which a few of the younger men add packing for the miners and the Hudson's Bay Company. As their territory is so extensive, it still abounds in fur-bearing animals and game of almost all descriptions. I found moose especially plentiful all over the country. The mountains are also rich in sheep and goats.

No wonder then, if the Nah'ane are well-to-do. In fact I consider that the western part of the tribe is at present dying on a golden bed. In the house of my hosts at the time of my visit were to be seen, besides gilt bronze bedsteads and laces of all kinds, two sewing machines, two large accordeons, and, will the reader believe it?—a phonograph! All this in the forests of British Columbia, north of the 58th degree of latitude!

Since I have mentioned death, I may remark that cremation was, until recently, the mode adopted by the western Nah'ane to dispose of their dead. And, in this connection, we have a ludicrous admixture of the new order of things with the olden ways, in the small travelling trunks bought from the whites, which are to be seen planted on two posts, in several places along the trails, and which contain some of the bones of the dead picked up from among the ashes of the funeral pile.

II.

As to the language of the Nah'ane, much might be said. I shall point out in the following pages only those particularities which are its exclusive property, and leave out most of the general features which are common to all the Déné dialects, and which the reader will find detailed in my paper on "the Déné Languages,"[1] and in my forthcoming complete grammar of the Carrier language. Furthermore, all the following remarks shall apply more particularly to the idiom of the western Nah'ane, the only one I have ever studied.

Neglected by the ethnographers as the Nah'ane have remained to this day, their dialect has still been more of a *terra incognita* to the philologists. With not even the least grammatical note has it been honoured so far in all the linguistic literature at my command, and the only vocabulary by which it has ever been represented in scientific publications consists of the four columns of Thalhthan words printed by the late Dr. Dawson.[2]

And here I may be allowed to state that, after a careful study of their language, I have had the satisfaction of ascertaining that of all the corrections in the latter's vocabulary which I lately declared[3] were demanded by the general rules of Déné phonetics and suggested by my knowledge of the other related dialects, not one have I found to be unwarranted.

Before going further I must also correct the one statement Dr. Dawson makes concerning their language. Speaking of the Thalhthan and Taku Nah'ane, he writes: "These Indians speak a language very similar to that of the Al-ta-tin, if not nearly identical with it, and so far as I have been able to learn, might almost be regarded as forming an extension of the same division. They appear to be less closely allied by language to the Kaska, with which people they are contiguous to the eastward."[4]

I have already done justice to the latter assertion. By Al-ta-tin, Dr. Dawson means the Lh'ta'tin, or "People of the beaver-dams," as the Tsé'kehne are called by the Carriers. His notion about the similarity of the two dialects I have found prevalent in other quarters. To prove its utter groundlessness, I need but reproduce here the Nah'ane and the Tsé'kehne versions, for instance, of the doxology. Was the Chippewayan version available, I have no doubt that it would be found more alike to that of the Tsé'kehne than to that of the Nah'ane. Grammatically speaking, there is more affinity between the Tsé'kehne and the Chippewayan—two very distinct tribes—than between the Tsé'kehne and the Nah'ane.

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[1] Transactions Canadian Institute, Vol. I.

[2] Notes on the northern portion of British Columbia, p. 19, *et seq.*

[3] Transactions Canadian Institute, Vol. VI., pp. 99-102.

[4] Notes, etc., p. 2.

THE DOXOLOGY.

IN NAH'ANE.	IN TSÉ'KÉHNE.
Seesoga, Œtha' ka'tceh, Œlcimê ka'tceh, Ahtige-Ti ka'tceh hut'sihkahtin.	Utqon Œtha' qûh, Œlcwinh qûh, Yelqire-Inqi qûh ut'sœrhautœz.
Lhayn kasiseh tûda ahth'té la, tû'gu ka'tceh, ue'te katceh, ét'tha ta'da œtû yotôzite u'tch éyéhe ka'tceh hu'karo'té ni.	Sé rhassêh tarhit'qé ille a, qû qûh, awoz'on qûh int'lion qé ta ussé utœtûzit e'tah éyétœ qûh hahut'qé.

