

THE METIS WORK ETHIC AND THE IMPACTS OF CCF POLICY ON THE
NORTHWESTERN SASKATCHEWAN TRAPPING ECONOMY, 1930-1960

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ABSTRACT

In 1944, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) entered northern Saskatchewan with the goal of utilizing natural resources and restructuring the northern economy through conservation and social policy in order to rehabilitate what they viewed as an impoverished Aboriginal population. This thesis analyzes the affects of government policy on the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis during the mid-twentieth century. Specifically, this study will examine how CCF policy affected the trapping economy and the socio-cultural traditions of the northern Metis. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis participated in trapping as one of their main sources of income, while facing deflating market prices and government intervention. Through an analysis of archival records that included government documents, government employee and northern Metis correspondence, newspapers, community and government research initiatives and transcribed interviews done by previous projects, this study found that the new government policies were met with resistance by Metis trappers who wished to maintain their traditional trapping practices. Trapping for the Metis, was not only a source of income, it was a livelihood inseparable from their socio-cultural identities and worldview. Therefore, Metis worldview had a direct connection to their acceptance and resistance of CCF policy. More specifically, the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis had a specific “work ethic.” In order to explain Metis reactions to CCF policy Max Weber’s theoretical framework of a “work ethic” derived from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* was utilized. In this thesis it is posited that the Metis work ethic was based upon the concept of wahkootowin, which placed high value on kinship systems and reciprocity. Wahkootowin encompassed all aspects of northern Metis life including the economy. These cultural values were also juxtaposed with living a “northern style of life,” which involved hard work and survival skills that allowed the Metis to flourish within the northern landscape. In the mid-twentieth century CCF conservation and social policy conflicted with the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis work ethic that was based on the principles of wahkootowin and the northern style of life.

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my aunt Adelaide Kimbley and my uncle Eugene Kimbley.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Literature Review.....	5
Theoretical Framework.....	16
Methodology.....	19
Chapter Organization.....	21
CHAPTER ONE “I Raised My Family Off the Land”: The History and Worldview of the Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis.....	29
The Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis in the 19 th Century.....	29
The Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis in the 20 th Century.....	35
Trapping in the 20 th Century.....	40
CHAPTER TWO “Into Saskatchewan’s Northland”: CCF Policy and Ideology in Northern Saskatchewan.....	54
The Northern Fur Conservation Program, 1946 and the Saskatchewan Fur Marketing Service, 1944.....	56
CCF Social Policy and The Northern Advisory Committee, 1953.....	62
CHAPTER THREE “Tell the Government to Give Us Our Living Back”: Traditional Metis Lifestyle, Government Policy and Resistance.....	79
The Saskatchewan Metis Society and Trapper Resistance to Government Policy.....	79
The Criminalization of Metis Harvesting Practices and the Rise of Social Assistance.....	91
Northern Metis Identity: Discrimination and Division.....	94
CONCLUSION “It Hasn’t Welded Together Yet”: The CCF’s Restructuring of the Northern Economy and the Metis Work Ethic.....	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	117

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Saskatchewan Northern Administration District.....	3
Figure 2. Northern Saskatchewan Fur Conservation Areas.....	60

INTRODUCTION

Before we didn't have to wait for nothing. We bring the [muskrats] and we get our money. We're blind now. They tell us these [muskrats] are not in class one. We're scared now that [the] damned game guardian is behind us with a shotgun. Can't go and take the game like before to make a living for the kids.¹ (Metis Trapper from Ile a la Crosse interviewed by V.F. Valentine, 1955)

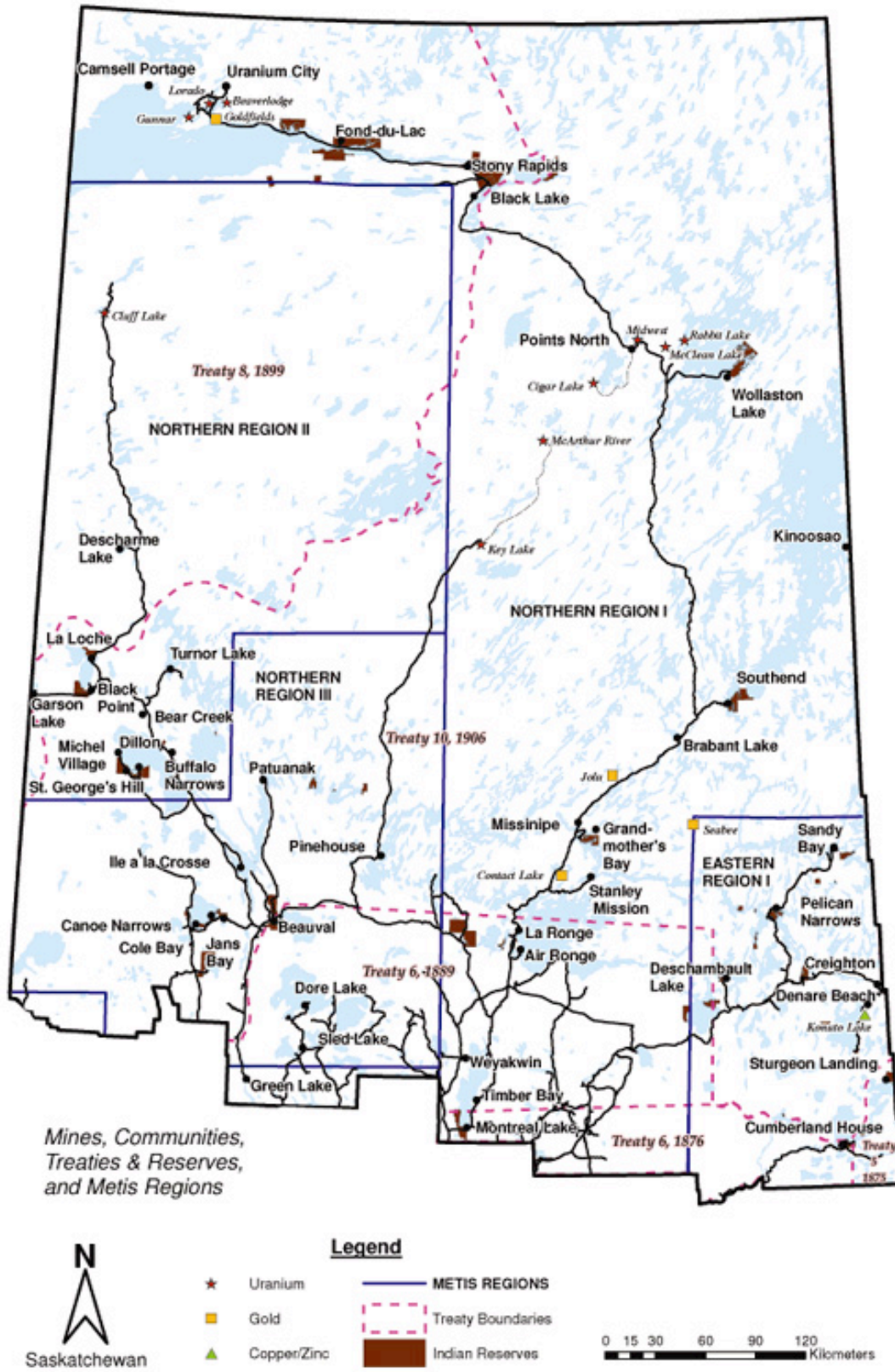
In 1955, the Department of Natural Resources hired anthropologist V.F. Valentine to conduct research in northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities in order to understand the Metis personality and their economic tendencies. Valentine interviewed Metis trappers from the northwest and discovered that many were unsatisfied with the government's plan to modernize the trapping economy. Trappers believed that government intervention, in the form of conservation policy and economic restructuring, hindered their ability to remain self-sustaining by living a life off the land. Their freedom to sell their furs to a trader of their choosing and the right to hunt for food on their traplines was lost due to government policies. The provincial government, led by Thomas Clement (Tommy) Douglas and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) sought to rehabilitate the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and usher them into a modern economy. As a product of this vision, the CCF sought to transition the northern trapping economy from a credit-based system to a modern cash-based system, and game laws were strictly enforced.

The roots of the issues raised by trappers in 1955 lay with the fur trade. Historically, northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities developed as a result of the western expansion of the Canadian fur trade. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, French Canadian, British and Metis men entered what would become known as the English River District² as traders and established themselves within northern economic and social systems by marrying into local First Nation communities.³ Subsequently, fur trading posts were erected and many became the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities of the present day, such as Buffalo Narrows, Ile a la Crosse, Beauval and Green Lake.⁴ Northern Metis communities were structured upon extended familial relationships and kinship ties were reflected throughout Metis society, including the economic realm. The fur trade economy remained a vital source of income and way of life for many northern Metis. By the mid-twentieth century, life on the trapline became synonymous with their culture and history. Ultimately, the fur trade economy evolved into a

strictly regulated enterprise dictated by government regulations and conservation measures, as well as the fluctuating world fur market.

Provincial government officials began looking northward after the passing of the *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* (NRTA) in 1930, which transferred ownership of public lands and resources to the Prairie provinces from federal control. Prior to the Agreement, northern Aboriginal people remained relatively unaffected by provincial and federal game laws, partly due to the fact that the north was “isolated and expensive to access.”⁵ Significant changes in the north did not take place until 1944 when the newly elected Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) systematically restructured northern Saskatchewan’s economy to tap into its latent economic potential. CCF leader, newly elected premier, Tommy Douglas, dubbed Saskatchewan’s northland as “Canada’s last frontier” and promised a “new deal” for the north, whereby conservation policy would be “superimposed on development” protecting the north from private enterprise.⁶ Government intervention in the form of conservation significantly affected the trapping industry and the lives of the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis. Ideas concerning the efficient and scientific application of conservation policy within Canada arose during the early twentieth century and culminated with Saskatchewan’s creation of the *Northern Fur Conservation Agreement* (1946), which allowed the CCF to establish a Fur Conservation Block system encompassing all lands north of the 53rd parallel.⁷ In total, the CCF created 39 fur blocks in the northern region. In northwestern Saskatchewan, fur blocks were divided into family allocated traplines, which were owned by individuals and have been informally passed down through family members. Although a creation of government, the trapline system was easily modified to fit Metis expectations of family life and labor because it supported the kinship-based traditions of northern Aboriginal people.⁸ The organization of the trapline system reflected a Metis worldview based upon extended family networks or kinship ties. However, unlike the success of the trapline system, which is attributable to its adherence to Metis kinship networks, many government regulations would fail to gain favor in northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities. In order to understand why some government conservation policies failed in northwestern Saskatchewan Metis worldview needs to be taken into account. Government policy was only successful if it was easily understood within a Metis societal framework.

Figure 1. Saskatchewan Northern Administration District



Government of Saskatchewan, First Nations and Metis Relations, Northern Administrative District Map <http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/NAD-map> (accessed May 8, 2012)

In his work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, sociologist Max Weber posited that the religious connotations of a certain group of people could affect their economic inclinations. Specifically, Weber hypothesized that Protestant religions contained elements that produced a work ethic, which became a factor for rationalizing capitalistic accumulation of wealth within Protestant Western societies.⁹ Weber's theory expressed that worldview played a significant part in how a society constructed their understanding of its economy, thus creating a specific "work ethic." Brenda Macdougall also examined the important role worldview plays within the economic realm in her book, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth Century Northwestern Saskatchewan*. She utilized the Cree term *wahkootowin*, which directly translates into "relationship" or "relation", as a theoretical construct to represent how the northwestern Saskatchewan Métis of the English River District ordered their society.¹⁰ *Wahkootowin* as an overarching worldview based on kinship and "established social behaviors that, in turn, affected economic decisions."¹¹ Trapping was an essential part of northern Saskatchewan Metis life, because it was an important source of income, and it was intertwined with their communities' history and traditions within the economy of the fur trade. This thesis will utilize Weber's theoretical framework concerning the Protestant work ethic and Macdougall's theory of *wahkootowin* to examine the impacts of government conservation policies on northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities during the mid-twentieth century. In doing so, Metis reactions to government policies regarding the trapline system will be examined through the analysis of the traditional Metis work ethic. Predicated on a 'northern style of life,'¹² the Metis work ethic was based upon hard work and survival, and defined by the concept of *wahkootowin*, and the people's historical relationship to the northern landscape and its resources.

The socio-cultural impact that government policies had on the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis included: the increased dependence on government run services; the creation of permanent settlements; and a shift of family roles and responsibilities.¹³ Another impact of government intervention in the north was the introduction of formal definitions of who was to be considered a status-Indian, a non-status Indian, and a Metis person.¹⁴ Therefore, a secondary focus of this thesis will be to explore the socio-cultural impact of government policies within Metis communities, in order to understand how rigidly imposed government definitions of Aboriginal people affected Métis identity and class formation in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Literature Review

Scholarship concerning the political economy of northern Saskatchewan during the mid-twentieth century has been driven mainly by an analysis of government policies and their impact on northern Aboriginal people. Studies concerning the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis during the mid-twentieth century are limited to reports written by economists and anthropologists commissioned by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) produced in that era, and a small collection of scholarly writing produced in the late twentieth century that evaluates the relationship between economy and policy.¹⁵ The three most comprehensive studies on the relationship between the political and economic goals of the Aboriginal people of northern Saskatchewan and the CCF were conducted by David Quiring, F. Laurie Barron and Murray Dobbin. Unfortunately, these sources do not specifically focus on trapping but rather the northern economy as a whole, much like other sources that document the northern environment and economy, conservation methods, and Aboriginal peoples socio-cultural relationship to land and resources. Whether the focus is on northwestern Saskatchewan, or the north more broadly, literature is largely focused on First Nation communities and often melds northern Aboriginal people into a homogenous entity because of their similar lifestyles. Surprisingly, although conservation and the environment have figured broadly in northern studies, there is a limited amount of literature that focuses directly on the northern trapping economy during the twentieth century, in comparison to the many sources documenting the historic fur trade era. In their book *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates state that:

An entire generation of fur trade historians operated on the assumption that 1870 represented a watershed in the development of the industry and therefore the country....The reality of course is rather different. Although the dynamics of the fur trade changed, due in part to the changing nature of the Hudson's Bay Company and the extension of competition, the fur trade remained a cornerstone of northern Aboriginal life. Moreover, it retained its central place well into the twentieth century.¹⁶

They continued by stating that, despite the decline of the fur trade industry after World War II, the trapping economy remained in many areas of the north.¹⁷ Although the fur industry was alive in the mid-twentieth century, the social and cultural dynamics of the fur trade in this period remain understudied.¹⁸ For the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis, the trapping economy

continued to play a central role in their daily lives well into the mid-twentieth century because it was a form of economic activity that fit within their worldview. V.F. Valentine's interviews conducted during 1952-1955 support the notion that trapping remained an important activity during the mid-twentieth century, and that trappers were concerned about the changes being made to industry by the provincial government.¹⁹ One trapper from the Athabasca region stated, "We are living mostly on the fur. The people on the outside don't know our situation. They [government officials] send us a notice to stop trapping...we have nothing to say about it, and sometimes it is very difficult for us."²⁰ Trapper's resistance to the CCF's economic and trapping related policies serves as a testament to the importance of traditional economic pursuits in the north.

The relationship between the CCF and Aboriginal people is documented through a policy-focused perspective with a secondary focus on the resulting socio-cultural changes that affected northern communities during this era.²¹ The most thorough of these sources is David Quiring's *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks*, which analyzed how CCF policies affected northern Saskatchewan's Aboriginal people. Quiring's main focus concerned the socialist goals of the CCF in northern Saskatchewan and, in doing so, he was highly critical of CCF policy. He argued that the CCF government, "through a multifaceted initiative, set out to build a northern socialist economy and society to replace the long standing capitalist system." This new north "would provide a modern environment for an assimilated, prosperous, healthy and educated Aboriginal population."²² Quiring outlined the northern policies of the CCF and highlighted their negative impacts on the restructuring of the trapping and fishing industry, conservation programs, and social welfare initiatives. While Quiring's work is not specifically Metis focused, he alluded to the amount of control that the DNR had among the northern Metis by stating, "Within the northern environment, DNR dictated to the Metis much as Indian Affairs controlled Status Indians."²³ Quiring also mentioned the impact that government imposed definitions had among Aboriginal people in the area, which divided communities and caused tension and conflict.²⁴ However, Quiring's book is largely about the CCF. Focusing on its failed attempts at modernizing northern Saskatchewan through assimilation and economic restructuring: it is a discussion about how the CCF's legacy caused the north to develop in the way that it did.²⁵ And, while northern Aboriginal people were a main component of Quiring's analysis their opinions were not central

to his argument and tended to be included as an afterthought. As such, Quiring's work served to provide a good understanding CCF policy but it failed to fully conceptualize Aboriginal reactions to CCF policy.

F. Laurie Barron's *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* was also written from a government policy perspective. Barron included a separate chapter on CCF policy regarding the Metis but it focused largely on the poverty and educational issues of the southern Metis, as well as on the development of the Metis colonies initiated by the government. Barron does provide some discussion on the disparity in CCF policy in regards to First Nations and Metis people. Barron explained that the ultimate goal of the CCF was 'integration.' More specifically, he explained that the CCF wanted Aboriginal people to be integrated into mainstream society by "...enjoying all the social services and individual political rights [non-Aboriginals] took for granted, ... while enjoying their own cultural integrity and collective rights as Aboriginals."²⁶ However, Barron claimed that this goal was not extended to the Metis population by stating that, "...integration seems to have been honored where Indians were concerned, but far less so in the case of the Metis who, as it turned out, were targeted by government for total assimilation."²⁷ According to Barron, Metis poverty became a specific issue for the provincial government at the end of the Great Depression because the Metis, unlike First Nations people, were not "wards of the federal government."²⁸ By distinguishing between First Nations and Metis people, Barron provided some historical context concerning the Metis relationship with the provincial government. However, Barron failed to explain how the jurisdictional distinction between First Nations and Metis people played out in northern Saskatchewan.

Barron provided some specific discussion on northern Saskatchewan in the chapter, "The Saskatchewan Far North: The Last Frontier," which explained the CCF's vision of the north as Canada's "last frontier" and its focus on restructuring northern development through conservation methods.²⁹ Barron summarized CCF policies concerning the fur industry and the evolution of trapping from a family enterprise to a mainly male centered activity. He also discussed social reforms that were implemented in the north, which included the development of hospitals and schools.³⁰ Within his analysis of CCF northern policy he concluded that the CCF "lacked the political will, and perhaps capacity, to solve the problems that made prosperity in the North so allusive."³¹ Barron's discussion of northern Saskatchewan provides greater context on

aspects of CCF ideology and while he discussed the consequences of policy reform in relation to Aboriginal people, his analysis lacks an Aboriginal perspective concerning CCF policies.

Murray Dobbin has produced a number of articles and books on the Metis in Saskatchewan.³² The most pertinent for the purposes of this thesis is, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan, 1944-1964," an article focused mainly on CCF policy, while using a Marxist theoretical framework to argue that the relationship between the CCF government and northern Aboriginal people remained essentially colonial. Thus this relationship created an Aboriginal population dependent on the state because of its policies. He argued that the DNR essentially replaced the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) as the colonizer in the north.³³ However he attested that, "...no significant changes in the class structure of the native population took place. Social relations changed significantly only in the sense that the CCF created a state dependent native population with new and serious social problems."³⁴ While it is generally agreed upon among scholars who study this era that CCF policies caused or exacerbated social problems among northern Aboriginals, both Barron and Quiring regard changes in class structure as an additional byproduct of CCF intervention. Unlike Dobbin, Barron clearly laid out a description of how government intervention created rigid class stratification, "often mirroring the features of a racially defined caste system."³⁵ Barron stated that, "At the top of the social pyramid were the white elite who monopolized most of the power and resources; at the bottom were the Indians and Metis who enjoyed neither."³⁶ This class stratification was furthered by the fact that most store managers, conservation officers, and administrators were recruited from the south,³⁷ which clearly changed the power dynamics and class structure of northern Saskatchewan.

Dobbin also failed to acknowledge how government definitions affected Aboriginal people and northern communities. He uses 'native' as an all-encompassing term for northern Aboriginal people stating that during the decades after the 1885 rebellion, "all native people who remained in the North became members of a single class of semi-nomadic trappers and hunters."³⁸ Furthermore, he argues that terms used to distinguish between various Aboriginal groups, such as the term Metis, "gradually disappeared in most areas."³⁹ Dobbin supported this notion by noting that the fur trade infrastructure of the HBC, which created a Metis working class, was displaced thus creating a homogenized class of northern trappers and hunters.⁴⁰ Dobbin's depiction of the northern Metis undermines their cultural identity, which was defined

through their familial relationships. Much of the literature on the relationship between the CCF and the northern Metis during the mid-twentieth century fails to explain the importance of Metis worldview and its connection to the northern economy. This lack of understanding contributes to the idea that the northern Metis had no definitive identity because all northern Aboriginal people practiced a similar lifestyle. However, as Brenda Macdougall explained in her book *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* the defining characteristic of Metis worldview was family. She stated that the Metis that lived in and around the Metis community of Ile a la Crosse defined their community through social obligation and mutual responsibility among family members.⁴¹ Macdougall further explained that these ideals were passed on through generations, and that the Metis “sense of self [was] defined by an ancestral legacy, living family relationships, and the land...”⁴² Macdougall’s study focused on Metis fur trade families that were intermarried with one another, thus developing a cohesive familial network during the nineteenth century, which laid a societal pattern for the twentieth century. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis knew who their relations were, and this defined their identity.

Dobbin’s study also suggested that northern Aboriginal people had no distinct understanding of their economy. He stated that, “The lack of new economic activity and the lack of modern infrastructure [in the north] both contributed to the continuing backwardness of the native population.”⁴³ When discussing the negative affects CCF policy had upon the social conditions of northern Aboriginal people Dobbin does attest that the CCF policies created problems for northern Aboriginal people stating that, “While healthcare and education improved, living standards did not, and massive social disruption, dependence on government, and alcohol abuse accompanied CCF government intervention.”⁴⁴ However, he also acknowledged that social conditions prior to CCF intervention were undesirable and characterized by poverty, ignorance, and low life expectancy. He also attested that Aboriginal social conditions prior to government intervention were often romanticized and labeled as “traditional lifestyles.”⁴⁵ What is problematic in Dobbin’s study is his characterization of northern Saskatchewan prior to CCF intervention. In describing northern Aboriginal people as “backward” and “ignorant” Dobbin negates the socio-cultural importance of the northern economy within Aboriginal communities. Rather than subscribing to a “romanticized” traditional lifestyle northern Aboriginal people maintained a socio-cultural connection with their economy that was defined by their worldview.

The trapping economy was a reflection of a worldview that was based on hard work, family and reciprocity. Therefore, while Dobbin provided valuable information concerning CCF policies, much like Quiring and Barron's studies, he failed to acknowledge northern Aboriginal peoples longstanding socio-cultural relationship with their economy, and that the Metis subscribed to a specific worldview based on familial obligation.

Various scholars have discussed the diversity of Metis culture, community and economy, in terms of how the Metis differed from the widely studied Red River Metis.⁴⁶ Much like northwestern Saskatchewan, various Metis communities maintained connections to First Nations communities in terms of lifestyle and economy. In, *Saint-Laurent, Manitoba: Evolving Metis Identities, 1850-1914*, Nicole St-Onge studied the Metis of Saint Laurent and their connections with the Saulteaux of "Saulteaux Villiage" or Baie St-Paul.⁴⁷ She stated that the Metis economic activities in Saint-Laurent resembled their close allies the Saulteaux who commercially produced dried or frozen fish, pelts and salt, rather than the economic activities of the Red River Metis who hunted bison.⁴⁸ Although there are many diverse Metis communities, early scholars concentration on Red River and government definitions have cast doubt on the authenticity of Metis identity outside of Red River.⁴⁹ According Robert Innes in "Multicultural Bands on the Northern Plains," this idea that the Metis are "not Indian" has legal implications for the Metis because outsider perspective imply that First Nations are "more culturally Aboriginal than Metis, and therefore have a stronger claim to Aboriginal rights."⁵⁰ The authenticity of Metis identity is twofold. For the Metis of northwestern Saskatchewan, their connections to First Nations groups and the northern style of life led outsiders to believe that these groups were a homogenous entity because their lifestyle did not resemble the Red River Metis, much like the Metis of Saint-Laurent in St-Onge's study. Legal definitions created further problems for the Metis in northwestern Saskatchewan during the mid-twentieth century because although they lived a similar lifestyle to First Nations they did not receive the same Aboriginal rights as their First Nations ancestors and relatives. This conceptualization of Metis cultural authenticity is a false narrative of Metis identity defined by outsiders, whether they are scholars or government officials. In her article, "The Myth of Metis Cultural Ambivalence," Macdougall explained how outsiders have tried to define Metis identity. She stated, "...the roots of cultural ambivalence must rest with others, not with the Metis who have, throughout historical record, attempted to express who they were to those who asked—only to be ignored or redefined in ways compatible

with someone else's ontological system."⁵¹ As this study will show, the Metis of northwestern Saskatchewan had a definitive understanding of who they were as a people. They defined themselves in relation to their families, their historical connection to their homeland, and the northern economies that they participated in.

Literature related to Metis worldview and its important role within the northern economy is limited. With the exception of Macdougall's work, sources discussing the importance of kinship and reciprocity within Metis worldview are often descriptive and do not delve deeply into how Metis worldview was translated in the economic realm.⁵² However, in order to successfully establish what constituted a Metis work ethic sources depicting Metis worldview are crucial. Two such sources are Delores and Irene Poelzer's *In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Women Speak Out* and Jean Morisset and Rose-Marie Pelletier's biography of a Metis trapper titled, *Ted Trindell: Metis Witness to the North*. Both of these sources document Metis conceptions of their communities along with their opinions on trapping and surviving within the northern landscape. The importance of reciprocity towards family and community is highlighted throughout both works. The women in *In Our Own Words* made statements such as, "The kind of people we were up north was: if you or someone needs something, I [will] cook or give it to you."⁵³ This is reiterated in *Metis Witness to The North* by Trindell who stated, "...if somebody else needs [food and money], you give it. Without any payment."⁵⁴ These sources provide context in determining what constitutes a Metis worldview through a northern perspective and provide insight into how kinship and reciprocity were utilized within northern communities.

Literature concerning the Aboriginal relationship to land was also reviewed for this study.⁵⁵ The article most pertinent to this study is Patricia McCormack's "Native Homelands as Cultural Landscapes: Decentering the Wilderness Paradigm." McCormack articulated the Euro-Canadian construction of viewing the North as "wilderness" and the need to civilize and develop wilderness lands. She stated that, European settlers believed that Native peoples simply roamed over the land, therefore, they did not settle or occupy it.⁵⁶ The conceptualization of "wilderness" was further ingrained by Canadian nationalism and capitalism, which was to be accomplished by developing and civilizing wilderness lands for agriculture and natural resource extraction.⁵⁷ Conversely, she argued Aboriginal people consider the north their homeland because it encompasses their "personal and cultural identities, their histories and their religions."⁵⁸ This

perspective can be used to explain the differing ideological views of the CCF and the northern Aboriginal people of Saskatchewan because an important aspect of CCF ideology was that northern Saskatchewan was “‘Canada’s last frontier,’ destined for extensive development.”⁵⁹ McCormack documented the important relationship between Aboriginal people and their homelands. Her discussion provides insight into critical aspects of Aboriginal worldview, in particular, the socio-cultural importance that land holds within Aboriginal communities.

There are a limited number of studies on northern Saskatchewan that focus specifically on the trapping economy.⁶⁰ Miriam McNab’s M.A. thesis, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community*, analyzed the community of Pinehouse and its connection to the trapping economy by utilizing the Marxist theoretical conception of the capitalist, “mode of production.”⁶¹ In doing so she differentiated between the capitalist mode of production and what she labels as the traditional or “bush” mode of production. She stated that these two opposing modes of production came into contact during the fur trade and the resulting changes led to the increasing vulnerability of the traditional mode while the capitalist mode became dominant.⁶² Her research focused on the changes of social relations in the traditional mode of production that occurred as a result of “intrusion of the capitalist mode of production.” More specifically, McNab analyzed how government programs and the modern economy affected “family-oriented bush activities,” such as trapping.⁶³ McNab’s research is important for the purposes of this thesis because it reinforces the notion that two modes of production existed in northern Saskatchewan due to government intervention and the introduction of a modern capitalist economy that was introduced through the fur trade.⁶⁴

Robert Jarvenpa’s study, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Economy of Modern Hunters*, focused on the spatial organization of the community of Patuanak during the early 1970s, which was a period of “rapid cultural change.”⁶⁵ Patuanak is a First Nation community situated on the northern end of Lac Ile a la Crosse and, therefore, Jarvenpa’s work is not a Metis specific study on trapping. However, Jarvenpa does engage in a discussion on how policy affected the spatial arrangements between status Indians, non-status Indians and the Metis. Jarvenpa explained that when families began settling in Patuanak in the early 1960s there was a division between status and non-status Indians. This was a result of the federal housing budget because “housing money was earmarked for registered band members on reserve land, the [non-status] or Metis families have had the burden of constructing their own houses.”⁶⁶ According to

Jarvenpa, these “legal technicalities” created new spatial arrangements because non-status settlements have evolved on the periphery of reserves, while status First Nations have stayed on reserve in government housing.⁶⁷ He explained further by stating that formerly non-status and status First Nations lived together in bush camps, while hunting and trapping.⁶⁸ Jarvenpa’s research provides some insight on how government policies separated northern Aboriginal families based on their adherence to treaty.

