SCOUTS AND SEIZERS: COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICING IN BLACKFOOT (NIITSITAPI) COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHERN ALBERTA, 1874-1919

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By

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ABSTRACT

In the late nineteenth century, the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) formulated and implemented the first community-oriented policing program in modern police history: the Indian Scout System of southern Alberta. The 1880s saw a fracturing of the relationship between the NWMP and the Niitsitapi (also known as the Blackfoot), as the latter occasionally threatened or assaulted NWMP parties sent out to apprehend suspected lawbreakers. More commonly, Niitsitapi communities simply refused to assist police investigations or help recover stolen property. The NWMP's initial response was to leverage intimidation and the threat of force to change Niitsitapi behaviour. To this end, the NWMP continuously allocated manpower resources to southern Alberta and built dozens of posts to monitor Niitsitapi reserves. An analysis of NWMP distribution patterns – made possible through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software – illustrates that the Niitsitapi were more heavily surveilled than other Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West. But this approach failed, and resistance continued. This development, combined with the fear of another uprising comparable to the North-West Resistance of 1885 – this time led by the more dangerous Niitsitapi – forced the NWMP to change strategies: attaching Niitsitapi men to the force as Indian Scouts, so they could police their own communities. However, because the Niitsitapi were angry with how the Canadian federal government had implemented Treaty 7, they initially refused to participate. The NMWP then engaged in a sustained program of positive, nonenforcement engagement – where the police helped to build reserve economies and advocated for particular Niitsitapi interests – to rebuild trust. This approach succeeded, resulting in many Niitsitapi men happily serving as "Indian Scouts" between 1891 and 1919. Indian Scout was a misnomer though; an analysis of scout duties illustrates that they performed many of the same ones that Euro-Canadian policemen did. Indian Scouts helped achieve better law enforcement outcomes on reserves because they spoke the language, knew the land, and had personal contacts that Euro-Canadian officers did not have. Overall, the Indian Scout System's story demonstrates that incorporating the Niitsitapi into the Canadian State was not one of rank subjugation, but a combination of coercion and consent. It was a process that ultimately emphasized negotiation.

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Linda Marsh (née O’Neil), who instilled within me a love of study and inquiry.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (AND HISTORICALLY RECOGNIZED NAMES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES)

Abbreviations

APA – Alberta Provincial Archives

Glenbow – Glenbow Museum and Archives

HBC – Hudson's Bay Company

LAC – Library and Archives Canada

MHS – Montana Historical Society

NARAD – National Archives and Record Administration at Denver, CO

NWMP – North-West Mounted Police

RNWMP – Royal North-West Mounted Police

Historically Recognized Names for Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian Prairie West

A'aninin – Gros Ventres

Anishinaabe – Plains Ojibway or Salteaux

Dakota, Lakota – Sioux

Apsáalooke – Crow

Dene – Chipewyan

Kainai – Bloods

Ktunaxa – Kutenai

Nakoda – Assiniboine

Nehiyaw – Cree

Newe – Shoshone

Niitsitapi – The Blackfoot Confederacy

Piikani – Peigan

Plateau Salish – Flathead

Q̓lispé – Pend d'Oreille

Schitsu'umsh – Coeur d'Alene

Siksika – Blackfoot Proper

Tsuu T'ina - Sarcee

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of twentieth-century Canada, Tail Feathers (or Tail Feathers Around His Neck) was a North-West Mounted Policeman (Figure I.1). At the time, no one called him that though; his official title was "Indian Scout." Not much is known about his early life other than that he was born somewhere in Blackfoot Country – the vast plains between the Yellowstone and the North Saskatchewan Rivers – in the second half of the nineteenth century. A member of the Niitsitapi (or Blackfoot) nation, he was part of the Kainai or Blood tribe – one of the nation's three branches – and lived on the reserve of the same name, in what is today the southern portion of the Canadian province of Alberta. Between 1892 and 1907, Tail Feathers served in the Fort Macleod police district for a combined period of nearly thirteen years. He did routine patrols, investigated crime, arrested suspects, issued summons for witnesses to appear in court, escorted prisoners, delivered mail, cared for horses, and did the occasional freighting of supplies. In short, he did the typical work of a mounted policeman. His colleague, Constable James Fullerton, described him as a "jovial bright man"; other peers complimented him for being dependable and hardworking.[1] But by early October 1907, Tail Feathers had fallen into a deep depression. According to Hugh Dempsey, an expert on Niitsitapi history, it was because his youngest wife had been unfaithful to him.[2] However, North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) records indicate that Tail Feathers was upset because of a recent physical assault perpetrated against his wife by a fellow scout. He also complained of being marginalized by the Kainai community, the target of taunts and jeers because of his employment with the force.[3] On October 4 – after spending the afternoon smoking and eating with friends – Tail Feathers announced he had to deliver a message for his commanding officer. Stepping outside, he walked a short distance from the

[1] Statement of Constable James Fullerton, "Tail Feathers Inquest," October 4, 1907 (Alberta Provincial Archives (APP) GR1966.0166/802).
[2] Hugh A. Dempsey, *The Vengeful Wife and other Blackfoot Stories* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 79-80.
[3] Corporal C.F. Miles to the Officer Commanding R.N.W. Police Macleod, October 4, 1907 (Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Record Group 18-Volume 343-File 615-07); "Crime Report: Re: Shooting of Indian (Blood) Tail Feathers," October 5, 1907 (LAC RG18-V343-F615-07).

Figure I.1: Kainai Scouts at Stand Off Detachment, 1894. (L-R) Calf Tail; Black Eagle; Big Rib; Many White Horses; Tail Feathers; Many Mules; and Bear's Teat (Meat Mouth). Glenbow Museum and Archives NA-288-6

house before shooting himself through the head. The *Montreal Daily Star* eulogized Tail Feathers, remembering his distinctive "half wild Indian, half military appearance" when he visited Montreal for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebration in 1897. The newspaper noted his long service, explicitly referred to him as a police officer, and stated he held the confidence of now legendary Mountie Sam Steele.[4] Steele spoke highly of Tail Feathers in 1896, crediting him for initiating the final chain of events that led to the capture of Charcoal, a fugitive who had murdered a fellow Kainai man and then a policeman sent to apprehend him.

Tail Feathers was not the only Niitsitapi man to serve in the NWMP. Between 1887 and the end of 1919, at least 252 of them worked as "Indian Scouts." This dissertation traces the origins and evolution of the Indian Scout System in the Canadian Prairie West and its contribution to establishing Canadian law and order in Blackfoot Country. The word "scout" is often conjures images as an individual who guides, tracks quarry, or gathers intelligence – and in an American context refers to Native American allies in the service of the United States military in their conflicts with Indigenous peoples during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Indian Scouts employed by the NWMP rarely or never performed these duties. In fact, the Indian Scout moniker was a complete misnomer. In effect, Niitsitapi men employed in these positions were North-West Mounted Policemen who specialized in effectively policing reserve communities. Even after training at the NWMP depot near Regina, Euro-Canadian police constables were unprepared to function as law enforcement officials on and near Niitsitapi reserves. They could not speak or understand the Niitsitapi language, did not know the country, were unfamiliar with Niitsitapi culture, and had no personal contacts with Niitsitapi communities. As such, they were mostly ineffective in investigating crime, implementing anti-crime measures, or apprehending suspected criminals without sparking community resistance. The NWMP needed Indigenous people to perform this kind of work. By the mid-1890s, Indian Scouts did most of the day-to-day policing in Niitsitapi communities. But by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Niitsitapi interest in doing such work slackened as better economic opportunities emerged. The NWMP officers most knowledgeable of the region – wanting to attract high-calibre individuals – recommended paying Indian Scouts more than double the salary of a Euro-Canadian constable. Although this recommendation was dismissed as too expensive, it illustrates how vital Indian Scouts had become to local law enforcement.

[4] "Trusted Indian Scout Suicides," *Montreal Daily Star,* October 14, 1907 (LAC RG18-V343-F615-07).

This dissertation also reveals the evolution of NWMP policy in Blackfoot Country. By the time the recently established Dominion of Canada acquired Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory in 1870, lurid and sensational stories of Niitsitapi violence, capriciousness, and "savagery" had circulated for decades. The continuous accounts of missionaries, fur traders, government explorers, and newspaper writers generated a potent image that can be characterized as the "Dangerous Blackfoot." It asserted that Blackfoot Country was not a safe place for life or property. The Niitsitapi did not take kindly to intruders, who the former would attack completely unprovoked. Believed to be brigands by nature, they stole horses indiscriminately from other Indigenous peoples and Euro-North Americans alike. A key concern for Canadian officials throughout the last third of the nineteenth century was how to contain Niitsitapi "criminality" effectively enough to protect the lives and property of immigrants, to assuage the anxieties of potential immigrants, reduce conflicts among Indigenous groups, and prevent cross-border incidents. A key question then is what strategies did the NWMP employ to fulfill this objective? When? How effective were they?

When the NWMP arrived in Blackfoot Country in late 1874, they expected conflict with the Niitsitapi based on the latter's purported history with foreign interlopers, the most recent being American whiskey traders from Montana Territory.[5] It was a welcome surprise that between 1875 and 1879 the Niitsitapi were friendly and welcoming. While initially wary about the presence of a large corps of armed Euro-Canadians in their territory, prominent Niitsitapi leaders accepted them because they ran off the whiskey dealers who were causing chaos within their communities. Efforts to keep liquor out were ongoing, and the Niitsitapi helped the police in doing so. While there to enforce Canadian laws on Niitsitapi communities, in the beginning the police were not overbearing in their approach. Police officials saw themselves as educators, teaching Niitsitapi men and women about the "Queen's law." Rather than seizing suspected lawbreakers out of hand, they worked through prominent and tactful leaders to induce them to surrender peacefully, often with the assurance they would be treated fairly. But in the early-1880s, certain individual officers abandoned this model, suddenly expecting the Niitsitapi to

[5] For an account of American migration to the region and the whiskey trade era see Paul F Sharp. *Whoop-Up Country: The Canadian-American West, 1865-1885* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955) and Hugh A. Dempsey, *Firewater: The Impact of the Whiskey Trade on the Blackfoot Nation* (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 2002).

unquestioningly comply with police demands at the mere appearance of an arresting party. The change in attitude had a detrimental effect on their relationship, causing armed confrontations and near bloodshed. Only the intervention of peaceably-minded Niitsitapi leaders prevented it. As Niitsitapi intransigence continued, police officials responded by concentrating more manpower in Blackfoot Country and expanding their surveillance networks over Niitsitapi reserves by constructing outposts (called "detachments" in NWMP parlance). Police officials sought to convey to the Niitsitapi that they were always being watched and that the NWMP had the requisite manpower to enforce compliance of the law. However, the Niitsitapi – particularly the Kainai – continued to be boisterously restive as they fought a war against the A'aninin (Gros Ventres) and Nakoda (Assiniboine) of the Fort Belknap Agency in northern Montana throughout the second half of the decade. The war resulted in hundreds of stolen horses being taken to Niitsitapi reserves, which sparked more confrontations as the police tried to recover the animals and arrest the raiders. As resistance and violence escalated, the NWMP concentrated even more manpower and built further detachments to contain Niitsitapi raiding and resistance. However, much of the community continued to defy the police.

