

Recent Literature on Native Peoples: A Measure of Canada's Values and Goals

Toby Morantz

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While we might not expect it in 19th century Newfoundland (or the 20th?) we might anticipate some move toward it now. Outport Newfoundlanders lived and saw a different reality: "We must live in hopes less we die in despair". Anthropologists and sociologists see overwhelming dominance by political scions, sometimes directed by bureaucratic logic — the word "Peckfordism" readily falls from our collective lips. Perhaps this is because we have not made a critical break with our own habitus, and only with reflective inspection of our own biases, traditions and understandings can we begin.

GAIL R. POOL

Recent Literature on Native Peoples: A Measure of Canada's Values and Goals

A COLLECTION OF BOOKS THAT "SELF-SELECTED" by arriving at the office of the review editor of this journal does not lend itself to easy or probing discussion. Nor does the fact that more than half of these dozen or so books are collections of essays. At first reading, the only connection seemed to be that they are concerned with various aspects of native life — both historical and contemporary, but particularly historical. As my reading persisted, it became apparent that this highly selective recent literature tells us as much about Canadians, past and present, as about the native peoples. All these works, except for the early ethnographic ones, document some aspect of relations with whites. Neither white nor Indian researchers present anything but a bleak view of what these relations have been like. Never does one find a hint that the well-being of the native populations was the guiding force in developing government policies. One might charge, in response, that with hindsight this is easy to say. The policies of assimilation and paternalism were born of humanitarian interests in England in the 1830s and for that time represented an enlightened approach to the native situation. However, for other groups, Canada has tolerated differences and a degree of autonomy in expressing these differences. The Quebec Act of 1774 enshrined the rights of French Canadians to remain linguistically and religiously distinctive; Mennonites were permitted to transfer their unique societal institutions to Canada beginning in 1825 in Upper Canada; and in the latter part of the 19th century no special pressures were applied to immigrants from Eastern Europe to encourage them to forsake their cultural and religious practices. On the other hand, Canadians respond to the Indians by asking what ought to be done with them. Whether this attitude was born of guilt over having stolen Indian lands or pity at their subsequent long-standing marginal existence, for the last several hundred or so years the Canadian authorities have felt moved to impose restrictions and conditions to which the various Indian societies have

had little choice but to respond and respond inadequately given that they were left with few resources. It is to this Canadian fact that most of these dozen books implicitly address themselves.

A good example of the orientation of these works is *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows. A Reader in Canadian Native Studies* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1983), edited by Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier. In the preface the editors state that this collection focuses upon Canadian native history since 1763, the year of the Royal Proclamation. Yet, in reading the table of contents, one easily sees that this is not a comprehensive history of native peoples (or of native studies, as the title would suggest) but, as the editors later point out, a history outlining the official Canadian Indian policy, its effects on the native peoples and their responses to it. Implicit in this focus is the belief that the significant native history is in fact these peoples' relations with the Canadian government. Most of the books reviewed here convey a similar message. This collection of 20 articles by university and government researchers is introduced by Chief John Snow of the Stoney Indian Tribe whose Nakoda Institute is the publisher. Most are papers that were presented at a native studies conference in 1981 at Brandon University, although six are reprints of much earlier published works such as that by Diamond Jenness (1954) and a selection from the Hawthorn report (1966). The papers are arranged under two headings — one on the development of Indian administration and the other on the responses of the native peoples to these changing relations.

In the introductory essay George F.G. Stanley presents an excellent review of early Indian-European relations in each of the southern regions of Canada through the treaty period. He reminds us that until the pressures of white settlement, the Indian rights to their lands were, on the whole, respected and he examines their legal validity right up to the present constitutional debate. Stanley sees in the Canadian acceptance of an Indian constitutional presence (evidently this was written before Meech Lake) a parallel to the Canadian self-interest in Indians as military allies in the 18th and 19th centuries. The present-day self-interest, Stanley suggests, stems in part, from the Canadian white's increasing acceptance of Indian values as a subconscious response to the American threat to Canadian culture. The next papers outline the specific policies through which the authorities strove to fashion Indian society to serve their own needs. In "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy" John L. Tobias shows how these three policies are the same: the assimilationist attempts predate confederation; the protectionist policy was born of the military rule of the 18th century. Like Stanley, Tobias cannot impute honourable motives to Canadian white society. He suggests that the assimilationist policies of the government were not repudiated even after the White Paper of 1969, only that alternative strategies to achieve the same end were sought. A similar analysis follows in John Milloy's "The Early Indian Acts:

Developmental Strategy and Constitutional Change”, in which he demonstrates how the various versions of the Indian Act were all oriented towards preparing the Indians for “higher civilization”. As Stanley notes in his introductory essay, the pressures on Indian land began in the early part of the 19th century. Robert J. Surtees, in “Indian Land Cessions in Upper Canada, 1815-1830” documents the ease with which Indian land was surrendered during this period. Two factors account for the Indians’ vulnerability. In the aftermath of the War of 1812, when the British recognized its own weak military defences, the immigration policy was loosened, resulting in increased immigration and pressure on Indian lands. At the same time, after the War of 1812, the Indians became less of a military threat to the Americans, who succeeded in signing treaties with a number of tribes. The result was a much weaker bargaining position with the British since there was no longer any danger of the Canadian Indians joining a confederacy with their American brethren. Thus, a much weaker, more demoralized people in southern Ontario sold off their land despite its well-recognized importance to them.