Jarvenpa also discussed how government policies changed the nomadic nature of the trapping economy. He stated that northern Aboriginal people became “increasingly dependent on services administered by an elite class of transient government specialists”, which corresponded with the “nucleation of families into larger year-round settlements.”⁶⁹ He also attested that the implementation of the *Northern Fur Conservation Program*, which introduced the usage of trapping blocks, created geographical boundaries that imposed upon the activities of the people of Patuanak who previously practiced seasonal family nomadism.⁷⁰ Jarvenpa’s study provides insight into the changing nature of the trapping economy during the mid-twentieth century and how government policy contributed to these changes.

There are a wide array of sources that concentrate on Aboriginal people and their relationships with land and resources⁷¹ along with sources that focus on provincial natural resource policy.⁷² However, there is little information that is specific to the trapping economy and the Aboriginal conception of that economy; except for Claudia Notzke’s brief statement about James Bay Cree, in which she described the social responsibilities of hunters and trappers in the context of sustainable resource management.⁷³ In, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada*, Notzke discussed the Cree conception of social responsibility and its relationship to the trapline. She used Fikret Berkes’ study of the Chisisabi Cree to define a trapline as a “registered beaver trapping area in which a native [trapper] has harvesting rights”; Cree people view the trapline as a “traditional family hunting-trapping territory.”⁷⁴ Social pressures deal with violations that occur on the trapline, such as poaching, rather than government laws, and Berkes found that there were few conflicts as long as traplines were not easily accessible. Only people who are family members of the trapper or who have been given permission can trap on the trapline.⁷⁵ Notzke utilized the Cree relationship to the trapline as an example of effective self-regulation in the management of natural resources;⁷⁶ but this relationship also documents the expression of familial kinship and its role within the trapping

economy. Other notable trapping specific studies focused on topics that include: the fur trade era, the Mackenzie Delta District, the anti-harvest or anti-trapping movement and articles concerning the mixed economy. These sources provided historical context and general information about how the trapping economy operates in terms of the global fur market and conservation policies. Articles concerning provincial policy focus on the NRTA and its affect on First Nations harvesting rights.

Sources that relate to Metis land and resources rights, the application of scrip and the NRTA were also reviewed.⁷⁷ These sources provided context on how Metis harvesting rights were extinguished through scrip, and also provide insight into the criminalization of the Metis through the persecution of their subsistence lifestyle. The process of scrip resulted in the subsequent distinction between the northern Metis and First Nations during the twentieth century because it extinguished the Metis' title to land. As a consequence, the Metis traditional harvesting rights were not protected, while First Nations rights were protected through treaty. This created new divisions between the two groups even though they lived similar lifestyles and participated in the same economy. In, "Law and Criminal Labels: The Case of the French Metis in Western Canada," Mike Brogden argued that the Metis were labeled as economic criminals by the HBC and eventually as political and social criminals by the Canadian state. Brogden explained that in the early nineteenth century French Metis traders "accumulated capital through the illicit trading of furs into the United States." Subsequently, the HBC responded by "criminalizing those who subverted its monopoly."⁷⁸ He continued by explaining that during the late 1800s, and after the events of 1885,⁷⁹ that the Metis were labeled as political criminals. The trial and execution of Metis and First Nations who participated in the 1885 resistance "de-legitimized" their land rights claims and established Canadian sovereignty in the Prairie Provinces.⁸⁰ Lastly, Brogden argued that the Metis were labeled as social criminals after the defeat of Louis Riel. He explained that negative stereotypes of the Metis caused them to be subjected to "discriminatory policing and criminalization."⁸¹ The criminalization of the Metis extended into the mid-twentieth century as northern Metis would be persecuted for practicing their subsistence lifestyle. This criminalization was the result of government legislation, such as the NRTA, and conservation policies. The northern Metis began to be persecuted for hunting and fishing on their traditional lands because their traditional rights had been extinguished through

scrip. Prior to government policy northern Metis hunted and trapped with relative freedom because conservation law was not strictly enforced.

In, “Neither Fish nor Indians’: Pursuing Crown-Metis Relations through Historical Evidence Concerning Policies and the Constitution Act, 1930,” Frank Tough contested the *R. v. Blais*⁸² decision by arguing that the term “Indian” in the NRTA can be extended to the Metis due to the similar subsistence lifestyles of First Nations and Metis groups. Tough used historical documents to prove that government officials often included resource use rights to both First Nations and Metis groups. He explained that during the nineteenth century government officials used the term “Indian” in a generic sense to describe all Aboriginal people. He stated:

... ‘Indian’ had been used in a generic way in the past, even after 1870, and in the same way ‘Aboriginal’ is used today. Even the use of the compound expression ‘Indians and Half-breeds’ in some instances does not negate the fact that the ‘Indians’ in other situations could be used as a generic category for Natives or Aboriginals... The coupling of ‘Half-breed’ with ‘Indian’ as an idiomatic concept provides assurance that the Metis are included in the categories of many things that relate to Indian.⁸³

The extinguishment of Metis rights to land and resources through the application of scrip legally divided Aboriginal people. In the north, this division resulted in the erosion of Metis rights to subsistence hunting and fishing, despite the fact that northern Aboriginal people practiced the same mode of life. When the north became a target for economic development in the mid-twentieth century, the division of responsibility between the two governments, federal and provincial, created a new legality in the terms “Indian” and “Metis.” This was because the Metis had their rights extinguished under the law. Both groups lived the same northern lifestyle, but their rights were defined by their adherence or non-adherence to treaty. The imposition of legal distinctions between Aboriginal people continues to affect northwestern Saskatchewan communities in the present day.

Through a review of the literature concerning the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis, and more broadly the north, it is clear that there is a lack of scholarly material concerning Aboriginal peoples socio-cultural connections to the trapping economy. Comprehensive academic studies concerning trapping mainly focused on the early fur trade period with limited sources pertaining to the trapping economy during the mid-twentieth century. Government policy during the mid-twentieth century is well analyzed by various scholars; however, Aboriginal opinions concerning policy initiatives are often an afterthought and not analyzed within a socio-cultural context. What

is problematic within these sources is that northern Aboriginal people are not active participants within the narrative. The literature surveyed is useful in terms of understanding government initiatives for the north and their impact on northern communities. The sources reviewed are also valuable for understanding aspects of Metis worldview. However, there is a lack of research that focuses on the Metis socio-cultural relationships that existed in the trapping economy and in particular, how these relationships were impacted by government policies from 1930 to 1960 in northern Saskatchewan.

Theoretical Framework

As previously mentioned this thesis will employ the theoretical construct of a “work ethic” as derived from Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* where Weber theorized that early Protestant religious doctrine shaped a specific work ethic, which hastened the development of the western capitalist system. Weber sought to understand the influence certain religious ideas had in the development of an economic spirit, or the ethos of an economic system.⁸⁴ Weber described the Protestant work ethic by discussing various virtues within the Protestant religion. These virtues can be viewed through the Protestant conception of the “calling” and, more specifically, the religious doctrine of Calvinism. Weber stated that only Protestantism possessed any expression of what is known as a calling: “a sense of a life task, a definite field in which to work.”⁸⁵ The calling allowed everyday worldly activity to have religious significance and redefined working as one of the highest forms of moral activity an individual could assume.⁸⁶ Man was to express his piety through intense worldly activity in order to maintain grace with God. In turn, there was a moral objection to the enjoyment of wealth, which created idleness, temptations of the flesh and distracted individuals from the pursuit of a righteous life. Therefore, wasting time became a sin and sociability, idle talk, luxuries and excessive sleep were worthy of “moral condemnation.”⁸⁷ According to Weber, these aspects of Protestantism played a role in the construction of a work ethic, which was fundamental in the creation of a “spirit of capitalism.”

Weber’s theoretical construct of a work ethic can be applied to the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and their socio-cultural connections to the trapping economy. However, rather than using religious doctrine as a basis of analysis, this thesis will utilize wahkootowin and the “northern style of life” as the foundation for Metis doctrine or worldview. The

northwestern Saskatchewan Metis followed a set of guiding principles that fostered a unique work ethic, which was based upon the northern style of life and wahkootowin. Although, most northwestern Saskatchewan Metis practiced Roman Catholicism by the mid to late nineteenth century, they integrated and adapted wahkootowin within Catholicism.⁸⁸ Macdougall explained that:

Wahkootowin's values promoted the creation of extended family structures and were, in turn, supported by Catholic ideals of familial relations, responsibilities, and obligations. In turn, Roman Catholicism became another vehicle transmitting the traditional cultural attributes that encouraged interfamilial connections and contributed to an individual's sense of identity.⁸⁹

Wahkootowin provided the guiding principles for Metis worldview and these principles were integrated within all aspects of Metis life, including the religious realm. Therefore, the cornerstones of Metis worldview - family, reciprocity, hard work, and survival - combined with a historical relationship to the northern landscape and its resources, were the fundamental components of the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis work ethic.

In, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan*, Macdougall analyzed the importance of kinship within northern Metis communities and how it served in the organization of Metis life, particularly within the economic realm. She examined how the Metis of the English River District utilized wahkootowin, to create a society based upon cultural worldview and identity, which emphasized family obligation and responsibility.⁹⁰ As described previously, wahkootowin was a Cree term, which meant relationship or relative; however, Macdougall explained that the literal definition of wahkootowin does not fully express the meaning of the term.⁹¹ As a theoretical construct wahkootowin represents a worldview and its encompassing values. She stated:

As much as it is a worldview based on familial – especially interfamilial – connectedness, wahkootowin also conveys an idea about the virtues that an individual should personify as a family member. The values critical to family relationships – such as reciprocity, mutual support, decency, and order – in turn influenced the behaviors, actions, and decision-making processes that shaped all a community's economic and political interactions.⁹²

Therefore, the values expressed within wahkootowin had a direct influence on the political and economic decisions of the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis. Wahkootowin was also expressed in relationships that were “formulated with independent traders from Montreal, the North West

Company (NWC), and, eventually, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC)."⁹³ In northwestern Saskatchewan, *wahkootowin* was integrated with a "northern style of life." More specifically, the values of familial obligation and reciprocity were essential to economic survival in the north. The northern style of life was based on hard work and survival skills that allowed the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis to be successful in a northern environment. Sharing resources, such as food, clothing and wealth, provided economic security for the Metis and their families, while maintaining their socio-cultural worldview based on familial obligation.

Weber's theoretical framework provides the fundamental idea that worldview can create a specific work ethic. However, Weber's study also presents other aspects of analysis that can be used to understand the relationship between the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and the CCF during the mid-twentieth century. Weber theorized that the Protestant work ethic created a "spirit of capitalism," which contributed to the rationalization of accumulating wealth in the western world. However, Weber also theorized that there were societies that did not possess a spirit of capitalism, which he labeled "traditionalist."⁹⁴ For Weber, the most important opponent of the spirit of capitalism was traditionalism. He explained the notion of traditionalism by stating that, "a man does not by 'nature' wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and to earn as much money as is necessary for that purpose."⁹⁵ Traditionalism represented individuals that lived only according to their subsistence needs, which contributed to their lack of desire to accumulate monetary wealth. Therefore, traditionalist societies lacked the ethos that fostered the rationalization of capitalist accumulation. Thus, the components of a Metis "calling" were not necessarily conducive to a spirit of capitalism or "work ethic" as described by Weber. The Metis notion of kinship and reciprocity, along with a northern style of life created a work ethic that was rooted in familial obligation and surviving within a northern environment. Although capitalism in the north was established through the fur trade and northern Aboriginal people eventually became dependent on European trade goods, the cultural value of reciprocity among Aboriginal groups was maintained through their kinship systems. As an economic principle, reciprocity was different from the capitalist accumulation of wealth. The socio-cultural values based on *wahkootowin* and the northern style of life, created an ethos that guided the way in which the Metis conducted themselves while they worked in the northern economy. Life on the trapline required hard work, survival skills and an intimate relationship with the northern landscape. These components fostered a work ethic that was based on

reciprocity. Thus, sharing wealth with family was more important than an individual pursuit of profit.

Methodology

This study consists of the qualitative analysis of primary and secondary sources in order to gather data on Metis opinions concerning the CCF's northern policy initiatives as well as construct the components of a Metis work ethic. The Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) was the chief resource for the primary documentation utilized in this study. Documents acquired from such collections as the Department of Natural Resources files and the T.C. Douglas papers yielded information ranging from letters and petitions drafted by northwestern Saskatchewan Metis trappers, letters from conservation officers and government officials regarding the Metis and CCF and studies concerning northern Metis communities. The letters and petitions written by the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis portrays trappers resistance against CCF trapping policies and provides a voice for the Metis in this study. Along with the T.C. Douglas papers, the CCF party newspaper *The Commonwealth*, which was obtained from the SAB's newspaper collection, provided insight into CCF ideology and policies concerning northern Saskatchewan. Documentation was also acquired from Library and Archives Canada's (LAC) Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Red and Black Series (RG10), which contained information concerning Federal and Provincial agreements relating to northern fur conservation and development as well as various letters and newspaper clippings. These documents also depicted the federal government's views on the northern Metis during the early to mid twentieth century.

Economic and anthropologic reports funded by the DNR were analyzed and used extensively within this study.⁹⁶ The CCF and the University of Saskatchewan sponsored the Independent Centre for Community Studies in 1957, which consisted of an interdisciplinary team of researchers ranging from economists, sociologists and anthropologists who began to study the North in 1959.⁹⁷ From 1960-1963 the centre and the DNR maintained a three-year contract that would involve "research, training and seminars aimed at improving the situation of the northern Metis."⁹⁸ Three of these reports will be used in this study: *The Indian and Metis of Northern Saskatchewan: A Report on Economic and Social Development, Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan* and *Economic and Social Survey of Northern Saskatchewan*. These reports contain valuable statistical information on population, trappers fur

returns, overviews of trapping policy and various observations on the social changes occurring in the Metis communities related to this study.

The reports of anthropologist V.F. Valentine were also extensively utilized in this study. Valentine was hired by the CCF in 1953 to help improve CCF programming and documented extensive data concerning the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis during the mid-twentieth century.⁹⁹ Valentine's study *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan* contains overviews on family life, entertainment and the class system of the Métis. However, the study's most valuable element for this thesis is the statements from informants living in Ile a la Crosse, Buffalo Narrows and the Beaver River area, which is near the community of Beauval. These statements include opinions on government policy and the changing socio-cultural aspects of Metis communities. Although these reports were commissioned by the DNR in an attempt to restructure the northern Metis economy and do not reflect a Metis focused perspective they do contain valuable sets of data, constructed within the confines of various disciplines, therefore they are beneficial to this study if read with caution.

Other primary sources analyzed for this study include interviews and documentation acquired from community research projects and the *Our Legacy* archival project.¹⁰⁰ The community research projects *Mukakawani-Kiskisi-no: We'll Never Forget* and the *Sakitawak Bicentennial* contain interviews of elders who resided in the communities of Beauval and Ile a la Crosse. The *Our Legacy* project is a website that consists of archival scans relating to Aboriginal peoples from various resources including the SAB and the Northern Saskatchewan Archives. The documents most pertinent to this study are transcribed interviews from northwestern Saskatchewan community members. These interviews were obtained from various sources including newspapers articles and the round table discussions conducted for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Lastly, interview transcripts obtained from *The Virtual Museum of Metis Culture and History* will be used. These interviews provide context for the establishment of what constitutes a northern Metis worldview and also depict the aspects of a northern style of life. In order to apply these sources to the study specific themes and patterns that addressed the research questions were observed. The themes that related to the northern Metis included: trapping, bush survival, expressions of cultural values, especially kinship and reciprocity, opinions about the changing traditional economy and CCF government policies. The themes that related to the CCF included: implementation of conservation policy, implementation

of social policies, opinions of the northern Aboriginal population by both government officials and employees and the party's ideology.

Chapter Organization

Chapter One will consist of a brief history of the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and their historical relationship with the trapping economy and northern landscape. The importance of kinship and reciprocity within a northern Metis worldview, and subsequently the founding principles of the Metis work ethic, will also be discussed along with their connections to the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). Conservation policy prior to CCF intervention will also be outlined in this chapter. Chapter Two will discuss the policy changes in northern Saskatchewan beginning with election of the CCF in 1944. The CCF's ideology and policies concerning the trapping industry and the northern Metis will be outlined. Chapter Three will explain how government policies affected the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis through an analysis of their reactions to CCF initiatives, focusing on their relationships with government officials and the social impacts that ensued. This chapter will also discuss government imposed definitions of Metis and First Nations people and how they affected communities in northern Saskatchewan. Lastly, the conclusion will summarize the Metis work ethic and how it contrasted with the CCF's vision for the north, and the implications of this research will be discussed.

¹ V.F. Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan* (Department of Natural Resources, 1955), 33.

² The northwestern area of Saskatchewan, which includes the present day communities of La Loche, Buffalo Narrows, Ile a la Crosse, and Beauval was historically known as the English River District. See: Brenda Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907* (PhD Dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 2005), 33, 38. By the mid-twentieth century government officials also labeled this area as the “Buffalo Region” and the “Athabasca Region.”

³ Brenda Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907* (PhD Dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 2005), 33-34.

⁴ The main focus of this study will be centered on these northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities, however various communities in close proximity will also be mentioned. These include: La Loche, Canoe Narrows, Jans Bay Cole Bay, Meadow lake and other small historical settlements around the Ile a la Crosse area and the Primrose Bombing Range lands. See Figure 1.

⁵ Bonita Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan* (M.A. Thesis University of Regina, 1996), 63.

⁶ F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 142, 143.

⁷ Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (UBC Press, 2006), 6; David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 104.

⁸ Helen Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Centre for Community Studies, Research Division, 1962), 17; Miriam McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1992), 79, 82; Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan*, 71; Robert Jarvenpa explains that, “...the predominantly Cree trappers in the Ile-a-la-Crosse area immediately to the south of Patuanak fur block have accepted zoning divisions created recently by the Department of Natural Resources and show more enthusiasm for the individual registered trapline system.” Robert Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980), 43.

⁹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 79.

¹⁰ Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907*, 3; Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 8.

¹¹ Brenda Macdougall, “Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities,” *The Canadian Historical Review* Volume 87, Number 3 (2006): 434.

¹² Term coined by Bonita Beatty in her presentation for the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference: *Kiweytinohk Pimachesowin: Saskatchewan Northern Way of Life*. Beatty defines the Cree word Nehithathaw Pimachesowin as the “Aboriginal way of life.” Pimachesowin reflects the traditional Aboriginal values of respect and dependency on the Creator, self reliance, cooperation, sharing, generosity, hospitality and kinship or wahkootowin systems. (NAISA Presentation, May 2011).

¹³ See: Chapter 5 The Saskatchewan Far North: The Last Frontier in F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997); Murray Dobbin, “Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964,” *Studies in Political Economy*, 16 (1985): 7-40; David

M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004).

¹⁴ David M. Quiring explains that, "...government imposed definitions among Aboriginal peoples northern Saskatchewan increasingly split communities and caused tension and conflict between Metis, non-Status Indians and Status Indians." See David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 41.

¹⁵ In the mid-1940's The Department of Natural Resources and Industrial Development (DNR) operated in both the southern and northern areas of Saskatchewan. However, in the north the DNR was instrumental in northern development and was given "greater powers" by the CCF to control northern services. See: David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 17; F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 140.

¹⁶ Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates, "The North and the Nation," in *Northern Visions: New Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, ed. Kerry Able and Ken S. Coates, 7-21 (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2001), 14.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁹ V.F. Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan* (Department of Natural Resources, 1955), 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

²¹ F. Laurie Barron, "The CCF and the Development of Metis Colonies in Southern Saskatchewan During the Premiership of T.C. Douglas, 1944-1961," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 10 (1990): 243-270; F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997); Murray Dobbin, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964," *Studies in Political Economy*, 16 (1985): 7-40; David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); Karla Radloff, *Co-operative and State Ownership in Northern Saskatchewan Under the CCF Government* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 2004). Radloff's thesis is mainly a discussion of CCF Co-operatives in the North rather than a study on the CCF's relationship with Aboriginal peoples.

²² Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 13.

²³ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 258.

²⁶ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, xix.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, xix.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 158.

³¹ Ibid., 175.

³² Murray Dobbin ed., *Economic Options for Northern Saskatchewan: Report of the Economic Options for Northern Saskatchewan Conference, Saskatoon, November 16-17, 1984* (Saskatoon: Inter-Church Uranium Committee and the Northern Native Rights Committee, 1984); Murray Dobbin, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964," *Studies in Political Economy*, 16 (1985): 7-40; Murray Dobbin, "The Metis in Western Canada Since 1945," in *The Making of the Modern West: Western Canada Since 1945* ed. A.W. Rasporich, 183-193 (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1984); Murray Dobbin, *The One-And-A-Half Men: The Story of Jim Brady & Malcolm Norris Metis Patriots of the 20th Century* (Vancouver: New Star Books Ltd., 1981).

³³ Murray Dobbin, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964," 8-9.

³⁴ Ibid., 9.

³⁵ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 195.

³⁶ Ibid., 195.

³⁷ Ibid., 195.

³⁸ Dobbin, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964," 10.

³⁹ Ibid., 10.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁴¹ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 6.

⁴² Ibid., 6.

⁴³ Dobbin, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964," 15.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁶ Heather Divine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004); John Foster, "Wintering, the Outsider Adult Male and the Ethnogenesis of the Western Plains Metis," *Prairie Forum* 19, no. 1 (1994): 1-13; Robert Innes, "Elder Brother, the law of the People, and Contemporary Kinship Practices of Cowessess First Nation Members: Reconceptualizing Kinship in American Indian Studies Research," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 34, no. 2 (2010), 27-46; Robert Innes, "Multicultural Bands on the Northern Plains and the Notion of 'Tribal' Histories (Draft Paper); Brenda Macdougall, "The Myth of Metis Cultural Ambivalence," in *Contours of a People* ed. Nicole St-Onge, Carolyn Podruchny and Brenda Macdougall, 422-464 (University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 2012); J.R. Miller, "From Riel to the Metis," *Canadian Historical Review* 69, (1988): 1-20; Nicole St-Onge, *Saint-Laurent Manitoba: Evolving Metis Identities, 1850-1914* (Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 2004); Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown ed., *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Metis in North America* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985).

⁴⁷ St-Onge, *Saint-Laurent Manitoba*, 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁹ Brenda Macdougall, "Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," *The Canadian Historical Review* Volume 87, Number 3 (2006): 434-440.

⁵⁰ Innes, "Multicultural Bands on the Northern Plains and the Notion of 'Tribal' Histories."

⁵¹ Macdougall, "The Myth of Metis Cultural Ambivalence," 491.

⁵² Lawrence J. Barkwell, Leah M. Dorion and Darren R. Prefontaine, *Metis Legacy: A Historiography and Annotated Bibliography* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 2001); Lawrence J. Barkwell, Leah M. Dorion and Audreen Hourie, *Metis Legacy II: Michif Culture, Heritage and Folkways* (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute and Pemmican Publications, 2006); Jean Morisset and Rose-Marie Pelletier ed. *Ted Trindell: Metis Witness to the North* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1986); Delores T. Poelzer and Irene A. Poelzer, *In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Metis Women Speak Out* (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt and Hamonic Publishing Inc., 1986).

⁵³ Poelzer and Poelzer, *In Our Own Words*, 5.

⁵⁴ Morisset and Pelletier ed. *Ted Trindell: Metis Witness to the North*, 126.

⁵⁵ See Leroy Little Bear, "Aboriginal Relationships to the Land and Resources," in *Sacred Lands: Aboriginal World Views, Claims, and Conflicts*, ed. Jill Oakes et al, 15-20 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, Department of Native Studies, 1998); Patricia McCormack, "Native Homelands as Cultural Landscapes: Decentering the Wilderness Paradigm," in *Sacred Lands: Aboriginal World Views, Claims and Conflicts*, ed. Jill Oakes, Rick Riewe, Kathi Kinew and Elaine Maloney, 25-32. (Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press, 1998); Wanda Wuttunee, *Living Rhythms: Lessons in Aboriginal Economic Resilience and Vision* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).

⁵⁶ McCormack, "Native Homelands as Cultural Landscapes: Decentering the Wilderness Paradigm," 26.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

⁵⁹ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 142.

⁶⁰ William Alfred Arrowsmith, *Northern Saskatchewan and the Fur Trade* (Masters Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1964); Robert Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980); Miriam Arlen McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1992); Jean Morisset and Rose-Marie Pelletier ed. *Ted Trindell: Metis Witness to the North* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1986).

⁶¹ Miriam A. McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community*, 29.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 33, 37.

⁶⁵ Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak*, 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 58-59.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 58-59, 60.

⁷¹ See Robert B. Anderson and Robert M. Bone, *Natural Resources and Aboriginal People in Canada: Readings, Cases and Commentary* (Ontario: Captus Press, 2003); Robert M. Bone, *The Geography of the Canadian North Issues and Challenges*, 2nd ed. (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2003); Steven C. Dinero, "Analysis of a 'Mixed Economy' In An Alaskan Native Settlement: The Case of Arctic Village," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXIII, 1 (2003): 135-164; Hans Matthews and Donald Wakefield, "Resource Development on Traditional Aboriginal Lands," in *Aboriginal Issues Today: A Legal and Business Guide* ed. Stephen B. Smart and Michael Coyle, 192-208 (North Vancouver BC: Self-Counsel Press, 1997); Claudia Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada* (Ontario: Captus Press Inc., 1994); Terry N. Tobias and James J. Kay, "The Bush Harvest in Pinehouse, Saskatchewan, Canada," *Arctic*, Volume 47, Number 3 (September, 1994): 207-221; Frank Tough, *'As Their Natural Resources Fail': Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996).

⁷² See Barry Barton, "Defending World Markets for Fur: Aboriginal Trapping, the Anti-Harvest Movement and International Trade Law," in *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspects* ed. Kerry Abel and Jean Friesen, 317-340 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991); Bonita Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan* (M.A. Thesis University of Regina, 1996); Brian Calliou, "Natural Resource Transfer Agreements, The Transfer of Authority, and the Promise to Protect the First Nations Right to a Traditional Livelihood: A Critical Legal History," *Review of Constitutional Studies*, Volume 12, Issue 2 (2007): 173-213; Peter Clancy, "State Policy and the Native Trapper: Post-War Policy toward Fur in the Northwest Territories," in *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspects* ed. Kerry Abel and Jean Friesen, 191-217 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991); Anthony G. Gulig, "We Beg the Government: Native People and Game Regulation in Northern Saskatchewan 1930-1940," *Prairie Forum*, Volume 28 Number 1 (Spring 2003): 81-98; Robert Irwin, "A Clear Intention to Effect Such a Modification: The NRTA and Treaty Hunting and Fishing Rights," in *Natural Resources and Aboriginal People in Canada: Readings, Cases and Commentary* ed. Robert B. Anderson and Robert M. Bone, 279-303 (Ontario: Captus Press, 2003); Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Kent McNeil, *Indian Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Rights in the Prairie Provinces of Canada* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1983); Claudia Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada* (Ontario: Captus Press Inc., 1994).

⁷³ Notzke, *Aboriginal Peoples and Natural Resources in Canada*, 149.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 149.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 149.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 149.

⁷⁷ See Mike Brogden, "Law and Criminal Labels: The Case of The French Metis in Western Canada," *Journal of Human Justice*, Volume 1, Number 2 (1990): 14-33; Murray Dobbin, "The Metis in Western Canada Since 1945," in *The Making of the Modern West: Western Canada Since 1945*, ed. A.W. Rasporich (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1984); D.J. Hall, "The Half-Breed Claims Commission," *Alberta History*, Volume 25, Number 2 (Spring 1977): 1-8; Ken Hatt, "The North-West Rebellion Scrip Commissions, 1885-1889," in *1885 and After: Native Society in Transition*, ed. F.L. Barron and J.B. Waldram, 189-204 (Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 1986); Frank Tough, "'Neither Fish nor Indians': Pursuing Crown-Metis Relations through Historical Evidence Concerning Policies and the Constitution Act, 1930," in *Metis-Crown Relations: Rights, Identity, Jurisdiction and Governance*, eds. Frederica Wilson and Melanie Mallet (Toronto: Irwin Law, 2008).

⁷⁸ Brogden, "Law and Criminal Labels," 14-33, 18.

⁷⁹ In the late 1800s the Metis feared the loss of their lands and in 1885 Metis leader, Louis Riel, created a provisional government based in Batoche, Saskatchewan. Subsequently, a Metis resistance began on March 26, 1885 in the community of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. On May 12, 1885 the Metis, who were outnumbered by the Canadian militia, lost the battle and Riel eventually surrendered. Riel was tried and found guilty of treason. He was hanged on November 16, 1885 in Regina. See: http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/north-west_resistance.html (accessed May 31, 2012).

⁸⁰ Brogden, "Law and Criminal Labels," 25.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸² Ernest Lionel Joseph Blais, a Metis from Manitoba, was convicted of hunting deer out of season on unoccupied Crown land. He appealed the decision based on the claim that the conviction infringed on his right to hunt for subsistence under paragraph 13 of the Manitoba NRTA. The court ruled that the use of the term "Indian" in the historical context of the NRTA did not extend to the Metis. *R. v. Blais*, [2003] 2 S.C.R. 236, 2003 SCC 44, *Judgments of the Supreme Court of Canada*, <http://scc.lexum.org/en/2003/2003scc44/2003scc44.html> (accessed May 31, 2012)

⁸³ Frank Tough, "'Neither Fish nor Indians': Pursuing Crown-Metis Relations through Historical Evidence Concerning Policies and the Constitution Act, 1930," in *Metis-Crown Relations: Rights, Identity, Jurisdiction and Governance*, eds. Frederica Wilson and Melanie Mallet (Toronto: Irwin Law, 2008), 157.