In 1887, the NWMP tried to ameliorate the problem by developing an Indian Scout corps, whose duties were to establish a police presence in the community, investigate crime, and arrest suspects. The pilot project was a success in that it proved that the Niitsitapi could do the work effectively. However, the police continued to fan the flames of community anger by trying to recover stolen horses and arrest raiders. Meanwhile, the manhunt for a Siksika suspect named Deerfoot led to the police shooting of an innocent Kainai man mistaken for the fugitive. In this tense atmosphere, the NWMP could find few volunteers to serve as Indian Scouts. The Kainai's conflict with the Fort Belknap finally led to a spectacular conflagration with the police in the summer of 1889, which oral history refers to as "The Time We Went to War with the Redcoats." The Kainai had gathered for their annual *Ookaan* ("Sun Dance"), and when a NWMP patrol arrived, they noticed the presence of suspected horse raiders. In trying to arrest them, the police entered the sacred lodge and created a disturbance. Outrage ensued, with a large group of Kainai men assaulting members of the arresting party. The suspects escaped in the confusion.

It was at this point that NWMP policy towards the Niitsitapi finally changed. Commissioner Lawrence William Herchmer – who had been an employee of the Indian Department before joining the NWMP – believed that the problem of Niitsitapi restiveness was

fundamentally a socioeconomic one. Since there was virtually no economic activity on Niitsitapi reserves – as agriculture was mostly untenable in the arid northwest plains and there had been little effort by the Indian Department to promote cattle raising – men were bored and clinging to systems of status remnant of the pre-reserve era.[6] Herchmer promoted the cultivation of haying and freighting on Niitsitapi reserves by awarding reserve communities police contracts. Over the 1890s, these industries grew, employing many Niitsitapi men. Others found work as Indian Scouts, which became more attractive as tensions with the police subsided. The war with Fort Belknap ended around 1890, eliminating a significant source of friction between the Niitsitapi and the police. The NWMP also interceded on Niitsitapi behalf in disputes with the Indian Department concerning rations and religious freedom. While the police generally supported Indian Department policy – meant to assimilate Indigenous peoples by transforming them into agricultural, Christianized, capitalistic individuals – the force's primary mission was to maintain peace and order. When Indian policy interfered with this objective, local police officials pushed back, which generated Niitsitapi goodwill. With the steady employment of Indian Scouts, everyday responsibility for policing reserve communities was turned over to them under police oversight, spawning an era of cooperative and peaceful relations between the Niitsitapi and the NWMP that lasted until the end of the Great War.

This dissertation also asks how the Niitsitapi came to accept the political dominance of the Dominion of Canada. Why did the Blackfoot Nation acquiesce to its incorporation into this polity? The hegemonic interpretation of Western Canadian historiography is that Indigenous peoples across the prairies were subjugated by the agents of the Canadian State: the Indian Department, the NWMP, the courts, and the army. In the 1870s, peoples like the Niitsitapi, the Nehiyaw (Cree), the Nakoda (Assiniboine), and the Anishinaabe (Plains Ojibway or Salteaux) were severely weakened by the collapse of their economies, caused by the decimation of the plains bison.[7] Fearing for the future, they signed a series of treaties with the Canadian federal

[6] For a history of Kainai reserve economic development see Keith W. Regular, *Neighbours and Networks: The Blood Tribe in the Southern Alberta Economy, 1884-1939* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2009).

[7] The destruction of the Great Plains bison has been widely studied. More recent studies point to the impacts of both Indigenous hunting practices and capitalist markets causing their near extinction in the late-nineteenth century. Some of the more prominent works include Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800- 1850," *Journal of American History* 78, no.2 (1991): 465-485; David D. Smits, "The Frontier Army and the Destruction of the Buffalo, 1865-1883," *Western Historical Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (1994): 312-338; William A. Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881," *Western Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1996): 33-52; Elliot West, *The Contested Plains: Indians Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence, KS: University of

government guaranteeing Euro-Canadian access to their traditional territories in exchange for one-time monetary payments, annuities, reserve lands, and promises of material assistance and education to aid them in building new economies based on agriculture and animal husbandry. However, many influential Indigenous leaders felt many treaty promises had not been kept, sparking a resistance movement to force the government to honour the treaties or renegotiate them. During the North-West Resistance of 1885, the federal government used military force against the dissenters and intimidated other leaders into submission. They seized weapons and horses, disbanded the most disruptive leaders' followings, and imprisoned the leaders themselves.[8] The Department of Indian Affairs then implemented a pass system that confined western Indigenous peoples to their reserves. John L. Tobias was one of the first historians to advance this narrative, a challenge to previous generations of western Canadian scholars who asserted that Canada had always pursued a just and honourable Indian policy.[9] Since the late-1980s, other scholars echoed this claim and built on Tobias's assertions by researching various aspects of Canadian Indian policy – agricultural development assistance, food relief, health care, and traditional religiosity – which further demonstrated Indigenous peoples had not been treated fairly.[10] These studies identify the North-West Resistance as a major turning point in the

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Kansas Press, 1998); Andrew Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Pekka Hämäläinen, "The First Phase of Destruction: Killing the Southern Plains Buffalo, 1790-1840," *Great Plains Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (2001): 101-114; George Colpitts. *Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade and the Last Bison Hunts in the British American West, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser, eds., *Bison and People on the North American Plains: A Deep Environmental History* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M, 2016).

[8] For some of the more important works on the North-West Resistance see George F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: The History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, reprint 1961; c1936); Desmond Morton, *The Last War Drum: The North West Campaign of 1885* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1972); Bob Beal and Rod Macleod, *Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion* (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1984); Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion*, (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 1997).

[9] See John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879-1885," *Canadian Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (1983): 519-548.

[10] See for example Jim R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989); Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); Olive Patricia Dickason *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992); Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994); Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); Brian Titley, *The Frontier World of Edgar Dewdney* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999); Maureen K. Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Jim R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, and Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Robert J. Talbot's *Negotiating the Numbered Treaties* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 2009); Brian

repression of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West. The federal government used force, the threat of force, and hunger as coercive tools to force them to accept Canadian political, economic, and social dominance. After 1885, Indigenous peoples were defeated, demoralized, and confined, kept on their reserves by Indian Department officials and the NWMP.

While these scholars' combined efforts have revealed a more complicated and less celebratory Canadian history, Tobias's initial interpretation was never meant to encapsulate the Niitsitapi experience with Canadian colonialism. Many of the bones of contention that existed for the Plains Nehiyaw (Cree) – specifically the struggle for large and politically powerful reserves or adequate famine relief – did not apply to the Niitsitapi, who already had large reserves with sizable populations. Throughout the last quarter of the nineteenth century, they received the lion's share of famine relief issued by the Canadian federal government. Most notably, the Niitsitapi remained neutral during the Resistance and had even offered to fight the Nehiyaw and the Métis. The superimposition of the Plains Nehiyaw model of subjugation onto the Niitsitapi obscures the actual processes that allowed for their political integration into the Canadian State. "Subjugation" refers to the process of one country or people vanquishing, subduing, or controlling another, or rendering them submissive, obedient, or dependent.[11] While the Niitsitapi were indeed economically dependent after the extirpation of the bison, to say that they had been "subjugated" in the other meanings of the word is an unsustainable claim that runs up against considerable evidence to the contrary, contained in NWMP annual reports, NWMP departmental correspondence, Indian Agent reports, and Indian Department correspondence. The Niitsitapi accepted political domination by Canada through what Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci has described as "hegemonic processes," which emphasizes conditions of both coercion and consent. The NWMP were the chief intermediaries between the Niitsitapi and the Canadian government in these processes.

In reality, both sides experienced coercion by the other, which allowed for the possibility of a negotiated settlement. While it was not the perfect solution for either side, it was something

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Titley, *The Indian Commissioners: Agents of the State and Indian Policy in the Canadian Prairie West, 1873-1932* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2009); and James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013).

[11] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (2000), s.v. "subjugation," "subjugate," and "subjection," https://www-oed-com.cyber.usask.ca/view/Entry/192726?redirectedFrom=subjugation; https://www-oed-com.cyber.usask.ca/view/Entry/192724?rskey=Mrmw8o&result=2#eid; https://www-oed-com.cyber.usask.ca/view/Entry/192699?redirectedFrom=subjection+#eid.

both could accept. The Niitsitapi were severely disadvantaged in their relationship with Canada because their economy had collapsed. They needed help building a new way of life based on agriculture, animal husbandry, natural resource extraction, and wage labour. The result was an enormous power imbalance favouring the federal government, one of life and death. Conversely, Canada felt constrained because its leaders did not want to fight a series of "Indian Wars" as the United States had done throughout the nineteenth century. These kinds of conflicts would have represented an enormous financial burden to the young Dominion.[12] They would have discouraged immigration, stifled agricultural settlement, and ultimately rendered the entire expansionist exercise – one that aimed to make Canada the crown jewel of the British Empire – pointless.[13] The Canadian Prairie West had to be peaceful. The image of the Dangerous Blackfoot compounded these fears. The federal government perceived the Niitsitapi as more warlike, brutal, and unpredictable than other Indigenous peoples. Throughout the 1880s and into the mid-1890s, Canadian officials worried continuously about a Niitsitapi uprising, which threatened to be more destructive than the 1885 Resistance. This fear gave the Niitsitapi a certain degree of power to ameliorate their material and cultural conditions under assimilatory Indian Department policies, which other Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West did not have.