To start with the sounds as such, I will remark that the following desinential letters or groups of letters are never found in Carrier or Chilcotin, but are quite common in Nah'ane: *c*, *ts*, *tc*, *tlh*, *klh*, to which we must add the medial *-slh-*, as in *aslhé*, I make, and *-srh-*, as in *etisrhuh*, I snore. Final *ts* occurs often enough in Babine, and final *tc* is as frequent in Tsé'kéhne, but the other compounds are never found even in those idioms.

On the other hand the letter *m*, which sometimes terminates a word in Carrier, never occupies that position in Nah'ane. We should not forget either to notice that the double letter *tj* or *dj*, which is so frequent in Kutchin, appears also in Nah'ane to the exclusion of all the other Déné dialects.

Some Carrier letters have their fixed equivalents in Nah'ane. Thus the Carrier initial *n* is often replaced by *t* in Nah'ane. Ex.: *ni*, mind, Nah'ane *ti*; *na*, eye, Nah'ane, *ta*; *annilh*, purposedly, Nah'ane, *atilh*; *dini*, he will say, Nah'ane, *dati*. The initial *p* of many Carrier words becomes *m* in Nah'ane (as well as in Tsé'kéhne), and we have *pœn*, lake, in Carrier, but *men'* in Nah'ane; *thapa*, shore, in Carrier, *thama* in Nah'ane; *pœ-*, his, in Carrier and *ma-* in Nahane.

A Nah'ane sound, which I have found in no other Déné idiom is that which I render by H. It is a kind of a guttural aspiration, much more pronounced than that of the common *n*. Its equivalent in the other dialects is *rh* or the Greek *rho*, and in the possessive case, it is inflected into a soft *r*. Ex.: *His*, pus; possessive, *me-rize*, his pus.

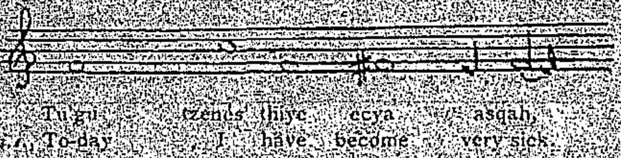
The first particularity which strikes a Déné scholar in his study of the Western Nah'ane, is the presence therein of a regular accent, something quite unknown in all the northern Déné dialects. I have no doubt that the intercourse of that subtribe with the Tlhinket of Fort Wrangell is responsible for that feature of its language. This accent has for effect, not only to lengthen the syllable it affects, but even to raise the pitch of the voice when the accented syllable is pronounced. Thus it often falls on monosyllables. Gun is *u'na* (a Tlhinket word) in Nah'ane; *kussa'* means, "I do not know" in the same dialect. Much stress must be laid on the *n* of the first word and on the *sa* of the last, otherwise neither would be understood.

On the other hand the voice must also be raised with a sort of constrained effort when one pronounces the words *'khon'*, fire, *nefin'*, land, *tsæ*, gum, etc., though many other monosyllables lack this distinguishing feature.

In this connection I must not fail to record what, to a student of the Carrier idiom, seems something of an anomaly. In my "Notes on the Western Dénés,"[1] I wrote some years ago: "In these nouns there is generally one syllable which is more important and contains, as it were, the quintessence of the word. Thus it is with the *ne* of *tæne*. . . . In composite words such syllables only are retained."