The following three papers shift the focus from policy decisions rendered by anonymous bureaucrats to an examination of three instrumental individuals of the British and Canadian governments. This is a relatively new genre in the literature of the history of Indian-white relations but one which is highly promising. By focusing on the life of a civil servant, we can learn about the thinking of the times and develop an understanding of why the decisions took the shape they did. No radical thinkers and innovators are to be found amongst this lot! Nonetheless, some well-placed individuals seem to have understood/ been sympathetic to the native perspective. One was the undersecretary in the mid-19th century British Colonial Office, Herman Merivale, who is said by David T. McNab in “Herman Merivale and Colonial Office Indian Policy in the Mid-Nineteenth Century” to have recognized that Indian land had been “stolen” (p. 92), although he did nothing to alter or correct this injustice. Another earnest administrator was Lawrence Vankoughnet, described by Douglas Leighton in “A Victorian Civil Servant at Work: Lawrence Vankoughnet and the Canadian Indian Department, 1874-1893”. Vankoughnet’s attention to detail and efficiency has earned for him a favourable accounting by the author, who attributes Vankoughnet’s inability to accomplish much not only to his sharing the assimilationist views of the time but as well to the status the Department of Indian Affairs held in the Macdonald government. It was, according to Leighton, a “backwater” department, not taken seriously, thereby impeding the work of even its well-intentioned civil servants. Of course, this has continued to be the status and emasculated role of the Department of Indian Affairs but we need reminding that it has never been anything else in Canada’s history. No doubt faced with near-total disinterest by the public and the politicians, in addition to the enormously complex nature of Indian administration, a whole host of departmental bureaucrats must have done what Clifford Sifton did.

From reading D.J. Hall's "Clifford Sifton and Canadian Indian Administration 1896-1905", one gathers that Sifton, the energetic, imaginative, aggressive promoter of immigration to the west, seemingly was, when it came to Indian Affairs, content to, as we call it today, "shuffle papers". While he was settling immigrants on Indian land his accomplishments as superintendent general of Indian Affairs were keeping expenditures low, making the department more efficient and maintaining the non-threatening position of the Indians vis-à-vis white settlement. None of his outstanding creativity was applied to altering the course of Indian reserve life.

The barriers created and indifference manifested by all levels of Canadian society have, as we all know, deeply affected native society. This is the theme of the second part of the volume. The subjects covered range from a mid-19th century ineffectual temperance programme aimed at the Indians in Upper Canada (F.L. Barron, "Alcoholism, Indians and the Anti-Drink Cause in the Protestant Indian Missions of Upper Canada, 1822-1850") to the loss of the Indians' common property, namely the land and its resources, so that abundance gave way to poverty. This is Irene M. Spry's novel (that is, to native studies) conceptualization of the economic processes that led to the economic and social degradation of Plains Indians, in her essay on "The Tragedy of the Loss of Commons in Western Canada". Another process that sapped Indian resistance to the changes hurtling about them on the prairies in the mid-19th century is documented by Robert S. Allen in "A Witness to Murder: The Cypress Hills Massacre and the Conflict of Attitudes towards the Native People of the Canadian and American West during the 1870s". In contrast to the more blatantly racist policies in the United States, three white men were charged with the murder of Chief Little Soldier. Although the three men fled the province and were never convicted, this attempt at justice is still said to have profoundly affected the Indians who came to believe that the government was genuinely interested in establishing "a just and racially equitable system of law" (p. 243). This confidence is said by Allen to have helped make the negotiations of Treaties Six and Seven easy for the government administrators. As for a just judicial system, the article by Don McCaskill, "Native People and the Justice System", shows, for those who need the proof, that even a century later this seems to be an unobtainable goal. Backed up by statistics, the spectre of 60 per cent of today's prairie-based native youth between the ages of 16 and 24 spending some time in jail is a haunting one. As McCaskill so necessarily reminds us, "the cost in terms of human potential is staggering" (p. 297).

No discussion of Indian responses would be complete, of course, without some reference to Louis Riel. This is done in two articles, one by Thomas Flanagan, "Louis Riel and Aboriginal Rights" and the other by Raymond Huel, "A Parting of the Ways: Louis Schmidt's Account of Louis Riel and the Métis Rebellion". As Flanagan points out, no one should expect Riel to have had a

“theory of aboriginal rights” since this theory is a more contemporary way of viewing Indian ownership of their land. Nevertheless, Flanagan argues that Riel’s position hinged on a recognition of Indian sovereignty, the position held by native leaders today, although Riel also accepted the concept of extinguishment of rights to the land (though for greater compensation) and did not reject the goal of assimilation. It is worth remembering that Riel was a Métis and it was this society’s rights he was advancing. The Huel paper discusses Riel through the writings of Louis Schmidt, a Métis civil servant in the provisional Government of Manitoba and later a MLA of that province. Schmidt was critical of Riel and the 1885 Rebellion, claiming that Riel misled the Métis with “his prophetic revelations” (p. 275). Although Schmidt had initially supported Riel, by 1884, Huel claims Schmidt found Riel had changed and he could not forgive him his opportunism and his manipulation of the Métis. Sympathetic to the reasoned position of Schmidt, Huel finds that history has quite ignored him, probably because Schmidt tended to identify with the French Canadian community rather than the Métis one. The symbolic significance of Louis Riel and his stand is also assessed by Jean Morisset in “La Conquête du Nord-Ouest, 1885-1985” in which he reminds us of the duplicity of the Canadians with regard to native peoples and cautions us that “the 1885 parody” will be re-enacted in whatever constitutional and legal claims settlements are made today (p. 286).