Niitsitapi resistance and restiveness was the direct result of Canadian agencies not keeping promises made. When the NWMP first entered Blackfoot Country in 1874, their officers' constant refrain was they would enforce the law equally, regardless of whether a lawbreaker was Indigenous or Euro-Canadian. However, several incidents in the 1880s revealed that Euro-Canadian suspects had certain legal "privileges" – like access to bail and legal counsel – that the police never even told the Niitsitapi about. During Treaty 7 negotiations, Canadian officials promised that in exchange for settler access to Niitsitapi land, they would dispense annuities, distribute yearly gifts of ammunition, provide food, and foster agricultural

[12] R.C. Macleod*, The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 4; Horrall, Stanley W., "John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police for the Northwest Territories" in R. Craig Brown and Robert Bothwell, eds., *Canadian Historical Review: Continuing the Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada, Founded at the University of Toronto in 1896* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 180-181.

[13] For history of the Expansionist movement in Canada and the vision it had for the Canadian Prairie West, see Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

endeavours.[14] When Canada failed to fulfill these promises to Niitsitapi satisfaction, it created bad feelings and outcry. The community was then not inclined to cooperate with police efforts to arrest horse raiders or recover stolen property, nor would it participate in initiatives like the Indian Scout corps. When the police demonstrated their ability to enforce the law equally and made positive contributions to reserve economies, the Niitsitapi did what the NWMP desperately wanted them to do. The Niitsitapi were less successful in pressuring local Indian Agents to change policies around food relief, the promotion of agrarian economies, and Indigenous religious freedom, prompting them to take their complaints to the NMWP. While the police were loath to interfere with assimilation policy because it sparked conflict with Indian Department officials, the primary objective of the NWMP was to maintain peace and order. When NWMP officials believed that Indian Department policies went too far and risked sparking violent outbursts, they interceded on Niitsitapi behalf, securing concessions on rationing and expressions of community religiosity. Because the local NWMP listened to Niitsitapi concerns patiently and publicly, the latter believed that someone in government was listening to them, providing a valuable safety valve for frustration. Hugh Dempsey once argued that while all Indigenous peoples in western Canada experienced material hardship and cultural decline during the late nineteenth century, the Niitsitapi were better off than most others.[15] This dissertation demonstrates that this was because of their stronger negotiating position – given them by the Dangerous Blackfoot image – that allowed the Niitsitapi to extract concessions from the Canadian government more effectively than other Indigenous peoples.

Finally, this dissertation makes a historical case for the efficacy of community-oriented policing in minority ethnic and racial communities. In the late nineteenth century, the NWMP

[14] For the government perspective of the treaty negotiations and the original text of Treaty 7, see Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, & Co., Publishers, 1880; Reprint, Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1979). For how the Niitsitapi interpreted the negotiations about the treaty and the treaty itself, see Hugh A. Dempsey, *Treaty Research Report, Treaty Seven* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1987); Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, Dorothy First Rider, and Sarah Carter*, The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996); and Hugh Dempsey, *The Great Blackfoot Treaties* (Vancouver: Heritage House, 2015). For general interpretations of the Numbered Treaties see Jean Friesen, "Magnificent Gifts: The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of the Northwest, 1869-76," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, Series V, 1 (1986): 41-51; Ray, Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller and Frank Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000) and Talbot, *Negotiating the Numbered Treaties.*

[15] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Red Crow: Warrior Chief, 2nd Edition* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1995), 255, 259.

pioneered and implemented what was perhaps the first community-oriented strategy in modern police history. Positive, nonenforcement contact between minority groups and police institutions improves relationships and allows for better policing outcomes in terms of crime reduction and public safety. Nationwide protests and political unrest after the deaths of Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York, Michael Brown in Fergusson, Missouri, and Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Ohio, all at police officers' hands – has put American policing in minority communities under scrutiny. Worldwide protests over the recent police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, have brought these issues back to the forefront of national consciousness. Minority communities – especially African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans – have significantly less trust and confidence in American police departments than Euro-Americans.[16] Since the 1960s, sociological and historical scholars have consistently noted that racial and ethnic minorities in the United States are less likely than Euro-Americans to trust the police because of the perception of unfair treatment and racial disparities in police behaviour.[17] Such perceptions exist in Canada too; racial and ethnic minorities hold lower levels of confidence in the police compared to Euro-Canadians.[18] In 2014, sociologist Cao Liqun demonstrated in a multivariate

[16] Jeffrey M. Jones, "In U.S., Confidence in Police Lowest in 22 Years," *Gallup*, June 19, 2015: https://news.gallup.com/poll/183704/confidence-police-lowest-years.aspx; Jim Norman, "Confidence in the Police Back at Historical Average," *Gallup*, July 10, 2017, https://news.gallup.com/poll/213869/confidence-police-back-historical-average.aspx; Center for Advancing Opportunity, *The State of Opportunity in America: Understanding Barriers & Identifying Solutions, 2019* (Washington, DC: Gallup, Inc., 2019), 6-7, 19.

[17] For example see Ben Brown and William Reed Benedict, "Perceptions of the Police: Past Findings, Methodological Issues, Conceptual Issues, and Policy Implications," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 25, no. 3 (2002), 547-549; Joshua C. Cochran and Patricia Y. Warren, "Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Differences in Perceptions of the Police: The Salience of Officer Race Within the Context of Racial Profiling," *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 28, no. 2 (2012), 207-211; and Kevin L. Nadal, Kristin C. Davidoff, Neil Allicock, Christine R. Serpe, and Tanya Erazo, "Perceptions of Police, Racial Profiling, and Psychological Outcomes: A Mixed Methodological Study," *Journal of Social Issues* 73, no. 4 (2017), 808-812, 814-825. In her historical study of the selective policing of racial and ethnic communities in early twentieth century New York City, Marcy S. Sacks illustrates that African-Americans perceived themselves as being unfairly targeted by the police and the criminal justice system writ large; see Marcy S. Sacks, "'To Show Who Was in Charge': Police Repression of New York City's Black Population at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Urban History* 31, no. 6 (2005). Hollie A. Teague illustrates an anti-African-American sentiment among police and the justice system in north Texas between 1880 and 1930; see Hollie A. Teague, "Black and Blue in North Texas: The Long Neglected History of Anti-Black Police Violence in North Texas, 1880-1930," *Journal of Black Studies* 49, no. 8 (2018).

[18] For example see Scot Wortley, "A Northern Taboo: Research on Race, Crime, and Criminal Justice in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 41, no. 2 (1999); Guy Ben-Porat, "Policing Multicultural States: Lessons from the Canadian Model," *Policing & Society* 18, no. 4 (2008); Liqun Cao, "Visible Minorities and Confidence in the Police," *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 53, no. 1 (2011); Robert Christmas, "The People Are the Police: Building Trust with Aboriginal Communities in Contemporary Canadian Society," *Canadian Public Administration* 55, no. 3 (2012); and Elizabeth Comack, *Racialized Policing: Aboriginal People's Encounters with the Police* (Winnipeg: Fernwood, 2012).

analysis that Indigenous peoples in Canada had "significantly lower levels of confidence in the police" than other segments of the Canadian population, including other visible minorities. For example, when asked if the police ensured the safety of all citizens, 65 percent of all respondents stated that the police did a good job. However, only 54 percent of Indigenous peoples polled thought the same, while 11 percent believed they did a poor job (compared to the overall average response of 5 percent). On another measure, 65 percent of all other respondents stated that the police did a good job treating people fairly, while only 53 percent of Indigenous respondents thought so. 14 percent of them asserted that the police did a poor job of doing so compared to 7 percent of all others.[19] Cao suggests this lack of confidence is due to police complicity in upholding colonial institutions bent on the assimilation of Indigenous peoples; deadly encounters between the two groups (such as Saskatoon "starlight tours" in the 1990s and, more recently police shootings or cases involving excessive uses of force); disproportionate policing of Indigenous peoples to contain a "problem population"; and an unwillingness on the part of police to believe the stories of Indigenous peoples.[20] A compounding factor may be the disproportionate amount of Indigenous peoples' deaths in police custody. For example, in British Columbia, they are twice as likely to meet such fates compared to other segments of the population.[21] Another factor might be the high incarceration rate among Indigenous peoples in Canada, which is disproportionate according to their overall make-up in Canada's population. Indigenous peoples make up around 5 percent but account for more than 30 percent of all federal prisoners.[22] The percentage of provincial prisoners on the prairies was even higher in 2014: 77 percent in Manitoba and 78 percent in Saskatchewan.[23] Sociologist Vicki Chartrand argues that Indigenous

[19] Liqun Cao, "Aboriginal People and Confidence in the Police," *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 56, no. 5 (2014).
[20] Cao, "Aboriginal People and Confidence," 502-503.
[21] Sherene H. Razack, "Timely Deaths: Medicalizing the Deaths of Aboriginal People in Police Custody," *Law, Culture, and the Humanities* 9 no. 2 (2011), 352-355.
[22] Office of the Correctional Investigator, "Indigenous People in Federal Custody Surpasses 30%: Correctional Investigator Issues Statement and Challenge," *News Releases*, January 21, 2020, https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/comm/press/press20200121-eng.aspx.
[23] Canada, Department of Justice, *Spotlight on Gladue: Challenges, Experiences, and Possibilities in Canada's Criminal Justice System* (Ottawa: Department of Justice Canada, 2017), 8. Alberta did not report the number of Indigenous peoples in provincial jails.

people are now so prevalent in penal settings, correctional institutions have displaced the reserve system and residential schools as vehicles of assimilation.[24]

Racial and ethnic discrepancies in opinions about the police have profound implications for reducing crime in these communities and ensuring public safety, which government officials, media outlets, the public at large, and law enforcement agencies all profess as being the main objectives of policing. People who do not have confidence in the police and feel that police maltreat them are less likely to believe in the legitimacy of police authority. They do not feel obligated to cooperate with policing efforts, being less willing to report crime and more apt to engage in criminal behaviour themselves. [25] This situation was precisely the state of affairs in Blackfoot Country during the 1880s and early-1890s. The Barack Obama administration's 2015 Task Force on 21st Century Policing recommended that police departments across the country implement more community-oriented initiatives to rebuild public trust, which sociologists interested in better police outcomes have advocated for since the late-1970s.[26] While some of the approximately 18,000 American police departments have incorporated such approaches, many have not. A lack of rigorous evaluation of and experimentation with community-oriented strategies (also called positive, nonenforcement engagement strategies) has left law enforcement professionals leery of their effectiveness.[27] While this dissertation cannot help rectify this weakness, it can provide a powerful historical case study as to the efficacy of positive, non-enforcement engagement. When the NWMP focused entirely on enforcing the law by any means necessary, it led to distrust, non-cooperation, increased criminal activity (by the standards of Canadian law), and general disorder in the southern reaches of the Canadian Prairie West. It led to increased danger for the Euro-Canadian public, the Niitsitapi, and the police officers themselves. But after the NWMP turned its attention to creating economic opportunity on

[24] Vicki Chartrand, "Unsettled Times: Indigenous Incarceration and the Links between Colonialism and the Penitentiary in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 61, no. 3 (2019), 77-79.
[25] T.R. Tyler, "Enhancing Police Legitimacy," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 593 (2004), 86-87.
[26] President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015*, Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing* (Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2015), 1. https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf. The seminal work recommending the community-oriented to policing is Herman Goldstein, "Improving Policing: A Problem Oriented Approach," *Crime and Delinquency* 25, no. 2 (1979).
[27] Kyle Peyton, Michael Sierra-Arévalo, and David G. Rand, "A Field Experiment on Community Policing and Police Legitimacy," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 116, no. 40 (2019), 19897.