⁸⁴ Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 27.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 157-158.

⁸⁸ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 4-5; 131.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁹⁰ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 8; Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan*, 3. Brenda Macdougall, "Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," *The Canadian Historical Review* Volume 87, Number 3 (2006): 431-462, 434.

⁹¹ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 8.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹³ Macdougall, "Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," 434.

⁹⁴ Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 58-59.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁹⁶ Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), R-33.1, IX.372 (9-16) *Primrose Lake Bombing Range, 1952-1961*, T.C. Douglas Papers, W.B. Baker, "Some Observations on the Application of Community Development to the Settlements of Northern Saskatchewan.,"; Helen Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern*

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⁹⁷ Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 162.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Robert Longpre ed., *Ile-a-la-Crosse 1776-1976 Sakitawak Bi-Centennial* (Ile-a-la-Crosse: Ile-a-la-Crosse Bi-Centennial Committee and Ile-a-la-Crosse Local Community Authority, 1977); David and Susan Zub ed., *Mukakawani-Kiskisi-no We'll Never Forget* (Beauval: Young Canada Works Program and Beauval Recreation Board, 1981); *Our Legacy* (The University of Saskatchewan Archives, University of Saskatchewan Library and Pakhisimon Nuye ? ah Library System, 2008) <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/>; The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture (Gabriel Dumont Institute of Applied Studies and Research) <http://www.metismuseum.ca/main.php>

CHAPTER ONE

“I Raised My Family Off the Land”: The History and Worldview of the Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis

And in them days when I was growing up and raising my family, there was no such thing as welfare and social services, I raised my family off the land, which I was able to hunt and do whatever I wanted to do because the laws were not there. They were not restricted, and as a Métis people, and as I grew up, that’s how I fed my family.¹

In 1945, after serving in the army in World War II, Vital Morin returned to northwestern Saskatchewan and settled in Ile a la Crosse where he had grown up living off the land. He continued to practice this way of life when he had his own family.² This northern style of life was practiced by the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and passed down through generations. The Metis economy continued to consist of trapping, hunting, and fishing throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and their economy played a main role within the socio-cultural realm of their communities. Stemming from their historical roots within the fur trade, trapping became synonymous with Metis culture and many northern Metis would come to regard their life on the trapline as essential to their heritage. Success on the trapline depended on familial kinship and reciprocity, which was also essential for survival within the northern landscape. These socio-cultural linkages were embedded in the Metis economy and contributed to the development of a specific work ethic. The Metis work ethic was a combination of the principles of wahkootowin and the northern style of life, which defined the Metis’ future interactions with government officials. Over time, fluctuating fur markets, depletion of wildlife, the power of traders and government intervention changed the shape of the trapping industry and consequently, the lives of the Metis in northern Saskatchewan.

The Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis in the 19th Century

Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities developed throughout the nineteenth century during the fur trade when French Canadian, English and Scottish traders from the XY, North West and Hudson’s Bay Companies migrated westward to northern Saskatchewan and established relationships with local Cree and Dene women.³ According to Macdougall, it was in this era, when “the result of these unions between fur traders and Indian women was the

ethnogenesis of Metis people and communities in the region.”⁴ Macdougall stated that strong social and cultural factors operating in the economic environment of the fur trade transformed the northwestern Saskatchewan region into a “Metis homeland.”⁵ Metis communities were erected around various fur post locations and along trade routes and the Metis prospered within this northern environment because of their knowledge of the landscape, their important contribution as employees of the fur trade and their unique “socio-cultural expression of family.”⁶ Murray Dobbin explained that during the late nineteenth century the Metis evolved into an indistinguishable “single class of semi-nomadic trappers and hunters” who were laborers for the HBC.⁷ Anthropologist V.F. Valentine similarly remarked that the northern Metis lived a semi-nomadic life with “no strong political focus, no complex division of labor...there was no strong community life in the Euro-Canadian sense of the term.”⁸ Although the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis can historically be described as semi-nomadic, studies such as Dobbin’s and Valentine’s, pay little attention to the complexities that evolved between the social conduct of the Metis and their economic roles in the trapping economy. The structure of Metis familial roles as well as their relationships with extended family and community developed their work ethic, and their understanding of an economy that was based upon living a northern style of life. Valentine also referred to the Metis living along the northwestern side of Saskatchewan as “children of the old fur trade.”⁹ While it is true that Metis genesis is linked to the fur trade, Macdougall argued that this view of fur trade history “does not explain the development of a Metis cultural worldview.” Instead she argued that the worldview of the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis was much more complex and based upon family obligation and responsibility.¹⁰ She stated that the Metis maintained a cultural attitude “that promoted fierce loyalty to one another, to their families, and to their land” and that “Metis cultural and economic solidarity [were] values embedded in wahkootowin...a worldview linking land, family and identity in one interconnected web of being.”¹¹ These values contributed to how the Metis conceptualized their relationship to the northern economy and also expressed the proper way to conduct themselves within their work.

Before the imposition of government policies in the north during the twentieth century the de-facto reigning authority was the HBC. The historical relationship between the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and the HBC impacted the ways in which the Metis related to the trapping economy. In 1821, the HBC and the NWC merged, therefore providing the HBC

with a monopoly in the fur trade throughout northwestern Canada.¹² The monopoly and exploitation of the trapping economy by the HBC is well documented. Many historians and academics discuss the HBC monopoly within the trapping industry and subsequently, the power it held over northern Aboriginal people.¹³ F. Laurie Barron stated that trappers were victimized by the fluctuating fur prices of the world market and excessive profit margins extracted by fur trading companies, particularly the HBC, which manipulated the terms and conditions of a trapper's credit.¹⁴ However, Macdougall argued that the Metis relationship with the HBC was more than simple economics; instead it was more complex because the social and economic spheres of the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis were "intertwined and inseparable." In particular, she pointed out that the NWC and HBC partners, chief factors, traders, clerks and other employees intermarried with northern Aboriginal people resulting in a "sizeable mixed-ancestry population," which was incorporated in the socio-cultural traditions of both companies.¹⁵ Therefore, the HBC was fully entrenched in northwestern Saskatchewan through the fur trade and embedded in the social fabric of society through its familial connections to northern Aboriginal people. The HBC held esteem within northern Aboriginal communities because of its social connections and its ever-present hold on the economy. However, Macdougall also explained that certain powerful northwestern Saskatchewan Metis families "exerted a certain level self-determination, as least until the early 1900s" in their relations with the HBC. These families asserted their economic self-determination by becoming free traders in the late nineteenth century, thereby "overtly challenging the Company's authority in the trade economy."¹⁶

In, *Fur Trade History as an Aspect of Native History*, Arthur Ray also challenged the notion that the relationship between non-Aboriginal traders and Aboriginal trappers during the fur trade was exploitative in all instances.¹⁷ Ray stated that the European abuses of Aboriginal people cannot be denied, but he also asserted that by focusing on this aspect historians failed to grasp that Aboriginal people played an "active and creative role" in the fur trade.¹⁸ Ray questioned whether Aboriginal people in the fur trade were being "systematically cheated" by the HBC or if they were "sophisticated traders, who had their own clearly defined sets of objectives and conventions" for trade.¹⁹ Ray explained how Aboriginal people used competitive situations between trading companies to improve the terms of trade, and that Aboriginal people also had limits to how much they would trade. He stated:

If [fur] prices were advanced beyond a certain level, the [trappers] must have perceived that their economic reward was no longer worth the effort expended, and they broke off trade even if there were no alternative European groups to turn to...unlike their European counterparts, [Aboriginal people] did not trade to accumulate wealth for status purposes. Rather, [Aboriginal people] seem to have engaged in trade primarily to satisfy their own immediate requirement for goods...It was disconcerting to the European traders in that when they were offered better prices for their furs, [Aboriginal people] typically responded by offering fewer pelts on a per capita basis.²⁰

Ray's example relates to how Aboriginal people's subsistence lifestyle affected their trade decisions and their relationship with non-Aboriginal traders. More specifically, it supports the idea that, although Aboriginal societies were engaged in a market economy where they were competitive and astute traders, they still maintained a somewhat 'non-acquisitive' lifestyle by trading to satisfy their subsistence needs. The principle of acquisitiveness that is essential to capitalist enterprise was not necessarily a common value in northern Metis society. In, *Our Heritage: The People of Northern Saskatchewan*, Michael Tymchak contrasted northern Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian society by dividing the two groups into acquisitive and non-acquisitive cultures. He states that, "Euro-Canadian culture is highly acquisitive: a large part of many people's waking hours is devoted to earning the capability of purchasing as many commodities as possible; [northern Aboriginal] culture was non-acquisitive – no effort was expended to accumulate more than the basic necessities."²¹ However, he stated that contact between the two groups allowed northern Aboriginals to participate and compete in acquisitive society.²²

Max Weber's discussion on traditional societies and his example of piece-rates sheds light on this phenomenon. A piece rate is compensation based on a worker's quantitative output or production.²³ Weber used agriculture to discuss how piece-rates can be utilized stating that, within agriculture the difference between high profit and heavy loss depends on the speed in which the harvesting can be completed.²⁴ Employers in factories thought that increasing workers piece rates would give them the opportunity to earn a higher wage, which would attract them to increase their output production or efficiency.²⁵ What the employers encountered, however, was the opposite effect. Raising the piece-rates resulted in individuals working less because the worker reacted to the increase in wage by decreasing the amount of work rather than increasing it. According to Weber, this result occurred because the worker could make the same wage as he

had previously by working less. Therefore, the opportunity of earning more was less attractive than decreasing the amount of work because the worker only labored to satisfy his traditional needs.²⁶ Weber stated that, “Wherever modern capitalism has begun its work of increasing the productivity of human labor by increasing its intensity, it has encountered the immensely stubborn resistance of this leading trait of pre-capitalist labor.”²⁷ Weber claimed that increasing and decreasing wages was not the answer to sufficiently maximize labor production. Labor (or work) needed to be indoctrinated through a “long and arduous process of education” or a “calling” as manifested within the Protestant work ethic.²⁸ During the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis subscribed to a specific work ethic that dictated their actions within the trapping economy. Their “calling” was non-acquisitive in nature because of their adherence to the principles of *wahkootowin*. Therefore, non-Aboriginal traders in the nineteenth century, and subsequently government officials in the mid-twentieth century, did not understand this behavior because the importance of a subsistence or northern style of life was maintained even though the northern Metis participated in capitalist labor, such as the fur trade.

The northern landscape also played a central role in the development of a Metis work ethic and created distinct communities that differed from their southern counterparts in many ways. In his book, *The Metis of the Canadian West*, Marcel Giraud posited that Metis genesis arose from two nucleuses within the fur trade; one in the southern region and one in the north around the Hudson’s Bay Company posts.²⁹ However, in the nineteenth century the northern Metis were not completely isolated from the larger southern-based Metis communities, even though their geographical location dictated much of their lifestyle. Macdougall connected the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis to the historical community of Red River stating that,

[Although] Ile a la Crosse was not a large Metis community like Red River, which was located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in Manitoba and often stands as the focal point of Metis history in Canada...Ile a la Crosse was, in many ways, at the centre of early socio-cultural developments that contributed to the circumstances leading to the hallmarks of Metis nationalism.³⁰

Macdougall conceded that although no “battles of nationhood” took place in northwestern Saskatchewan the Metis of Ile a la Crosse were aware of these events. Ile a la Crosse also had connections to southern Metis communities through the Riel family. Metis leader Louis Riel’s

father was born in Ile a la Crosse and his sister Sarah Riel, a missionary, would reside in Ile a la Crosse during the mid-nineteenth century.³¹ According to Macdougall, “The Riel connection to Ile a la Crosse and the potential contribution of the community to Metis nationalism was a source of great anxiety in the 1880s.” This anxiety was due to the speculation that the Metis of northwestern Saskatchewan would provide support to their southern brethren.³² It was also rumored that Louis Riel would “seek revenge on the priests” because he wanted to avenge his sister Sarah’s death at the Ile a la Crosse mission in 1884.³³

Ile a la Crosse community member Napoleon Johnson spoke of this situation stating that his wife’s father, Celestine Kipling, was eleven years old when the nuns and priests fled Ile a la Crosse to an island just past the community of Patuanak because they feared Louis Riel would come.³⁴ Johnson also connected his and his wife’s family to the Red River settlement stating that they came to Ile a la Crosse on HBC York boats freighting fur and groceries before eventually settling in the area.³⁵ After the 1885 resistance others migrated to northern Saskatchewan and settled in communities, such as Green Lake and Ile a la Crosse.³⁶ The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis had various historical connections to larger southern Metis communities but they developed mainly through the western expansion of the fur trade in the late eighteenth century. However, the events of 1885 and thereafter would have a profound affect on all Metis as the government sought to extinguish the Aboriginal rights of the Metis through the allotment of scrip.³⁷ Scrip commissioner J.A.J. McKenna began negotiations for Treaty 10 and scrip in the English River District in 1906. According to Macdougall:

Scrip altered the relationship between northwestern Saskatchewan families by establishing new territorial and legal divisions over socio-cultural boundaries that recognized difference, but did not necessarily demarcate divisiveness. Because of shared maternal relatives, language, and in some instances, religion, families in northwestern Saskatchewan, whether Cree, Dene or Metis, had maintained a closeness, but the introduction of Canadian legal divisions that established categories of treaty and non-treaty Indians cut right through family.³⁸

The introduction of these new legal definitions would have far reaching impacts on the Aboriginal people of northern Saskatchewan, as traditional rights to natural resources would become an issue in the mid-twentieth century.

The Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis in the 20th Century

During the first half of the twentieth century, government officials and anthropologists often remarked that the similarities between Aboriginal people of the north made it almost impossible to distinguish between First Nations and Metis individuals.³⁹ Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities were forged through relationships between the Metis and the First Nations in the area. Macdougall stated that, “Over time, [northwestern Saskatchewan] was transformed into a Metis homeland not only by the virtue of their occupation, but through the acknowledgement of the Cree and Dene communities of which [the Metis] were a part.”⁴⁰ Wahkootowin as a Metis worldview has a historical connection to the northern Cree and Dene women who passed on their cultural values to their children, and therefore relates to the northern style of life. The values of reciprocity, kinship and working together related to the communal nature of northern people. In her PhD dissertation, *Pimacesowin (To Make Your Own Way): First Nation Governance Through an Autonomous Non-Government Organization—The Experience of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Health Services Inc. In Northern Saskatchewan*, Bonita Beatty explained the communal nature of northern Cree culture, where families shared their food with one another and where individuals were expected to contribute to the common good. Reciprocity or sharing with family was a “fundamental value” among the northern Cree.⁴¹

The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis ordered their society by utilizing their family networks, which included their First Nations ancestors. These extended family connections allowed them to successfully navigate the fur trade, an economy that was ingrained within their cultural heritage. The close linkages between the lifestyles of northern Metis and First Nations is important within this thesis because this sheds light on the genesis of the Metis in the region, which included many communities and cultural variations. In, *Metis Legacy: A Historiography and Annotated Bibliography*, Leah M. Dorion and Darren R. Prefontaine explained that, “Each Metis community, despite many commonly held experiences with other Metis communities, has a unique history, and a slightly different cultural background.”⁴² Furthermore, Macdougall argued that scholars need to discard the racial paradigm that debates “whether the Metis were more European than Indian...because it undermines their authenticity as an Aboriginal people who established a culture intrinsically linked to their homeland.”⁴³ Northern Aboriginal people had a distinct understanding of their identity because of their strong familial networks and their connections to the regions that they occupied.

The Metis of the north differed from their southern counterparts due in part to their geographical location and social context. For the Metis of northern Saskatchewan their relationship with the land was essential to their economy. Barron explained the differences between the northern and southern Metis by stating: “In the southern part of the province, most Metis spoke either French or English and were closely tied to a way of life dominated by white settlers; however, in the North they often spoke only Cree and their way of life was much closer to that of the Indian subsisting off the land.”⁴⁴ The northern Metis women in Delores and Irene Poelzer’s work, *In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Women Speak Out*, offer some insight as to why government officials could not distinguish between First Nations and northern Metis. The women referred to their way of life as the “Indian way.”⁴⁵ They explain that the “Indian way” encompassed their language and their customs and traditions that included trapping, hunting and fishing, which were related to knowing “how to live in the bush” and “how to live off the land.”⁴⁶ Although the Metis women interviewed in this study referred to their lifestyle as the “Indian way,” the authors noted that the women still identified as being Metis.⁴⁷ The Aboriginal people of northwestern Saskatchewan participated in a style of life that consisted of hard work, reciprocity and knowledge of the land. This northern style of life was partly a product of their geographical location and their economic history. Bonita Beatty explained that the northern style of life relates to self-reliance, cooperation, generosity and kinship.⁴⁸ During the mid 1900s, government officials and anthropologists viewed the northern style of life as a definitively “Indian” way of life, which in essence ignored the fact that Metis communities had unique histories and cultural experiences.

Northern Aboriginal people had distinct connections with one another because of the northern landscape and because of the economies they worked in. The harsh northern environment dictated that survival was dependent on strong community and kinship based relationships, and this was reflected within their work ethic. During the mid-twentieth century anthropologists and economists hired by the DNR to study the northern economy and its people frequently acknowledged the importance of kinship systems within the north. For instance, researchers P.M Worsley, Helen Buckley and A.K. Davis stated that:

...the tight knit communities of the North are enmeshed in a complex web of kinship and social relations. The pressures to spend are not merely the personal wants of the earner and his family, but of the many others with whom he or she has close connections.⁴⁹

This cultural practice of spending income on family and extended family members was understood as a social obligation, and part of a culture of reciprocity within northern Metis communities. Furthermore, sharing food that was obtained through subsistence means was a common practice in Metis communities; hoarding food was “virtually unknown.”⁵⁰ In a mid-twentieth century report on the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis sociologist W.B. Baker pointed out that, “. . .the insecurity of subsistence income tends to place high value on sharing one’s good fortune with the less fortunate. Material accomplishment would thus evoke scorn rather than public esteem.”⁵¹ The Metis work ethic reflected *wahktoowin* principles and the northern style of life. The women in Polezer’s study explained that accumulation of material objects and money was not necessarily important. Poverty was explained as a lack of friends and family rather than “lacking material things.”⁵² Therefore, sharing with one another in communal fashion was compatible with the Metis lifestyle, and even with increased penetration of the north through capitalistic enterprise, Metis expressions of sharing and reciprocity continued within the changing economy.

Just as in the nineteenth century fur trade era, kinship played a central role in the lives of northwestern Saskatchewan Metis in the twentieth century as families engaged in trapping and the fur trade economy. Polezer’s study noted that during the trapping season families migrated often, rather than residing in permanent settlements.⁵³ Similarly, Metis trapper and hunter Ted Trindell commented on the nomadic nature of the northern trapping economy by stating that, “As you are hunting the game move away, so you can’t stay in one place. . . .When the game goes away, you move camp. You keep moving camp, follow your game. That was the way of life.”⁵⁴ However, the establishment of trading posts during the fur trade era caused many Metis to settle around the posts thereby creating permanent settlements. Historian David Quiring pointed out that prior to CCF initiatives in northern Saskatchewan, many Aboriginal people had settled into communities because of the presence of fur trading posts, missions and boarding schools. In particular Quiring noted that communities such as Ile a la Crosse, Cumberland House and La Ronge flourished due to the advent of fur trade posts.⁵⁵ In her dissertation, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan*, Bonita Beatty explained that by the 1920s the prominence of permanent settlements and centralized services altered the “year round” hunting and trapping patterns of northern Aboriginal families. Northern Aboriginal families

began to seasonally migrate by only utilizing their traplines during trapping seasons. However, she argues that family stability remained intact as long as the whole family migrated to the trapline.⁵⁶

By the time the CCF imposed its policies on northern Saskatchewan, during the mid-1900s, Metis people involved in the fur trapping economy had well-established socio-economic practices. Beatty stated that:

[Northern Aboriginal people's] participation in the fur trade enabled them to expand their subsistence-based economy to accommodate the developing capitalist economy of the Canadian state. They no longer confined their harvesting activities to food and clothing production, but they also sold their furs to trading companies for manufactured goods like guns, ammunition, tea, sugar and so forth.⁵⁷

As a result of the fur trade, the economy of northern Aboriginal people shifted from subsistence based practices, to include various trade activities.⁵⁸ Beatty explained that, permanent settlements and the introduction of "European technology and specialized trapping practices" changed the labor practices of Aboriginal people. These changes, coupled with the depletion of furs and game resources, made northern Aboriginal people more dependent on external aid that was initially provided by the HBC and then by the government.⁵⁹ The development of the fur trade also caused the economy of the Metis to become more complex as a result of a combination of subsistence and increased trade. What remained intact within Metis society during these changes were the values of kinship and reciprocity, which were reflected in their economic endeavors.

Expressions of *wahkootowin* and the 'northern style of life' can be found in interviews donated to the Gabriel Dumont Institute by various researchers, the Beauval Young Canada Works Program and the Ile a la Crosse Bicentennial Committee. Metis elders who resided in northwestern Saskatchewan recalled their experiences of northern life during the mid-twentieth century. The hard work that was needed to survive in northern settlements and on the trapline was expressed by two Metis women as follows:

There was no assistance of any kind available then. We ate wild meat, ducks, moose meat. We only had the basics like flour, sugar, salt, tea, from the store... They used logs to build houses and dirt roof or hay roof, a long time ago. It was tough times.⁶⁰ (Monique Gardiner, Ile a la Crosse)

I didn't have a tough life in my childhood but I had a tough time when I started my family because we had to do everything by hand. In the winter, for

transportation, we traveled by horses and a dog team and in the summer by canoes.⁶¹ (Marguerite Kimbley, Ile a la Crosse)

In order to survive within their subsistence lifestyle the northern Metis had to be resourceful. They understood their landscape and made sure that nothing they used to survive went to waste. Isabelle Bishop of Green Lake made her family clothes, sometimes using old flour sacs. She tended to animals, such as cows and chickens and she also grew a large garden while her husband would hunt, fish and trap. She stated, “I worked hard in my lifetime... There were no bills to pay and we never went hungry... We were poor but not that bad.”⁶² Christine Misponas of Sandy Point reflected on Metis survival skills stating that, “[My family] would use everything [from] the animal. They would even use the bones. We would crack the bones and use the bone marrow for fat. We would dry meat so the meat wouldn’t spoil.”⁶³ Misponas was not unfamiliar with trapping herself; she would trap alone near her home when her husband would leave to trap on his trapline.⁶⁴ Due to the introduction of permanent settlements northwestern Saskatchewan Metis women were not always on the trapline with their male family members, but they worked hard and contributed to the family when they were at home. Trapping was more than an economic endeavor for the northern Metis; in many aspects it was their only way of life. Georgina Morin of Ile a la Crosse stated that, “In the old days people worked, trapped, fished to make a living... We worked hard to survive... We were not lacking anything.”⁶⁵ Tom Natomagan, a trapper from Ile a Crosse, stated that, “Trapping was the only way of life. There was no other work. We used to trap only for beaver. At times it was poor... the price was low, but so was the cost of living.”⁶⁶

Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis survival was not only based on hard work, it also involved the sharing and reciprocity of community and family members. This principle of reciprocity was partially related to ‘bush life’ survival but was also a cultural trait expressed within *wahkootowin*. *Wahkootowin* established how resources were utilized and how relationships were formed, within the extended family and within communities.⁶⁷ Reciprocity was an ingrained social value that was based upon obligations to the extended family. Elder Harry Roy, a resident of Green Lake, discussed instances of reciprocity in northwestern Metis communities. He recalled women who made syrup from birch trees and how they would share this syrup with trappers. He also discusses the sharing practices of hunters and trappers stating that, “Oh you’d give [moose] to people, some old people that couldn’t trap, you’d give them

some, you know? That's what we used to do."⁶⁸ Leon Morin of Buffalo Narrows reiterates these sentiments while reflecting on changes that have occurred in modern northern Metis communities, stating:

Nowadays, nobody will help each other unless they get paid. Back then if someone killed a moose, we'd share the meat. That way nothing was spoiled. They [canned] any remaining meat and fish when we caught some. We ate fish, caribou, muskrat. We also ate beaver and bear. There was no garbage back then.⁶⁹

Metis communities ascribed to a particular work ethic, which was a product of earlier generations. The Metis work ethic was based upon the mutual cooperation of family and community members, along with the knowledge and resourcefulness that was required for the "northern style of life." The familial networks, social values and subsistence practices that were inherent in the nineteenth century continued well into the mid-twentieth century.

Trapping in the 20th Century

The major changes that northwestern Saskatchewan would experience began with the creation of the *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* (NRTA) in 1930. The NRTA was passed to allow the provinces of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan to have control over the natural resources within their provinces, which were previously governed by the federal government.⁷⁰ A provision was placed in the NRTA that would enable the federal government to meet its obligations to First Nations people and their right to natural resources.⁷¹ Paragraph 12 of the NRTA states that:

In order to secure to the Indians of the Province the continuance of the supply of game and fish for their support and subsistence, Canada agrees that the laws respecting game in force in the Province from time to time shall apply to the Indians within the boundaries thereof, provided, however, that the said Indians shall have the right, which the Province hereby assures to them, of hunting, trapping and fishing game and fish for food at all seasons of the year on all unoccupied Crown lands and on any other lands to which the said Indians may have a right of access.⁷²

While the NRTA protected the right of status First Nation people to hunt for subsistence purposes, the government did not include the Metis under this clause, thereby placing them under the jurisdiction of the province. The NRTA allowed the provincial government to enforce restrictive regulations regarding natural resources. However, Beatty points out that prior to 1945

the government ignored the north because, unlike the south, it was insignificant to provincial economic policy.⁷³ Nevertheless, the introduction of the NRTA did set in motion the introduction of new policies concerning conservation that would eventually affect the northern subsistence economy.

In the early 20th century trappers did not strictly adhere to hunting and trapping regulations, and this eventually caused the depletion of fur stocks in northern Saskatchewan. Before the introduction of trapping blocks trappers utilized a “lease system” which allowed individual trappers to trap on a piece of land for a ten-year period.⁷⁴ However, Helen Buckley argued that the lease system was problematic for Aboriginal trappers, stating that, “The trouble with the lease system was that most of the leases went to the more aggressive White trappers. Thus Indian and Metis lost many of the more productive fur areas in the North.”⁷⁵ The economic depression during the 1930s caused the migration of non-Aboriginal trappers to northern Saskatchewan who competed with the Metis and First Nations people for fur. Many of the non-Aboriginal migrants were transient muskrat trappers who would migrate north when trapping seasons were opened, while others remained in the north year round.⁷⁶ In the view of government officials, the in-migration of non-Aboriginal trappers and the lack of conservation policies were the major cause of the depletion of fur bearing animals in northern Saskatchewan. The problem was so severe that in the early 1930s the Saskatchewan provincial government banned beaver trapping. Although this ban was eventually lifted in 1937, it was replaced with a strict quota system that limited pelts to ten per trapper.⁷⁷ Other conservation methods employed during this time included the opening and closing of the trapping season.⁷⁸ Buckley stated that, “This meant all-out trapping in the open season, so that too much fur was taken, while in the closed season, which might last a year or longer, the trapper has no income at all.”⁷⁹ As a result of these negative aspects of fur trapping, the government moved to take a more scientific approach to fur conservation policies, which were not always beneficial to the Aboriginal trapper and hunter.

In, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century*, Tina Loo articulated the negative affects the emergence of systematic and scientific conservation policies had upon rural and Aboriginal communities.⁸⁰ She claimed that conservation policies sanctioned the “non-consumptive use of wildlife: that, in effect, promoted sports hunting rather than subsistence hunting practices. Consequently, she argued, members of the rural working class, many of which were non-British immigrants and Aboriginal people, were persecuted for what

they had always practiced: living a subsistence lifestyle off the land.⁸¹ Interestingly, the criticisms of Aboriginal trappers and hunters were depicted a decade prior to the NRTA in an annual government report of the Chief Game Guardian of Saskatchewan. A section in the report titled, *The Indian as a Factor in the Extermination of Wildlife*, stated that:

Each year the Department receives an interesting number of complains of wonton slaughter of big game by Indians. These are usually received by settlers who reside in the vicinity where Indians are operating, or from sportsmen who go to considerable expense and trouble in preparing for their annual big game hunting trip, only to find on arrival at their camp unquestionable evidence that the Indians have preceded them.⁸²

Opinions like those expressed by the Chief Game Guardian document the shift in the way the north was being conceptualized by political forces largely external to the area. It was no longer viewed as a hinterland where remnants of the fur trade existed but rather a frontier with natural resources that needed to be exploited and shared with those in the south. The power of conservation officers in the north became all encompassing as restrictions on hunting and trapping were put in place to safeguard northern Saskatchewan's game and fur. These virtues of conservation were extended, with the election of the CCF party, in the north. The party's ideology advocated for conservation to protect and preserve the wealth of the province's natural resources for all of Saskatchewan's citizens and especially for future generations. This was reiterated by the Minister of the Department of Natural Resources, Joseph Phelps, who in 1944 stated that, "The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation believes, and has always believed, that the natural resources of Saskatchewan were placed here by the Creator for the purpose of benefiting all the people of the province, not simply for the benefit of the few."⁸³ However, as this research will show, once the north was opened up the lives of its Aboriginal inhabitants would be affected in both positive and negative ways.