Two of the concluding papers are on the Inuit. Lance W. Roberts in “Becoming Modern: Some Reflections on Inuit Social Change” suggests that the Inuit are at the crossroads and no doubt will be heading down a path of accepting modernity to a greater degree. The author claims that first must come a generous land claims settlement to enable them to follow this path and he ends on a note of optimism. In “The Inuit and the Constitutional Process” Simon McInnes outlines the Inuit input to this process at all levels of government up to 1981 and is also optimistic that the Inuit, as other native peoples, will successfully press the government for further entrenchment of aboriginal rights in the Constitution. Little did the editors realize back in 1983 how fitting these two papers were to end the main body of the collection for their optimism about the good faith of the Canadian government vis-à-vis its native peoples has not been borne out five years later, given the failure of the constitutional conferences on aboriginal peoples and their exclusion from the Meech Lake accord. This book, filled with accounts of how the natives over several hundreds of years have been tricked, cheated, lied to, and ignored by the government is obviously in need of yet another article that continues this story to the very present day. Nothing has changed! On a happier note, the bibliographic essay by James W. St. G. Walker, entitled “The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing, 1971-1981”, provides a detailed accounting of what has been written during these ten years. He finds improvements in the historian’s depiction and analysis of Indian life. One hopes that Walker’s analysis in 1991 will continue to demonstrate this

progression that one can see from his first review of Indian historical writing in 1971.¹

A reader intended to introduce students to the subject of Indian policy and administration, the Getty/Lussier volume admirably accomplishes its task. Not dissimilar in its approach nor even in subject matter, is *1885 and After. Native Society in Transition* (Regina, University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 1986), edited by F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram. This work is also dualistic, centring first on specific incidents surrounding the 1885 Rebellion and then looking at what the editors call the “aftermath”. The papers examine a variety of topics from the scrip commissions, to relations with the North West Mounted Police, to questions of Indian identity and Métis self-government. This volume would be ideal as a history reader and no doubt is much used. By no means comprehensive in the treatment of the subject (nor could one expect it to be), it is focused and provides insightful forays into some of the consequences for Indians and Métis of the events of 1885. The editors do caution us not to view 1885 as a major turning point in the West since many of the features characterizing Indian society in the 20th century had historic antecedents predating the Rebellion. The destructive trends forced upon them by Canadians in terms of dispossession of their lands and the loss of their economic and political sovereignty were already longstanding. The edited volume by Getty and Lussier certainly demonstrates this and these two works (Professor Tony Lussier had a hand in both) complement each other nicely in looking at Canadian and native developments at the end of the last century. Whereas the first volume focuses on Indians, this second one tends to evaluate events in terms of the repercussions for Métis, though, as with the people themselves, the overlap is extensive.

Fittingly enough the first section is mainly about Louis Riel and fittingly enough the leading article is again by George F.G. Stanley. He has entitled his essay, “The Last Word on Louis Riel — the Man of Several Faces”, because, he says, it is his last statement on the man after 50 years of writing about him. Stanley reviews the new writings on Riel and concludes that there are now “four faces of Riel” — as defender of French language rights, as Métis patriot, as prophet and visionary, and as the first western Canadian leader. He leaves it up to the reader to decide which is the “real” Riel but reminds us that all these themes are universal in history and human drama. Later in the volume, Paul Driben agrees with Stanley in his varied portrayal of Riel and offers another perspective, an anthropologically derived one. In “The Rise and Fall of Louis Riel and the Métis Nation: An Anthropological Account”, he characterizes the Métis as a “purchase society”, that is, a society that is not politically dominated by the larger society but interacts with it in the sale of its surplus production for

1 James W. St.G. Walker, “The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing”, *Historical Papers* (1971), pp. 21-51.

goods of foreign manufacture, in this case through the fur trade. Driben claims one way that such societies can change is through their engaging in a revitalization movement, which he claims was what Riel chose to make of the 1885 Rebellion in contrast to his 1869-70 stand. In "Louis Riel: Was He Really Crazy?" Thomas Flanagan shows how Riel's insanity served not only Métis and government interests of the time to mislay blame but also present-day liberals who wish to avoid the harsh truth of the white society's treatment of the natives. Needless to say, Flanagan concludes that Riel's insanity is a myth, concocted for these very reasons.

In "Frontiers in Transition: Nova Scotia 1713-1763 Compared to the North-West 1869-1885", Olive P. Dickason offers a valuable comparative setting and shows the similarity in the fundamental nature of the Indian resistance (over control of their lands and self-determination). In the end, both in the East and West the Indians suffered social and cultural disintegration but in both cases have retained a remarkable sense of identity which Dickason sees as providing the basis for a "renewed cultural self-confidence". A.I. Silver reminds us in "The Impact on Eastern Canada of Events in Saskatchewan in 1885" that for the Maritimes the events out west had little significance but in central Canada the western conflict, perceived as between French Catholic and English Protestant, took on great local significance. The next series of papers look at the effects back in the West. André N. Lalonde, writing on "colonization Companies and the North-West Rebellion", discusses the role of the intensified colonizing efforts of the Macdonald government in alienating the Métis. The failure of the settlement policies, although shown by Lalonde to be the result of the usual bureaucratic, political, bungling, was attributed by everyone to the uprising. So everyone, politicians, land companies, etc., gained from the events of 1885 except, of course, the Métis and the Indians. Government policy is also the focus of Donald McLean's "1885: Métis Rebellion or Government Conspiracy?" in which he concludes that the Macdonald government manipulated the Métis into engaging in this armed conflict as an excuse for acquiring further public funding for the failing CPR. McLean's argument hinges on the fact that Prime Minister Macdonald chose to follow the advice of the Honorable Lawrence Clarke, the lone advocate of military action, rather than the police in the North West who over a period of years counselled the settling of the Métis land claims. The latter course of action would also have been much the less costly one. These shadowy dealings have left the country with a legacy of racial hatred in the West and a thorough marginalization of the Métis population.

Another government policy, less violent, but perhaps in the long run more tragic, was the reserve agricultural programme, documented by Noel Dyck in "An Opportunity Lost: The Initiative of the Reserve Agricultural Programme in the Prairie West". He shows that leading up to 1885, there was an attempt to run these programmes as cooperative affairs. Nevertheless they were failing because of unrealistic goals set by the government, and of (the familiar) serious

underfunding which created problems in the Indians' dealings with the government and led to their discouragement. In the aftermath of the Rebellion the Indian agents were given additional powers and control over almost every aspect of Indian life and Indians had to choose whether "to take an active part in reserve agriculture and to place themselves under the unrelenting tutelage of government personnel or whether to adopt a course of circumspect but determined passive resistance" (p. 133). They chose the latter and as Dyck notes have endured "a hundred years of tutelage and enforced dependency" (p. 134).