Niitsitapi reserves and meditated against the Indian Department's assimilation policy's most oppressive impulses, Niitsitapi confidence in the police rose, as did their cooperation with law enforcement activities. The Indian Scout System made both Niitsitapi individuals and police personnel safer relative to their counterparts in other parts of the Canadian Prairie West.

Before turning to the historical literature that underpins this study, a few clarifications need to be made. This dissertation mainly examines the period between 1874 and 1919, although it also considers how the image of the Niitsitapi developed during the early and mid-nineteenth century. The NWMP first appeared in Blackfoot Country in 1874, becoming the first Canadian government agency to interact with the Niitsitapi regularly. This study ends in 1919 because the police's mission changed after the institution combined with Dominion Police to form the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in 1920. The NWMP's main task was to maintain law and order in the Canadian Prairie West and secure the international boundary to facilitate national expansion. When it re-emerged as the RCMP, it was a national police force focused on the problems of an industrialized, urbanized, and heterogeneous society, mostly monitoring and suppressing the labour movement, communists, and urban crime (most notably opium use and sex work).[28] While enforcing the law on reserves was still in the RCMP's purview, it was of a lower priority compared to the settlement period.

This study's geographical boundary is the "Canadian Prairie West," which is encapsulated by the Rocky Mountains on the western border and the western border of Manitoba (with that border extending northward) in the east. On a north-south axis, the region begins at the Forty-Ninth Parallel and extends northward through the northwestern plains until reaching the parkland and woodland biomes extending past Fort Saskatchewan, Battleford, and Prince Albert (see Figure I.2). It is in this space that the NWMP operated for most of its existence. Since this dissertation focuses on Niitsitapi, the regions around Fort Macleod and Calgary feature heavily.

Finally, the term "Niitsitapi" (Blackfoot Nation) refers to the political and social configuration of four groups of Indigenous peoples: the Siksika ("Blackfoot" proper), Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), and the Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee). In earlier histories about Canadian Indigenous Plains peoples, scholars referred to the Niitsitapi as the Blackfoot Confederacy. The Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani share a common language and culture, while the Tsuu T'ina has an

[28] For a full account of this transformation see Steve *Hewitt's Riding to the Rescue: The Transformation of the RCMP in Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1914-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

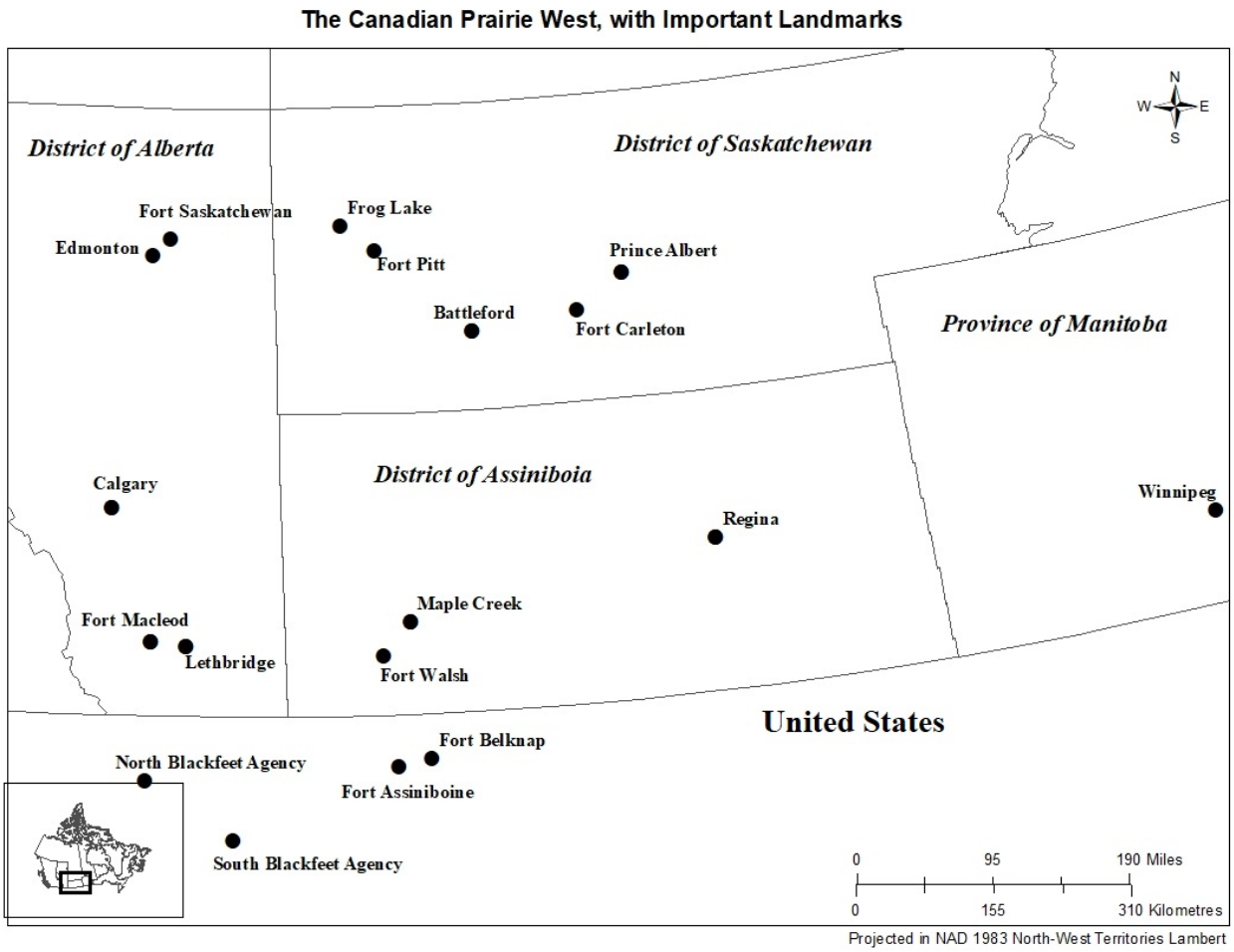

Figure I.2: The Canadian Prairie West (and some essential landmarks)

entirely different language, originally lived to the north of the northwestern plains, and only later adopted elements of plains culture, including bison hunting and religious ceremonies. Over the centuries, the Tsuu T'ina moved closer – both physically and culturally – to the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani, becoming their close military allies. When the NWMP arrived in the Canadian Prairie West, they – like fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Company before them – recognized that all four peoples had close political and social ties. In the settlement era, the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani, becoming their close military allies. When the NWMP arrived in the Canadian Prairie West, they – like fur traders from the Hudson's Bay Company before them – recognized that all four peoples had close political and social ties. Even though the Tsuu T'ina lived on their own reserve south of Calgary in the settlement era, there was still constant interaction with their historical allies. Indian Department records indicate that intermarriage and

intercommunity visits were typical. Tsuu T'ina individuals moved to other Niitsitapi reserves and vice versa. They took part in religious ceremonies like the *Ookaan* (Sun Dance). In this study, "Niitsitapi" is mostly used to refer to all four communities without using the more cumbersome descriptor "Niitsitapi and Tsuu T'ina."

This dissertation engages with four broad categories of literature: (1) Niitsitapi Scouts in police historiography, (2) interpretations of NWMP Indian policy, (3) images of the Niitsitapi and other Canadian Prairie West Indigenous peoples and (4) the general historiography on the Niitsitapi and their relationship to the Canadian State.

Canadian historians have typically chosen to disparage or overlook the contributions Niitsitapi scouts have made to establishing law and order in the Canadian Prairie West. In 1910, A.L. Haydon's lionizing history of the NWMP characterized the force as being the "best tradition of the British race in doing its work silently, unostentatiously, and efficiently" in bringing law, order, and "civilization" to people perceived as "primitives," which left little room for the Niitsitapi scouts.[29] Haydon mentions them only once, and in doing so suggests that they were lazy, being "short-service men" who only worked long enough to accumulate a little bit of money before retiring to "live a life of luxury until forced again to seek employment."[30] Superintendent Sam Steele's progressive narrative– *Forty Years in Canada* (1915) – made no mention of the Niitsitapi scouts, even though he had commanded the district that employed them for years.[31] They had no role in a story where the police played, in Steele's words, an "integral part" in the peaceful transformation of "Red-man's Country" – filled with warring Indigenous peoples, free-running bison, and fur trappers – to wheat fields, railroads, grain elevators, and small cities.[32] Instead, the Niitsitapi were one of the biggest obstacles.[33] He characterized the Kainai as "the most war-like of the western Indians," a community filled with many young men