Although the NRTA allowed the provincial government to enact changes in the north Quiring explained that politicians ignored the north until the CCF was elected.⁸⁴ Therefore, the Metis connections to the HBC and the credit system remained in northwestern Saskatchewan well into the mid-twentieth century; in addition the Metis would defend their right to trap within this system after the arrival of the CCF. In the mid-twentieth century the CCF strove to destroy the monopoly of the HBC. According to Quiring, the CCF viewed the HBC as the "worst villain" in northern Saskatchewan because it controlled Aboriginal people through an "outdated and

exploitive economic system.”⁸⁵ However, despite the negative connotations Saskatchewan’s provincial government had towards the HBC monopoly the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis were intertwined with the Company, not only economically, but socially as well. According to P.M Worsley, H.L. Buckley and A.K. Davis in their study, *Economic and Social Survey of Northern Saskatchewan*, the HBC became a “symbol of stability” and the trapper’s relationship with the HBC became part of their traditional values. As Worsley, Buckley, and Davis put it: “Whether the Company was popular with the trapper, whether it exploited them or not, it was there, from generation to generation.”⁸⁶

Macdougall’s research provides context for the Metis historical connections to the fur trade and the HBC. Macdougall explained that, during the 1800s, northwestern Saskatchewan Metis society was centered upon “regionally defined matrilineal organization.” She stated, “In essence women served as the anchor for northwestern Saskatchewan culture and society.”⁸⁷ As a result, non-Aboriginal traders who arrived in northern Saskatchewan, rather than having no relationship with Aboriginal people – were adopted into their families through marriage and, in effect, they were adopted into their worldview. Macdougall explained that the arrival of fur traders in the late eighteenth century “did not displace this indigenous world view; rather, the European and Canadian men who worked closely with Aboriginal trading partners became a part of it.”⁸⁸ Furthermore, she explained that because northwestern Saskatchewan became a meeting place for various cultural groups familial networks “created processes of economic and religious accommodation and acculturation based on mutual interest.”⁸⁹ This expression of familial networks, which was extended to non-Aboriginal fur traders, provides insight into the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis’ longstanding relationship with the HBC.

The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis socio-economic connections to the HBC through familial alliance and the traditional credit based system played a role in the construction of their work ethic. Northern Aboriginal trappers depended on the credit system to finance their trapping expeditions. Therefore the economic success of Metis trappers was heavily dependent on their relationship with the trader. In his book, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870 -1930*, Frank Tough stated that:

An inherent feature of the Native economy was the outfitting of the trapper, on credit terms, with goods needed for hunting, trapping and fishing. In the language of the fur trade, Indians were ‘debted.’ Credit or ‘taking debt’ was vital to the long-term operation of the industry. This social relationship was

partly reinforced by the population cycles of fur bearers, since it made sense for the [HBC] to carry the trapper through lean years.⁹⁰

Tough explained that the HBC devised this system as a means to track profitability on an annual basis. He states: “The Made Beaver (MB) standard to value trade goods and Native produce (furs, hides, and provisions) permitted the company to apply exchange value to a barter system.”⁹¹ In his book, *A History of Buffalo Narrows*, Richard Wuorinen identified trapping “debt” as a grub stake comparable to mining, whereby a trader would outfit trappers with food and equipment at the beginning of the season, thus obligating the trapper to sell his winter catch to that company.⁹²

Historian Arthur Ray stated that the foundation of the fur trade economy was the credit and debt system, and that many Aboriginal trappers adhered to the view that there was a “mutual obligation between trappers and traders.”⁹³ Worsley, Buckley and Davis attested that northern Saskatchewan trappers were so accustomed to the credit system that “one was more likely to hear expressions of pride in having a high credit-rating, rather than the resentment of the credit-system itself.”⁹⁴ In the span of decades the credit system became enmeshed not only in northern Saskatchewan’s trapping economy but also in the socio-economic realm of communities. To outsiders, such as anthropologists and government officials, the credit system was a vicious cycle whereby a trapper’s debt was contracted for basic necessities. In differentiating between northern and southern society Worsley, Buckley, and Davis stated:

[The Aboriginal trapper’s] debt is contracted, not for luxuries like two-tone cars or refrigerators, but for flour, lard and bannock. Their debt is directly owed to a known person who represents a store that has the power to cut them off from obtaining further basic necessities; it involves a direct relationship of personal dependence and obligation.⁹⁵

The credit system in the north was, by no means, a perfect system. In, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, Helen Buckley explained that the credit system gave fur traders the advantage because they could set high prices on goods and large margins on pelts. However, she also argued that the credit system was not the only factor related to the decline of the trapping industry. Other factors were small fur harvests and a fluctuating world market that served to maintain trappers in continuous debt.⁹⁶ Furthermore, the credit system was criticized because it placed northern Aboriginal people in a permanent state of debt that led to stereotypes, which included “laziness, improvidence and the inability to handle

cash.”⁹⁷ The relationship between northern Aboriginal trappers and the HBC has been described in terms of total dependence or what Murray Dobbin labeled as “virtual serfdom.”⁹⁸

Nevertheless, the historical entrenchment of the HBC and its credit system became intimately intertwined with tradition in Metis communities. Thus, while outsiders viewed this relationship as strictly colonialist and exploitive in nature, many northern Metis embraced it as compatible with their cultural background and worldview.

It is important to note that the use of cash was not prominent in the north during the early to mid-twentieth century due to the dominance of the credit system. Metis activist and leader, Clem Chartier, stated that, historically, the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis did not use money as a means of currency.⁹⁹ He explains through an interview conducted with Ross Cummings in 1976, that during the 1906 scrip commission people were “still dealing in furs and paper money meant nothing to them.”¹⁰⁰ Beatty further explained that, “The period between 1920 and 1950 was described as ‘the period of least-cash use in most of the Canadian North’...”¹⁰¹ Therefore, the value of accumulating capital in the form of money or otherwise was not prominent in the north during the mid-twentieth century. As a woman in Poelzer’s study reiterated, “Money was not that important. There was a time when we did not have as much money as we have now. You can work things out if you have it or you don’t...”¹⁰²

At the end of the 1940s the northern Saskatchewan’s economy and population were facing many challenges. The reigning Liberal government discussed these challenges and the northern Metis were at the forefront of their concerns. These concerns included Metis poverty and the jurisdictional responsibility between federal and provincial governments. Attorney General for the Liberal government, T.C. Davis, outlined these problems in a letter to Minister of Mines and Resources, T.A. Crerar, in 1938. Davis stated that the federal government was concerned with the fate of the Indian and his ability to “maintain himself in the North”; similarly, he claimed the provincial government was concerned with the northern Halfbreeds and their need to be self-sustaining rather than a burdensome provincial expenditure.¹⁰³ Davis continued by stating, “Our problem is identical, and our objectives are the same, and we gladly enter into negotiations with your Government with the object of attempting to jointly reach a solution of this problem.”¹⁰⁴ Davis then laid out a plan that would essentially place the Metis under the jurisdiction of the federal government, in terms of natural resource use. He recommended that a trapping area be allocated to the Department of Indian Affairs to be set-aside for the northern Indians and

Halfbreeds exclusively; it was also recommended that an area be created near Ile a la Crosse. In exchange for this area the Dominion government would assume responsibility for the entire Indian and Halfbreed population of northern Saskatchewan.¹⁰⁵ As stated previously, government officials often remarked that the lifestyle, language and appearances of northern Aboriginal people made them indistinguishable. Davis acknowledged this by stating that, “Everyone recognizes that in many instances, there is very little difference between the Half-breed and the Treaty Indian, and if it had not been for the giving of Half-breed scrip...a lot of these people would have been admitted to Treaty.”¹⁰⁶ He then requested that the federal government allow northern Metis to enter into treaty if they desired, if not they should be allowed to have land to establish a home.¹⁰⁷ The response of the federal government through a letter from Dr. Thomas Robertson, Saskatchewan Inspector of Indian Agencies, was that only those Halfbreeds who agreed to take treaty would be allowed on reserves.¹⁰⁸ The jurisdictional issue was not the only problem that concerned both governments. The northern Metis were a concern for the federal government because of the cost of relief programs and because of their influence among First Nations on reserves. As Robertson explained:

One of the great troubles on our reserves today is that in many cases our Reserves are surrounded by half-breeds. These half-breeds are drawing relief from the Provincial government, greatly in excess of what we allow our Indians...In addition they are not required to do any work, whereas we require the Indian to work for what he receives. The half-breed is continually agitating among the Indians, advising them [that] they are entitled to and should demand the same assistance that the half-breed is receiving.¹⁰⁹

Further involvement of the provincial government in relation to conservation and social programs would create a newfound differentiation between Metis and First Nations people in the north. While northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and First Nations people shared similar lifestyles, increasing government intervention would further define their natural resource rights. The *Natural Resource Transfer Agreement* and treaty agreements essentially protected First Nations subsistence rights, however, the Metis economy was not similarly protected. This would eventually affect Metis trapping, fishing and hunting rights. As provincial government interest in northern resources increased, the jurisdiction between provincial and federal governments became an issue. Furthermore, according to Barron, the underdevelopment of northern Saskatchewan in terms of public services and amenities, along with economic stagnation became a main concern for the CCF government.¹¹⁰ Since the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis fell

under provincial jurisdiction the CCF government would pay particular attention to the “plight” of the Metis by conducting research on the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis in hopes of finding solutions.

Conclusion

The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis lived a life that was greatly influenced by their relationship with the northern landscape. Their economy was intertwined with the land and the historical relationships that formed during the fur trade era. The northern way of life was based upon knowing how to survive off the land and maintaining close familial connections based upon reciprocal obligation. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis incorporated their way of life in the relationships they had with their First Nation family members, and to some extent the relationships they had with traders. The trapping economy was a part of their cultural history and the relationships and practices held within this economy became tradition. These factors created a specific work ethic that continued to guide community members during the mid-twentieth century as it had in the nineteenth century. While outsiders and government officials were introducing economic and social changes, the Metis retained their socio-cultural connections to the land that had provided them with the knowledge on how best to survive socially and economically as a people. It was the Metis work ethic based on *wahkootowin* and the northern style of life that would come into conflict with CCF fur trade policies in the mid-twentieth century.

¹ Vital Morin, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Remarks by Vital Morin," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Archives, April 21, 1992), 78.
<http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/28707>(accessed Feb 22, 2011)

² Ibid., 77.

³ Brenda Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907* (PhD Dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 2005), 10.

⁴ Ibid., 10.

⁵ Ibid., 48, 49.

⁶ Ibid., 48, 49; Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 50.

⁷ Murray Dobbin, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964," *Studies in Political Economy*, 16 (1985): 7-40, 10.

⁸ SAB, R-33.1, XL 859b (44) Metis December 1942-April 1961, T.C. Douglas Papers, V.F. Valentine, "Some Problems of the Metis of Northern Saskatchewan," 2.

⁹ V.F. Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan* (Department of Natural Resources, 1955), 2.

¹⁰ Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907*, 4.

¹¹ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 242.

¹² Philip Taft Spaulding, *The Metis of Ile-a-la-Crosse* (PhD Dissertation University of Washington, 1970), 55.

¹³ See: Bonita Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan* (M.A. Thesis University of Regina, 1996); Murray Dobbin, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964," *Studies in Political Economy*, 16 (1985): 7-40; Frank Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba 1870- 1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996); Arthur Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 1996).

¹⁴ F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 144.

¹⁵ Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907*, 48.

¹⁶ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 239, 216.

¹⁷ Arthur J. Ray, "Fur Trade History as and Aspect of Native History," in *Expressions in Canadian Native Studies* ed. Ron F. Laliberte et al, 163-177 (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Extension Press, 2000), 165.

¹⁸ Ibid., 166.

¹⁹ Ibid., 170, 166.

²⁰ Ibid., 171.

²¹ Michael Tymchak, *Our Heritage: The People of Northern Saskatchewan* (Department of Northern Saskatchewan, Academic Education Branch, 1975), 8.

²² *Ibid.*, 8.

²³ Dictionary.com, Definition of Piece Rate, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/piece+rate> (accessed on May 24, 2011).

²⁴ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 59.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 60, 61, 62.

²⁹ Marcel Giraud, *The Metis of the Canadian West*, 2 vols. Trans. George Woodcock (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1986), 1: 211-212.

³⁰ Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907*, 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

³² *Ibid.*, 9.

³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴ Nap Johnson, "Interview with Nap Johnson from Ile a La Crosse," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (La Ronge: Northern Saskatchewan Archives, 1975), 1-2 <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/28615> (accessed May 30, 2011)

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Richard Wuorinen, *A History of Buffalo Narrows* (Buffalo Narrows: Celebrate Saskatchewan Committee, 1981), 1-2.

³⁷ See D.J. Hall, "The Half-Breed Claims Commission," in *Alberta History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Spring, 1977); 1-8; Ken Hatt, "The North-West Rebellion Scrip Commissions, 1885-1889," in *1885 and After: Native Society in Transition*, ed. F.L. Barron and J.B. Waldram (Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 1986).

³⁸ Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907*, 298.

³⁹ See V.F. Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan* (Department of Natural Resources, 1955); P.M. Worsley, H.L. Buckley and A.K. Davis, *Economic and Social Survey of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: Research Centre for Community Studies, 1961).

⁴⁰ Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan*, 53.

⁴¹ Bonita Beatty, *Pimacesowin (To Make Your Own Way): First Nation Governance Through an Autonomous Non-Government Organization—The Experience of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Health Services Inc. In Northern Saskatchewan* (PhD Dissertation, University of Alberta, 2006), 102-104. Similarly, Ron Bourgeault stated that, "In

the case of northern Indians primitive communalism, its social relations of production were egalitarian in the sense that what the people produced and how it was distributed, exchanged and consumed were mutually decided upon.” He continued by explaining that land within the northern communal society existed for all to produce “what was to be used in a collective capacity.” Ron Bourgeault, “The Indian, The Metis and the Fur Trade: Class, Sexism and Racism in the Transition from ‘Communalism’ to Capitalism,” *Studies in Political Economy*, no. 12 (Fall, 1983): 45-80, 49.

⁴² Leah Dorion and Darren R. Prefontaine, “Deconstructing Metis Historiography: Giving Voice to The Metis People,” in *Metis Legacy: A Historiography and Annotated Bibliography* ed. Lawrence J. Barkwell, Leah M. Dorion and Darren R. Prefontaine, 13-36 (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 2001), 21.

⁴³ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 14.

⁴⁴ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 37.

⁴⁵ Delores T. Poelzer and Irene A. Poelzer, *In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Metis Women Speak Out* (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt and Hamonic Publishing Inc., 1986), 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁸ Bonita Beatty explains the northern style of life in her presentation for the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference: *Kiweytinohk Pimachesowin: Saskatchewan Northern Way of Life*. Beatty defines the Cree word Nehithathaw Pimachesowin as the “Aboriginal way of life.” Pimachesowin reflects the traditional Aboriginal values of respect and dependency on the Creator, self reliance, cooperation, sharing, generosity, hospitality and kinship or wahkootowin systems. (NAISA Presentation, May 2011).

⁴⁹ Worsley, Buckley and Davis, *Economic and Social Survey of Northern Saskatchewan*, 12.

⁵⁰ Audreen Hourie, Lawrence Barkwell, Anne Carriere-Acco, and Leah Dorion, “Metis Foods and Food Preparation,” in *Metis Legacy II: Michif Culture Heritage and Folkways*, ed. Lawrence Barkwell, Leah M. Dorion and Audreen Hourie, 120-132 (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute and Pemmican Publications, 2006), 120.

⁵¹ Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), R-33.1, IX.372 (9-16) *Primrose Lake Bombing Range, 1952-1961*, T.C. Douglas Papers, W.B. Baker, “Some Observations on the Application of Community Development to the Settlements of Northern Saskatchewan,” 4. This report does not have an exact date, therefore the date range (1952-1961) given by the Saskatchewan Archives will be used.

⁵² Poelzer, *In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Metis Women Speak Out*, 6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁴ Jean Morisset and Rose-Marie Pelletier ed. *Ted Trindell: Metis Witness to the North* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1986), 116.

⁵⁵ David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 46-47.

⁵⁶ Bonita Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan* (M.A. Thesis University of Regina, 1996), 68.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, i.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 57.

⁶⁰ Monique Gardiner, Transcript, July 5, 2001, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, April 18, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06297> (accessed April 20, 2012). Note: Born in 1910. She was 91 years old when the interview was conducted.

⁶¹ David and Susan Zub ed., *Mukakawani-Kiskisi-no We'll Never Forget* (Beauval: Young Canada Works Program and Beauval Recreation Board, 1981), 22. Note: Born in 1917.

⁶² Gerard Makuch, "Green Lake's Isabelle Bishop," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (Northern Saskatchewan Archives, August 1982) <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/27856> (accessed December 7, 2011). Note: Born in 1907.

⁶³ Christine Misonpas, Transcript, July 4, 2001, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, April 16, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06259> (accessed April 20, 2012).

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Georgina Morin, Transcript, August 21 and 22, 1999, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, April 17, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06297> (accessed December 5, 2011). Note: Born in 1924.

⁶⁶ Robert Longpre ed., *Ile-a-la-Crosse 1776-1976 Sakitawak Bi-Centennial* (Ile-a-la-Crosse: Ile-a-la-Crosse Bi-Centennial Committee and Ile-a-la-Crosse Local Community Authority, 1977), 48-49. Note: During the time of the interview [est.1977] Natomagan was eighty-six years old.

⁶⁷ Brenda Macdougall, "Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," *The Canadian Historical Review* Volume 87, Number 3 (2006): 431-462, 434.

⁶⁸ Harry Roy, "An Interview with Harry Roy of Green Lake," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (Northern Saskatchewan Archives, April, 1975) <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/28617>(accessed December 8, 2011) Note: Born in 1905.

⁶⁹ Leon Morin, Transcript, July 5, 2001, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, April 18, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06292> (accessed April 4, 2012). Note: Born in 1930.

⁷⁰ Kent McNeil, *Indian Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Rights in the Prairie Provinces of Canada* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1983), 20.

⁷¹ Ibid., 20.

⁷² *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement*, S.C. 1930, 20-21 Geo. V., c. 41, s. 12. <http://www.fnmr.gov.sk.ca/documents/lands/nrta1930.pdf>

⁷³ Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan*, 63.

⁷⁴ Helen Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Centre for Community Studies, Research Division, 1962), 17.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁶ Robert Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980), 55; Helen Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Centre for Community Studies, Research Division, 1962), 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁷⁸ Helen Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Centre for Community Studies, Research Division, 1962), 17.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁸⁰ Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (UBC Press, 2006), 6, 40.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 7, 40.

⁸² Canada, *Report of the Chief Game Guardian*, Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture Annual Report, 1919, 45.

⁸³ "Conserving Resources and Developing Industries (Broadcast of December 4)," *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 13 December 1944.

⁸⁴ Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 10.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁸⁶ Worsley, Buckley and Davis, *Economic and Social Survey of Northern Saskatchewan*, 10.

⁸⁷ Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907*, 123; 118.

⁸⁸ Macdougall, *One of the Family*, 25.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁹⁰ Frank Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870- 1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 17.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁹² Wourinen, *A History of Buffalo Narrows*, 15.

⁹³ Arthur Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 1996), 272.

⁹⁴ Worsley, Buckley and Davis, *Economic and Social Survey of Northern Saskatchewan*, 13.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹⁶ Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 44.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44

⁹⁸ Murray Dobbin, ed. *Economic Options for Northern Saskatchewan: Report of the Economic Options for Northern Saskatchewan Conference, Saskatoon, November 16-17, 1984* (Saskatoon: Inter-Church Uranium Committee and the Northern Native Rights Committee, 1984), 5.

⁹⁹ Clem Chartier is a Metis lawyer, activist and politician born in 1946. He was raised in Buffalo Narrows and attended school in Ile a la Crosse. Chartier became a political activist in the late 1960's. Darren R. Prefontaine, "Chartier Clement (1946-)," (University of Regina: The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan) http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/chartier_clement_1946-.html (accessed April 26, 2012).

¹⁰⁰ Clem Chartier, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Presentation by the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, Clem Chartier," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (University of Saskatchewan Archives, Native Law Centre Fonds, December 10, 1992) 189-190.

¹⁰¹ Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan*, 68.

¹⁰² Poelzer, *In Our Own Words*, 6.

¹⁰³ Library and Archives Canada, Indian Affairs, Saskatchewan Trapline Leases 1933-1940, RG10 C-8112, Vol 6759, File 420-11-2 Pt.1. "Letter to T.A. Crerar, Minister of Mines from T.C. Davis, September 1, 1938."

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Library and Archives Canada, Indian Affairs, Saskatchewan Trapline Leases 1933-1940, RG10 C-8112, Vol 6759, File 420-11-2 Pt.1. "Letter from Dr. Thos Robertson Inspector of Indian Agencies to The Department of Mines and Resources, Sept 14, 1938."

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 140-142.

CHAPTER TWO

“Into Saskatchewan’s Northland”: CCF Policy and Ideology in Northern Saskatchewan

There are riches [in Saskatchewan’s North] that most of us had never thought of nor had been concerned with, but today we have to think about them and concern ourselves with them. Proper development of these resources, with a view of preserving them, for the benefit of our people and a due regard to their conservation and perpetuation, are matters of concern for us all.¹

In 1944 the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a socialist party led by Tommy Douglas, formed the majority government in Saskatchewan; the media would label them as “the first socialist government in North America.”² In 1952, in an article written for the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* Tommy Douglas presented the CCF’s mandate for northern Saskatchewan. For Douglas, northern Saskatchewan was “Canada’s last frontier,”³ and the rich resources found within the north were to be conserved and developed for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens. The CCF’s main goal for restructuring the north was to tap into the vast amount of natural resources in Saskatchewan’s northland. However, CCF socialist ideology also called for the rehabilitation of the impoverished northern Aboriginal people who inhabited the region. These goals led to an increase in policies and initiatives aimed at further settling Aboriginal people into permanent communities, thus allowing the government to effectively provide services such as education, medical care and social assistance programs. Since the Metis did not fall under the *Indian Act*, they became the responsibility of the CCF government and the main focus of their rehabilitation efforts. CCF policies for the north, in particular its conservation and social programs, themselves a direct reflection of the party’s socialist ideology and subsequent policy development, resulted in a major restructuring of the fur trapping industry, which negatively impacted Metis trappers by altering their socio-economic lifestyle.

As a socialist party, many of the CCF’s priorities stemmed from promoting socialist values and resisting capitalism. Quiring explained that for the CCF party, “The welfare of the community took precedence over that of the individual. State intervention would result in a dramatic reduction of private ownership of resources and the means of production.”⁴ Therefore, in some ways the CCF’s ideology was similar to the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis because the importance of community and sharing resources were also cornerstones of Metis worldview. However, contrary to this ideology, the CCF would employ top-down bureaucratic policies in the north that would greatly affect the Aboriginal population. Quiring stated that eventually the CCF

softened its staunch socialist position and the “stark contrast between the two competing ideologies, socialism and capitalism, became blurred” with the CCF preferring to label the party as “social democratic.”⁵

In 1944, the Department of Natural Resources, led by Minister Joseph Phelps, became the dominant authority in the north. Barron provided a description of Phelps stating that he “ruled the DNR by the seat of his pants” and that “cabinet colleagues learned of DNR development projects only after they had already been initiated.”⁶ The more conservative CCF party members often characterized Phelps administration of northern Saskatchewan as “radical and unorthodox” but he had strong supporters in a small group of committed socialists.⁷ Phelps held a strong belief in the CCF party’s ideology that economic development must benefit Saskatchewan’s citizens. In a CCF radio broadcast on December 4, 1944 he stated:

We believe that the department of natural resources should be operated with the keynote of the CCF policy – “Humanity First” – as our watchword. We must conserve and develop those resources first, which will give the citizens of Saskatchewan the three essentials of life – food, shelter and clothing.⁸

Shortly after taking office, Phelps and Premier Douglas toured northern Saskatchewan and were disturbed by what they witnessed: a stagnant trapping and fishing economy coupled with a lack of social services in Aboriginal communities.⁹ In 1946 Phelps’ visit to Saskatchewan’s north was depicted in the CCF party newspaper, *The Commonwealth*, which highlighted the lack of transportation infrastructure as Phelps traveled to places such as Ile a la Crosse and Buffalo Narrows by plane and motor canoe.¹⁰ Development for the north was viewed as problematic because of its isolation which, in turn, hindered the provision of supplies, the supervision of fur and conservation measures, the establishment of fisheries and the construction of hospitals and schools.¹¹ The CCF utilized its party radio broadcasts and newspapers to draw attention to the poverty and hardships faced by northern Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal people and then used its ideological slogan of “humanity first” to guide the formulation of its policies for the north. Northern economic development was touted as essential in addressing northern poverty. As *The Commonwealth*, stated: “...a program of economic development is essential. The extreme poverty of the northern Indians, Treaty and Metis alike, the primitive and precarious conditions under which they live, the prevalence of disease among them, are factors underlying the need.”¹² However, the CCF’s perception of northern poverty did not necessarily reflect Metis views. As noted in Chapter One, some Metis expressed that although survival in the north was

hard they still lived a good life because they were “not lacking in anything.”¹³ The CCF would use their ideology of helping the downtrodden as a guiding principle for their economic and social policies instituted in the north whether the people wanted such help or not.

The CCF and especially DNR Minister Joseph Phelps opposed the long rule of the provincial Liberal party and the HBC in the north. According to Premier Douglas and Phelps, the Liberals thirty-five year rule in the north had allowed individual entrepreneurs and private corporations to “ravage the northern landscape and plunder natural resources.” Their solution to this was to implement conservation policy and government regulations to control economic development in northern Saskatchewan.¹⁴ Phelps disliked how the trapping industry revolved around old agreements that were “costing the Saskatchewan government millions of dollars every year in legalized robbery.”¹⁵ In particular, Phelps claimed that the Hudson’s Bay Company Charter of 1670, that gave the company exclusive rights to trade furs with Aboriginal people, was exploitative. Furthermore, he condemned the Liberals for “aiding and abetting” the monopoly of the HBC thus allowing the company to become the only law in northern Saskatchewan.¹⁶ The CCF were intent on creating a “new north” by emphasizing the need for both sharing and conserving natural resources while rescuing Aboriginal people from poverty and the oppressive rule of the HBC. The CCF also maintained that, “development of the resources could not be dissociated from the development of the people who used them because of the importance of natural resources to the economy of the northern people.”¹⁷ The restoration of the trapping economy would rehabilitate the Aboriginal population and allow them to participate in the modern economic system without being under the rule of capitalist fur traders.

The Northern Fur Conservation Program, 1946 and the Saskatchewan Fur Marketing Service, 1944

The formal Liberal government and the newly elected CCF government both understood that the trapping economy had been in steep decline since the 1930s. The CCF’s approach to northern Saskatchewan’s deteriorating trapping economy was to boost the trapping economy through conservation measures and policies, which were meant to safeguard northern trappers from the economic fluctuations in fur markets and the monopoly of private traders. In her study, *Trapping and Fishing in Northern Saskatchewan*, Helen Buckley explained that the prices of fur on the world market during the mid twentieth century were in decline due to “...shrinking

demand, increasing production of ranch fur [mink farming], and more competition from other countries.”¹⁸ Phelps claimed after his tour of northern Saskatchewan that a “great deal of work” would be required to “straighten out the mess” in the north.¹⁹ As far back as 1939, the Liberal government had taken measures to secure the natural resources in Saskatchewan through the introduction of the *Northern Conservation Board Act*. The Act served to create an advisory board consisting of two individuals, one to be appointed by the provincial government and another to be appointed by the federal government with cost of operating it divided between the two.²⁰ The mandate of the advisory board was to provide advice to the two levels of government on how to increase fish, fowl and fur resources throughout northern Saskatchewan. This, the Conservation Board stated, would make it possible for the Indian and Halfbreed population to be self-sustaining.²¹ The areas that were to be governed by the Northern Conservation Board included the provincial electoral divisions of Cumberland and Athabasca. The Athabasca area included the constituencies of Green Lake, Beauval, Ile a la Crosse and Buffalo Narrows.

The Act included clauses directing the board to investigate the feasibility of licensed traplines along with the agreement that hunting and trapping licenses only be issued to residents of the area. Exceptions were made for Indians under the *Indian Act* who were entitled to have licenses issued to them regardless of whether they were residents of the area outlined by the board.²² In order to alleviate the over trapping that was occurring due to an influx of non-Aboriginal trappers in the area, the Act also sought to differentiate First Nations and Metis trappers from transient non-Aboriginal trappers who were not northern residents. The Act stated that:

...hunting and trapping licenses shall hereafter be issued only to the actual resident population of said area. Insofar as Indians are concerned, as defined by the Indian Act, necessary licenses to hunt and trap shall be issued to them regardless of whether or not they were resident in said area upon the date of this agreement or whether they moved into the said area from elsewhere in the province of Saskatchewan after the date of this agreement. The same shall apply to persons of mixed white and Indian blood, it being the intention of the parties hereto that the Indians and Halfbreeds of the entire province of Saskatchewan shall be, from time to time, permitted to hunt a trap in the area...so long as they are actually residents of area [when they apply for a license.]²³

Therefore, First Nations and Metis trappers could procure a hunting or trapping license regardless of whether they had migrated to the area or not, so long as they chose to remain in the north. Non-Aboriginal trappers holding licenses were allowed to maintain their licenses.