As in the Getty and Lussier volume, here too we find a new trend in delving into the work life of individuals to learn more about the kinds of decisions made and processes set into motion. In "Indian Agents and the North-West Rebellion" F. Laurie Barron reviews the personal characteristics of a few agents. We learn that although political patronage is certain in their appointment, corruption is less certain. It was their incompetence, their instability and insensitivity, in a period when Indians were suffering the most cruel blows to their self-sufficiency and self-esteem, that incurred the mistrust and discontent of the Indians and contributed to their part in the Rebellion. A. Blair Stonechild's "The Indian View of the 1885 Uprising" is a fitting final paper in this first section, as it outlines a very different interpretation of Indian involvement from what we view as the official "line". He argues, using documentation derived from oral history accounts, that the Indian chiefs were opposed to participating in an armed conflict and were drawn into it as a result of misunderstandings. Consequently, they were subjected to extreme measures restricting them to their reserves. Had they been able to gain their freedom of movement, Stonechild believes, the course of events for Indians might have turned out differently. This paper is, of course, invaluable as it presents the views of Indian elders and reminds us how so many of us have allowed ourselves to be content with accepting the versions culled from accounts left by almost everyone except the principal players. The more we can put the two together, the stronger will be our history and the legacy to future generations of Canadians — native and non-native.

The next papers look at some of the consequences for the Métis societies in the West of the events of 1885. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Diane Payment in "Batoche after 1885, A Society in Transition" shows that the Métis did not leave the area in large numbers and their economy did not disintegrate; rather, during the years 1885 to 1925, they continued to resist change but at the same time adapted to it. Rightly, she calls for similar intensive studies of other Métis communities to enhance our comparative framework and seek out other trends. Evidently, Ken Hatt, in "The North-West Rebellion Scrip Commissions, 1885-1889", sees in these commissions attempts to be conciliatory and to create social harmony, which other historians do not, by showing cases where the commissioners weighed the evidence and made their decisions according to these principles. Since Hatt's paper was a response to Flanagan's views on the

subject, there follows a short paper by the latter ("Comment on Ken Hatt, 'The North-West Rebellion Scrip Commissions, 1885-1889' ") in which he replies to specific points rather than addressing the larger viewpoint expressed. All this suggests that there continues in the West an ongoing discussion/debate on this issue. If there is not, there ought to be.

Donald B. Smith brings us an account of another confrère of Riel's, Honoré Jaxon. The title, "Rip Van Jaxon: The Return of Riel's Secretary in 1884-1885 to the Canadian West, 1907-1909", is intended to convey his 22 year self-exile in the U.S. and absence from the North-West. The story combines a description of how and how much the West had changed and of Jaxon's social views, for he had become a labour organizer in Chicago. Perhaps because of his long absence, he also returned with a sense of the need to conserve the records of the 1885 period and pressed Saskatchewan authorities to preserve historic sites. He also set about writing a history of the period.

The next few papers centre on what the aftermath meant for the Indians. John Jennings looks at "The North West Mounted Police and Indian Policy after the 1885 Rebellion" and concludes, as have others for other government departments, that relations between the two eroded. The earlier emphasis on "understanding and compassion" gave way to greater coercion. Although he sees the 1885 Rebellion as a watershed, Jennings does state that relations had begun to deteriorate before then as more Indians were confined to reserves and reduced to dependents. The influx of immigrants produced demands by the settlers for protection and control of what they perceived of as trespass by the Indians. Nevertheless, there was a "tenuous harmony" (p. 232) between the two until 1895-97 when two Indians killed five policemen, a situation that arose not of any particular incident but rather several relatively minor incidents. Jennings sees the stand by one of the Indians, Almighty Voice, as an act of defiance against the oppressiveness of both the police and the Department of Indian Affairs. A different look at Indian response is found in "The Origins of the Treaty Rights Movement in Saskatchewan" by John L. Tobias. This treaty rights movement arose as a result of the oppressive measures imposed on the Indians, such as outlawing ceremonies, imposition of game laws, subdivision of reserves, and abolition of indigenous leadership. Thus, the Indians on the prairies began looking to their treaty rights as a means of protecting themselves some 80 years ago. A first delegation to Ottawa in 1911 was, not surprisingly, dismissed by the superintendent of Indian Affairs, Frank Oliver. Nevertheless, despite lack of recognition from Ottawa, the Indians persisted in advancing the treaties as the basis of their rights. Along the way, Tobias spells out for us how the conception of treaty rights has changed. He sees irony in the fact that these treaty rights (though still not defined) are now enshrined in the Constitution, thereby enshrining the principle of their inviolability, a principle that the original signatories to the treaties a hundred years ago failed to achieve.

A different kind of paper, focusing on the make-up of populations, is one co-authored by K.S. Coates and W.R. Morrison, entitled "More Than a Matter of Blood: The Federal Government, the Churches and the Mixed Blood Populations of the Yukon and the Mackenzie River Valley, 1890-1950". The authors show how the distinctions between Indian and non-status Indians were often not according to racial mixture but according to the cultural lifestyle of the individual, the determination of which was often decided by government officials. These government actions, through deciding who could take treaty, or scrip, who came under the Indian Act, etc., divided the native peoples. These are the patterns discerned in the Yukon and Mackenzie Valley and the authors call for similar studies across the country to describe the broader national patterns. These studies, of course, must be done in the East where no distinctive mixed blood populations formed, though we know that as early as the mid-17th century Micmac and French in the Maritimes created mixed blood families and a century later in James Bay, Cree-English families took root. James B. Waldram's "The 'Other Side': Ethnostatus Distinctions in Western Subarctic Native Communities" follows from the previous article in showing that at present day there are few discernible cultural differences between the Indian and Métis peoples. Within a community and within their internal community affairs, the differences between status Indian and Métis seem to be ignored. However, the legal and political distinctions, resulting in ethnostatus distinctions, have served to create a "great deal of tension and conflict" (p. 292). Waldram suggests that these ethnostatus distinctions may become even more pronounced, resulting in increased tensions between the two communities.