[29] A.L. Haydon, *The Riders of the Plains: Record of the Royal North-West Mounted Police of Canada, 1873-1910* (London: Melrose, 1910), vii.
[30] Haydon, *Riders of the Plains*, 160.
[31] A progressive historical narrative tells a formulaic story of positive transformation, where untamed, uninhabited wilderness gives rise to "comfort and civilization" through the efforts of brave, rugged, and resourceful pioneers. Indigenous peoples and wild nature are often seen as obstacles that must be overcome if Euro-American "civilization" is to survive and thrive. For further elaboration on and examples of the progressive narrative in a Western American context, see William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative," *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (1992), 1351-1357.
[32] Samuel B. Steele*, Forty Years in Canada: Reminiscences of the Great North-west with Some Account of his Service in South Africa*, ed. Mollie Glen Niblett (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild, and Stewart, 1915), vi, 55-59, 87-98, 110.
[33] Steele, *Forty Years in Canada*, 258.

who wanted to emulate their ancestors' brave deeds.[34] R.G. Macbeth's 1922 historical narrative – the purported "real-life record of the famous Royal North-West-Mounted Police" – makes no mention of the scouts either. In Macbeth's eyes, Indigenous peoples were "wards of the state" who needed protection from whiskey traders and other nefarious characters.[35] The Niitsitapi were the victims of their own "savage" nature and unscrupulous Americans. They needed the protection of the NWMP, who Macbeth describes as the embodiment of Britishness.[36] Such a narrative left no place for scouts neither. Nor did Cecil E. Denny's progressive narrative *The Law Marches West* (1939), whose opening epigraph boldly declares, "To tame Wild Indian tribes and Outlaw Whites, through Seas of Grass presently to give place to Seas of Grain – here comes the Mounted!"[37] Denny's erasure of the scouts was particularly egregious given that he had served with many Kainai and Piikani men, even leading their patrols in the early-1890s.[38] Ten years after Denny's account, John Peter Turner's mammoth two-volume history – commissioned by the RCMP itself – only mentioned the Indian Scouts a few times. However, these mentions are unflattering in recollecting the scouts' character and competence. Turner suggests they were mostly a disappointment to their commanding officers because they quickly became indolent after an initial burst of energetic service. He accused them of only occasionally being effective in rooting out crime on the reserves.[39]

In the 1970s, a new generation of police scholars challenged the largely episodic, heroic, and hagiographic histories of the police, which historian William Baker asserts were little more than an extension of popular public perceptions.[40] Still, few of these new scholars mentioned the Indian Scouts, either. Rod Macleod's *The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement* – a ground-breaking monograph in NWMP history – is novel in that it acknowledges that the force could not have functioned without them (along with other "special constables"). However, he does not explain why and some of his characterizations of the institution are inaccurate. For

[34] Steele, *Forty Years in Canada*, 262.
[35] R.G. Macbeth, *Policing the Plains: Being the Real-Life Record of the Famous Royal North-West Mounted Police* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, Ltd., 1922), 19.
[36] Macbeth, *Policing the Plains*, 9.
[37] See Cecil E. Denny, *The Law Marches West*, ed. W.B. Cameron (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons [Canada] Ltd., 1939).
[38] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 19 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1891* (Ottawa, 1892), 63.
[39] John Peter Turner, *The North-West Mounted Police, 1873-1893* (Ottawa: Edward Cloutier, 1950), Vol. I, 433, 506.
[40] William M. Baker, ed., *The Mounted Police and Prairie Society 1873-1919* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998), viii-ix.

example, he states they were not allowed to be armed, did not have the power of arrest like regular constables, and only rarely carried out regular patrols.[41] Since Macleod's monograph, historians have spent little time examining what the Indian Scouts did or how valuable their service was.

Macleod's monograph also speaks to general police policy towards Indigenous peoples. He argues that the NWMP was essential for Canada's successful settlement of the Canadian Prairie West because it was the visible face of government. Macleod points out that Canada could not afford expensive "Indian Wars" on the scale of its American neighbour. Thus, the NWMP's primary mission was to keep Indigenous peoples peaceful and law-abiding.[42] For the first dozen years, the police helped conclude the treaties, encouraged Indigenous peoples to settle on reserves, scrupulously modelled lawful behaviour, and developed an extensive patrol system that deterred crime, all instrumental for preparing the region for settlement.[43] Macleod argues that the police prioritized the rights of Indigenous peoples in this early phase of contact and protected them, even when it annoyed or inconvenienced Euro-Canadian settlers.[44] The police were more understanding of Indigenous culture and character than the average immigrant, who believed "Indians" were all naturally lazy, savage, and doomed to extinction.[45] But after 1885, the relationship between Indigenous people and the police changed, becoming more paternal, more coercive, and characterized by less mutual respect.[46] Macleod's interpretation is popular and has been well-received. William Baker's anthology of the late-1990s, which showcases the breadth and depth of police scholarship in the late twentieth century, asserts that Macleod's monograph is the best single book about the NWMP. Baker reprinted two of Macleod's chapters in their entirety, and several new essays provide further evidence for Macleod's arguments.

Macleod's work influenced John Nelson Jennings, who expanded on it by specifically focusing on the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the NWMP in the Canadian Prairie West, which fluctuated as police policy shifted. Jennings argues that between 1874 and 1884, police had a good rapport with Indigenous peoples. Their relationship was based on mutual respect and the recognition that the NWMP was there to protect Indigenous peoples from, in

[41] Macleod, *NWMP and Law Enforcement*, 148-150.
[42] Macleod, *NWMP and Law Enforcement*, 4, 9-16.
[43] Macleod, NWMP and Law Enforcement, 21-22, 27-28.
[44] Macleod, *NWMP and Law Enforcement*, 27.
[45] Macleod, *NWMP and Law Enforcement*, 30.
[46] Macleod, *NWMP and Law Enforcement*, 144-148.

Jennings's words, "the rapacity of the fast encroaching frontier."[47] Police officials admired their independent spirit and warrior culture elements such as bravery, toughness, and fairness.[48] However, after the 1885 Resistance, police support for Indian Department policies drove a wedge between them and Indigenous peoples. The NWMP restricted their movement to destitute reserves where they bore the full brunt of Canada's assimilationist agenda, which Indigenous peoples perceived as an attempt to destroy their culture.[49] As such, defiance of police authority and violent confrontations became increasingly common across the Canadian Prairie West by 1896.

Barbara Mayfield observed a similar trajectory for NWMP-Niitsitapi relations between 1874 and 1884. She argues that the Niitsitapi pursued a policy of "co-operative coexistence" with the NWMP because the gold standard for pursuing relationships with foreigners was mutual benefit.[50] The Niitsitapi were primarily interested in maintaining social, cultural, and political integrity, only accepting the police presence in Blackfoot Country after the police suppressed the American whiskey trade. The relationship between the NWMP and the Niitsitapi remained friendly and respectful until the plains bison's decimation. Because of a focus on economy within the Indian Department, it became important that the Niitsitapi become self-sufficient through agriculture. Parsimony necessitated a "no work, no food" rationing policy meant to encourage them to work, which created hunger and despair on their reserves. The Niitsitapi viewed Indian Department initiatives as degrading their independence and cultural integrity. Since the NWMP supported these efforts, the previously harmonious relationship was now marred by Niitsitapi defiance and confrontation. They no longer regarded the police presence as mutually beneficial.[51]

Lesley Erickson's examination of prairie women in the criminal justice system from the settlement period to the end of the Great Depression also notes a shift in police policy. She maintains that before the 1885 Resistance, Indigenous people could go to the police or use their own cultural justice systems to settle disputes between individuals. The NWMP only interceded when crime was interracial. After 1885, the police became more assertive in advancing the

[47] John Nelson Jennings, "The North West Mounted Police and Indian Policy, 1874-1896" (PhD. Diss., University of Toronto, 1979), ii.
[48] Jennings, "NWMP and Indian Policy," 7, 357.
[49] Jennings, "NWMP and Indian Policy," ii, 229-230, 356-358.
[50] Barbara Mayfield, "The North-West Mounted Police and the Blackfoot People," (Master's Thesis, University of Victoria, 1979), ii, 1, 9.
[51] Mayfield, "NWMP and the Blackfoot," iv, 159, 259-260.

"civilizing efforts" of missionaries and the government, especially in mandating the legitimacy of monogamous life-long marriage.[52] The NWMP, the Indian Department, and the courts united in advancing this cornerstone of British-Canadian "civilization," to the detriment of Indigenous women who suffered physical and sexual violence at the hands of their husbands.[53]

In contrast, William Beahen and Sam Horrall argue that violent outbursts involving Indigenous individuals were "dramatic contrasts to the behaviour of most western Indians." In reality, the police had little trouble with Indigenous peoples between 1886 and 1900.[54] While the police were in the unenviable position of trying to keep the peace while the Indian Department "turn[ed] Indians into White men," they mostly prevented trouble that stemmed from unpopular policies and insufficient rations by employing a "pragmatic approach" to problems as they arose.[55] Their primary concern was that the Indian Department would provoke a significant incident involving "hungry Indians" in their impatience to make Indigenous peoples self-sufficient. Hence, NWMP officials advocated for Indigenous peoples when such policies went too far.[56] In a similar vein, Shelly Gavigan's study of Indigenous peoples and the interactions with the lower criminal courts in Saskatchewan during the late-nineteenth century suggests that the NWMP and the courts were not "best friends" with the Indian Department. While its officials sought support from the other two institutions to enforce Indian policy, they did not always get it. In 1895, Indian Agents received more extraordinary powers as justices of the peace, which reflected dissatisfaction with the justice dispensed by regular courts.[57] This dissertation argues that after an initial period of harmonious relations, the Niitsitapi and the NWMP experienced a period of intense conflict throughout the 1880s, which has gone unrecognized by other historians. After 1892, a harmonious relationship was re-established – manifest in the development of the Indian Scout System – because the NWMP focused on their role of keeping the peace and upholding Canadian law rather than being in complete lockstep with Indian Department assimilation policies.

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[52] Lesley Erickson, *Homeward Bound: Sex, Violence, the Law, and the Making of Settler Society* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 45.
[53] Erickson, *Homeward Bound*, 53-59, 232-233.
[54] William Beahen and Stan Horrall, *Red Coats on the Prairies: The North-West Mounted Police, 1886-1900* (Regina: Centax Books, 1998), 85.
[55] Beahen and Horrall, *Red Coats*, 70-71, 86.
[56] Beahen and Horrall, *Red Coats*, 71, 85.
[57] Shelley A.M. Gavigan, *Hunger, Horses, and Government Men: Criminal Law on the Aboriginal Plains, 1870-1905* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 123-125.