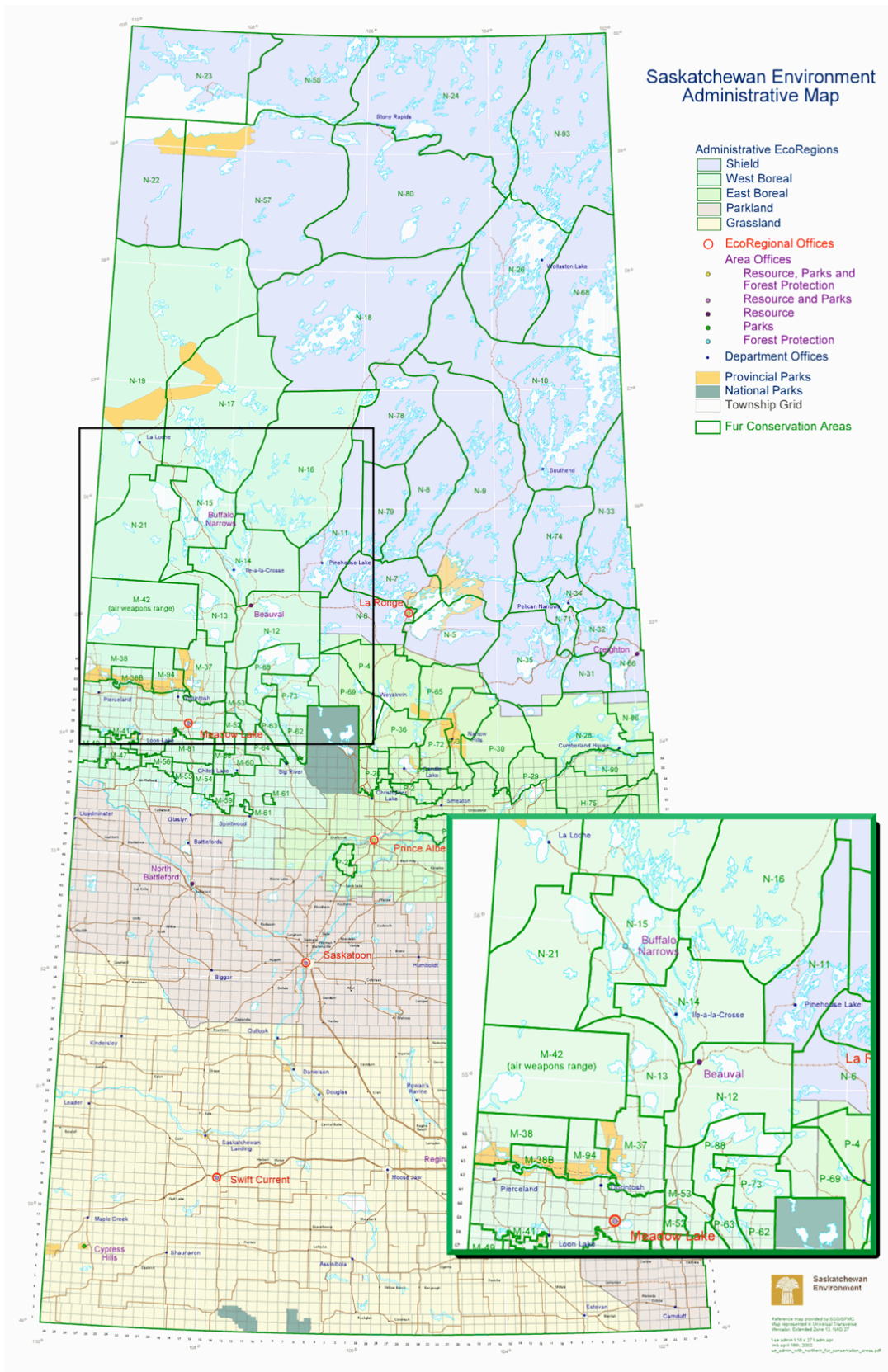
However, unlike northern Aboriginals, they would not be able to procure a license if they had moved into the area after the Act was instituted unless approved by the Northern Conservation Board.²⁴ While the *Northern Conservation Board Act* was a joint effort between the federal and provincial government to safeguard the north from transient non-Aboriginal trappers and thereby protect fur resources, northern Saskatchewan's natural resource policy would not change drastically until the arrival of the CCF and the creation of the *Northern Fur Conservation Program* in 1946.

The *Northern Fur Conservation Program* utilized the agreement made in 1939 between the federal and provincial governments to enact a conservation agreement that allowed for the creation of fur conservation areas in northern Saskatchewan. In 1946, a minute created by the Committee of the Privy Council²⁵ outlined the history of the provincial and federal governments efforts to create a northern conservation program. The Committee stated that: "...further studies of [northern fur resources] show that the [agreement] enacted [between the two governments] in 1939 was too circumscribed and was inadequate to provide fully for the economic problems [of Saskatchewan's northern peoples.]"²⁶ Thus, the failure of the previous agreement led to the creation of the *Northern Fur Conservation Agreement*, which took effect in July 1946. The federal and provincial government both sponsored the agreement, which provided a budget of \$50,000 a year to reestablish the fur industry. The federal government paid sixty percent of the expenditure in lieu of its responsibility for status First Nations. In addition to the original allocation of \$50,000, funds were made available for various projects that included: "wildlife studies, the clearing of portages, and building dams to raise and maintain water levels in support of muskrat production."²⁷ The agreement was to last ten years and as previously stated, it allowed the CCF to create a fur conservation block that would envelop all areas north of the 53rd parallel, which roughly corresponded to the northern affairs region under control of the DNR.²⁸ Fur Conservation Areas (FCAs), henceforth referred to as trapping blocks, were created to replenish the beaver population.²⁹ The trapping blocks also functioned as units of management whereby the fur harvest in each block was maintained by an orderly system that restricted the number of trappers in each area. This reduced conflict between trappers and established the commercial identities of each trapline.³⁰ Each trapping block was composed of licensed trappers. A council of five representatives was chosen from each trapping block, which was responsible for the administration, organization and operation of the block. In order to become a member of a

trapping block a trapper had to be at least sixteen years old, a local resident who had resided within the community corresponding to the block for at least one year, or a woman who supported a family. Then, membership had to be approved by the block council.³¹ Thirty-nine trapping blocks were created in the northern region and divided into three types: large “open” fur blocks, individual registered traplines and fur blocks divided into zones.³² Large “open” fur blocks were preferred by people of the far north because zoning curtailed their movements for the caribou hunt.³³ In the more southerly areas, individual traplines were preferred. Lastly, in the mid-north around Ile a la Crosse, Beauval and Buffalo Narrows, fur blocks were divided into zones where groups of “informal but recognized” family owned traplines were held by individual family members and passed down through generations.³⁴ In *Trapping and Trapline Life*, Merle Massie described how trappers chose their traplines. She states that choosing a trapline was a complex process and was controlled by two key factors: local resources and government regulations (i.e. trapping blocks and trapping licenses). Traplines were established in isolated forest areas near “good fur regions and game trails.” In order to locate a trapline, trappers spent time “walking, snowshoeing...and canoeing their proposed trapline to find game trails, dens and habits of their target animals.”³⁵

The CCF’s *Northern Fur Conservation Program* was also utilized to rehabilitate the beaver population in northern areas. Since the inception of the program, the DNR began transplanting beaver in the north. For instance, in 1946 the DNR transplanted forty beaver in the Ile a la Crosse area, in 1947 another one hundred and in 1948 an additional forty. The beaver were taken from southern regions of Saskatchewan where they had become a “nuisance.”³⁶ The CCF highlighted their accomplishment in rehabilitating the northern beaver population by declaring that, “...when in 1946 the live-trapped [beavers] were unloaded at the wharf [in Ile a la Crosse], they were the first that young people of the settlement had ever seen.”³⁷ Trapping of beaver was regulated on a quota basis. Data on animal populations and habitat conditions were gathered and used to determine the quotas set by the block council with assistance from the DNR. Trapping quotas were applied to each block and in some instances quotas were set for muskrat as well.³⁸ The trapping blocks established by the CCF were touted by DNR Minister, Joseph Phelps, as one of the most rigorous conservation programs in the history of the province. Phelps was determined to rejuvenate the trapping industry and referred to the new CCF conservation policies as a “bill of rights for the people of northern Saskatchewan.”³⁹ The CCF

Figure 2. Northern Saskatchewan Fur Conservation Areas



Government of Saskatchewan, Environment, S.E. Admin with Northern Fur Conservation Areas, <http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/maps> (accessed May 16, 2012)

ideology of “Humanity First” and the belief that northern resources were to be shared equally were consistent themes within the CCF’s conceptualization of new conservation programs. This ideology was echoed by Phelps who stated, “all resident trappers, regardless of race, will enter the plan on equal footing and be given an opportunity to take part in the government of each conservation block.”⁴⁰ In regards to the new policy the CCF government affirmed that, “Indians, Metis and whites will be treated alike in their dealings with the administration, and if possible traplines will be allotted to those who trapped them previously.”⁴¹

The CCF conservation policy that stipulated all resident trappers were to be treated equally, regardless of whether they were Aboriginal or not, differed from that of the former Liberal government because the *Northern Conservation Board Act* of 1939 differentiated between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal trappers in terms of how the Act was applied. Quiring argued that CCF intervention in northern Saskatchewan had a negative impact on the non-Aboriginal population because southerners who used to migrate north to trap were suddenly “shut out.”⁴² Nevertheless, prior to the conservation policies of the CCF, the Liberal government was aware of the problems non-Aboriginal transient trappers were causing for northern conservation. The CCF had to balance its ideology, which stipulated that natural resources should benefit all Saskatchewan citizens, with the mandate that northern conservation policy would be the backbone in rehabilitating Aboriginal people. Therefore, while Saskatchewan’s northland was to be opened up for development, the trapping economy was to be protected for northern residents who were mainly Aboriginal and more importantly, conservation measures, such as the removal of transient trappers, were to be strictly observed.

Perhaps the CCF’s most controversial fur conservation measure was the establishment of the Saskatchewan Fur Marketing Service (SFMS) in 1944. The SFMS was a crown corporation designed to increase prices for furs and as a conservation measure it provided a way to ensure that trappers adhered to pelt quotas.⁴³ The CCF described the SFMS as “...an agency set up as a crown corporation for the purpose of selling furs from trappers and fur ranchers at the highest market prices. It is the first successful fur auction in Saskatchewan, and it’s the only government operated agency of its kind in Canada.”⁴⁴ SFMS headquarters were located in Regina and held its fur auctions⁴⁵ once a month from December to August, excluding July.⁴⁶ While most pelts could be sold to any fur trader, beaver and muskrat had to be marketed through the SFMS. According to the CCF there were two main reasons for this policy. First, centralized marketing would

maintain constant reproduction of beaver and muskrat by assuring that trappers did not trap more than their allotted quota each year. Second, the CCF stated that, "...a great deal of public money is being spent on the conservation and development of muskrat and beaver and, therefore, it is necessary to guarantee that the public treasury receives its fair share from the sale of muskrat and beaver pelts."⁴⁷ The SFMS took a percentage of each muskrat and beaver pelt sold; the usual allotment was ten percent. However, in some areas where special conservation measures and development had been done, twenty percent was to be deducted. On all other furs, five percent was deducted from the total pelt price.⁴⁸ Trappers received an initial cash payment for their furs and then a final payment once the price of the furs were determined through the auction in Regina.⁴⁹ The SFMS essentially changed the trapping economy from a credit-based system to a cash based system through provincial control over the marketing of beaver and muskrat pelts.

The SFMS was an extension of CCF political ideals. It was a program instituted to manage conservation and to free trappers from the monopoly of the HBC and other private traders. However, according to economist Helen Buckley the SFMS "was never wholly or even primarily a northern venture" because from its inception it had provided a commission service for trappers, mink ranchers and dealers throughout Saskatchewan. Furthermore, she pointed out that a high percentage of the furs sold in Saskatchewan originated from central and southern Saskatchewan.⁵⁰ The compulsory marketing of beaver and muskrat through the SFMS was discontinued in 1956. According to the CCF, this decision was based on the fact that the fur stock was replenished due to the success of conservation policies.⁵¹ But various scholars have noted that many northern trappers were opposed to the compulsory marketing of the SFMS and that this may have precipitated the decision to discontinue the restriction.⁵² For the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis the SFMS hindered their ability to finance their trapping seasons with credit. The Metis were tied to the credit system both historically and economically, and their reaction to the policy changes enacted by the CCF could have partially influenced the discontinuation of the SFMS.

CCF Social Policy and The Northern Advisory Committee, 1953

The restoration of the stagnant trapping economy through the use of conservation policy was not the CCF's only mandate for northern Saskatchewan. The party also wanted to alleviate the social problems among northern Aboriginal groups and in particular, improve the welfare of

the Metis. Much of CCF ideology was based on helping the impoverished, and rectifying the northern economy was viewed as one way to eradicate northern poverty. In addition, access to education and healthcare were viewed as essential in the rehabilitation of the northern Metis. CCF socialist ideology dictated that the “rehabilitation of underprivileged groups was the responsibility of the public sector.”⁵³ In October 1953 the CCF established the Northern Advisory Committee (NAC) and its mandate was to: “...consider the problems attendant upon the social and economic development of the people of northern Saskatchewan - to define and determine the causes of these problems and to recommend avenues of activity which will assist in their ultimate solution.”⁵⁴ The NAC met eight times spanning the years 1953 to 1955 and devoted their meetings to discussions concerning social welfare, agriculture, resource management, co-operatives and public health. Much of the information discussed in these meetings was procured from preliminary studies made in the fields of anthropology and geography. As a result, the NAC felt it had acquired sufficient information to make recommendations concerning the Metis. The NAC paid specific attention to the Metis of the “Buffalo Region” which included the settlements of La Loche, Ile a la Crosse, Buffalo Narrows and Beauval. This region was described as having the least natural resource wealth and was also labeled as a “problem area.”⁵⁵ The committee recommended that the government devote special attention to this area and that Ile a la Crosse be considered an “experimental area.”⁵⁶ The CCF was also concerned with the lack of transportation infrastructure in the north. Therefore, the NAC recommended the creation of an all-weather road to Buffalo Narrows and that the community of Ile a la Crosse be moved closer to the road.⁵⁷ Ile a la Crosse was located on a peninsula miles from the proposed road, which hindered access to the community. The community was never relocated although two sites were selected.⁵⁸ The case of Ile a la Crosse demonstrated the challenges the CCF faced in developing northern transportation routes.⁵⁹

As an experimental area, Ile a la Crosse was regarded as a place that harbored many factors restricting development, such as poor soil quality and land susceptible to flooding.⁶⁰ Moreover, while anthropologist V.F. Valentine remained in the community, all agencies of government were expected to accommodate Valentine by “making special concessions in their policies and regulations” so that his experimental programs could be facilitated.⁶¹ Valentine was hired to oversee the development of cooperatives in northern Saskatchewan and would conduct what he would label a “social experiment” by setting up a co-op store in Ile a la Crosse.⁶² More

specifically, Valentine developed a co-op store in Fort Black directly across the lake from the village of Ile a la Crosse. Historically, families in the Ile a la Crosse area were scattered throughout various points around the lake. Ile a la Crosse community member Nap Johnson explains that, "...[people lived in] Canoe River, there used to be about nine families over there; and...Fort Black, ...Poplar Island, Beaver River, Sucker Point, Sandy Point...[families] were scattered you know."⁶³ Fort Black was a location central for those families that lived on the east side of the lake. In her thesis, *Co-operative and State Ownership in Northern Saskatchewan Under the CCF Government*, Karla Radloff defined co-operatives as "voluntary 'self help' organizations that are member owned and operated." They also provide their members with specific services and, in turn, the surplus profit of the co-operative can be returned to member-owners.⁶⁴ Radloff explained that because every member has an equal position in the co-operative members have a "higher degree of control over their economic lives."⁶⁵

In Valentine's account of the development of the Fort Black co-operative store he described the animosity this project generated between the HBC and himself because of his efforts to support a co-op store in Ile a la Crosse.⁶⁶ This animosity was due to the economic competition the HBC would face with the creation of a co-op store. The development of co-operatives was one avenue the CCF pursued to bring the northern Metis into a southern or modern economy and to discourage the reliance on the credit system of the HBC. The NAC felt that in certain areas of the north, most notably in the Buffalo region, that co-operative action in the development of available resources was the only way northern Metis would improve their standard of living.⁶⁷ However, the NAC suggested that the Metis personality and cultural traits acted as barriers to their social and economic development, particularly their "tendency towards individualism," which stemmed from the nature of their trapping and hunting lifestyle.⁶⁸ According to the committee, the development of northern co-operatives would undermine the latter Metis traits. Cooperative development also needed to be slowly implemented because of the Metis' "lack of capital and 'know how.'"⁶⁹ The NAC's depiction of the Metis was misguided in terms of the Metis' perceived cultural traits. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis worldview was centered on kinship systems, which anchored them to family and community. Thus, co-operatives reflected the core values of the Metis. However, the CCF failed to tailor co-operatives for Aboriginal communities. Dobbin explained that co-operatives remained a "top down" initiative and that the most active members were non-Aboriginal. He continued by stating that

many Aboriginal people continued to deal with traders, such as the HBC, who were already living in the area for years and who often spoke Aboriginal languages.⁷⁰

The NAC came to the conclusion that there was no “clear cut answer” concerning what they were trying to accomplish within northern Metis communities. In light of the absence of a clear policy for the Metis, the committee recommended that,

...the government adopt a policy of ‘gradual integration under which the Metis ultimately are encouraged to develop into a mature, independent and self-sufficient group of people able to conduct their own enterprises and to solve their particular problems without excessive reference to government or other agencies.’⁷¹

The NAC was a reflection of the CCF government’s views on northern Metis people, especially those of the “Buffalo Region.” The committee advanced two approaches to develop the Metis into a self-sufficient people. First, increase the utilization of available resources, which was already underway with the induction of conservation programs and policies within the northern economy, and second, initiate “broad educational processes.” The NAC stated:

...through broad educational processes, raising the general level of understanding of the Metis, of such aspects of modern civilization as technology, economic principles and values and advantages of co-operative or community organization in order that they might benefit from more efficient use of resources.⁷²

In other words, the objectives of the CCF among northern Metis were to educate them about the modern economic system and provide them with knowledge on cooperatives. In doing so, the CCF hoped to instill the Metis with the value of community organization, which in turn, would further its goal of creating an efficient economic system in the north. The CCF would use bureaucratic procedures to create order in the northern economy and institute social programming. To accomplish this, the Metis needed to maintain permanent settlements and be weaned off of the credit based economic system embedded in the trapping economy.

While the DNR assumed the dominant role in regulating provincial government policies, conservation officers would be the enforcers of CCF conservation policy. The NAC outlined the responsibilities of conservation officers in the north stating, “The work of the Conservation Officer in northern Saskatchewan is vastly different from that of his counterpart in the south... the resources he administers are of much greater immediate importance to the people of his district.”⁷³ Conservation officers were expected to do much more than supervise game

regulations. In addition, they were expected to be representatives of the government and teachers of modern economic values. The NAC stated that:

It must be remembered that these people [the Metis] do not comprehend the principle of conservation and practices based on this principle. Therefore, the conservation officer in order to do his job properly must be more than an overseer and an enforcement officer – he must also be a leader and a teacher...In many of the northern settlements, the Conservation Officer is the sole representative of government, in fact to the people he is the government. The opinion which these folk hold about the department and its programs is largely influenced by this man and the way in which he handles his work.⁷⁴

Conservation officers became the sole representative of the provincial government in the north. Tasked with the daunting responsibility of being teacher and disciplinarian of provincial government policy, the northern conservation officer had to interpret the law as he saw fit. In, *Action and Reaction: An Overview of Provincial Policies and Programs in Northern Saskatchewan*, Vernon C. Searl referred to a DNR conservation officer's description of his duties. As Searl reiterated, the conservation officer stated, "...a conservation officer...in the north...must improvise and use whatever methods his good judgment indicates will bring about a good result in a given situation...I have often, to use honest language, twisted, distorted, or completely neglected parts of the law..."⁷⁵ Conservation officers became the symbol of government authority in northern Metis communities and the relationships they held with community members played a large role in shaping northern Aboriginal peoples opinions of government policy.

The conservation of natural resources remained a main policy goal of the CCF throughout their time in office. However, changes to the DNR were made after the provincial election in 1948 that caused a shift in the CCF's ideal of "Humanity First." Phelps was defeated in the 1948 election⁷⁶ and subsequently Premier Douglas appointed a new Minister of Natural Resources, John H. Brockelbank. Quiring stated that after Phelps departure from the DNR, the CCF dedicated less energy on the northern program and focused on the idea of "self-help" within northern Metis communities, and although the CCF's ideology changed, they "did little to undo Phelps's work."⁷⁷ Brockelbank's opinions and approach regarding the Metis differed from those of the NAC. While he agreed that the Metis had to be integrated into the modern economy, he felt that the government was being too lenient with services and aid. In a 1955 letter to the NAC he stated:

I can't help but feel that at times we have inaugurated schemes in the North which have not given due regard to the ultimate end to which the Metis ought to be moving. As a result certain benefits offered these people are regarded by them as rights rather than privileges. Though all of our endeavours have been well-intentioned, I am afraid we have helped to foster a "beggarly" attitude on the part of these people in which they have come to expect that the Provincial Government will carry the whole burden of solving their dilemma, while they do nothing. Obviously if the Metis are not encouraged to strive towards independence, maturity and self sufficiency...many of the endeavours of government among them will come to nought (sic).⁷⁸

The social dilemma of the Metis remained an important consideration in CCF social policy. However, in the view of government, it was a situation whereby the Metis would have to "take responsibility" for themselves. Even though Brockelbank made his sentiments regarding the northern Metis known, the CCF continued to fund research studies to understand why the Metis resisted integrating into a modern or southern style economy and society.

CCF ideology and their application of modern economic principles in the north collided with Metis worldview, and subsequently the Metis work ethic. The traditional cultural practice of familial reciprocity was maintained in northwestern Saskatchewan communities well into the mid-twentieth century. When CCF officials and their non-Aboriginal government employees encountered this aspect of Metis society they viewed it as detrimental to modern economic principles. DNR researchers P.M Worsley, Helen Buckley and A.K. Davis stated that a missionary familiar with the practice of reciprocity described it as "bumming, borrowing and begging."⁷⁹ In his 1955 study, *The Metis of Northern Saskatchewan*, V.F. Valentine described his understanding of Metis reciprocity as follows:

An individual shares a portion or the whole of his good fortune with another because if he does not, he will not likely receive help when he is in need. The fear of being left destitute by one's kinfolk and friends is so great that no true bush Indian or Metis would dare refuse to give what he can to the needy. The principle of sharing is at once the strength and weakness of the Indian and Metis life, for while it assures the people of a reasonable distribution of vital goods it hinders them from participating in white society which demands conspicuous accumulation of certain commodities.⁸⁰

Many non-Aboriginal people residing in the north were confused and angered with this component of northern Aboriginal society. Valentine's study provided an example of a non-Aboriginal contractor working in the Athabasca region who was dissatisfied with First Nation and Metis laborers. The contractor noted that one of his employees shared the food he received

on the worksite with his whole family. He stated, “..I don’t mind giving [food and board] to them, but when you have to feed a whole family that’s going too far.”⁸¹ To the northern Aboriginal laborer the concept of sharing his wealth with his family was rational and based on the principle of reciprocity within *wahkootowin*. But, to the non-Aboriginal contractor it was a detriment to his profit margin.

The northern style of life and the trapping economy reflected a lifestyle whereby Aboriginal people subsisted on what they needed to maintain their traditional quality of life, which was regulated by the changing seasons and the northern landscape. As much as the Metis work ethic was predicated on social responsibilities towards family it was also a reflection of an economy based on seasonal rhythms of time. There were distinct differences in the rhythms of time in non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal societies. In, *Our Heritage: The People of Northern Saskatchewan* Michael Tymchak explains the differences between Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal concepts of time by stating:

...with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, western (Euro-Canadian) life has become increasingly ordered by the precise, mechanical measurement of time. Here we speak not of the technical achievement of making...timepieces, but of the attitude of ordering one’s life with a certain amount of mechanical precision. For [Aboriginal peoples], nature, its rhythms and cycles, were temporally determinative:...seasonal animal cycles... fishing and trapping seasons...animal migrations...For these Indian peoples, time was ordered as a response to natural events.⁸²

These contrasting rhythms of time between the traditional economy of Aboriginal people and the capitalist nature of non-Aboriginal society were factors that contributed to stereotypes of the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and their perceived inability to adapt to the CCF’s vision of a modern northern economy. This had an affect on the northern Metis employment opportunities in “non-Aboriginal” industries. In Valentine’s 1955 study a mining executive from the Athabasca region stated:

The problem with hiring local native help is, you can’t depend on them to work. They might work one day or two days, ask for their pay at the end of each day, and never show up again for work until they need more money. We can’t run our business this way. We need a man at the machine all the time – maybe 24 hours a day in shifts. Why, we couldn’t operate if these machines didn’t run steadily. Then paying them by the day involves all kinds of complications in our bookkeeping. It’s pretty hard to handle daily payments. No bookkeeping system in the world can stand it.⁸³

This example provides insight into the problems that occurred when modern capitalist enterprise entered the northern economy through the development and exploitation of the north's natural resources. The Metis work ethic caused non-Aboriginals to view the Metis as a people that took little pride in their work. Sociologist W.B. Baker explained that stereotypes about northern Aboriginal peoples were prominent because government and non-Aboriginal knowledge of Aboriginal culture was "grossly inadequate." He stated, "The White culture...places high value upon individual achievement and 'keeping up with the Jones[es].' The Indian and Metis do not yet display such characteristics. The conclusion: 'Natives are inherently lazy.'"⁸⁴ Life on the trapline and subsisting off the land required hard work and specific skills that were not easily transferred and incorporated within the modern capitalist economy.

During the second term of CCF leadership in Saskatchewan, social programs continued to be a main component of the CCF mandate. However, its attention on natural resources would shift from the fur industry to the development of the mining industry. During this shift, northern Aboriginal people remained dependant on trapping and fishing economies for survival, and had little participation in the CCF's development of the mining industry in northern Saskatchewan. In 1952, in an article written for the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, T.C. Douglas stated that northern mineral resources would be the main focus for the CCF government. Douglas is quoted as saying:

Fur, fish and timber are yielding fine returns, and should continue to do so for years to come. Today, however, main attention is focused on minerals. So far, exploration has only scratched the surface of our PreCambrian Shield area, but already we have discovered uranium resources which bid fair to make Saskatchewan the country's greatest uranium producer.⁸⁵

As such, the mining industry was poised to become one of Saskatchewan's greatest revenue producers while northern Aboriginal people were to continue their traditional economic pursuits of hunting and fishing, which were "deemed the twin pillars of the Native economy."⁸⁶ Barron pointed out that while the development of uranium "had the potential to outstrip all other forms of wealth in the North," mining was to be restricted to the non-Aboriginal domain. He goes on to note that although some First Nations and Metis were trained as prospectors, they were not employed in the mines.⁸⁷ The only economic salvation the CCF offered to the northern Metis was the intense restructuring of trapping and fishing markets and implementation of conservation policy, which in their minds would alleviate the problems of traditional Aboriginal economies.

This was coupled with the fact that CCF bureaucrats and non-Aboriginal employers believed that the Metis were inherently inept to participate in a modern economy.