One can only hope that the recent announcement of a tentative land claims settlement in the Mackenzie River Valley which is purported to include the recognition of Métis rights means a recognition of their aboriginal rights. If this is the case, then the government is just beginning to address problems it created a 100 years ago. At the same time, the native peoples have been once again attempting to address their problems and find their own solutions. One hopes they will fare better than the Saskatchewan Indians who in 1911 went to Ottawa to press for their treaty rights, an issue that remains unresolved today. Accordingly, the last paper of the volume by Wayne McKenzie, "Métis Self-Government in Saskatchewan", expresses the hope of the Métis for they have drafted a constitution encompassing the form of self-government they envisage for themselves. The objectives they seek are self-determination, a land-base, economic opportunity and the right to practice their language and develop their culture.

How does one sum up the research and thoughts of 18 different contributors? The short answer is "loss of control". This volume, as the Getty and Lussier one, is about the native populations having to adapt in the face of rapid directed change, change not directed by them. In both these works it is a despairing tale but a tale well told. There are, of course, many other aspects that have not been

treated, such as the discrimination towards Indians by other government agencies and, perhaps, more wounding, by the Canadian public itself. Also omitted is how the native peoples have been unable to respond positively to the changes forced upon them, with tragic consequences for their community and family life. Perhaps even worse than the overt discrimination is the almost complete indifference to them by Canadians.

Race Relations in British North America, 1607-1873, edited by Bruce A. Glasrud and Alan M. Smith (Chicago, Nelson Hall, 1982), is another reader but composed of already published papers. Although about race relations in British North America, the papers do not venture north of New York State and it is really a book about colonial America rather than British policy. It focuses on the relations between, not only the Indians and the Europeans but also the blacks and the Europeans. There are four main themes: the clash of cultures, the exploitation of blacks through slave labour, the resistance of Indians and blacks, and the continuing exploitation during the American Revolution. The chapters on Indian-white relations read not any differently than the Canadian versions, i.e. land seizures, broken treaties, reservations, etc. It was during the American Revolution that there emerged the ideas of displacement and removal in order to clear the land for white settlement (p. 280). These ideas came to fruition in the 19th century and are still alive and well in the 20th.

It is exciting to find that several books represent a category best described as Indian literature. Two are writings about natives by non-natives and the other two herald new highly promising trends in native studies. A short volume by F.W. Peacock, simply titled *The People* (Newfoundland, Jespersen Press, 1983), is really his homage to the Inuit people of Northern Labrador whom he served as a Moravian missionary for 36 years, from 1935 to 1971. It is in poetic form and describes much of the traditional life of the Inuit that he witnessed such as the caribou hunt, the dog teams, the drum dance as well as events that had been recounted to him by the elders such as the whaling festival. On the whole, these short 60 or so pieces of verse are romantic accounts of the life of the Inuit. Peacock, who lived through the transition from traditional to modern life, expresses his anger for the deterioration in the quality of life in a poem entitled "The Labrador Indian" where he accuses the white man of a "rapid, rapacious intrusion...whose greed knows no restraints" (p. 18).

The other non-native literary work, *A Native Heritage. Images of the Indian in English-Canadian Literature* by Leslie Monkman (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1981) is a very good, strong complement to others that have appeared on the images of Indians in historical writing.² Combined, these works demonstrate that as in our political and economic treatment of natives, so in our

2 Donald B. Smith, *Le Sauvage, The Native People in Quebec Historical Writing on the Heroic Period (1534-1663) of New France* (Ottawa, 1974); Sylvie Vincent et Bernard Arcand, *L'image de l'Amérindien dans les manuels scolaires du Québec* (Ville La Salle, 1979).

historic and literary treatment of them we seem to use Indians symbolically and then discard them according to our needs or whims. As Monkman points out, the Indian in literature helps define white culture (usually in terms of what it is in relation to Indian life — rational, monotheistic, technologically superior). Or, as James Reaney, in his own inimitable style, phrased it: “we despise the Indian while eagerly sucking at the symbols he evolved from a life supposedly inferior to ours” (p. 163). But Monkman is hasty to add that relatively few writers demonstrate outward hostility towards natives. There are a number of other themes that are covered in the literature — such as the strength and vitality of the Indian but also the Indian as a doomed figure. It came as a surprise to me that the Indian does figure to the extent that he does in Canadian literature for I assumed that as in real life, so in literature, he would be much ignored. Not so. The narrative poems of the late 18th century, beginning with one in 1789, are filled with the settler seeing his task as not only taming the savage soil but also the “savage mind” (p. 8). Even at this early date, there are works, such as by Frances Brooke, that assert the superiority of the Indian particularly in his relations with the environment, although Brooke’s favourable depiction is not unrestrained. The portrayal of Indians as “children of nature” is not the only manner in which Indians are represented as sources of alternative values. In Margaret Laurence’s writings, a Métis family depicts a number of values such as strength and a sense of personal integrity by which white characters are subtly measured.