Textual analysis is a well-trod path to identify and describe how Europeans and Euro-North Americans have imagined Indigenous peoples. By examining and interpreting philosophical essays, travel literature, missionary accounts, captivity narratives, ethnographies, fictional literature, dime-store novels, popular magazine articles, and newspapers, scholars from various disciplines have identified several major archetypes. Other media, including live performances (such as Wild West Shows), paintings, photography, film, and television, also reveal images of Indigenous peoples. In the context of the United States, the two major archetypes are the "Noble Savage" (or "Good Indian") and the "Ignoble Savage" (or "Bad Indian"), the fundamental binary from which many of the lesser archetypes derive (such as the "Lazy Indian," the "Drunk Indian," the "Ecological Indian" and the "Primitive").[58] Europeans saw Noble Savages as innocent, free, friendly, courteous, peaceful, modest, honest, and dignified. They welcomed European ways, longed for assimilation, and willingly helped Euro-North Americans in their colonial projects. "Bad Indians" were hostile, ferocious, cannibalistic, treacherous, vengeful, cruel, lecherous, and superstitious. They constantly waged war against "Whites," took pleasure in torturing captive victims, practised polygamy, treated their women as beasts of burden, and resisted encroaching European "civilization." In his seminal work, Robert Berkhofer touches on many of these archetypes, asserting that imagining and defining Native Americans was an exercise in American identity formation and a justification for European and Euro-North American colonial behaviour. They say little that is accurate about Indigenous peoples themselves.[59] Brian Dippie identified another major archetype outside the Good/Bad dichotomy: the "Vanishing Indian." Euro-Americans commonly believed throughout the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century that Indigenous peoples would disappear. Mere contact with Europeans – mostly their diseases and alcohol – resulted in the further degradation

[58] European construction of the "Lazy Indian" trope can be seen throughout Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992). Although John S Lutz, Makúk*: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008) does not utilize textual materials to same extent, he does illustrate the development of the image of the "Lazy Indian" on the Pacific Coast. For development of the "Drunk Indian" in a North American context see James B. Waldram, *Revenge of the Windigo: The Construction of the Mind and Mental Health of North American Aboriginal Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 142-143, 156. 302. For the "Ecological Indian," see Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1999). For the "Primitive" marginalized from modernity see Philip Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004). Hollywood movies reinforced many of these images; see Edward Buscombe, *"Injuns!" Native Americans in the Movies* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006).

[59] Robert J. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 27.

of an already racially inferior other.[60] While Americans believed that the Niitsitapi were doomed to eventually disappear, throughout the nineteenth century, they were also "bad Indians" willing to attack and steal from Euro-Americans, though likely seen on the same plane as the Dakota, Lakota, Cheyenne, and Comanche, major Indigenous nations that the United States clashed with throughout the nineteenth century.[61]

Scholars have noted these images in a Canadian context as well. In *The Imaginary Indian*, Daniel Francis evaluates the impact of media on how Euro-Canadians have imagined Indigenous peoples, which affected the formulation of Canadian public policy.[62] Francis argues that Indigenous peoples took on the mantle of many identities in Canadians' eyes over the decades, which were often dependent on how antagonistic they were to the objectives of the would-be colonizers or whether they could be mobilized to critique particular facets of Canadian society. In the late-nineteenth century, the archetype of the "Incorrigible Savage" (Francis's version of the "Bad Indian") flourished as Canada struggled to fulfill its national dream of becoming a transcontinental nation.[63] Once this goal was accomplished, Indigenous peoples were no longer a threat. Their image experienced rehabilitation through the filter of the "Noble Savage" as Canadians began to lament the malaise of industrial society. Francis also points out that most Canadians in the nineteenth century believed that Indigenous peoples were doomed to disappear.[64] Sarah Carter examined images of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West in the 1885 Resistance context. Because of a mass murder at Frog Lake and the abduction of two Euro-Canadian women, eastern Canadians were anxious about the sexual threat Indigenous men posed.[65] Previously seen as a mere "nuisance," the newspaper press recast them as a threat to

[60] Brian W. Dippie, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1982), 11.
[61] For a history of conflict between Americans and the Niitsitapi, see Paul R. Wylie, *Blood on the Marias: The Baker Massacre* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016). Conflict between Americans and Dakota/Lakota (and how American perceived them) see Jeffrey Ostler, *The Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism from Lewis and Clark to Wounded Knee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 204-261; between Americans and the Cheyenne, see West, *The Contested Plains*; between Americans and the Comanche, see Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
[62] Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 6.
[63] Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 221-222.
[64] Francis, *The Imaginary Indian*, 23.
[65] Carter, *Capturing Women*, 34-35.

life, property, and the virtue of white women.[66] In a more recent study of English-language newspapers in Canada since 1869, Mark Crunland Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson conclude that Euro-Canadians imagined Indigenous peoples in three fundamental ways: moral depraved (sneaky, thieving, lazy, dishonest, ungodly, sexually promiscuous, and vicious), innately inferior (naturally stupid, imprudent, weak-willed, irresponsible, and violent), and unprogressive (primitive, stubborn, childish, and maladaptive). All other popular archetypes developed from these three essentialized images.[67] Anderson and Robertson assert that before the 1885 Resistance, the Canadian press more often advanced the idea that Indigenous plains people were vanishing, primitive, drunken, lazy, sexually promiscuous, larcenous, an obstacle to progress, rather than violent or dangerous. The image of the "Red Devil," dangerous "savages" who loved battle, plunder, and harrying innocent settlers and emigrants, really only applied to American "Indians." The authors maintain that the Canadian press advanced this idea to facilitate identity formation, taking "gleeful delight" in denouncing American Indian policy's failure, manifest in that country's constant warfare with Indigenous peoples. In contrast, Canadians could see themselves as benign, fair-minded, and generous because of their treaty-making policy and the observance of those commitments.[68] However, newspapers also implied that Indigenous peoples became more savage the further west one went; thus, the Blackfoot were "the really wild Indians."[69] This dissertation demonstrates that Anglo-Canadians had imagined the Niitsitapi as being especially dangerous compared to other Indigenous peoples since the early nineteenth century. By the time Canada asserted its claim to the Canadian Prairie West, the Niitsitapi were considered the worst of the "Bad Indians": savage, aggressive, and unpredictable, lovers of warfare and unrepentant brigands. In contrast, peoples like the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe were mostly friendly, taking tentative steps towards "civilization."

Until the late-1940s, the conviction of North American historians was that the history of Indigenous peoples did not matter because of the supposedly minimal impact they had had on the development of North American societies and economies.[70] When they did appear in historical

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[66] Carter, *Capturing Women*, 21.
[67] Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson*, Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 7.
[68] Anderson and Robertson, *Seeing Red*, 30-36.
[69] Anderson and Robertson, *Seeing Red*, 34.
[70] James W. St. G Walker, "The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing," *Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers* (1971), 21-51 and James W. St. G Walker, "The Indian in Canadian Historical Writing, 1971-1981" in *As Long*

narratives, they were represented as passive consumers in the fur trade or hostile obstacles to expansion. For example, in his comprehensive examination of the fur trade's imperial and economic facets in Canada, A.S. Morton's only specific mention of the Niitsitapi is in the context of them being an ominous Indigenous power in the far west. Because of their location on the plains, food was plentiful, which allowed for a larger population and a stratified society that enabled the Niitsitapi to field large hosts of disciplined warriors.[71] When scholarly interest in Indigenous peoples did develop, it often fell within the scope of ethnohistory, which combined European and Euro-North American textual documents with Indigenous oral histories. Ethnohistorians were mostly interested in the continuity and change of Indigenous cultures, with John C. Ewers being the first ethnohistorian to focus on the Niitsitapi. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, he conducted extensive oral interviews with Piikani (Piegan) and Kainai (Kainai) individuals who he believed exemplified "pure" Niitsitapi culture. Ewers' primary argument was that by the mid-nineteenth century, Euro-North Americans had thoroughly modified Niitsitapi culture.[72] However, they only adopted those facets of newcomer culture that were immediately practical and useful, incorporating horses, firearms, iron tools, and tobacco but eschewing Christianity and agriculture.[73] Ewers suggests that the Niitsitapi were mostly uninterested in farming, a conviction that has endured in the literature. Hana Samek's comparative study of the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana and Blackfoot reserves in Canada argues that agricultural initiatives failed because the Niitsitapi actively resisted learning how to farm.[74] Hugh Dempsey has written prodigiously on the Niitsitapi for over four decades using the ethnohistoric method. Focusing mostly on individual life stories like Crowfoot and Red Crow, Dempsey's works often emphasize a declensionist slide from the "Buffalo Days" – represented as a period of plenty, independence, and freedom – to the reserve period, characterized by material deprivation, disease, isolation, and powerlessness.[75] Ewers and Dempsey's narratives emphasize the theme of

as the Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies, Eds. Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 340-357.

[71] Arthur S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West, 1870-71* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1939), 14-16.

[72] John C. Ewers, *The Horse in Blackfeet Culture: With Comparative Material from Other Western Tribes* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1955), 7-15, 240-244, 332-336; John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet: Raiders on the Northwest Plains*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 70-77, 95-96, 126-128.

[73] Ewers, *The Blackfeet*, ix-x.

[74] See Hana Samek, *The Blackfoot Confederacy, 1880-1920: A Comparative Study of Canadian and U.S. Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976).

[75] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Crowfoot: Chief of the Blackfoot*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 101-104, 106-107. These themes are discernable in Hugh A. Dempsey, *Charcoal's World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska

cultural loss. Still, they are more sophisticated than writings that preceded them, whose authors are often described as "salvage anthropologists" because they wanted to preserve a "pristine" form of Indigenous culture at a time when many Euro-North Americans believed Indigenous peoples were doomed to extinction. In the early twentieth century, anthropologists thought that such cultures were static, so Ewers and Dempsey were part of a ground-breaking movement that illustrated Indigenous cultures were innovative and adaptive.