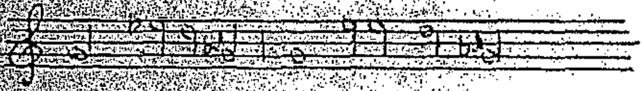
Now it happens that in Nah'ane the accent falls precisely on the first syllable of that word (which means "man" in all the dialects), and not on the second, which is hardly audible when pronounced by a native. In the same way, instead of using only the second half of the word, as is usual with the Carriers and the Chilcotin when they refer to the human body or to any part thereof, as in *ne-yæs'te*, human body; *ne-na*, human eyes; *ne-t'silhcæn*, human neck, etc., a Nah'ane will always utter the whole word, giving particular prominence to its first part, and say, for the same objects, *ten'e-ri*, *ten'e-ta*, *ten'e-kwos*, which the careless listener will most probably take for *ten'ri*, *ten'ta*, etc.

Beside their accent, the Nah'ane have, when speaking, a particularly marked intonation. This is so pronounced that it could almost be compared to a song. In fact, I have noticed the following modulation as being of very frequent occurrence. Its finale especially is hardly ever omitted.


Tu'gu tzenes thiyc ecya asqah,
To-day I have become very sick.

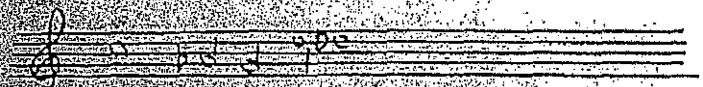
Students of native languages must have noticed that most tribes or portions of tribes have their own peculiar way of singing out, as it were, the sentences of their respective idioms. When there is nothing in their elocution which can be compared to a song, the finale, at least, is almost certain to stray out of the *recto tono*. So the ending of each Shushwap sentence is infallibly from G to upper C, while the Coast Salish, or at least the Sicalh, content themselves with raising the voice from G to A, or one full tone.

The intonation of the Carriers varies too much according to the different groups of villages to be recorded here. I will choose but one, which is characteristic of the Hwozahne, or people of Stony Creek.



Ntœn thecœtni, au t'sœtœst'sœk ;
i.e., What does he say, we don't understand him.

The elocution of the Chilcotin and of the Tsé'kéhne is more uniform. Any member of the former tribe would, I think, easily recognize the following sentence, which they are ever ready to utter when anything is asked of them which they are not disposed to grant.



Tla kan'te kule ; *i.e.*, There is none.

But to return to our Nah'ane dialect. From a terminological point of view, it has all the appearances of an eclectic language. Indeed, I would fain compare it to English, as it occupies to some extent, with regard to the other Déne dialects, the position held by that language relatively to the European idioms. Its vocabulary furnishes us, besides fully forty nouns[1] which are more or less Tlhinket, several terms which duly belong respectively to the Kutchin, the Hare and the Chippewayan dialects. Here are a few examples : Kutchin : *djugu*, now, Nah'ane, *djugi* ; *lhaon*, quite, Nah'ane, *lhan* ; *akwœt*, knee, Nah'ane, *ekwœt* ; Hare *dui*, no, Nah'ane, *tueh* ; *gwotie*, elder brother, Nah'ane, *etiye* ; Chippewayan : *sorlin*, well ; Nahane, *soga* ; *esdan*, I drink, for which the Nah'ane have an absolutely homonymous synonym.

Even the Tsimpsian has lent them one word, *lelk*, to designate the snake, a reptile which is not found within Nah'ane territory. A few words of English have also crept into the Nah'ane vocabulary, and it is worthy of remark that whenever an *l* occurs in them, the Nah'ane have altered it into an *n*. Thus for gold, they say *gon*; for silk, *sink*; for dollar, *dana*. The word *kas* for barrel they owe to the Tlhinket, who had themselves borrowed it from the English speaking skippers and traders (*kas*=cask).

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[1] I may here draw the reader's attention to the fact that a people of a low mental standard, a nation of uncultivated intellects, may borrow many unchangeable words from the vocabulary of its heterogeneous neighbours, but will never attempt to appropriate verbs. The former they will leave in their original form, or allow them through neglect or ignorance to slowly degenerate into more or less different terms ; but when it is a question of verbs, the low type intellect is not up to the task of adapting them to the exigences of its grammar. In other words it cannot digest and assimilate them.