The CCF's main initiative was to institute conservation policies in order to stabilize the natural resource economy not only for Aboriginal people who resided in the north but also for the benefit of all of Saskatchewan residents. When the CCF came to power, the north was characterized as a 'new frontier' that if managed properly its natural resources would allow Aboriginal people to prosper and become self-sufficient members of modern society. The wealth obtained from northern mining and timber resources would also benefit the entire province. The CCF's restructuring of the northern trapping industry was to play a major role in the economic revitalization of the resident Aboriginal population. However, a major roadblock to this project was CCF expenditures on northern conservation programs that did not match the economic output of the fur industry. In his dissertation, *Northern Saskatchewan and the Fur Trade*, William Alfred Arrowsmith argued that the amount spent on northern conservation measures by the CCF were modest.⁸⁸ He stated that provincial expenditures on the Northern Fur Conservation program in the eleven years from its inception to the end of the 1956-57 season totaled \$352,000. In contrast, from 1944 to 1963 the fur industry contributed 3.8 million to provincial government revenues through royalties and licensing fees. Moreover, when the profits from the SFMS were added to this latter amount "the total contribution of the fur industry to provincial government revenues [was] 4.2 million."⁸⁹ Arrowsmith estimates that 41 percent of this revenue was derived from the Northern Fur Conservation Area, which would amount to a contribution of 1.7 million.⁹⁰ The CCF claimed that the restructuring of the northern trapping industry was to benefit northern people and to do this it needed to create policy that would fund these programs. Clearly, Arrowsmith's research indicates that the CCF made a very high return for its modest investments. Although the CCF maintained that their goal was to restructure the fur industry for the betterment of northern people their policy goals were too costly. The northern landscape was also too vast and communities too varied to allow for the total development of CCF programs. Barron concluded that the CCF withdrew from the north when their policies failed to produce Aboriginal prosperity because they realized that hunting and trapping were only "marginal and transitory" economies as compared to mining. He described this retreat as an "offloading process" that required Aboriginal people to be responsible for "their own redemption" while the CCF maintained governmental rule in Regina.⁹¹

The CCF's conservation policies aimed to restructure the northern economy, however, their social policies had unintentional affects on the trapping economy as well. One of the CCF's main goals was to provide northern Aboriginal people access to suitable healthcare and education, but in order for them to access these services they had to be ushered into permanent settlements. As stated in Chapter One, there were Aboriginal settlements in northwestern Saskatchewan prior to CCF intervention but much of the population remained semi-nomadic, choosing to migrate seasonally during trapping seasons. However, Quiring argued that the CCF wanted Aboriginal people to "end their unregulated wanderings" because "nucleation" into settlements made it easier to assimilate Aboriginals into non-Aboriginal society. Nucleation also allowed the CCF to administer education, health, housing and other social services to a formally nomadic population.⁹²

The introduction of a school system that would provide education for northern Aboriginal children was essential to the CCF's mandate of humanity first. Barron outlined the CCF's school program explaining that the province took over some mission schools and remodeled old schools. However, most provincial spending was directed towards the "building program," which involved building new schools for northern Aboriginal people residing in remote locations. Both the federal and provincial governments funded the program.⁹³ In 1944, the *Canadian Family Allowances Act* was introduced and it tied social assistance payments to school attendance. The Act stipulated that family allowance payments would cease if a child did not attend school as required by the law of the province where he or she resided.⁹⁴ Because of the high rates of unemployment and poverty in the north the stipulation was a "powerful incentive" for parents to place their children in school.⁹⁵ While good intentioned, the CCF's goal to provide education for northern Aboriginal people played an essential role in the evolution of traditional family trapping and gender roles. In their research on northern Saskatchewan Helen Buckley, J.E.M. Kew and John B. Hawley stated that alterations in work cycles and residence patterns combined with the shift of importance towards traditional economic pursuits affected the cultural and familial values in Aboriginal communities. Due to the development of formal education in the north children would often remain in the village to attend school while "formally they would be trapping, tanning moose hide, or otherwise contributing to the family's income."⁹⁶ The evolution of the family oriented trapping economy to mainly male activity will be further explained in Chapter Three.

Conclusion

When the CCF arrived in the north in 1944 it encountered what it regarded as an impoverished political landscape inhabited by what it deemed an underdeveloped people. The CCF's long-term objective was to create policies that reflected its socialist ideology that would shape conditions in the north to the extent that northerners could enjoy a standard of living equal to that of the south.⁹⁷ To accomplish this, the socialist ideology of the CCF was to be thoroughly ingrained in northern resource policies such as the SFMS, cooperatives, and educational development. Both conservation and control of natural resources was intended to replenish dwindling fur stocks and, at the same time, integrate the northern Metis in the modern economy through the restructuring of the way furs were produced and sold. Natural resource management was to be intertwined with the social development of the people. The CCF characterized its objectives for the north as an "interesting experiment in the development of the province's material and human resources."⁹⁸ While the CCF understood that northern Aboriginal people were dependent upon the trapping economy it failed to understand why its conservation policies and programs fostered discontent among Metis trappers. Consequently, the CCF then dismissed those concerns by attributing the discontent to the backwardness of the Metis lifestyle. Furthermore, government officials viewed Metis reactions to northern conservation programs as an indication of their inability to adapt to the modern economy rather than understanding the socio-cultural connections the Metis had to their economies. In short, Metis were not progressive enough to understand the benefits of policies meant to improve their lives. Therefore the CCF, while believing that they were creating an equitable northern economy through socialist ideology and policy, maintained a paternalistic role when dealing with northern Metis society.

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- ¹ Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) R-33.1, XXXI.810 (31) Press June 1944 – Oct 1961, T.C. Douglas Papers, “Draft article written for the Prince Albert Daily Herald, T.C. Douglas, March 4, 1952.”
- ² F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), xiii.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 142.
- ⁴ David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 5.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ⁶ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 140.
- ⁷ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 140-141; Murray Dobbin, *The One-And-A-Half Men: The Story of Jim Brady & Malcolm Norris Metis Patriots of the 20th Century* (Vancouver: New Star Books Ltd., 1981), 169.
- ⁸ “Conserving Resources and Developing Industries (Broadcast of December 4),” *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 13 December 1944.
- ⁹ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 141.
- ¹⁰ “Into Saskatchewan’s Northland,” *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 31 July 1946.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Georgina Morin, Transcript, August 21 and 22, 1999, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, April 17, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06297> (accessed December 5, 2011). Note: Born in 1924.
- ¹⁴ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 143.
- ¹⁵ “Phelps Challenges H.B.C. Land Contracts: Original Charter of Hudson’s Bay Company Was Granted Before Canada Became British,” *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 28 March 1945.
- ¹⁶ Thirty-fifth Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company David E. Mitchell, *Lords & Proprietors: A Readers Guide to the Hudson’s Bay Company Charter* (Toronto: Madison Press Books, 2004); “Phelps Challenges H.B.C. Land Contracts: Original Charter of Hudson’s Bay Company Was Granted Before Canada Became British,” *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 28 March 1945.
- ¹⁷ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 143.
- ¹⁸ Helen Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Centre for Community Studies, Research Division, 1962), 14-15.
- ¹⁹ “J.L. Phelps Finds Need For Change on Tour of the North,” *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 2 August 1944.
- ²⁰ Library and Archives Canada, Northern Saskatchewan Game Conservation 1938-1946, RG10 C-8111, Vol 6758, File 420-11-2 Pt.1. Northern Saskatchewan Conservation Board, 1939.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 16; Library and Archives Canada, Northern Saskatchewan Game Conservation, RG10 C-8111, Vol 6758, File 420-11-2 Pt.1, Northern Saskatchewan Conservation Board, 1939.

²⁵ “A minute is a written instrument, which notes a decision made by the Committee of the Privy Council and is transmitted to the Governor General for information and approval. A minute sets out the authority for something to be done, such as the transmittal of a report of a Commission of Inquiry to the Governor General for information purposes, or the recommendation of the appointment of a person by commission under the Great Seal of Canada.” Canada, Privy Council Office <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=secretariats&sub=oiic-ddc&doc=gloss-eng.htm> (accessed May 9, 2011).

²⁶ Library and Archives Canada, Northern Saskatchewan Game Conservation – General Agreement with the Province of Saskatchewan for the General Development of the Northern Part of the Province for Hunting and Trapping 1946, RG10 C-8111, Vol 6758, File 420-11-2 Pt.2. Minute of the Meeting of the Committee of the Privy Council August 6, 1946.

²⁷ Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 17; Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 146.

²⁸ Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 17. See Figure 1.

²⁹ See Figure 2.

³⁰ Government of Saskatchewan, *Saskatchewan Fur Program: Summary of Regulations, Policy and Associated Programs*, <http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=1597,596,94,88,Documents&MediaID=3431&Filename=Saskatchewan+Fur+Program.pdf&l=English> (accessed May 10, 2011) The document summarizes policies which are Regulations under the Wildlife Act. See W-13.1 REG 1-57.

³¹ “Government Fur Program Gives Impetus to Industry,” *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 11 December 1946; “Department of Natural Resources,” *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 4 February 1948; Library and Archives Canada, Northern Saskatchewan Game Conservation – General Agreement with the Province of Saskatchewan for the General Development of the Northern Part of the Province for Hunting and Trapping 1946, RG10 C-8111, Vol 6758, File 420-11-2 Pt.2, Regulations Governing Northern Saskatchewan Fur Conservation Block, 1944, Part 2-19(1); Government of Saskatchewan, *Saskatchewan Fur Program: Summary of Regulations, Policy and Associated Programs*, <http://www.environment.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=ab32aaa5-2445-41e9-ae33-49bda7414951> (accessed May 10, 2011) The document summarizes policies which are Regulations under the Wildlife Act. See W-13.1 REG 1-56.

³² Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 17; Miriam McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1992), 79.

³³ McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community*, 79.

³⁴ McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community*, 79, 82; Merle Massie states that, “Historically, some traplines were developed by family units and passed down through the generations...” Merle Massie, “Trapping and Trapline Life,” in *Our Legacy Research Project* http://www.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_trapping (accessed June 5, 2010); Robert Jarvenpa further explains that, “...the predominantly Cree trappers in the Ile-a-la-Crosse area immediately to the south of Patuanak fur block have accepted zoning divisions created recently by the Department of Natural Resources and show more enthusiasm for the individual registered trapline system.” Robert Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980), 43.

³⁵ Merle Massie, "Trapping and Trapline Life," in *Our Legacy Research Project* http://www.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_trapping (accessed June 5, 2010)

³⁶ "Conservation Brought Beaver Back to Ile a la Crosse," *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 18 Feb 1953.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 17, 18.

³⁹ "Fur Conservation Will Assure Trappers' Security," *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 29 May 1946.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Government Fur Program Gives Impetus to Industry," *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 11 December 1946.

⁴² David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 105.

⁴³ Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 18.

⁴⁴ "Department of Natural Resources," *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 4 February 1948.

⁴⁵ The Fur Institute of Canada states that the Canadian fur auction has been the principle method for selling furs in the international market since the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 and that the "age old tradition is a perfect model market economy where supply and demand will establish the price levels for each type." The Canadian Fur industry employs the public auction method to this day. Fur Institute of Canada, "How Fur is Sold," (Ottawa: Fur Institute of Canada, 2012) http://www.fur.ca/TFT_fur_sale.php (accessed May 1, 2012)

⁴⁶ "Department of Natural Resources," *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 4 February 1948.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 145.

⁵⁰ Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 19.

⁵¹ "Publicly Owned Service Brings Good Prices to Trappers As Buyers Come from Far and Wide," *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 11 January 1956.

⁵² See F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 146; David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 117; William Alfred Arrowsmith, *Northern Saskatchewan and the Fur Trade* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1964), 104.

⁵³ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 158.

⁵⁴ SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "A Brief by the Northern Advisory Committee on the Metis of Northern Saskatchewan."

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ The CCF developed northern roads when they took office in 1944. In 1952, they proposed a highway from Beauval to La Loche. They completed a winter road, however, an all weather road remained uncompleted by the time the CCF left office in 1964. See David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 72-73.

⁶⁰ SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "A Brief by the Northern Advisory Committee on the Metis of Northern Saskatchewan."

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² SAB, R-33.1, XL.859c (44), Metis Dec 1942-April 1961, T.C. Douglas Papers, "The Fort Black Co-operative Store: A Social Experiment among the Ile a la Crosse Metis, February 26, 1957."

⁶³ Brenda Macdougall, *Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northwestern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907* (PhD Dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 2005), 11-13; Nap Johnson, "Interview with Nap Johnson from Ile a La Crosse," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (La Ronge: Northern Saskatchewan Archives, 1975), 29 <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/28615> (accessed May 30, 2011)

⁶⁴ Karla Radloff, *Co-operative and State Ownership in Northern Saskatchewan Under the CCF Government* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 2004), 3.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁶ SAB, R-33.1, XL.859c (44), Metis Dec 1942-April 1961, T.C. Douglas Papers, "The Fort Black Co-operative Store: A Social Experiment among the Ile a la Crosse Metis, February 26, 1957."

⁶⁷ SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "Minutes of the Northern Advisory Committee Monday March 14, 1955."

⁶⁸ SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "Minutes of the Northern Advisory Committee Monday March 14, 1955."; SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "A Brief by the Northern Advisory Committee on the Metis of Northern Saskatchewan."

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Murray Dobbin, "Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan 1944-1964," *Studies in Political Economy*, 16 (1985), 17; Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 172.

⁷¹ SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "Minutes of the Northern Advisory Committee Monday March 14, 1955."; SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "A Brief by the Northern Advisory Committee on the Metis of Northern Saskatchewan."

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "A Brief by the Northern Advisory Committee on the Metis of Northern Saskatchewan."

⁷⁴ Ibid.

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- ⁷⁵ Vernon C. Searl, "Action and Reaction: An Overview of Provincial Policies and Programs in Northern Saskatchewan," in *A Northern Dilemma: Reference Papers* ed. Arthur K Davis, Vernon C. Searl and Philip T. Spaulding (Bellingham: Western Washington State College, 1967), 20.
- ⁷⁶ Dobbin, *The One-And-A-Half Men: The Story of Jim Brady & Malcolm Norris Metis Patriots of the 20th Century* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1981), 173.
- ⁷⁷ Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 22.
- ⁷⁸ SAB, R-33.1, IX.367 (9-11-1) *Northern Advisory Committee, August 1953-December 1957*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "Letter from J.H. Brockelbank to Premier T.C. Douglas and All Cabinet Ministers," Regina, Saskatchewan, October 10, 1955.
- ⁷⁹ P.M. Worsley, H.L. Buckley and A.K. Davis, *Economic and Social Survey of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: Research Centre for Community Studies, 1961), 12.
- ⁸⁰ Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan*, 11.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 30.
- ⁸² Micheal Tymchak, *Our Heritage: The People of Northern Saskatchewan* (Department of Northern Saskatchewan, Academic Education Branch, 1975), 8-9.
- ⁸³ Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan*, 30-31.
- ⁸⁴ SAB, R-33.1, IX.372 (9-16) *Primrose Lake Bombing Range, 1952-1961*, T.C. Douglas Papers, W.B. Baker, "Some Observations on the Application of Community Development to the Settlements of Northern Saskatchewan."
- ⁸⁵ SAB, R-33.1, XXXI.810 a (31) *Press June 1944 - Oct 1961*, T.C. Douglas Papers, "An article written for the Prince Albert Daily Herald by T.C. Douglas, March 4, 1952."
- ⁸⁶ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 155.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 155.
- ⁸⁸ William Alfred Arrowsmith, *Northern Saskatchewan and the Fur Trade* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1964), 120.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 120.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 120.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 175.
- ⁹² Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 47.
- ⁹³ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 160-161.
- ⁹⁴ Edward E. Schwartz, "Some Observations on the Canadian Family Allowances Program," *Social Service Review*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (December 1946): 451-473, 459.
- ⁹⁵ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 161.
- ⁹⁶ Helen Buckley, J.E.M. Kew, and John B. Hawley, *The Indians and Métis of Northern Saskatchewan: A Report on Economic and Social Development* (Saskatoon: Centre for Community Studies, 1963), 27.

⁹⁷ SAB, R-33.1, CIV.932 (118), *Speeches and Articles Nov 1947- Jan 1951*, T.C. Douglas Papers, “J.W. Churchman
“Our Goals in the North and How We Hope to Achieve Them, April 23, 1959.”

⁹⁸ “Into Saskatchewan’s Northland,” *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 31 July 1946.

CHAPTER THREE

“Tell the Government to Give Us Our Living Back”: Traditional Metis Lifestyle, Government Policy and Resistance

...we ask you [the DNR] for the downtrodden Indians and Métis to reserve sufficient territory [for trapping and fishing] so that we, and our children and the coming generations, may enjoy our heritage.¹

In 1946 the president of the Green Lake Metis Association, Alex Bishop, wrote a letter to the Minister of Natural Resources, Joseph Phelps, on behalf of the Aboriginal people of Green Lake. Bishop, and other Metis people in northwestern Saskatchewan, believed that CCF policies were infringing on their northern style of life. The implementation of conservation and trapping policies by the CCF invoked active resistance from the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis. This resistance was a product of northern Metis' commitment to their way of life and their socio-cultural connections to the economy of northern Saskatchewan. Prior to the election of the CCF, the north was often an afterthought in the minds of the provincial government, thus allowing northern Aboriginal people to maintain some independence in terms of how they lived off the land. Trapping was a family activity that had historical and traditional significance among the Metis. When the CCF came to power in 1944 they realized that the trapping industry was in decline. However, they entered the north with the preconceived notion that the Metis did not adhere to a specific work ethic, let alone one that was tied to kinship practices and values that included reciprocity. It was because of this that the CCF came upon a resistance that they were not prepared for nor clearly understood. Social policies implemented by the CCF also began to affect the familial aspect of the trapping economy. During this time, Metis and First Nations relationships began to shift due to the increasing importance of government jurisdiction between the provincial and federal governments. The notion of traditional rights and differentiation of treatment between northern Metis and their First Nation kin would continue to change as government further staked their claim within northern Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Metis Society and Trapper Resistance to Government Policy

While the trapping economy was in decline in the mid-twentieth century, northwestern Saskatchewan Metis trappers remained adamant in protecting their northern lifestyle. The CCF's solution for the faltering trapping industry was the introduction of strict conservation measures

and government operated programs, such as the Saskatchewan Fur marketing Service (SFMS). These government restrictions may have been beneficial to local fur conservation, however, “[they caused] friction and unrest in small communities with limited local economic resources.”² The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis were relatively isolated from government intervention but with the introduction of conservation policy the Metis northern style of life was criminalized. Although Aboriginal people in the north lived similar lifestyles, the Metis had to abide by provincial laws, rather than be protected by those federal laws that provided some protection for subsistence hunting for status First Nations. Many trappers were concerned about how CCF policy affected their livelihood and their traditional trapping rights. Through the introduction of Metis locals, trappers began to lobby the government to recognize their Aboriginal rights to natural resources.

Although the northern style of life required hard work to survive, the Metis stressed that their freedom to work within their traditional economies was of the utmost importance. The northern Metis practiced a traditional lifestyle that gave them the freedom to live off the land. Prior to government intervention the Metis had long practiced informal and communal methods of enforcing the “laws” of the trapline. Miriam McNab described traditional trapping ethics in her thesis *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community*. She explained that sharing was an important ethic and that trappers often assisted one another and, that “rules of conduct” regarding land tenure and trespassing on traplines were imposed in an informal sense. She stated:

Within government imposed zones and fur blocks...the traditional mode of land holding and inheritance still exists. Handed down from father to son, individual traplines within the zones are commonly recognized and trespass is discouraged, not through society’s larger judicial system, but simply by indicating to the trespasser that he is infringing on another’s territory. If a trapper finds another’s traps on his trapline, he will simply hang the traps in a tree for the owner to find. Thus the trespasser will be made aware of his mistake and of the extent of the other’s trapline and move accordingly.³

Various scholars, such as Bonita Beatty, Miriam McNab and Robert Jarvenpa noted that Metis in the northwest accepted the government created trapping zones because they complimented kinship based trapping practices.⁴ McNab also noted that some informants in her study stated that their parents trapped all over northern Saskatchewan prior to the 1940s. However, she also maintained that there were various areas “habitually used” by specific families.⁵ Despite the

general acceptance of family traplines, government restrictions on hunting and trapping would alter the trapping economy in the mid-twentieth century. After decades of practicing their way of life in relative isolation, the Metis were confronted with new government policies that would affect their northern style of life. Northern Metis trappers and hunters made statements such as, "...we lived good because nobody come behind us to tell us what to do, it was [a] free country..."⁶ Trapper Daniel Daigneault reiterated these sentiments when discussing the new policies that restricted natural resource use:

That was all we did [fishing and trapping]. Since I was ten years old I went with my dad... In the past we could hunt anywhere, but now you're restricted to the block... We would get blocks where we'd hunt and trap. We couldn't go beyond that, but in the past we could go anywhere to hunt.⁷

CCF policy would affect more than the economic realm of the Metis, because the northern Metis lifestyle was inherently connected within all aspects of their lives: work, family and community. As the Metis began to spend more time in permanent settlements to receive the benefits of CCF social programming, the semi-nomadic nature of the trapping economy began to shift. Through interviews, northwestern Saskatchewan Metis community members described the semi-nomadic nature of the trapping system, where families would spend most of their time together on the trapline. Metis trapping families explained that they raised their children on the trapline from a young age. In some cases the women would take their babies with them on the trapline and utilized the northern environment to take care of their children. Monique Gardiner of Ile a la Crosse stated: "I'd collect moss in the fall and dry it...I'd shred the moss and use it as a liner in diapers. The moss would get soaked and I would toss it out. It made it easier work. I would breast feed the babies and boil porridge which I would strain and feed the babies."⁸ Trapping was an activity that was passed on within families. It reflected Metis socio-cultural values, in terms of family cohesiveness, and it allowed them to practice a northern style of life by living off the land.

In the mid-twentieth century the implementation of social infrastructure, such as medical facilities and schools, created new options for Metis families. Metis parents had to decide whether to continue to raise their children on the trapline or allow them to stay in the settlement to receive a formal education. Many young boys were trained to trap from a young age and they played an important role in contributing to their families' income. Daniel Daigneault of Ile a la Crosse stated, "My dad taught me to trap. That's why he took me out of school."⁹ Similarly,

Leon Morin of Buffalo Narrows stated, “I was in school for only half a year and my dad took me out of school because he didn’t have anyone to help him [trap].”¹⁰ Some parents would keep their children with them on the trapline rather than send them to school. However, northwestern Saskatchewan Metis parents also understood that their children were going to grow up in a new era where formal education would prove to be an asset. Nap Johnson discussed this issue stating that his generation would have liked to stay in the bush; however, their children needed an education to survive:

...we want our kids to get schooling...I want my kids to get jobs because now when you ask for a job they want to know how much education you got...not the experience alone...We live in town because we want our kids to go to school. How much I want to go back to those cabins we had in the bush.¹¹

During the mid to late 1940s the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis realized that their lives were changing. Their traditional economies were beginning to decline and they understood that their children needed to be educated. However, with the trapping economy in decline many Metis families began to rely on social assistance payments to supplement their incomes. And as stated in Chapter Two, school attendance was compulsory to receive social assistance payments.¹² Therefore, many families had to keep their children in school, rather than on the trapline, in order to receive this income. According to Buckley, Kew and Hawley, a side effect of northern Aboriginal children attending school was the displacement of the informal education process received on the trapline: “...young people learned not only how to trap and tan hides but also to accept and respect the traditional system.”¹³ In an interview conducted by Murray Dobbin in 1976 with J.H. Brockelbank, former CCF Minister of Natural Resources, Brockelbank discussed the affects of CCF schooling policies on northern Aboriginal communities:

Well, there were a lot of children going to these schools in the north, I know that. And that meant they weren’t out on the traplines... It changed their way of life, which was one of the intentions of the whole [CCF] program. And if they are going to maintain that [nomadic] way of life, there is going to be no place left for them.¹⁴

He continued by stating that northern Aboriginal peoples wanted to educate their children:

...they wanted schools. They wanted education for their children, I’m sure of that. And they used to send a lot of their children to these boarding schools. And this was really the disruptive thing that broke up the family because they went...and they [would go back to their communities] and they were little foreigners in their own homes.¹⁵

While the implementation of education was believed to better the lives of northern Aboriginal youth, formal schooling did not allow northern students to participate in “modern industrial society” because they did not enter senior-level grades.¹⁶ Therefore, while some Metis parents believed that formal education was the best option for their children’s success, the level of education provided was not always equal to southern communities. Quiring claimed that the CCF’s belief that, “Aboriginals should pursue traditional, nonindustrial vocations reinforced the view that they did not need much education.”¹⁷ This was coupled with teachers that had low qualifications and an “inappropriate curriculum.”¹⁸

The combination of permanent settlements, social assistance payments and children receiving formal education changed the social structure of northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities. Trapping shifted from a family activity to a male oriented economy. Women remained in the community, while their husbands would continue to live on the trapline during the trapping season. Jarvenpa explained that, “the movement of family work units between trading posts and trapping grounds” faded out near the mid-1940s, and as a result teams of male trappers replaced the older social-economic unit.¹⁹ Buckley, Kew and Hawley described how male trappers had to take on roles that were usually reserved for female trappers. They stated: “Where previously husband and wife formed a close and effective economic unit, men now work much more independently of their wives and families. When trapping, for example, they must perform such traditionally feminine tasks as cooking and dressing pelts.”²⁰ They further noted that women received family allowance and social aid payments, and therefore controlled more monetary income than their husbands.²¹ The result of this shift was that women became the main family providers within the new cash based economy of the north. Various authors explained that the change in gender roles resulted in the declining status of men because women began to receive formal education and they took on the role of dealing with government bureaucracy.²² Also, with the trapping industry in decline, women would become the dominant income provider in over sixty percent of Metis households by 1960.²³ Poelzer discussed these new sex-defined familial roles of northern Aboriginal women in her study *In Our Own Words*. Poelzer’s discussion with a female trapper named Annette depicted the partnership between men and women on the trapline:

My husband and I work together hunting and skinning animals. Some for food; some for fur...I can do everything he does. I like it...[He can do

household chores] but maybe not as good as I can. But in the bush we do it together. It's easier there. Not so much pressure...In the bush it's different from when you're [in the community] or [in the city]...he went out to work and I cleaned house and cooked. Sometimes I just sat in the kitchen looking out...I like it better when we work together in the bush...freer, I guess...doing the same thing.²⁴

On the trapline gender roles were maintained through partnerships with family members because each member had a role in the production of furs. This bond between family members strengthened the cohesiveness of the family unit. The modernization of Metis communities and the CCF's restructuring of the northern system changed the family oriented economic structure of Metis communities. However, the Metis would resist these policies in various ways and maintain their connection to *wahkootowin*.

The arrival of the CCF in 1944 ushered in a new era of political resistance in northwestern Saskatchewan communities. The Saskatchewan Metis Society (SMS) and the creation of Metis locals²⁵ influenced Metis political resistance in northern Saskatchewan. As a result, northern Metis trappers disputed various CCF policies through letters and petitions. The SMS was officially created in 1937 and had origins in southern and central Saskatchewan.²⁶ According to Barron, the SMS was supposed to represent all Metis and serve as a lobby, "accomplishing collectively what the Metis could not individually."²⁷ However, there were divisions in SMS leadership divided by the north and the south factions of the society, due to distance, communication and the fact the two groups did not always share the same priorities. In 1943, the northern Metis organized a new collective that would be known as the Saskatchewan Metis Association (SMA).²⁸ Barron claims that the SMS was "in shambles" by 1944 and the last effort to strengthen the SMS in the CCF era was during a government sponsored convention in 1946. Government officials and Metis delegates from the north and south attended the meeting, but the meeting was unsuccessful due to the divisions of the northern and southern factions of the society.²⁹ However, Metis political leaders Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady made attempts to organize the northern sector of the SMS in 1947; they were both employees of the CCF's Department of Natural Resources.³⁰ Both Norris and Brady were Metis political activists from Alberta and were hired by DNR minister Joseph Phelps in 1946.³¹ Quiring explained that although Norris supported Phelps positions on developing fur, fish and timber industries, he also "showed loyalty to and understanding of Aboriginals."³² He continued by stating that, "When

people spoke of the ‘Indian problem,’ Norris told them that the white man, who did not understand, was the problem.”³³

One area of protest for the Metis was the influx of transient non-Aboriginal trappers and hunters to northern Saskatchewan during the mid-twentieth century. As stated in Chapter One, conservation polices also placed value on the non-consumptive use of wildlife.³⁴ Sport hunting became an attraction that would entice American tourists to northern Saskatchewan. In an advertisement developed by the Department of Natural Resources, in conjunction with the Tourist Development Branch, a newly elected CCF government stressed the importance of conservation and its role in the tourist industry. The advertisement stated, “Thousands of American tourists travel to Canada each year to hunt and fish... We owe it to our visitors... to ourselves, to protect and conserve our natural resources. It is our duty to do everything in our power to practice conservation.”³⁵ Alex Bishop, a Metis trapper and hunter, and leader of the Green Lake Metis Association, articulated the position of the permanent residents of northern Saskatchewan regarding transient hunters:

...we didn’t want the white man here, especially the Americans. We were here and they kill all our moose and deer. There was a heck of a lot of these people, white men, would kill a moose. They will just take the head and leave the meat there, yeah...we were against that...and the [non-Aboriginal] men that were born and bred in this country [were against that too].³⁶

As a byproduct of the former Liberal government’s *Northern Conservation Board Act*, the CCF enforced polices that would safeguard northern trappers. For example, in order to obtain a trapping license a trapper needed to be a northern resident for at least a year.³⁷ However, these policies were not always clear and Metis trappers would protest to the provincial government when non-Aboriginal trappers would try to trap and hunt on their lands.

In August 1946, Bishop wrote a letter to the Department of Natural Resources on behalf of the Green Lake Metis Association, which outlined their grievances towards the CCF government. Bishop stressed that members of the Association had, for numerous years, earned their livelihood by hunting, trapping and fishing.³⁸ The main issue concerning the Green Lake Metis was the infringement of their trapping rights due to the allowance of “wealthy ranchers” and non-Aboriginal trappers applying for trapping leases. The letter stated:

...we wish to strongly protest against the issue of trapping leases to some of the wealthy ranchers to trap on our centuries old trapping grounds, which have been one of the principle means of making a living for ourselves and

children. We believe it very unfair for the Government to permit ranchers who have no need for money to be allowed to trap to the detriment of the interests of the Metis people...we also wish to protest against the granting of trapping leases in some of the best trapping grounds in the Green Lake area to white trappers, who were non-residents of the district, to the exclusion of the Metis.³⁹

The Green Lake Metis Association also stressed to the government their contributions to the war effort in the First and Second World Wars. The letter stated that, "...in return for our sons' blood, we earnestly ask [that] you give back the rights we previously enjoyed in the above respects."⁴⁰ The trappers of Green Lake were contesting the policy that stated: "Only male British subjects who have attained the age of 16 years and who have residence of at least one year in the community for whose benefit the fur conservation area was created shall be eligible for such license."⁴¹ While this law provided the permanent residents of northern Saskatchewan protection from seasonal migrant trappers, it did not protect them from non-Aboriginal laborers who lived in the area for over a year. In 1949, Bishop wrote the Department of Natural resources noting the same concerns about migrant laborers wishing to trap on Metis lands. The Green Lake Metis objected to this clause because there were a number of non-Aboriginal men working in logging camps near Green Lake, who had been living in the area for over a year. The Metis trappers requested that these men be barred from applying for trapping licenses.⁴² Game Commission E.L. Paynter replied by stating that there was also a restriction upon transient laborers and non-northerners that required them to apply for licenses at the annual meeting of the conservation area. If there was no sufficient space for new trappers the regular members of the trapping block could deny their request.⁴³ One of the most pertinent issues with the CCF's implementation of conservation policy was that most trappers and hunters were unaware of the extent of the policy. This lack of knowledge was problematic for the game wardens and conservation officers who were enforcing the policies as well.