More recent studies of the Niitsitapi have focused on cultural continuity – especially in terms of long-held community values – while still acknowledging change. Allison Brown and Laura Peers argue that 1920s Kainai society was one "in transition," when a serious effort was made to adapt to a world based on farming and ranching.[76] Simultaneously, government officials perceived the Kainai as "Indians of a different sort," more traditional and proud because they had lost less of their language and religion.[77] Kainai elders today acknowledge the significant changes that have afflicted their communities but also emphasize the continuity of values that have persisted since before the reserve era – kindness, generosity, strength, and bravery – and extend uninterrupted into the present.[78] While Brown and Peers' study speaks mostly to the importance of historians and museum curators collaborating with Indigenous communities in a good way, Blanca Tovias speaks directly to Niitsitapi cultural transformation between 1870 and 1920.[79] She concentrates on the "threads of continuity," arguing that the Niitsitapi resisted forced acculturation while adopting accommodation strategies to preserve society and culture.[80] Despite assimilative pressures, the ceremony of *Ookaan* ("Sun Dance"), modes of ceremonial dress, and ancient Niitsitapi stories that encapsulate their world view all survived. Tovias

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Press, 1973); Hugh A. Dempsey, *The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories: Three Hundred Years of Blackfoot History* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Ltd., 1994); Hugh A. Dempsey, *Red Crow, Warrior Chief 2nd Edition* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1995), Hugh A. Dempsey, *Tom Three Persons: Legend of an Indian Cowboy* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1997); and Hugh A. Dempsey, *The Vengeful Wife and Other Blackfoot Stories* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003).

[76] Allison K. Brown and Laura Peers with Members from the Kainai Nation, *'Pictures Bring Us Messages', Sinaakssiiksi aohtsimaahpihkookiyaawa: Photographs and Histories from the Kainai Nation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 25-27, 125, 138, 235.

[77] Brown and Peers, *Pictures Bring Us Messages*, 219.

[78] Brown and Peers, Pictures *Bring Us Messages*, 25, 138, 242.

[79] Brown and Peers, *Pictures Bring Us Messages*, ix-x.

[80] Blanca Tovias, *Colonialism on the Prairies: Blackfoot Settlement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), xii, 1-2.

demonstrates that the propagation of Niitsitapi stories continued into the late-twentieth century through novels and short stories written by contemporary Indigenous authors.[81]

The Niitsitapi have featured prominently in fur trade literature. In 1974, Arthur Ray directly challenged the notion that Indigenous peoples were peripheral to the fur trade. He argues that without their cooperation, it simply could not have functioned.[82] Focusing on the Nehiyaw of northern and central Saskatchewan, he points out they dictated the conditions in which trade took place, acted as provisioners, and supplied the labour that produced peltries. In the early-1970s, John Ewers argued this point about the Niitsitapi, who were heavily involved in the Upper Missouri fur trade, which provided a nexus for interaction with Europeans.[83] In Ray's narrative, the Niitsitapi were often peripheral to the Canadian fur trade. For many decades, they received used trade goods (like guns and kettles) from their Nehiyaw neighbours rather than Hudson's Bay Company traders.[84] Economic geographer David Wishart wrote about Niitsitapi participation in the American fur trade, arguing that their hostility and violence towards American fur traders and trappers before 1831 helped spur the development of the Rocky Mountain fur trade, which was formulated to bypass the Niitsitapi altogether. Relationships improved immensely for traders on the Upper Missouri in the 1830s when they stopped sending company trappers into Niitsitapi territories to poach resources. Instead, they incorporated the Niitsitapi into the fur trade, fostering a relatively peaceful and stable system that endured until the late 1840s. Wishart emphasized both their integral role in the fur trade and the threat they posed to Euro-Americans.[85]

In his study of trade on the northwestern plains, Ted Binnema rejected previous historical narratives that suggested the most important developments involving Indigenous peoples between 200 and 1806 AD revolved around cultural continuity and change. Instead, the big story was the complex combinations of trade, warfare, and diplomacy that took place in "a common and contested ground of diverse communities."[86] The Niitsitapi were a dominant military power

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[81] Tovias, *Colonialism on the Prairies*, 155-160, 186-187.
[82] Arthur S. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), xi-xii.
[83] John Ewers *Plains Indian History and Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 38-43.
[84] Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 68-69, 91.
[85] David J. Wishart, *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840: A Geographical Synthesis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 21-22, 45, 100.
[86] Theodore Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 3-6.

at the centre of these struggles over resources, notably bison and trade goods. Binnema's analysis of these power politics concluded in 1806, but John S. Milloy's earlier study continued until 1870. Milloy focuses on the Nehiyaw but illustrates that the Niitsitapi continued to be a dominant military power until the eve of Canada's acquiring Rupert's Land. Faced with a shrinking resource base in their homeland, the Nehiyaw led an "armed migration" into Niitsitapi hunting grounds during the 1850s and 60s. The two Indigenous powers clashed over access to the bison, which ended in a major Nehiyaw defeat near present-day Lethbridge in 1870.[87] Binnema and Milloy both portray the Niitsitapi as a powerful nation of warriors hostile to outsiders, a longstanding image. However, Hugh Dempsey suggests that this may not have been an accurate representation of the Niitsitapi on the eve of contact with the Canadian State. Dempsey argues that although the American whiskey trade was of brief duration – from 1868 to 1874 – it had a devastating impact on Niitsitapi society and its material well-being. The constant presence of alcohol encouraged them to drink excessively, which caused violence and poverty. It left them unable to defend their hunting territories and leaders unable to control the young men.[88]

Canadian historians have extensively examined the relationship between Indigenous people and the Canadian State in the Canadian Prairie West. Many have laboured under the assumption that it was uniform, despite differences in ethnicity, geography, and political strength. The foundational myth of peaceful settlement of the region originated with George F.G Stanley, who treated all First Nations peoples (and the Métis) as a monolithic block. His analysis of the Riel-led "rebellions" maintains they were fundamentally clashes between "primitive peoples" and "civilization." Indeed, Stanley argues that 1885 saw "the last effort of the primitive peoples in Canada to withstand the inexorable advance of white civilization."[89] He suggests that Canada's policy towards Indigenous peoples was far-seeing and fair-minded. Once Canada acquired Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company, it organized the NWMP and sent it west to disperse the disorderly American influence. The federal government recognized the need to make treaties with Indigenous peoples and did so quickly. Canadian officials perceived the need to offer them practical support in adopting agricultural economies, made promises in the

[87] John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy, and War 1790 to 1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), 69-70, 108-118.
[88] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Firewater: The Impact of the Whisky Trade on the Blackfoot Nation*, (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 2002), 220.
[89] George F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: The History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,1961; c1936), xxvi.

treaties to do so, and fulfilled these obligations. That done, the federal government conducted a land survey, built a railroad, and successfully peopled the North-West Territories. Peace, order, and good government reigned thanks to the meticulous planning of the federal government.[90]

Historians have challenged many of Stanley's assumptions about the nature of Canadian colonialism and Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples over the last forty years. In the 1980s, John Tobias's interpretation was ground-breaking in that it challenged the assertion that Canada pursued an honourable and just policy with the Plains Indigenous peoples.[91] The government did not chart out the treaty process ahead of time but was reactive to Nehiyaw opposition to encroaching Euro-Canadian settlement.[92] The treaties were the product of hard negotiations because the Nehiyaw demanded particular conditions concerning reserve lands, famine relief, health care, and support in developing agricultural economies. Jean Friesen argues that all the numbered treaties were fiercely negotiated by both sides, although Indigenous leaders did so from a severely disadvantaged position.[93] Tobias illustrates that while the Nehiyaw secured key commitments from the Canadian government, they were not supplied with seeds, implements, livestock, or infrastructure (such as flour mills) as promised. Sarah Carter extensively documented the failure of Canadian authorities to provide such support, arguing that in doing so they sabotaged efforts – both deliberately and through incompetence – to develop agricultural reserve economies, massively contributing to their underdevelopment. It led to the Euro-Canadian belief that Indigenous peoples were incapable of farming, so it was wasteful to appropriate land for them.[94] This perception led to demands that they surrender "surplus lands" so Euro-Canadians could make better use of them. Peggy Martin-McGuire documented the process of land surrenders and the sale of reserve lands between 1896 and 1911, when the federal government appropriated 21 percent of the land reserved for Indigenous peoples.[95] Martin-McGuire asserts that much of the land ended up in the hands of speculators who had ties to the Laurier government rather than migrating settlers. There was little regard for Canadian law or

[90] George F.G. Stanley, "Western Canada and the Frontier Thesis" *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report* (1940), 105-114.
[91] Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree," 519.
[92] Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree," 519.
[93] Friesen, "Magnificent Gifts," 43-44.
[94] Carter, *Lost Harvests*, IX, 192-193, 234-236.
[95] Peggy Martin-McGuire, *First Nation Land Surrenders on the Prairies* (Ottawa: Indian Claims Commission, 1998), xiii.

treaty obligations in the surrender process.[96] In many land surrender "negotiations," Indian Department officials often used intimidation and coercion to induce Indigenous leaders to capitulate to the federal government demands. In several instances, informed consent – an essential condition for land surrender under Canadian law – may have been absent.[97] In her examination of the rise of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases on Prairie Canada reserves, Maureen Lux accuses the Canadian government of failing to provide adequate famine relief in violation of Treaty 6 because of parsimony and for fear of creating a permanent class of paupers, which led to an eruption of tuberculosis on reserves. Euro-Canadians took skyrocketing rates of disease and death among Indigenous peoples as evidence that they were racially flawed – biologically inferior – and thus doomed to extinction.[98] More recently, James Daschuk has studied the root cause of the disparity in health outcomes among First Nations peoples and Euro-Canadians, which has garnered more public attention than Lux's study. Using archaeological evidence, Daschuk illustrates that Indigenous peoples on the western plains were some of the world's healthiest humans before contact with Europeans, who unleashed a "biological onslaught" against them. In the early twentieth century, Indigenous peoples suffered from tuberculosis at rates twenty times higher than Euro-Canadians. Daschuk argues that had the Canadian government fulfilled its treaty obligations by providing adequate subsistence, these health consequences could have been avoided.[99] Instead, the Indian Department – backed by the coercive power of the NWMP – withheld food to Indigenous communities considered disloyal after the 1885 Resistance and used famine relief to suppress resistive behaviours. Many of the above studies highlight the federal government's fiscal tightfistedness and the Indian Department's manipulative stubbornness, with complicit police power reinforcing both tendencies.