Chinook has contributed *masmas* (a corruption of *musmus*), cattle, and probably *kimdan* (for *kiutan*), horse. Following the example of the coast Indians, the Nah'ane have likewise changed the Chinook for cat, *pus*, into *tuc*.

At times this propensity for appropriating foreign terms leads to curiously hybrid compound words. For instance, the Nah'ane equivalent of organ is half Tlhinket and half Déné. All the Déné call that instrument a "paper that sings." As the Nah'ane had already borrowed the Tlhinket work *'kük* for paper, and on the other hand, as they did not know or could not use the Tlhinket synonym for "sings," they unscrupulously retained the first vocable to which they added their own equivalent for the verb and said *'kük-elqune*.

The dictionary may be regarded as a thermometer which faithfully registers a people's status and chief avocation. Its readings are seldom at variance with fact, and when it records, for instance, a multitude of fish names or, still better, when it possesses several names for the same fish according to its age or condition, it will inevitably denote a nation of fishermen. In like manner the sociological status of our Nah'ane is betrayed by their vocabulary, which abounds in fine distinctions for the names of the larger animals on which they mainly subsist.

I will take but one example to illustrate my meaning. With them the generic name of the marmot is *tœtiye*, and the female is called *hosthelh*, while the name is known as *oet'qetha*. A little marmot in general is named *oe'kune*, or *usthe-tsetle*. But if it is only one year old it goes as *usase*; the next year it will be known as *oekhutse*, and when in its third year, it will be called *tœtiye-tucitze*. And note that all of those eight words apply to only one kind of animal, since there is another term to denote the smaller variety of marmot (*arctomys monax*).

We have therefore our Nah'ane stamped by their very vocabulary as a people of trappers and huntsmen, and the abundance of their terms for a mountain animal furthermore sheds a good ray of light on the topography of their country.

Another reliable indicator of a primitive people's main occupations, to which it adds a valuable hint at the nature and climate of its land, is the calendar. Subjoined is that in use among the western Nah'ane, and the careful student of Americana will perhaps find it worth his while to compare it with those of the Carriers and of the Tsé'kéhne published in my "Notes on the Western Déné."[1] Of course, all the months therein recorded are lunar months, and coincide but imperfectly with our own artificial divisions of the year.

January, *sa-t'séslhie*, moon of the middle (of the year).
February, *tænon-thene*, the snow is a little frozen over.
March, *thi-si-sa*, moon of the wind.
April, *thi-panetse-e*, the dog uses to bark.
May, *thase-sa*, moon when all the animals leave their winter retreats.
June, *ayaz-e-sa*, moon of the little ones (when animals have their young.
July, *ætæte-e-sa*, moon when they moult.
August, *u'ka-e-sa*, moon when they fatten.
September, *hosthelh-e-sa*, moon of the female marmot.
October, *man-then-tsetle*, moon of the small ice.
November, *man-then-tco*, moon of the big ice.
December, *karh-uzwoesse*, the rabbit gnaws.

We have tarried so long over the sounds and substantives of the Nah'ane language that our remarks on the other parts of speech must necessarily be brief.

In its numerals we find a confirmation of what I said some time ago when I wrote, speaking of the roots of languages in general: "The numerals and the pronouns . . . . generally have a kind of family air in cognate dialects. As to the pronouns, I think that hardly any qualificative reservation is necessary, but it is not so with all the numerals."[2] Of the ten Nah'ane numbers, only three (one, *lhige*, Carrier, *lha*; three, *thade'tçh*, Carrier, *tha*; and five, *lholla*, Carrier, *kwollai*) have any affinity with the Carrier, Babine, Chilcotin or even Tsé'kéhne numerals. The other seven have not the faintest resemblance thereto.