Another theme that Monkman has identified in the literature is the death of the Indian, a lament for what many have believed is the vanishing race. Earlier writers saw the Indian as doomed by the superiority of the white man, while the contemporary literature sees him as self-destructing in an alcoholic haze. Some writers, such as the poet, Irving Layton, also use the spectre of the dying Indian for reflecting on the future of the white man. Canadian literature also has its Indian heroes, although ironically the two most popular writers and heroes were not quite the *bona fide* Indians they claimed to be, namely Pauline Johnson and Grey Owl. The hero tends to be an historic figure such as Almighty Voice or Riel, although Rudy Wiebe’s *The Temptations of Big Bear* with its focus on the power and vitality of Big Bear, a Cree chief, is a commanding example of a fictional Indian hero. Still other Canadian writers make use of native peoples’ myths and legends. The most successful to blend myth with the novel form, in Monkman’s view, has been Francis Parker Day’s *John Paul’s Rock* (1932), which was based on the life of a young Micmac. Other writers use myth in the sense that they explore the Indian’s mythic relationship to the environment, sometimes seizing on sensational myths such as the Algonquian windigo, as George Bowering has done in a poem of that name. Monkman concludes that the authors have been moving, “towards the recognition that the apparently irreconcilable opposites embodied in the tension between Indian and white cultures are, in fact, complementary parts of a common humanity” (p. 165). She sees the Indian as a

kind of “touchstone” through which to illuminate white character and culture. It is tempting to draw parallels with this finding of the lack of centrality of Indians in the Canadian literary consciousness with the political reality but it is too obvious. Certainly a comparison with the Indian role in American literature should yield a very different portrayal of Indians. Monkman does call for this as well as a comparison with French-Canadian literature.

The book *First People, First Voices*, edited by Penny Petrone (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1983) is a superb collection of Indian writings and speeches, which attempts to show the beginnings and the development of an Indian literary tradition in English. Her emphasis is on writings before this century. In her desire to show the beginnings, as early as 1630, the editor does use a number of speeches extracted from the Jesuit Relations which, of course, were written in French and Latin, although the speeches themselves were no doubt originally in Micmac or Montagnais or Huron. Nevertheless, this gathering of the early leaders’ speeches, although not necessarily illuminating about the English literary tradition, is highly informative about the natives’ historical perspective, which constitutes the second objective of the author. The editor has also imaginatively used letters, diaries, journals, petitions, prayers, songs, poems, myths and stories to inform the reader about Indian literary styles, literature being broadly defined here and rightly so. The impetus for this book arose out of Petrone’s accepting to teach a course in native literature in the Native Teacher Education Program at Lakehead University and then finding there were few materials, particularly on the development of Indian literature up to this century.

The writings are organized chronologically and each chapter has a specific focus, representing a major feature of that era. Thus, the first chapter, appropriately entitled “Bad meat upon our lands”, concerns the events of first contact — the fur trade, warfare and missionaries. The second, dealing with the 19th century, focuses on the Indians’ contending with European settlement in their midst. Other chapters deal with Indian writings produced by people active in the 19th century church, with the secular side of Indian life and with some insights into contemporary Indian writings. Each chapter is introduced by Petrone who provides a little background on the period and draws our attention to some of the literary devices we are to encounter. The number of writers is great; the subject matter is extensive; and the perspectives developed wide-ranging. All this makes it impossible to extract themes and comment on them. But all attest to the eloquence, deeply felt spirituality and humanity of Canada’s first peoples.

As Monkman says, “no white author writes as a red man” (p. 4) and so especially thrilling is the relatively recent development of biographical works by individual natives. Recognizing that very few people (Indian and non-Indian) would be motivated, or able, to sit down and write either their life story or an essay on social and economic conditions, this genre of biography is the almost

perfect solution for the Indian world to come alive through being described from *within* rather than from without — as it has almost always been. An excellent example of this genre is *John Tootoosis* by Jean Goodwill and Norma Sluman (Winnipeg, Pemmican Publications, 1984). Goodwill, incidentally, is the daughter of Tootoosis, though she never lived with him and only met him when she was 15. The book does not begin with Tootoosis' life but rather with something of the history of the Plains Cree, of the treaties and of the Poundmaker Reserve for, as the authors remark, the lives of status Indians are so infused with these elements one cannot merely isolate the individual. And so, we learn much of the political forces, of the history of oppression, that shaped the life of John Tootoosis, born in 1899, the paternal grand-nephew of Poundmaker. Like his famous ancestor, Tootoosis came to be a "troublemaker" (p. 87) for the government officials. Through his lifetime of complaining, of seeking ways around, of organizing, we learn of the very politically active life many Indians on the prairies led in their uphill battles to improve living conditions for their brethren — be it in health services, education, justice or living standards. It was through the League of Indians which was formed in 1918 that Tootoosis did much of his agitating for change — to correct the Indian exclusion from the decision-making process, to prevent the erosion of even more Indian lands, to permit boarding school children to go home for two months in the summer, to curtail the role of the priests in determining who gets educated or not, to permit League officers to visit the various reserves, to practice their own religion and ceremonies, to protest the enfranchisement act of 1933 (p. 159). This is but a short list of restrictions Indians endured and against which Tootoosis fought. Since we do not have much in the way of a 20th century Indian history, not only does this work remind us of the details but it also shows us how the Indians viewed the controls exercised over them and reacted to them. I can remember well-intentioned whites, highly involved in Indian matters in the late 1950s and early 1960s, who were staunch supporters of the boarding schools and of the religious groups who ran them and much of the lives of the Indians. Fortunately we will not have to rely exclusively or heavily on the observations of the whites when we write the history as was done in the past. Moreover there are now Indian historians.