Dobbin noted that the CCF's budget for northern development was "chronically inadequate."⁴⁴ The CCF also had problems attracting qualified staff to work in the north because "Southern civil servants spoke of the north as 'Siberia' and often displayed hostility to the area and its inhabitants."⁴⁵ In 1947, field officer Harold Reed of Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan stated that the government needed to provide more general meetings with trappers to convert them to

the new conservation policies. He also stressed that conservation officers needed to be fully educated about the policies they were enforcing:

I note at some of the meetings held by the field officers, that they are kept quite busy issuing licenses etc, and some times are possibly not well enough acquainted with the policy to be able to sell it to the trappers, therefore not gaining the confidence that could have been gained otherwise....[also] many of the trappers in these areas have not really got the idea of the conservation policy.⁴⁶

Besides not being fully aware of the policies they were enforcing, conservation officers also, as Dobbin noted, displayed hostility towards northern community members. Field officer Fred Beaudoin expressed his disdain for Green Lake trappers and the leaders of the Green Lake Metis Society in a letter to Game Commissioner E.L. Paynter in 1947:

I have been acquainted with the Green Lake area for over twenty years, and during that period it has always been a feast or a famine and always will be unless the Government teaches them different, and this will never be accomplished with a Metis advisory committee dictating to the Government. These people have had there (sic) own way for the past two hundred years and look at them today as far in the rut as they can possibly get. I think that should prove my point....This Government must commence to realize that the Green Lake Metis cannot think wisely for them selves (sic) before they can accomplish anything with them.⁴⁷

The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis faced negative attitudes from those who enforced policy, while coping with transient trappers and a declining trapping economy. The CCF also failed to provide sufficient information and education concerning the government's reasoning behind conservation policy, which resulted in the Metis having less control over their livelihood. The CCF continued to implement policy that infringed on the Metis northern style of life throughout their time in office.

The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis also protested against government regulated conservation programs. The government regulated Saskatchewan Fur Marketing Service (SFMS) was unpopular among the Metis and First Nation trappers. As explained in Chapter Two, beaver and muskrat pelts had to be marketed through the SFMS as a conservation measure. The SFMS was also used as a tool to undermine the HBC's monopoly in northern Saskatchewan. Prior to the SFMS, trappers could take their pelts to any trader and received credit to finance their trapping season. Anthropologist V.F. Valentine interviewed northwestern Saskatchewan Metis trappers for his 1955 study, *The Metis of Northern Saskatchewan*, and many trappers expressed

their frustrations with the SFMS. The main opposition to the service was that trappers often had to wait long periods before they received their payments for furs, and that it undermined their ability to obtain credit from private traders and the HBC. A trapper from Ile a la Crosse stated, “The big trouble with the Fur Marketing Service is that it ruins a man’s credit. At one time a man could go to the store and buy enough grub for the whole summer with his [muskrats], but now all he can get for twenty-five [muskrats] is enough grub to go back and catch thirty more.”⁴⁸

Valentine argued that the SFMS affected the traditional credit system and that this had further implications on the Metis way of life. He stated, “The effect of Fur Marketing Service is felt on the credit system, which in turn affects the economic cycle, which in turn affects the family and the social and recreational activities – that is to say, the whole customary mode of living.”⁴⁹

Besides ruining a trapper’s credit the SFMS also had problems with slow payments. A trapper from Buffalo Narrows explained, “The only trouble is if we could get quicker services for our cheques...The big trouble dealing with the Fur Marketing Service is that you can’t get no advances from the stores to go trapping.”⁵⁰ The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis felt they could no longer predict the amount of money they would receive⁵¹ from their trapping season, and without credit many trappers could not outfit themselves for the next season. Much of the blame for the poor service, and the lack of information regarding the policies and procedures of the SFMS, fell on the CCF. According to a trapper from Beauval, “...the cheques come back sometimes a good price and sometimes not so good, so you never know what you’ve got. I don’t know whose fault it is – the CCF I guess.”⁵²

Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis trappers were so adamant in their opposition to the SFMS that they participated in an active resistance against the program through a written petition. Trappers from the communities of Ile a la Crosse and the community of Canoe Narrows wrote to the Department of Natural Resources requesting that their credit be restored. On January 4, 1947 the trappers from Ile a la Crosse, conservation block fourteen, sent the petition to the Minister of Department of Natural Resources, Joseph Phelps, stating:

...last [muskrat]-season 1946, trappers learned a good experience from the trappers who willingly sent rat-pelts to the Fur [Market] in Regina....The trappers did not received (sic) a good price: in fact they lost money: prices were higher at Ile a la Crosse than on the Regina-fur-market....Trappers waited over two months, some three months before they saw cheques....Fur Department deducted heavy commission: royalty, handling, freight....And the worst of it, because they were given a first small payment on beaver the

trappers were charged with interest on money belonging to them...From the above facts, the Trappers of Ile a la Crosse, through this petition, ask you, Honorable Sir, to let them free to take rat-pelts to any store they like as they did before.⁵³

Ninety-two members of the Ile a la Crosse fur block signed the petition.⁵⁴ The trappers of Ile a la Crosse received a reply from the Game Commissioner, E.L. Paynter, on February 6, 1947. Paynter informed the trappers that due to the conservation agreement made between the Dominion and the Provincial Government, beaver and muskrat had to be trapped on a quota basis and supervised by the government in order to protect the breeding stock for the next trapping season.⁵⁵ Paynter also made note of conservation policies being implemented in Manitoba and compared their royalty rates, "...the Manitoba government deducts 20% share plus royalty...in your district, under the agreement, only 10% of the net selling price will be retained by the Department."⁵⁶ Paynter also answered concerns about the interest charges on the pelts. He stated that, "This year, the Field Officer will pay an advance payment as soon as the muskrat is delivered to him and in all probability there will be no interest charge made."⁵⁷ The trappers of Ile a la Crosse were not satisfied with Paynter's explanations and George Ramsay, acting as representative of block number fourteen, wrote to the DNR on March 19, 1947:

In reference to [the] letter from E.L. Paynter (sic) We the people of Isle a la Crosse after hearing supervisor W.G. Tunstead say that all the Fur Board could pay as an iniatial (sic) payment was 50¢ it would seam (sic) that there would be no use trying to live on that perhaps you think we get our grub for nothing...We are not interested in other Provinces (sic) [and] what they do for there (sic) prices...hoping that you will see fit to pay us the payment asked for.⁵⁸

The trappers from Ile a la Crosse were determined to receive full payment for their fur pelts or that they be allowed to continue to receive credit from the HBC and private traders. The combination of the CCF's lack of explanation for new conservation policies, inadequate program funding and the abolishment of the credit system caused unrest among Metis trapping communities. Due to the opposition of Aboriginal trappers, the compulsory marketing of beaver and muskrat through the SFMS was removed in 1956.⁵⁹ Quiring argued that, for northerners, the SFMS was a failure. However, the CCF viewed the program as a success because it played a "key role in the party's ideological attack" to destroy the monopoly of the HBC, private traders and the credit system.⁶⁰

After the initial opposition against the SFMS the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis remained engaged in trying to maintain their traditional economies while discovering new economic avenues in which to participate in. In the late 1950s to the early 1960s, many Metis began to realize their lives were changing due to government intervention and that they needed to lobby for change. Tom Fiddler, a member of the Green Lake Metis Association, described the treatment of the northern Metis during the mid-twentieth century: “Our people at that time...they were grasping. They were trying to make their living and stuff like this and...they were always put down. I mean, they were always the lower dog or something like this. And they got all the dirtiest jobs there was if there had to be work.”⁶¹ Through the Saskatchewan Metis Society and community development work Fiddler realized that the government’s ideals were not always what was best for Metis communities. He stated, “...when I was a young fellow...I lived by the rule of the white man [government] because I always thought he was superior to us. But I find out as I get older he’s not always right you know.”⁶² Fiddler’s wife Evelyn was also active in the Green Lake Metis Association and she discussed how the Metis began to realize that the government’s treatment of northern Aboriginal people needed to change. She noted that Metis leaders involved in the society discussed, “Discrimination and the raw deal the native people had got from the government for the past so many years and it was time that we now started to try to...feel our way into society and have an equal right, the same as anybody else.”⁶³ These ideals concerning equal rights continued on in Metis communities into the late 1960s, even after the CCF’s dissolution.

In an interview conducted by Murray Dobbin in 1976, Louis Laliberte, former president of the Beauval Metis Local, discussed how he and other members of this Local tried to create employment opportunities in his community. He stated that, “It’s a shame...that these young people just look through the window. Don’t have bugger all to do, nothing to do you know. Just on welfare. They should have something, sawmill or post camp, something like that.”⁶⁴ Laliberte concluded that Beauval and the SMS should lobby the government to support employment opportunities in his community. Therefore, Laliberte and community members, Phillip Gauthier, Jules Roy and John Frazer decided to go to Prince Albert to receive support from the SMS in order to petition the government.⁶⁵ Laliberte’s idea was to start a logging post camp in the community. He stated: “There is a lot of timbers in that country...It’s a shame the way it is now, there is nothing to do, just trapping and fishing, it’s not enough for all these people.”⁶⁶

Eventually, the members of the Beauval Metis Local received funds from the government to create a logging post camp in 1968.⁶⁷ Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities resisted government policy through petitions, letters and Metis Local organization. They understood that they needed to participate in new avenues of development, such as logging, but they also believed that they had a right to maintain their traditional livelihoods despite government interference.

The Criminalization of Metis Harvesting Practices and the Rise of Social Assistance

The animosity of the northwestern Saskatchewan Métis' towards the provincial government and appointed conservation officers would continue to escalate during the CCF's time in power. This was largely due to the fact that the economic style of life of northern Metis became criminalized because of the strict conservation measures placed on hunting and trapping practices. In "What is a Crime? Pimatsiwin Weyasowewina: Aboriginal Harvesting Practices Considered" authors Cora Pillwax and Lisa D. Weber discussed how legislation in Alberta criminalized Aboriginal hunting practices. They argued that regulations and legislation restrict Aboriginal peoples hunting and fishing practices that have sustained cultures and peoples survival for millennia.⁶⁸ They also argued that, "...restrictions cause fundamental shifts in lifestyle including dietary adjustments and diminishment and loss of cultural practices...laws and policies are preventing whole populations of Aboriginal peoples from living out their values and way of life."⁶⁹ Similarly, the Metis of Northwestern Saskatchewan experienced persecution for hunting and had to endure extensive restructuring of trapline regulations. Hunting was an essential part of trapline life because trappers hunted on their traplines for subsistence use.⁷⁰ Northern Metis expressed their frustration with game regulations and conservation officers' persecution of their hunting rights. In 1955, one trapper stated, "...Tell the government to give us our living back so we aren't afraid to move away from our houses again. We're afraid to go up the trail with our .22's to snare a rabbit in case the Game Warden takes our guns away. We're scared to move."⁷¹ Ile a la Crosse resident Nap Johnson explained the criminalization of hunting practices in his community by stating that, "You can kill a person, you'll get out free. Maybe they'll tell you, 'Don't do anything for six months.' They'll give you a kick in the behind, you go. But if you kill an elk, they'll put you in jail or [give you] a \$200 dollar fine."⁷² Pillwax and Weber explained that game enforcement officials "often leave [traditional] harvesters with a

sense of criminality and apprehension of authority figures.”⁷³ This “sense of criminality” heightened the tensions between northern Metis and the provincial government.

An example of the animosity trappers had concerning the policies of the CCF government was articulated in a letter from three trappers from the community of Buffalo Narrows. Thomas Pederson, Alvin J. Morton and Reid Pederson expressed their discontent with the CCF government in a letter written to the Game Commissioner E.L. Paynter, claiming that they were all denied trapping licenses because they had not trapped in the last few years. They stated that, “We feel that we are being let down when we say that during your first C.C.F. election as well as your last springs (sic), we were the back bone of your victory here.”⁷⁴ However, these trappers were not typical of the overall voting patterns of Saskatchewan’s northern constituencies. According to Quiring, the CCF did not garner as much voter support in the north as it had in the south. He explained that in the Athabasca constituency the CCF had only 7.4 percent of the vote as compared to the Liberals who had 80.7 percent.⁷⁵ Paynter claimed that due to the population of muskrat being “built up in the area” the trappers from Buffalo Narrows were trying to “get in on the harvest.”⁷⁶ However, the trappers from Buffalo Narrows felt that resuming trapping was their only economic option and that they would be “forced to trap” whether they received a license or not. They also stated that they were “left to the mercy of the Native Elements” (environmental conditions) and that is how it has been for thirty years.⁷⁷ Trappers had to adapt to maintain their incomes but the institution of new government policies created less freedom to live off the land as they had in previous years. The lack of information concerning new trapping policies and the fact that Aboriginal people had little involvement in other northern industries, such as mining, left many northern trappers with few options for employment and created negative connotations towards the CCF.⁷⁸

Northern Metis trappers felt they were being denied their economic livelihood and that the government offered them no alternatives for employment. In Valentine’s 1955 study, many northwestern Saskatchewan Metis expressed their concerns about the lack of employment options in the north, and their disdain for compulsory conservation programs and policies. They also maintained that their northern style of life gave them the freedom to harvest the land for survival. A man from Ile a la Crosse explained that, “...[Back] then it was free and you could go any place to make a living, and now you can’t. We were the boss of what we took out of the bush. It belonged to us, but now with this compulsory stuff, it doesn’t belong to us. This

Government has just taken everything away from us and never gives us work.⁷⁹ The northern Metis believed that their northern style of life was a more independent and respectable way to live. They wanted to continue to supplement their trapping income with subsistence hunting and fishing in order to feed their families. A man from Beauval explained the situation in the north after the CCF was elected:

There is nothing here to be got – no work, no roads. We're afraid to set nets to feed our kids. Can't hunt for nothing. We can't even kill nothing to feed our kids with. We're just sitting at home doing nothing. What's feeding our kids right now, to tell you the truth, is our Family Allowances [social aid], but it isn't enough to buy clothes. If we bought any clothes them kids would have to go hungry. I'd like to see a little work around our country. The CCF never gives us any work. That's why we're against them. Can't even kill a duck to make a pot of soup for our kids. As soon as they let things go free so's (sic) we can take fish or duck to feed our kids, we'll be okay. Now if we do we'll go to jail, and that's all that's got to happen to us now. Nobody here has got any money but the storekeepers, and nobody's got meat to eat but the timber wolves.⁸⁰

Metis families began to rely on social aid to supplement their income because conservation policies hindered their ability to hunt and fish for subsistence. Valentine summarized the strained relationship between the CCF government and northern Metis communities stating that, because the Metis believe that the government has removed their rights to natural resources without their consent, they must provide alternatives through social aid or economic programs.⁸¹ However, as discussed previously, the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis strongly resisted government trapping policies. Rather than wanting to receive social aid they wanted their traditional livelihoods restored. Because their way of life was criminalized, the Metis believed that they could no longer feed their families through subsistence measures. With the introduction of a cash-based economy the Metis also understood that they needed alternatives for employment but jobs outside the traditional economic realm were usually reserved for non-Aboriginals.

Although many northern Metis were trying to change and resist government intervention the affects of CCF social policy still weighed heavily on their lifestyle. Receiving social assistance payments became necessary for survival. With the trapping industry in decline and the introduction of strict conservation policy the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis began to rely on social assistance payments for their income. Barron stated that, "...by the end of the [CCF era] social assistance became a major source of income...actually outstripping trapping and fishing in

dollar value.”⁸² Buckley explained that in the north social assistance payments became more financially rewarding than other means of employment. However, she also warned that, “. . .the increasing scale of assistance threatens traditional pursuits and occupations.”⁸³ In an interview conducted in 1973, Mary Jacobson of Ile a la Crosse reflected on the changes in northern Metis communities that were caused by a reliance on social assistance:

We used to eat anything, no matter what. [We made] a good living. . . Like ducks and tongues and moose meat and fish. Anything. People used to make their livings really good, And now, everything comes from the store. Too much welfare, that is what poisoned the people. . . people don't go far from their homes nowadays. And before, long time ago, they used to go out and do their living. . . they just stay home now, men, doing nothing.⁸⁴

Northern women in Polezer's study also reiterated how social assistance transformed their communities from self-sufficient to dependent. The women discussed how people would subsist off the land and were able to maintain “dignified survival and communal living.”⁸⁵ They also stated that the freedom of “bush life” allowed them to look after themselves, while in modern society community members either find employment or live off social assistance.⁸⁶ CCF conservation policies had a direct affect on the socio-cultural aspects of northern Metis life. Although traditional economies were in decline, northern Aboriginal people still wanted to maintain a subsistence lifestyle to supplement their incomes and feed their families. With the introduction of government policy and the application of the CCF's ideology to modernize northern Saskatchewan, the Metis would undergo significant changes to their socio-cultural understanding of their communities. A class hierarchy would develop as non-Aboriginal government employees took residence in the north. And beyond this, a divide between Metis and First Nations communities would develop due to the new restrictions on natural resource use.

Northern Metis Identity: Discrimination and Division

Increased government intervention during the CCF era created a growing class distinction between the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and non-Aboriginal government employees. Quiring insisted that “DNR officers, nurses, teachers, and other CCF employees formed a separate class within the small, primarily Aboriginal villages” of northern Saskatchewan.⁸⁷ Quiring also attested that many government workers considered themselves superior to the Metis and this belief was partly due to the CCF's mandate to task employees with the assimilation of

northern Aboriginal people.⁸⁸ In his dissertation, *The Metis of Ile a la Crosse*, Philip Taft Spaulding summarized non-Aboriginal attitudes towards Metis by stating that many negative attitudes were derived from the belief that the Metis were “little more than children” who were lazy and “reluctant to earn a day’s pay.”⁸⁹ However, Spaulding also claimed that this attitude was juxtaposed with a sympathetic view that placed blame upon “lack of employment opportunities, low incomes and ignorance.”⁹⁰ The attitudes of non-Aboriginal government employees were reflected in the Metis inability to receive employment opportunities. Mary Jacobson of Ile a la Crosse described an instance where a Metis man received less pay than his non-Aboriginal counterparts for his work at the sawmill:

And him, he knows better than white men, he knows just as much as the white men and he gets only [two dollars and fifty cents an hour]. How come? Just because he is a Metis and the white men gets [four dollars and fifty cents an hour]... Why treat a Metis less than a white man? He should get the same wages as the white man...⁹¹

The women in Poelzer’s study discussed how stereotypes of Aboriginal people and increasing resource development affected northern Aboriginal people. The women were divided between the opinion that government development supplied the community with more job opportunities and the opinion that development restricted traditional economic pursuits. This was coupled with the claim that, “in so much of northern development they are not hiring Native people.”⁹² She also stated that many of the women interviewed in the study were concerned about the wage disparity between non-Aboriginals and northern Aboriginal people.⁹³ This racial divide was not only confined to the economic field. As discussed previously, conservation officers were viewed as “enforcers” within northern Saskatchewan communities. These sentiments also applied to law enforcement, as Mary Jacobson of Ile a la Crosse stated, “[The police] are more on the white man’s side...that is the way it looks, eh. They are more on the white man’s side than the...Metis and Indian side...That is the way I look at it anyway.”⁹⁴ The increasing socio-cultural and racial divisions in northern Saskatchewan were not confined to non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal; they would also develop between northern Metis and First Nations communities.

The creation of conservation policies caused a separation between First Nations people and the Metis in terms of the rights to natural resources. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis received scrip in 1906, which relinquished their legal rights to land resource use in the eyes of

the government. However, as previously noted, northern Aboriginal people lived a similar northern style of life, which involved natural resource subsistence and reciprocity with their kin. As stated in Chapter Two, the introduction of the NRTA in 1930, which transferred the ownership of natural resources to the provincial government, caused the northern Metis to face strict policies that dictated their natural resource use. Both Metis and non-Status First Nations received no special protection for subsistence harvesting rights. In his study on the trappers of Patuanak, Robert Jarvenpa stated that, "...the non-treaty Indians were caught in a vulnerable situation with no special federal protection. Unlike the Treaty Indians, 'they are considered to be citizens under the law, with all rights and responsibilities inherent in that status.'"⁹⁵ The Metis shared a similar fate with non-Status First Nations people. Many Metis began to feel unfairly persecuted for living their traditional lifestyles and the distinction between status-First Nations people and the Metis would eventually become prevalent in northwestern Saskatchewan. This distinction created by the government has increased Metis activism for their natural resource rights. Many northern Metis felt that they had no representation within both the federal and provincial government. Louis Laliberte of Beauval stated, "...treaty Indians, they got the Indian department behind them. And white people, they got the government behind them. Metis and the halfbreeds, there is nobody behind them."⁹⁶ Their underrepresentation was coupled with the lack of federal and provincial funding for Metis people. Vital Morin of Ile a la Crosse explained that, "...when you [try to get] programs or funding or anything, the Metis people are always being left out. We're not being recognized as Aboriginal."⁹⁷ Lastly, the Metis believed that they were being criminalized for practicing their traditional lifestyles. Clem Chartier of Buffalo Narrows, former president of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan and current president of the Metis National Council stated:

Essentially what the government has done is outlawed our way of life... The [Metis are being persecuted for] violations or actions that a treaty Indian would not be persecuted for or convicted for, so for the Metis, as I say, [the government has] criminalized our way of life. They have basically made outlaws of us and refer to us as poachers...It is getting more difficult to use the resources from our lands. In fact, it is even getting to the point where it is difficult for people to get wood for their stoves.⁹⁸

While government imposed definitions of Aboriginal people would severely affect the rights of the northern Metis, Bonita Beatty notes that status-First Nations were also persecuted because of the stipulation in the NRTA that regulated the "commercial aspect" of the fur trade. This meant

that status First Nations were not exempt from NRTA regulations unless they were hunting for subsistence.⁹⁹

Perhaps the greatest manifestation of the distinction between Metis and First Nations natural resource rights in northwestern Saskatchewan relates to the creation of the Primrose Lake Bombing Range. The Primrose Lake Bombing Range was created in 1953 by the Federal Government of Canada for the testing of air weapons systems by the Department of Natural Defense (DND).¹⁰⁰ Quiring stated that the Federal Government believed that no one lived in the chosen location for the bombing range because no roads, communities or indicators of human activity were visible on maps of the area. However, many First Nations and Metis people depended on lands included in the bombing range for trapping, fishing and hunting.¹⁰¹ Although all Aboriginal people utilizing the region for traditional economic pursuits lost their rights to access their traditional land base, compensation was particularly problematic for the Metis because of the 1906 scrip commission. Quiring explained the importance of scrip by claiming that one could argue that the Metis had given up their right to occupy the contested lands because they had signed scrip documents and “enjoyed nearly half a century of grace before having to leave the area.”¹⁰² However, Quiring also claimed that very few northwestern Saskatchewan Metis benefited from receiving scrip because their parents or grandparents had sold or became separated from the scrip issued to them decades prior.¹⁰³ In the article, “The Metis Versus the Bombing Range,” Vye Bouvier explained that during the scrip commission in 1906, eligible Metis were assigned 240 acres of land in southern Saskatchewan or 240 dollars. However, the northern Metis were not assigned any acres of land in northern Saskatchewan because “the government claimed that it did not wish to part with the land in Northwestern Saskatchewan because it was not surveyed.”¹⁰⁴ Clem Chartier explained the Metis view of the scrip commission:

...scrip was not good for [the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis] in a sense that it was only redeemable for open Dominion Crown land...who in their right mind would leave their traditional homelands in northern Saskatchewan, move to some unknown territory somewhere probably what is now south of North Battleford...to collect 240 acres of land. What good would that do when our people had the whole north and our way of life? In fact at that time our people were still dealing in furs with the Hudson’s Bay Company...there was no such thing as money, so money did not mean anything. The currency still was furs.¹⁰⁵

The issues surrounding land rights became problematic when the federal government agreed to compensate the northern Aboriginal people who occupied the Primrose Lake area. In 1955, after preliminary research done by Indian Affairs concluded that the bombing range affected five First Nations Bands, the first interim payment for compensation was made.¹⁰⁶ This payment included the Canoe Lake First Nation [Canoe Narrows], which is located between the communities Beauval and Ile a la Crosse. The claims drafted by Indian Affairs only applied to status First Nations.¹⁰⁷ In 1957, the federal government conducted negotiations with Metis fishermen and trappers and some Metis from the communities of Cole Bay, Jans Bay and Beauval were also compensated. These trappers received up to three years of compensation for being removed from bombing range lands.¹⁰⁸ However, according to P. Whitney Lackenbauer in *Battle Grounds: The Canadian Military and Aboriginal Lands*, Metis compensation became problematic when Metis claimants in the area compared their compensation with that of status First Nations. Metis claimants received compensation that represented only 13 percent of the amount paid to status First Nations.¹⁰⁹ This discrepancy was also problematic for the CCF because of their responsibility for Metis and non-Status First Nations in the area. Lackenbauer stated that the provincial government questioned the compensation because they knew that they would have to provide the Metis with compensation if the federal allotment was inadequate.¹¹⁰ Louis Laliberte of Beauval reiterated the compensation discrepancy between First Nations and Metis people who utilized the Primrose area as follows:

[Canoe Lake First Nation], the treaties, they got up to \$3000 of this bombing range over here, for a trapping area and fishing area. They are taking that fishing area, trapping area...and [the Metis] are getting at highest, \$1000. Some of them they got \$200. And Jans Bay, just off Canoe Narrows, the highest I think, \$250 they were getting, families. Most of them \$80, \$90, \$100.¹¹¹

The Metis who resided in the Canoe Narrows area were greatly affected by the Primrose Lake Bombing range. Ambrose Maurice explained that he received a \$900.00 dollar allotment in compensation for the loss of his traditional lands in the Primrose area where he hunted, fished and trapped to feed his family. He affirmed that the government owed the Metis more compensation for the loss of traditional lands, and he was not satisfied with his allotted payment. He stated, "I have always wondered why – we have always wondered why we have never had

any compensation for the Primrose Weapons Range...It is time for us to be involved in that compensation package, Jans Bay, Cole Bay...”¹¹²

In the early 1960's Metis claimants from Beauval, Canoe Narrows, Jans Bay and Cole Bay along with other Metis settlements demanded equal compensation to status First Nations claimants. Consequently, Lackenbauer explained that DND distributed a final payment of \$107,800 to 112 Metis, which brought the average payment to \$1,604. However, this payment was still not on par with status First Nation's allotments.¹¹³ Lackenbauer stated that, "...news of these allegedly secret payments circulated back to Indian communities, [and] in turn fed expectations of additional compensation. Canoe Narrows Chief John Iron wanted to know 'why we treaty Indians didn't get any money, because the half-breeds got theirs and also the Bea[u]val people.'"¹¹⁴ The First Nations and Metis people of northwestern Saskatchewan both resided and utilized the Primrose Lake area to hunt, fish and trap. With the arrival of DND, lines were drawn between Aboriginal groups that lived similar lifestyles but were divided by jurisdictional law. While both First Nations and Metis people lost a significant traditional land base, the discrepancy between compensation payments caused friction in communities that had shared the land for generations. The provincial government was also concerned about the issue of Metis compensation because of their jurisdictional responsibility for the northern Metis. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities of Beauval, Ile a la Crosse, Cole Bay and Jans Bay would continue to lobby the government to compensate their loss of livelihood resulting from the bombing range well into the twenty-first century.¹¹⁵

The continued resistance of northern Aboriginal people against government policy and the lack of sufficient funding for northern programs began to impact the attitudes of the CCF government and its employees by the early 1950s. Barron explained that, "northern policy in the 1950s was characterized by self-doubt, growing cynicism, and ultimately retreat."¹¹⁶ In particular, he found that DNR field officers began to doubt CCF policy measures to deal with the "native problem" because they were first hand witnesses to the negative affects of government policy and carried most of the blame for being enforcers of those policies.¹¹⁷ Moreover, government sponsored research initiatives also depicted the inadequacy of the CCF's policies in the north. Art K. Davis, a sociologist with the Centre for Community Studies explained that the CCF hired anthropologist V.F. Valentine to uncover the cause of the negativity towards the CCF government:

[The CCF] sent in Vic Valentine...an anthropologist...[to] go up [North] and find out what was wrong, what [the CCF] was doing wrong and why everybody was mad at them up there. Meaning particularly the native people. And he found out, I think, but [the CCF] didn't like what he found out.¹¹⁸

Barron stated that Valentine condemned the CCF government and government officials for being insensitive to the cultural needs of northern Aboriginal people, and for undermining the traditional Aboriginal way of life and replacing it with welfare.¹¹⁹ In the RCAP round table discussions of 1992, trapper Ambrose Maurice explained how government policies hindered the Metis way of life and left them with no legacy to pass on to their children:

At least [the government] should help us out a little bit and I don't mean government handouts. We are talking about land. Land is what we need, not so much for myself, but for my children and my children's children... We want a better life for our children. We don't want to pass down what was given to us which was nothing but a line at the welfare office.¹²⁰

Much of the disillusionment for the CCF was a result of their shortsightedness in terms of the cultural importance of Aboriginal economies. The CCF implemented a "top down" policy with little consideration for Aboriginal concerns. As Davis explained: "...the whole idea came to be something down from the top. It was the white people, you see, who were going to do this and they were going to do something for the *Indians* and they were right back [in] the old rut, you see, even before they started."¹²¹ Nap Johnson of Ile a la Crosse provided an example of how the CCF operated within a "top down" system in his description of game commissioner E.L. Paynter's visits to northwestern Saskatchewan:

...there was Ernie Painter, a game commissioner from Regina; that guy he came to the north, not all the time, might be three times in one year. And he used to go and visit people; he don't hold meetings; he talked to different people. Well because he's trained, he get the information that he wants; then he made the laws himself.¹²²

As noted in Chapter Two, the CCF also attempted to implement a "self-sufficiency" model for the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis in the mid to late 1950s with the recommendations from the Northern Advisory Committee (NAC), who were in favor of establishing cooperatives. However, researchers from the CCF sponsored Independent Centre for Community Studies felt that the government placed "too much emphasis" on the benefits of "channeling more fur through co-ops." They stated that co-ops could not increase trappers'

earnings because prices for fur were so low that trappers would have to produce an “enormous” amount of furs to make a decent living.¹²³

The north would have been penetrated by economic development regardless of CCF initiatives because of its rich natural resources. Moreover, during the mid 1900s trapping and fishing were in decline and northern Aboriginal peoples suffered as a result. However, the CCF’s “good intentions” to rehabilitate the northern Aboriginal population through bureaucratic procedures and policies undermined the traditional values and lifestyle of northern Aboriginal people. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis viewed CCF policies as an infringement on their traditional economic practices and their ability to lead a lifestyle based on *wahkootowin*. CCF ideology transitioned from a socialist rhetoric of helping the impoverished to trying to provide systems that would allow the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis to become self-sufficient. While the CCF were successful in implementing some modern necessities to the north, such as health care and formal education, they failed to truly understand the northern style of life that was ingrained within northern communities. Until their defeat in 1964, the CCF maintained a paternalistic structure of policy implementation in northern Saskatchewan.