A peculiarity worth recording in this connection is the fact that the numbers two, three and four are in Nah'ane perfectly regular verbs which are conjugated with persons—plural, of course—and tenses. Let us take, for instance, the number three, *thade'tçh*. We have at our disposal any of the words of the following conjugation:

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[1] Transactions Canadian Institute, Vol. IV., p. 108.

[2] The Use and Abuse of Philology, Transactions Canadian Institute, Vol. VI., p. 92.

PRESENT.

tha-dest'tilh, we are three
tha-dah'tilh, you are three
tha-hadé'tilh, they are three

PAST.

tha-dest'tée, we were three
tha-dah'tée, you were three
tha-hadé'tée, they were three

PROXIMATE FUTURE.

tha-dil'tilh, we are going to be three
tha-dah'tilh, you are going to be three
tha-hada'tilh, they are going to be three

EVENTUAL FUTURE.

tha-dil'tée sa, we will be three
tha-dah'tée sa, you will be three
tha-hadil'tée sa, they will be three

In all these words the main root for three is, of course, *tha*. Yet *thadest'tilh*, etc., are single words whose neither first nor last component parts can be used separately.

The only approach to these conjugable numerals I know of is to be found in the speech of a small portion of the Carrier tribe. It is restricted to the number two, *natne*, which becomes *nat'soetne*, we are two (persons), *nahtne*, you are two, etc. I should not forget, however, a peculiar set of numerals for which I find no more appropriate qualificative than the epithet "inclusive." These not only have in Carrier all the persons and tenses of the above, but they are even modified so as to form a separate class of adverbal numerals. Here are a few examples: *na-t'sat'torh*, both of us;[1] *na-nel'torh*, both of us; *na-nalh'torh*, both of you; *na-rhal'torh*, both of them.

The following are impersonal verbs: *na-hwul'torh*, both times; *na-hwothil'torh*, it is going to be both times, etc.; *tha-hwul'torh*, all of the three times; *ti-hwul'torh*, all of the four times, etc.

All these forms, tenses or persons can be applied in Carrier to all the numerals of that class, except the first, the ninth and the tenth, and in this respect, as in so many others, that language surpasses in richness all the other Déné dialects.

The Nah'ane lacks an equivalent for the personal plural particle *ne*, which the Carriers suffix to the verb when in English we make use of the demonstrative and relative pronouns "those who," as in *hwat'sit-ne*, "those who lie," the liars. Instead of this, the Nah'ane will say, by a curiously abnormal commingling of a plural pronoun with the corresponding singular verb: "he-lies they," *tsat'sit oekhune*. This renders speech unnecessarily long and rather unwieldy.