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This fine book ends in John Tootoosis' 84th year, in 1983, when the constitutional fight lies ahead for the Indians. Although it is an entirely new struggle, it is obvious the younger leadership has benefitted from the lifelong, selfless work of this "troublemaker" and his colleagues. The experience and wisdom of this younger leadership is evident in the next work, edited by Leroy Little Bear, Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long, *Pathways to Self-Determination. Canadian Indians and the Canadian State* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984). It is a focused collection of essays, written mainly by native people, which grew out of the editors' awareness that the Indian perspective was largely missing from most of the published works on Indians. The particular concern of the book, as the title suggests, is with the issue of Indian self-government and all of the papers address themselves to some aspect of this question. It is not a general treatise on self-government which treats it as a motherhood issue that bears no critical analysis. Rather these papers probe the issues — the Indian concept of nationhood, the kind of leadership required, its relationship to the white society, the problems achieving unity, and so forth — making this work a must for anyone interested in the question of self-determination or self-government. Appropriately, the first paper in the collection is a reminder of the centrality of the spiritual dimension to almost all aspects of Indian life. It is a concept that whites have difficulty in comprehending. In "Spirituality, Equality, and Natural Law", Oren Lyons uses examples from the Iroquois to illustrate and emphasize that spirituality underlies the Indian political system. Tom Porter in "Traditions of the Constitution of the Six Nations", further underscores their belief in the sacredness of Indian government in making the point that the Iroquois Constitution was given by the creator some 1000 years ago. As a result, the traditional system was "foolproof" because

it was based on "integrity, justice and real democracy" (p. 21).

Another fact that certainly needs repeating to Canadians is that Canadian Indians have been (and are) victims of the same sort of colonial oppression as indigenous peoples in the U.S., Chile, and Nicaragua. In "Nation-States, Indigenous Nations, and the Great Lie", Rudolph C. Ryser claims that in Canada, as in these countries, the indigenous peoples have become "refugees" in their own lands and he urges the Indians to assert their nationhood. Similarly, Marie Smallface Marule, in "Traditional Indian Government: Of the People, by the People, for the People", argues that the strength of the Indian people is in their tribal institutions and therefore their political institutions must be revitalized. It will not be sufficient to replace white people in the Department of Indian Affairs with brown people. It has not worked in the U.S. and will not work here. Indians must create their own solutions. On the other hand, Kirke Kickingbird in "Indian Sovereignty: The American Experience" is more sanguine about the exercise of self-determination among the American Indians and he points to a number of examples to show that Indian sovereignty there "is a far-reaching and vigorous reality today" (p. 53).

David Nicholson's "Indian Government in Federal Policy: An Insider's Views" demonstrates how the federal government and the Indians are poles apart in their thinking. He claims that the federal government supports only a very limited concept of Indian government; "nationhood", "sovereignty" and a "third order of government" are not acceptable to them. His pessimism is shared by Sally Weaver ("Indian Government: A Concept in Need of a Definition") who asserts that "DIAND [Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development] has shown no evidence to date of developing an innovative people-oriented policy with respect to Indian government" (p. 67). In "Federal Indian Policy and Indian Self-Government in Canada", the editors encouragingly comment that the discussions on self-government do represent an attempt to break away from the "policy paradigm that has dominated the federal government's relationships with Indians since the beginning of Confederation" (p. 70). But they also comment that self-government will only be viable if "it rests on a firm economic base" (p. 80), which, of course, depends on the willingness of the federal government to supply the necessary funding. H.W. Thiessen's title, "Indian Self-Government: A Provincial Perspective", describes his orientation. He claims that his employer, the Province of Alberta, "supports, in principle, measures that are intended to increase the level of authority and responsibility exercised by local Indian governments" (p. 87). However, this statement of support is tempered by his remarks about the financial implications of self-government and the suggestion that the federal government must seriously consider the attendant problems if fiscal resources are inadequate. The provincial perspective here is, moral support, "yes", but financial support, "no".

Another useful American comparison is found in "Federal Government

Policies and Indian Goals of Self-Government". The author, Andrew Ebona, asserts that it is a misconception that Indians are ethnic groups. Indians are unlike ethnic or minority groups for four major reasons: treaty relationships, a land base, tribal self-government and rural isolation. He then reviews the past woes of economic development among the U.S. Indians and the often bureaucratic reasons for their failure. Their history has been one of a "suffocating relationship" but Ebona argues that major changes have taken place in the last 15 years, in the education of Indians, in the return of the youth to their home reservations and, most importantly, in a change of attitude among Indian leaders from protecting their land at all costs to one of accepting development but on their own terms.

The next set of papers deals with the legal, political and economic constraints. John D. White in "Indian Self-Government: A Legal Analysis" offers the opinion that the right to self-government, judicially speaking, may not necessarily be defined as an aboriginal right as many Indians believe and he outlines the legal and judicial obstacles one must resolve before this can be accepted thinking. Douglas E. Sanders, also writing from a legal vantage in "Some Current Issues Affecting Indian Government", looks at the major differences separating the thinking of Indians and government. Sanders points out that attempts have been made for 19 years to amend specific sections of the Indian Act. Although, in the meantime, a number of these issues have been acted upon outside the Act by certain bands, Sanders suggests that bands, on the whole, seem unwilling to assume jurisdiction, thereby leaving the initiative for change in the Department of Indian Affairs. He cautions that if Indian government is to be achieved bands must act less passively. J. Rick Ponting and Roger Gibbins also elucidate problems that will be faced in the achievement of self-government. Unlike the previous two papers that focused on legal issues, here the authors have attempted to anticipate all the social and political complications Indian bands will encounter along the way. They talk of the social costs such as of the high expectations the Indian people themselves will have of their governments that may not be always met. Since even greater distinctions between reserve and off-reserve Indians will be made under self-government, conflicts could arise. In addition there will be inter-group tensions as there always are when the stakes are high. As far as relations external to the Indian societies, there is the problem of dealing with aggressive multi-national corporations. The authors also ask a number of questions about the relations of these governments to the provincial and federal levels, what their role will be and how they will be represented within the Canadian state. This is a very important question. Indeed, the authors ask whether, in the end, the Indian government might have even less influence over federal government decisions than they have now.