Conclusion

Government intervention served as a catalyst for Metis organization and resistance in northern Saskatchewan. Although the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis understood that their way of life was shifting they were adamant in protecting their traditional economies and lifestyles. The implementation of strict conservation policy essentially criminalized the northern Metis way of life, while the introduction of permanent settlements caused family trapping practices to shift to a strictly male activity. Women no longer went with their husbands to trapping areas, but instead would remain in the community to work or collect social assistance payments while their children would attend school. These factors significantly changed the socio-cultural aspects of northwestern Saskatchewan Metis communities. Essentially, government policy would undermine northern kinship systems and the traditional livelihood of Metis trappers and hunters. However, despite the government’s efforts to try and modernize the northern economy, the ideals of *wahkootowin* and the northern style of life remained fully entrenched in northwestern Saskatchewan communities. Continued resistance against

government policy by the Metis is a testament to the importance of traditional economic practices and kinship systems in northwestern Saskatchewan.

¹ Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), NR3 A.24.56, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Green Lake*, “Letter to J.L. Phelps, Minister of Natural Resources from Alex Bishop, Green Lake Saskatchewan, August 28, 1946.”

² Merle Massie, “Trapping and Trapline Life,” in *Our Legacy* http://www.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_trapping (Accessed March 23, 2012).

³ Miriam McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1992), 130-131.

⁴ See: Bonita Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan* (M.A. Thesis University of Regina, 1996); Robert Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980); Merle Massie, “Trapping and Trapline Life,” in *Our Legacy Research Project* http://www.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_trapping (accessed June 5, 2010); Miriam Arlen McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community* (M.A. Thesis University of Saskatchewan, 1992).

⁵ McNab, *Persistence and Change in a Northern Saskatchewan Trapping Community*, 79.

⁶ Nap Johnson, Transcript, ca. 1999-2001, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, April 20, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06302> (accessed April 3, 2011).

⁷ Daniel Daigneault, Transcript, July 2, 2001, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, February 8, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/05869> (accessed April 4, 2012).

⁸ Monique Gardiner, Transcript, July 5, 2001, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, April 18, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06297> (accessed April 4, 2012).

⁹ Daniel Daigneault, Transcript, July 2, 2001, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, February 8, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/05869> (accessed April 4, 2012) Note: Born in 1923.

¹⁰ Leon Morin, Interview, Transcript, July 5, 2001, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, April 18, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06292> (accessed April 4, 2012).

¹¹ Nap Johnson, “Interview with Nap Johnson from Ile a La Crosse,” in *Our Legacy Research Project* (La Ronge: Northern Saskatchewan Archives, 1975), 19. <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/28615> (accessed February 6, 2012) Note: Born in 1915, interviewed in 1975.

¹² F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 161.

¹³ Helen Buckley, J.E.M. Kew, and John B. Hawley, *The Indians and Métis of Northern Saskatchewan: A Report on Economic and Social Development* (Saskatoon: Centre for Community Studies, 1963), 27.

¹⁴ John Brockelbank, Interview by Murray Dobbin, Transcript, August 19, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01175> (accessed January 24, 2012).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The study uses data from Saskatchewan Education stating that during 1961-1962 only three percent of northern provincial students in unorganized areas were in grades higher than twelve. The provincial average of students above grade twelve is twenty-five percent. Helen Buckley, J.E.M. Kew, and John B. Hawley, *The Indians and Métis of Northern Saskatchewan: A Report on Economic and Social Development* (Saskatoon: Centre for Community Studies, 1963), 27.

¹⁷ David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 246-247.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁹ Robert Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980), 60.

²⁰ Buckley, Kew, and Hawley, *The Indians and Métis of Northern Saskatchewan*, 27.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²² F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 165; David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 48; Philip Taft Spaulding, *The Metis of Ile-a-la-Crosse* (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1970), 67.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Delores T. Poelzer and Irene A. Poelzer, *In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Metis Women Speak Out* (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt and Hamonic Publishing Inc., 1986), 56.

²⁵ Metis Locals in the north are divided into three regions. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis of this study belong to Northern Region III. Metis Locals are local governing bodies that provide governance for their communities. Locals consist of nine members who must meet the definition of Metis citizens as defined by the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan (MNS) and the Metis National Council (MNC). Locals answer to their respective regional councils and must develop local bylaws (i.e. election processes, terms of service, types of elections) that are consistent with the MNS constitution. Bylaws need to be ratified by a vote of Local members and must include terms of local Metis governance. <http://www.mn-s.ca/main/governance/legislation/>; <http://www.mn-s.ca/main/governance/mn-s-locals-2/> (accessed on May 21, 2012).

²⁶ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 34.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁹ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 34, 42-44; Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 44.

³⁰ Dobbin, *The One-And-A-Half Men*, 169; Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 172-173, 165-166.

³¹ Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 20.

³² *Ibid.*, 20.

³³ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁴ Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (UBC Press, 2006), 7.

³⁵ Library and Archives Canada, Indian Affairs, Saskatchewan Fur Conservation – Registered Traplines – Correspondence, 1947-1950, RG10 C-8112, Vol 6759, File 420-11-2-1. “Conservation Ad produced by Saskatchewan Tourist Development Branch and Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources.”

³⁶ Alex Bishop, interviewed by Murray Dobbin, September 9, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01179> (accessed April 4, 2011).

³⁷ Helen Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Centre for Community Studies, Research Division, 1962), 16; Library and Archives Canada, Northern Saskatchewan Game Conservation, RG10 C-8111, Vol 6758, File 420-11-2 Pt.1, Northern Saskatchewan Conservation Board, 1939; SAB, NR3 A.24.56, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Green Lake*, "Letter to J.L. Phelps, Minister of Natural Resources from Alex Bishop, Green Lake Saskatchewan, August 28, 1946."

³⁸ SAB, NR3 A.24.56, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Green Lake*, "Letter to J.L. Phelps, Minister of Natural Resources from Alex Bishop, Green Lake Saskatchewan, August 28, 1946."

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ SAB, NR3 A.24.56, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Green Lake*, "Letter to The Game Commissioner from H.L. Cathrea, Meadow Lake Saskatchewan, March 5, 1949."

⁴¹ SAB, NR3 A.24.56, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Green Lake*, "Letter to J.L. Phelps, Minister of Natural Resources from Alex Bishop, Green Lake Saskatchewan, August 28, 1946."

⁴² SAB, NR3 A.24.56, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Green Lake*, "Letter to The Game Commissioner, Regina, Saskatchewan, from H.L. Cathrea, Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, March 5, 1949."

⁴³ SAB, NR3 A.24.56, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Green Lake*, "Letter to H.L. Cathrea, Barrister, Solicitor, Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, from E.L. Paynter, Game Commissioner, Regina, Saskatchewan, March 15, 1949."

⁴⁴ Dobbin, *The One-And-A-Half Men*, 167.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 168.

⁴⁶ SAB, NR3 A.25.1, *Northern Conservation Area Files No. 1, 1945-1949*, "Letter to E.L. Paynter, Game Commissioner, Regina, Saskatchewan, from Harold Reed, Field Officer, Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, December 27, 1947."

⁴⁷ SAB, NR3 A.25.1, *Northern Conservation Area Files No. 1, 1945-1949*, "Letter to E.L. Paynter, Game Commissioner, Regina, Saskatchewan, from Fred Beaudoin, Field Officer, Paddockwood, Saskatchewan, April 28, 1947."

⁴⁸ V.F. Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan* (Department of Natural Resources, 1955), 33.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 32.

⁵¹ Ibid., 33.

⁵² Ibid., 33.

⁵³ SAB, NR3 A.24.56, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Green Lake*, "Letter to Joseph Phelps, Minister of Natural Resources, Regina, Saskatchewan, from The Trappers of Ile a la Crosse, Block No. 14, Ile a la Crosse, Saskatchewan, January 5, 1947."

⁵⁴ In 1946 Ile a la Crosse had 110 registered family traplines, Beauval had 79 registered family traplines, Buffalo Narrows had 93 registered family traplines and Green Lake had 63 registered traplines. Traplines are listed in order

by the head of the family, usually male, and have anywhere from 0-9 family members (children) registered to trapline. By cross-referencing these lists with the Ile a la Crosse petition it was determined 78 names matched the signed petition. In terms of family representation 53 families from Ile a la Crosse signed the petition. In some cases both the head of the family and children signed, usually the sons of the family. SAB, NR3 A.24.14, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Ile a la Crosse*, "Letter to Joseph Phelps, Minister of Natural Resources, Regina, Saskatchewan, from The Trappers of Ile a la Crosse, Block No. 14, Ile a la Crosse, Saskatchewan, January 5, 1947."

⁵⁵ SAB, NR3 A.24.14, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Ile a la Crosse*, "Letter to George Ramsay, Ile a la Crosse, Saskatchewan, from E.L. Paynter, Game Commissioner, Regina, Saskatchewan, February 6, 1947."

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ SAB, NR3 A.24.14, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Ile a la Crosse*, "Letter to Joseph Phelps, Regina, Saskatchewan, from George Ramsay, Block No. 14, Ile a la Crosse, Saskatchewan, March 19, 1947."

⁵⁹ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 145; Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 117.

⁶⁰ Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 117-118.

⁶¹ Tom Fiddler, Interviewed by Murray Dobbin, September 13, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01157> (accessed April 20, 2011).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Evelyn Fiddler, Interviewed by Murray Dobbin, September 13, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01158> (accessed April 20, 2011).

⁶⁴ Louis Laliberte, Interviewed by Murray Dobbin, September 11, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01147> (accessed April 5, 2011).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Law Commission of Canada, *What is a Crime? Pimatsiwin Weyasowewina: Aboriginal Harvesting Practices Considered*, Cora Pillwax and Lisa D. Weber (Government of Canada Publications: 2003), 135. <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/325419/publication.html> (accessed April 20, 2012)

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Merle Massie explains that trapping was a part of a seasonal economic system that included hunting and fishing. Trappers would often search for large animals to hunt for food while checking traps. Merle Massie, "Trapping and Trapline Life," in *Our Legacy* http://www.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_trapping (accessed April 20, 2012).

⁷¹ Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan*, 34.

⁷² Nap Johnson, "Interview with Nap Johnson from Ile a La Crosse," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (La Ronge: Northern Saskatchewan Archives, 1975), 8. <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/28615> (accessed April 20, 2012)

⁷³ Law Commission of Canada, *What is a Crime? Pimatsiwin Weyasowewina: Aboriginal Harvesting Practices Considered*, Cora Pillwax and Lisa D. Weber (Government of Canada Publications: 2003), 137. <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/325419/publication.html>

⁷⁴ SAB, NR3 A.24.15, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Buffalo Narrows*, "Letter to E.L. Paynter, Game Commissioner, Regina, Saskatchewan from Thomas Pederson, Alvin J. Morton and Reid Pederson, Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan, February 7, 1949."

⁷⁵ Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 8.

⁷⁶ SAB, NR3 A.24.15, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Buffalo Narrows*, "Letter to Hon. J.H Brockelbank, Minister from E.L. Paynter, Game Commissioner, February 15, 1949."

⁷⁷ SAB, NR3 A.24.15, *Conservation Area Files 1946-1949 Buffalo Narrows*, "Letter to E.L. Paynter, Game Commissioner, Regina, Saskatchewan from Thomas Pederson, Alvin J. Morton and Reid Pederson, Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan, February 7, 1949."

⁷⁸ F. Laurie Barron explains that various northern industries, such as mining and lumbering had little impact on the economic lives of northern Aboriginal peoples. These industries, especially mining, were "almost exclusively a white man's domain." Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 155.

⁷⁹ V.F. Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan*, 34.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁸² Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 164.

⁸³ Buckley, Kew, and Hawley, *The Indians and Métis of Northern Saskatchewan*, 26.

⁸⁴ Mary Jacobson, Transcript, August 3, 1973, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01120> (accessed April 22, 2012).

⁸⁵ Poelzer and Poelzer, *In Our Own Words*, 19.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁸⁷ Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan*, 34.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 34, 63.

⁸⁹ Philip Taft Spaulding, *The Metis of Ile-a-la-Crosse* (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1970), 110.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁹¹ Mary Jacobson, Transcript, August 3, 1973, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01120> (accessed April 22, 2012).

⁹² Poelzer and Poelzer, *In Our Own Words*, 20.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹⁴ Mary Jacobson, Transcript, August 3, 1973, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01120> (accessed April 22, 2012).

⁹⁵ Robert Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1980), 61-62.

⁹⁶ Louis Laliberte, Interviewed by Murray Dobbin, September 11, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01147> (accessed April 5, 2011).

⁹⁷ Vital Morin is a Metis World War II veteran from the community of Ile a la Crosse. He was also involved in the organization of the Saskatchewan Metis Society in Ile a la Crosse. Vital Morin, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Remarks by Vital Morin," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (University of Saskatchewan Archives, Native Law Centre Fonds, April 21, 1992), 78-79. <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/28707> (accessed April 26, 2012).

⁹⁸ Clem Chartier, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Presentation by the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, Clem Chartier," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (University of Saskatchewan Archives, Native Law Centre Fonds, December 10, 1992), 182-183. <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/30676> (accessed April 25, 2012).

⁹⁹ Bonita Beatty, *The Transformation of Indian Political Culture in Northern Saskatchewan* (M.A. Thesis University of Regina, 1996), 81-82.

¹⁰⁰ Vye Bouvier, "The Metis People Versus the Bombing Range," *New Breed Magazine*, April 1983, 26. *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, June 27, 2007). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/06963> (accessed April 25, 2012).

¹⁰¹ David M. Quiring, "From the Bush to the Village in Northern Saskatchewan: Contrasting CCF Community Development Projects," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2006): 151- 178, 169-170.

¹⁰² Ibid., 170.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 170.

¹⁰⁴ Bouvier, "The Metis People Versus the Bombing Range."

¹⁰⁵ Clem Chartier, "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Presentation by the Metis Society of Saskatchewan, Clem Chartier," in *Our Legacy Research Project* (University of Saskatchewan Archives, Native Law Centre Fonds, December 10, 1992), 184-185. <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/30676> (accessed April 25, 2012)

¹⁰⁶ P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *Battle Grounds: The Canadian Military and Aboriginal Lands* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 150-151.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 150-151.

¹⁰⁸ Bouvier, "The Metis People Versus the Bombing Range."; Lackenbauer, *Battle Grounds*, 158.

¹⁰⁹ Lackenbauer, *Battle Grounds*, 158.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 158-159.

¹¹¹ Louis Laliberte, Interviewed by Murray Dobbin, September 11, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01147> (accessed April 5, 2011).

¹¹² Ambrose Maurice, “Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Presentation by Ambrose Maurice” in *Our Legacy Research Project* (University of Saskatchewan Archives, Native Law Centre Fonds, December 8, 1992), 137,142. <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/30641> (accessed April 26, 2012)

¹¹³ Lackenbauer, *Battle Grounds*, 165.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹¹⁵ “In 2004, the Government of Canada and the Province of Saskatchewan reached an agreement with the Primrose Lake [Metis] communities [of Beauval, Ile a la Crosse, Cole Bay and Jans Bay] whereby the two levels of government would invest \$19.5 million, over five years, towards regional economic development initiatives. The federal share was \$15 million with the Province of Saskatchewan contributing the remaining \$4.5 million.” Canada, “Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range Economic Trust Fund Announcement,” Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/aiarch/mr/nr/j-a2007/2-2839-bk-eng.asp> (accessed April 26, 2012).

¹¹⁶ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 166.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹¹⁸ Art K. Davis, Interviewed by Murray Dobbin, July 5, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01163> (accessed April 26, 2011).

¹¹⁹ Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins*, 166.

¹²⁰ Ambrose Maurice, “Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Presentation by Ambrose Maurice” in *Our Legacy Research Project* (University of Saskatchewan Archives, Native Law Centre Fonds, December 8, 1992), 137,142. <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/30641> (accessed April 26, 2012), 139, 143-144.

¹²¹ Emphasis mine. Art K. Davis, Interviewed by Murray Dobbin, July 5, 1976, *The Virtual Museum of Metis History and Culture* (Gabriel Dumont Institute, May 30, 2003). <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/01163> (accessed April 26, 2011).

¹²² Nap Johnson, “Interview with Nap Johnson from Ile a La Crosse,” in *Our Legacy Research Project* (La Ronge: Northern Saskatchewan Archives, 1975), 23. <http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/permalink/28615> (accessed February 6, 2012)

¹²³ Buckley, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan*, 55.

CONCLUSION

“It Hasn’t Welded Together Yet”: The CCF’s Restructuring of the Northern Economy and the Metis Work Ethic

The white man, he’s got his system. And Mister Indian has his system too, but it hasn’t welded together yet. Because Mister Indian has his ways and time doesn’t mean anything and he’s used to it. While the white man’s system is a must because it’s all regulated like a big machine running.¹

In an autobiography entitled, *Ted Trindell: Metis Witness to the North*, trapper and hunter Ted Trindell succinctly articulated the difference between northern Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society. He explained that each society had their own unique economic system, however, these systems were not compatible. Trindell’s statement expressed the relationship between the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and the CCF during the mid-twentieth century. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis had their own economic system and work ethic, which were products of *wahkootowin* and a northern style of life. The CCF entered northern Saskatchewan with socialist ideals, and sought to modernize the northern economy through conservation and marketing policies as well as through social programming. Through an examination of the impacts of government policies, and the Metis reaction to these policies, it is clear that the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis had a specific work ethic that guided their economic principles. This work ethic collided with the CCF’s attempted social engineering and bureaucratic restructuring of the northern economy. CCF socialist ideology had some similarities with Metis worldview, such as mutual cooperation and social equality. However, the CCF implemented their policies in a paternalistic manner that gave the Metis little control in the northern economy. The CCF had preconceived notions about northern Metis believing them to have a lack of knowledge about modern economic principles and co-operative development. This combination of factors led to animosity between the northern Metis and the CCF because the CCF failed to acknowledge or comprehend that the Metis had their own specific work ethic and socio-cultural ties to the northern economy.

Weber’s theoretical framework served as a tool to examine what constituted a northwestern Saskatchewan Metis work ethic, and explain how work ethic is linked to worldview. Weber’s conception of traditionalism provided a framework to analyze the relationship between the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis and government outsiders during the mid-twentieth century. However, Weber’s theory fails to explain how aspects of traditionalism

are rational in certain societies because they work well within the context of their environments. Although Weber's theoretical framework fails to fully explain the problems associated with the transition of northern Saskatchewan's traditional economy to a modern capitalist economy, his theory on the development of a capitalist "ethos" provided insights on how Metis connections to wahkootowin and the northern style of life were essential in the creation of an ethos that dictated their economic decisions, most notably within the trapping economy.

Macdougall's theoretical framework wahkootowin explained the elements of Metis worldview. The concepts outlined in wahkootowin, such as kinship and reciprocity directly influenced the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis economic decisions. This combined with the aspects of a northern style of life, which included hard work and survival, created the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis work ethic. This work ethic collided with CCF ideology and policy implementation, along with capitalist development in the north. The CCF's use of bureaucratic top down policy essentially removed the former freedom the Metis had within their economies, more specifically, the trapping economy. The CCF portrayed the credit-based trapping system as exploitative, and in order to provide Aboriginal trappers with a more fair and equitable system, they altered the historical relationship between trappers and traders that formed during the fur trade era. The economic relationship between the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis, the HBC and other private traders was established through generations of fur trade relations. However, this relationship between the Metis and the HBC was not necessarily an equal partnership because the company often exploited trappers. As stated previously, the fur trade monopoly of the HBC has been documented. However, given that the HBC was the only "reigning authority" over the Metis people in the north for generations, this created a distinct socio-cultural relationship between the Company and the Metis. Macdougall further explains the historical relationship of the HBC and the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis by stating:

...the HBC as an institution was incorporated, however unwillingly, into the Metis familial structure because of the holistic nature of its worldview. When they were in service and had a good economic relationship with the Company, the Metis strove to keep the HBC within their socio-cultural framework by treating it as a member of the family...However, when the HBC failed to act as a good relative – putting profits ahead of the interests of the people...the heads of [Metis] families...had to locate alternative means to support their immediate and extended families.²

Therefore, wahkootowin dictated the actions of the Metis in their economic life. If an economic policy was attuned to familial obligation the Metis supported it, much like the family based registered trapline system. However, if an economic policy hindered wahkootowin principles and the northern style of life, such as the SFMS, the Metis resisted that policy. The interference of government outsiders and the regulation of the trapping system were viewed as an infringement on an economic system that functioned well for the Metis. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter Three, the Metis wanted the freedom to sell their furs to whomever they chose rather than being forced to market them through the government. In fact, the Metis viewed the credit system as an economic practice that provided stability. In the view of the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis, government conservation policy and the restructuring of the trapping economy upset their traditional socio-economic practices and criminalized their way of life that they had engaged in for many generations. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis were removed from a self-sufficient lifestyle based on hunting, trapping and fishing and the use of land resources. This was replaced with the breakdown of traditions and family cohesiveness due to the creation of permanent settlements, loss of credit status with the HBC, the criminalization of their economic pursuits, and the loss of the ability to harvest land resources. Ultimately, this caused the Metis to become dependant on welfare and they were also subjected to racism from non-Aboriginal people. All of this was linked to the policies the CCF implemented in the north. The CCF also provided the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis with no alternatives to supplement the decline of their traditional economies. Yet, government ideology confined Aboriginal people to their traditional economies because “they believed that Aboriginals had an aptitude for traditional occupations.”³

The Metis resisted CCF policy because socio-cultural values based on wahkootowin and the northern style of life were rational concepts within the context of their environment, and within their own unique work ethic that developed during the fur trade. Trapper Ted Trindell conceptualized how the northern style of life was rational to Aboriginal peoples, just as the non-Aboriginal economy was rational to the “white man.” He explains that in order to make a living in the bush you need to learn how to survive within the northern environment. Similarly, he explains that non-Aboriginal peoples had their own economic realm where they worked as farmers, bookkeepers or bankers but they also needed to know how to survive in that system. For Trindell, both systems allowed the two groups to make a living but in “different ways.” He

states, “I go out in the bush and shoot a [three hundred or four hundred pound] moose, and money wise, I’m equal to [the non-Aboriginal]: [the non-Aboriginal has] the cash, and I [have] the meat.”⁴ As such, the northern style of life was rational to the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis because it allowed them to survive in an economic system that was based on a relationship that was in harmony with their landscape. However, this style of life was not conducive to the CCF’s goals for restructuring northern Saskatchewan. The CCF’s socialist ideology failed to be fully embraced within the northern economy because of their inherent views of Aboriginal people. CCF officials believed that restructuring traditional economic pursuits would usher the northern Aboriginal population into a modern economy that was similar to the south.

A secondary focus of this thesis was to briefly explore how government policies created distinctions between northern Aboriginal groups and affected Metis identity and class formation. As explained in Chapter Three, government intervention in the north created a growing class distinction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal government employees. As government intervention in the north grew, further distinctions were made between status and non-status First Nations people and the Metis. The demarcation of the terms “Indian” and “Metis” would affect the kinship relations of Aboriginal people in northwestern Saskatchewan and cause animosity between communities. Furthermore, the Metis way of life would become criminalized because their subsistence rights were not protected within government legislation. In the mid-twentieth century the Metis would be persecuted for practicing their northern style of life and conservation policy would contribute to the erosion of their rights to natural resources. Criminalizing the traditional lifestyle of the Metis functioned to keep the Metis impoverished and marginalized. They were kept in this structural position through racism from non-Aboriginal society and by the separation of their rights from other Aboriginal groups.

When the CCF government arrived in northern Saskatchewan they believed they had stumbled upon an unknown crisis. Northern Aboriginals were surviving in poor living conditions coupled with a lack of substandard healthcare and formal education due to isolation and the decline of the traditional northern economy. The CCF believed that the Liberal government, private corporations, and the HBC had swindled northern Aboriginal people. While aspects of this vision of northern Saskatchewan may be based in truth, there were other socio-economic factors that the CCF would fail to recognize when they began to restructure the northern economy. More specifically, the CCF failed to recognize that northern Aboriginal people had

their own distinct worldview that was reflected within the traditional economy. The practices of trapping, hunting and fishing were more than an economic means to an end for the Metis. These practices related to a way of life with a distinct set of values and rules that guided survival and responsibility. The northwestern Saskatchewan Metis worldview or expression of wahkootowin produced a specific work ethic that did not coincide with the CCF's vision for northern Saskatchewan. Therefore, interaction between the Metis and the CCF can be described as a clash of two distinct worldviews. The illustration of the Metis work ethic explains why the Metis resisted government policies and exemplifies the fact that the Metis were not simply controlled or manipulated by government policy. Provincial government policy did have a profound effect on the trapping economy, but the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis resisted these policies, and further expressed the importance of their traditional lifestyle and their connection to the land. The Metis continued to create a space for themselves within a system of government ideology and control. Rather than wanting to survive upon social assistance payments the Metis fought to sustain their economic livelihoods. They also tried to adapt to the changing economy by understanding that formal education would become an avenue to allow their children to be successful and by lobbying for new avenues of employment. They were not passive victims during the restructuring of the northern economy, however, government "top down" policy repeatedly denied them the right to choose how they wanted to live their lives.

Through the use of primary documents and transcribed interviews conducted during the mid to late twentieth century this study has shown that the northwestern Saskatchewan Metis adhered to specific a ethos that dictated how they reacted to government policy. Furthermore, it adds an Aboriginal perspective to the body of literature on CCF policy in northern Saskatchewan. This study also provides some context into the continuing importance of the trapping economy beyond the confines of the fur trade era. The research also adds insight to the northern Metis claim for land rights in northern Saskatchewan by explaining that government policy and regulations served to divide a northern Aboriginal population that had deep cultural and economic connections to their landscape. Through the application of scrip and the subsequent implementation of conservation policy the Metis were criminalized, and their rights to natural resources were severed even though they lived a similar lifestyle to status First Nations people. This study indicates that development during the mid-1900s furthered the erosion of Metis rights in the north. As such, more research is needed on how this affects the northern Metis

current relationship with resource extraction and development, such as mining and nuclear waste storage. As Saskatchewan moves towards increasing industrialization of the north government and businesses may be poised to make the same mistakes as the CCF. In the coming years, tailoring economic development within northern and Aboriginal worldview may help to create equal partnerships between government and northern Aboriginal people. The continuation of “top down” policy in northern development has implications concerning the duty to consult northern Aboriginal communities when their lands are affected by resource extraction and development. Further research also needs to be done on the impacts of government imposed definitions on northern Aboriginal peoples kinship systems and identity. Also, more research is required on the affects of centralized settlements in northern Saskatchewan their affects on class structure and gender roles. The shifting nature of the family oriented trapping system from a family based practice to a mainly male activity had a profound effect on the structure of northern Metis families and how they related to one another. The study of these issues, along with research on the continuing importance of the trapping economy would provide insight into the current status of the northern economy and northern Aboriginal people.

¹ Jean Morisset and Rose-Marie Pelletier ed. *Ted Trindell: Metis Witness to the North* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1986), 125.

² Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 216.

³ David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan: Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, and Fur Sharks* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 106.

⁴ Morisset and Pelletier ed. *Ted Trindell: Metis Witness to the North*, 104.

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