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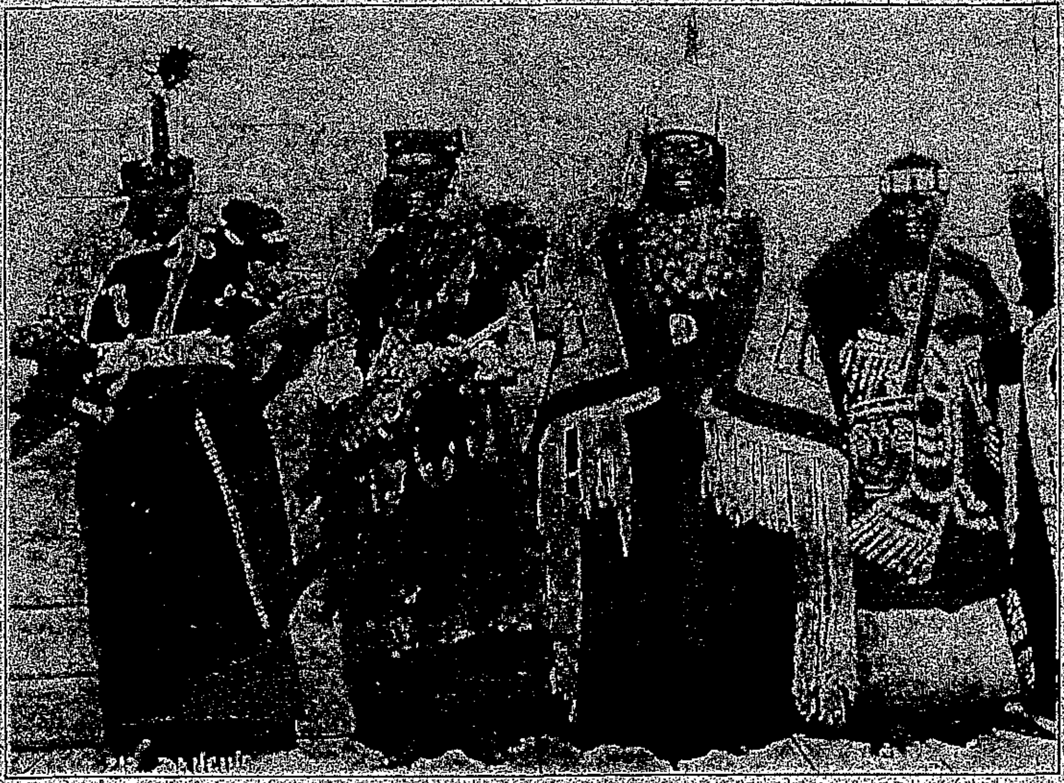
[1] With an idea of impersonality, which it is impossible to express in English, and which is absent in *nanel'torh*.



Nahdue Women in Dancing Costume

A feature of the possessive pronouns which the Nah'ane shares with some related idioms is the absence of a term for the second person of the plural. Most of the eastern Déné dialects even lack altogether the same person of the personal pronouns, but the Nah'ane are not so verbally destitute. In their minds, however, there lurks some vague confusion about the difference between the first and the second person plural of those pronouns which, at times, does not seem to be fully grasped.

In common with those of the other Déné dialects, the Nah'ane verbs are rich in persons, some, like the verbs of station and the verbs of locomotion, having as many as eighteen for each tense, as against the twenty-one their Carrier equivalents boast of. In the face of that relative richness it is somewhat of a surprise to find that the regular or common verbs have not even a single person representing the dual, which is rendered as with us, by the plural, while even the Carrier, which is rather deficient in that respect, possesses, at least, the first person dual for all the verbs.

A point of resemblance with the eastern dialects is the plural of some Nah'ane verbs which is formed by the incorporation of the particle *da* without any alteration of the desinential syllable. Thus, until we come to the plural, the conjugation of the verb *t'se-mésit*, I wake up, is practically that of its Carrier equivalent. But after this, the similarity is confined to the main or initial root, which, through all tenses and with any person, remains invariable in all the dialects. The following partial conjugation of the present of the above mentioned verb will illustrate my remark.

	CARRIER	NAH'ANE.
Dual.—	*t'se-nilsit*, we wake up, both of us.	*t'se-nilsit*.
	t'se-nahsit, you wake up, both of you.	*t'se-nahsit*.
	t'se-rhansit, they wake up, both of them.	*t'se-hansit*.
Plural.—	*t'se-t'senilih*, we wake up.	*t'se-dasilsit*.
	t'se-nahilih, you wake up.	*t'se-dahsit*.
	t'se-rhanilih, they wake up.	*t'se-dahesit*.

Another most important point of resemblance of the Nah'ane with the eastern Déné dialects is the utter absence in the former of any special negative form. This particularity may be said to constitute its fundamental difference from the Carrier, Babine and Chilcotin idioms, the verbs of which are distinguished by at least one, and frequently two or even three syllabic inflections in addition to the negative particle.

instead of this the Nahane set that particle before the verb, which remains under its affirmative or normal form.

To sum up. The Nahane language is much less complicated and verbally poorer than the Carrier. It is also less pure in its lexicon, more embarrassed in its phraseology, and owing to its accent, even more delicate in its phonetics.