The final section of the book ends on a more positive note in that a number of Indian leaders affirm that self-government is a realistic goal. Andrew Delisle in

“How We Gained Control over Our Lives and Territories: the Kahnawake Story” talks of the successful administration of health and educational services that the people in Kahnawake have achieved. Using his American experiences, Chief Earl Old Person (“Problems, Prospects, and Aspirations of the ‘Real People’ in America”) recounts the American history of broken treaties and the tragic relocation programs, but suggests that in the 1980s Indians have the desire and potential to succeed. He cautions that there are many important decisions to be made by Indians in terms of where “we as Indian people want to go” (p. 151) and that Indians must be prepared to fight for self-government. At a more applied level, Sol Sanderson outlines, in “Preparations for Indian Government in Saskatchewan”, the economic, social and political systems they are designing, heading towards self-government. The constitution they have drafted embodies broad objectives but the main one is individual band autonomy over cultural, spiritual and language development. In “What Canada’s Indians Want and the Difficulties of Getting It”, Del Riley, a former president of the old National Indian Brotherhood, frankly discusses what he perceives as their biggest problem — dependency on the federal government — and he challenges his people to alter their thinking and attitudes. At the same time he calls on Canada to recognize that Indians have given all they can and expect Canada now to share with them. Similarly, Skye Powderface, in “Self-Government Means Biting the Hand That Feeds Us”, urges his people to make their political organizations independent of government funding. “So long as we are financially dependent upon the federal government, we cannot chart our own paths and set our own goals” (p. 166).

A concluding section on “Indian Government and the Constitution” presumably, by the editors, provides a very good summary of the limited accomplishments of the first Constitutional Conference and looks to what must be accomplished in the future. It also addresses the ever so critical problem of the diversity of the Indian groups and native peoples and calls on all of them to maintain a “common front”. As the jacket cover of this book so aptly puts it, this volume expresses the “yearning” of Canadian (and American) Indians for self-government as well as pointing out the political, cultural and legal difficulties that lie ahead in a series of frank, well-argued and cogent discussions. My one criticism is that not enough attention has been paid to the economic underpinnings of self-government. This dimension is scarcely mentioned so that the reader concludes that solutions for economic development, at least on a grand scale, are eluding these thinkers. As a result, the attainment of self-government may be more remote than reading this excellent book would lead one to believe. If one were to expect that the federal government, on behalf of the Canadian people, would undertake the massive spending and creative input necessary to make self-government work, then one need only refer back to the books reviewed at the beginning and remind oneself of our historical treatment of native peoples. Therein lies the answer.

All the foregoing books discuss native peoples in terms of their relations with white society and the focus has been on the control and domination of the latter over the former. The extent of this oppression is further borne out by the last four works reviewed here. Three of them examine the life of the Maritime Indians in the days before the white man and the fourth chronicles the 19th century changes resulting from this contact. All four would be described as "popular" (as opposed to "scholarly") — most definitely a very important audience to reach.

The *Maritime Provinces Prehistory* (Ottawa, National Museums of Canada, 1984) by James A. Tuck is a nicely written, beautifully illustrated work that outlines the prehistory beginning 11,000 years ago (when the glaciers retreated and opened up the land to plants, animals and man) to the time of contact, 400 or so years ago. Tuck has skillfully managed to cover the major sites in the three provinces and to organize the information into the three major periods (Palaeo-Indian, Pre-Ceramic and Ceramic) without saturating the lay reader nor depriving him of the salient information necessary to involve him in the controversies and speculative analyses. Using this archaeological record and the early historic record, authors Ruth Holmes Whitehead and Harold McGee in *The Micmac. How Their Ancestors Lived Five Hundred Years Ago* (Halifax, Nimbus, 1983) have fashioned a highly readable and simplified (but not simple) ethnographic account of Micmac life 500 years ago. We learn how they hunted and fished, their family life, and something of their material culture, their clothing styles, canoes, basketry techniques, etc. We also learn how this society and lifestyle were shattered by the coming of the Europeans and of their struggle for survival. The book is beautifully illustrated by Kathy Kaulbach. Another popular account is R. Stephen Irwin, *Hunters of the Eastern Forest* (Surrey, Hancock House, 1984). However, this one is less ethnographically reliable because the author makes a composite of "the eastern Indians". The book combines photographs and original sketches by J.B. Clemens although less attention has been paid to authentic depictions of the material culture, presumably because it is not of any particular culture.

Still on a Maritime people but very differently presented is W.D. Hamilton's *The Julian Tribe* (Fredericton, the Micmac-Maliseet Institute, 1984), a history of a particular Micmac community in New Brunswick, as seen through the lives of the chiefs of the Julian Tribe. It begins in 1790 with the English settlers and continues to 1900. As one reads about the tenure of the various chiefs, it seems that throughout this one hundred year period, the one regular activity engaged in by them was the sale of their reserve lands, at the initiation of the government. Secondly, one sees the great control and/or meddling in band life exercised by the Indian agents. The second half of the book is a genealogical summary of a number of the Miramichi families. This work shows the detailed kind of information one can extract for single communities and then the rich regional history one can develop from it. The chronicling of this one tribe serves as a

witness to their treatment by the local and federal authorities.

It seems as though, in reading studies on native peoples, one can never escape being confronted by the interference, the meddling and the oppression of local or federal officials. It is the native reality. Moreover, it is the Canadian reality. These works serve as “touchstones” for assessing Canada’s relations with the peoples we dispossessed. Jennings, in the Barron and Waldram book, comments that the treatment of minorities tests the system of law (p. 225). One can equally alter his proposition to read, “a crucial test of a society is the treatment of its minorities”. The books reviewed here all attest to the fact that we have failed the test miserably.

TOBY MORANTZ