Other studies illustrate that this dishonourable treatment went further than failing to fulfill treaty promises. F. Laurie Barron illustrates that after the 1885 Resistance, the Canadian government repressed Indigenous peoples by implementing a racialist pass system that had no basis in law. It attempted to confine Indigenous peoples to their reserves, resulting in segregated

[96] Martin-McGuire, *First Nation Land Surrenders*, xlvii, 461.
[97] Martin-McGuire, *First Nations Land Surrenders*, xlvii.
[98] Lux, *Medicine That Walks*, 5-7, 226-230.
[99] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, xix.

communities across the Canadian prairies, a policy comparable to South African Apartheid.[100] The Canadian government also tried to stifle the religious freedom of Indigenous peoples. Katherine Pettipas's study of the repression of religious ceremonies on the prairies demonstrates an explicit attempt to undermine Indigenous religiosity because Canadian officials and religious leaders recognized it laid the foundation for Indigenous identity and worldview. Since spirituality purportedly interfered with the assimilative efforts of the Indian Department, it had to be eradicated.[101] Sections of the *Indian Act* banned "give-away" ceremonies and elements of the Sun Dance. While the Indian Department preferred that local agents used "moral suasion" – which mostly boiled down to threats to withhold rations and annuities – to convince Indigenous people to refrain from these practices, Pettipas provides examples of the NWMP suppressing such ceremonies when these efforts failed.[102] All of these studies overwhelmingly demonstrate that the Canadian State has not treated Indigenous plains peoples justly or honourably.

However, the preponderance of evidence underlying this body of scholarship comes from Treaty 4 and 6 territory, where the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe are predominant. This is not to suggest that the Niitsitapi were not subjected to assimilative policies or unjust treatment – far from it – only that the volume of scholarly works dedicated to them are not as abundant. It is premature to assert that the government strategies used to pacify Indigenous peoples in Treaties 4 and 6 were the same ones used against the Niitsitapi, or that they operated on similar timelines. Studies focusing more on the Niitsitapi experience have emerged in recent years. Keith D. Smith employs concepts of the state and power formulated by Michel Foucault (see below) to illustrate how the bureaucrats of the Department of Indian Affairs, the NWMP, the criminal courts, Indian Agents, agency employees, and missionaries worked together to erect intensive surveillance over the Niitsitapi and Indigenous bands in B.C during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Its goal was the imposition of disciplinary power over Indigenous peoples to inculcate capitalistic and liberal values, thereby changing conceptions of property relations and the distribution of political power in Indigenous communities. It also mitigated the possibility of rebellion.[103] Smith illustrates a more substantial "web of surveillance" in southern Alberta than

[100] F. Laurie Barron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935," *Prairie Forum* 13, no. 1 (1988): 25-26, 40.
[101] Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind*, xi-xii, 3-4, 212-217.
[102] Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind*, 217.
[103] Keith D. Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance, and Resistance: Indigenous Communities in Western Canada, 1877-1927* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2009), 2-9, 15-18, 73-74.

in B.C., which coincides with this research's findings, as far as the NWMP is concerned.[104] Kenichi Matsui's study of Indigenous water rights in southern Alberta and interior B.C. between 1870 and 1930 complicates previous native-newcomer narratives. It illustrates that the relationship between the federal government and Indigenous peoples did not necessarily have to be antagonistic. Securing water rights was vital if agricultural projects on reserves were to be successful. The federal government worked hard to guarantee that Indigenous peoples had them, even when it angered or inconvenienced Euro-Canadian farmers and ranchers.[105] This was easier to do in southern Alberta than in B.C. because of the absence of a bellicose provincial government, prompting Matsui to conclude that colonialism is not a monolith with equal effects everywhere; interactions at the local level generate distinct expressions.[106] One of this dissertation's purposes is to complicate the story of colonialism in the Canadian Prairie West and illustrate another of its localized expressions.

Several theoretical frameworks have influenced the interpretation and analysis of primary documents and the crafting of the narrative in this dissertation. The first is the concept of hybridized identity as articulated by postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha.[107] In a Latin American colonial context, Andrew Fischer and Matthew O'Hara argue that no one single identity can encapsulate a person or group's entire historical experience.[108] Identity is multi-nodal, and many nodes - such as race, ethnicity, class, sex, gender, age, political affiliation, generational cohort, region, etc. – must be considered to get at the complete story. Western Canadian historians have focused too much on one node – race – and as a result have generalized the experience of Indigenous peoples in Canada. This dissertation examines other nodes – notably geographical locale, ethnicity, and relative political power – and how they influenced Canadian colonial policy.

A second guiding theory is the conception of the state advanced by Michel Foucault, who argues that the modern Western state ensured the economic productivity of its population by

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[104] Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance, and Resistance*, 232, 235.
[105] Kenichi Matsui, *Native Peoples and Water Rights: Irrigation, Dams, and the Law in Western Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 138.
[106] Matsui, *Native Peoples and Water Rights,* 141. A point also made in Toby Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha: The Colonial Challenges to the Crees in Quebec* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).
[107] See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).
[108] Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara. *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 15.

securing a particular economic, social, and political environment. He explains that European peoples had to be inculcated with liberal and capitalist values by implementing and maintaining disciplinary power, established through State surveillance.[109] Instead of conceptualizing the State as a "thing" that holds power as a kind of commodity, power should be perceived as a series of processes carried out by a constellation of institutions. State institutions always act for an express purpose, aiming to govern "all and each," motivating individuals to be invested in the functioning of the whole.[110] States cannot maintain themselves or their agendas through the exercise of punitive power. They must envelop individuals through more positive, creative expressions, thus stimulating a feeling of desire for State involvement among its citizens. Foucault asserts, "Power would be a fragile thing if its only function was to repress…exercising itself only in a negative way. If, on the contrary, power is strong this is because, as we are beginning to realize, it produces effects at the level of desire..."[111] For example, in her studies of post-civil war Guatemala anthropologist Diane Nelson – heavily influenced by Foucault – suggests that it is through the "Piñata Effect" – a process where citizens are encouraged to "beat" the State until "treats" (government programs and other forms of largesse) fall out – that individuals come to the see political regimes as legitimate.[112] The Niitsitapi came to accept the Canadian State's presence in Blackfoot Country because the latter drove out a problematic American element – the whiskey traders – and offered assistance in creating a new economy, which Niitsitapi leaders knew to be necessary because of the extirpation of the bison. When the NWMP relied purely on repressive measures to shape Niitsitapi behaviour, the latter saw the Canadian State as illegitimate, and relations suffered. When the police laboured on Niitsitapi behalf to fulfill the promises of Treaty 7 – racial equality before the law, famine relief, and other forms of economic assistance – their relationship improved, with the Niitsitapi cooperating with NWMP efforts to entrench Canadian law in the region.

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[109] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 25-34, 201-209, 227-228.
[110] Colin Gordon, Graham Burchell, and Peter Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 3-5.
[111] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Katie Soper (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), 59.
[112] Diane Nelson, *A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 28, 37. See also Diane Nelson, *Reckoning: The Ends of War in Guatemala* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

A third theoretical framework is Antonio Gramsci's "hegemony," which has been used fruitfully in studies of Indigenous Latin America.[113] Hegemonic processes shed light on how the legitimacy of state governance is established in relationships characterized by inequality and domination, by constructing shared social and moral projects, a "common discursive framework."[114] In Blackfoot Country, the common discursive framework was the rhetoric of racial equality before the law and the purported willingness of the "Great Mother" to protect and care for her Indigenous children. When the Canadian State's actions did not coincide with this rhetoric, its legitimacy suffered, and the Niitsitapi balked in keeping the promises they had made. Examining Mexico's Oaxaca region under Spanish Imperial rule, Yanna Yannakakis suggests states cannot establish authority over Indigenous populations through simple violence and repression. It certainly did not occur in Oaxaca, which was located too far from the center of imperial power, much like Blackfoot Country was to Ottawa in the 1870s and 1880s.[115] Instead, the dominators and the dominated came together in a dynamic agreement regarding the conditions – expressed in social and political relationships, and discourse – that one would accept the other's authority and domination. Native intermediaries facilitated this process by walking a fine line between Indigenous and imperial wills and desires (at the same time contested by dominants and subalterns within each sphere).[116] When Native intermediaries succeeded, relationships were stable and peaceful, if at the same time socially, economically, and politically disadvantageous to the dominated partner. When they failed, violence broke out and prompted brutal state suppression. Yannakakis reveals that some Indigenous groups were more effective in extracting concessions from the dominant partner than others due to their military and political usefulness – or because of the threat they posed to the colonial order – which

[113] These ideas originally appeared in Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from Prison, Selected, Translated from the Italian, and Introduced by Lynne Lawner* (New York: Harper Collins, 1973). Applications of his framework in the Latin America context can be seen in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and The Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); Florencia E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Jeffrey L. Gould, *To Die in this Way: Nicaraguan Indians and the Myth of Mestizaje, 1880-1965* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Brooke Larsen*, Trials of Nation Making: Liberalism, Race, and Ethnicity in the Andes, 1810-1910* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

[114] Joseph and Nugent, *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, 72, 102, 357-361; Mallon, *Peasant and Nation*, 5-7.

[115] Yannakakis, *Art of Being In-between*, xi, xiv, 3-4, 14, 25, 221-222.

[116] Yannakakis, *Art of Being In-between*, xiii-xvi, 11-13, 224-225.

accorded them certain privileges.[117] Similar hegemonic processes were at play during the incorporation of the Niitsitapi into the Canadian colonial order; the Dangerous Blackfoot image and boisterous Niitsitapi resistance during the 1880s rendered them a privileged class of western Indigenous peoples.

The foundational sources for this dissertation are the correspondence, monthly reports, weekly reports, daily journals, local orders, earnings lists, and personnel records found in both the North-West Mounted Police fonds (RG-18) and the Department of Indian Affairs fonds (RG-10), held by Library and Archives Canada. It also draws on more than a dozen major archival collections of the Glenbow Western Research Centre on the University of Calgary campus, including Niitsitapi reserve agencies, individual officers serving in the NWMP, and Indigenous oral history projects. It makes extensive use of NWMP annual reports and a collection of historical maps belonging to Library and Archives Canada and the Peel Art Gallery, Museum, and Archives. Finally, it draws on the published accounts of missionaries, fur traders, government explorers, Niitsitapi individuals, and newspapers such as the *Toronto Globe* and *Macleod Gazette*. These sources were examined for and analyzed in terms of specific themes: the Dangerous Blackfoot, the usefulness of Niitsitapi scouts, NWMP policy concerning Indigenous peoples, hegemonic interactions between the federal government and the Niitsitapi, and community-oriented approaches to policing undertaken by the NWMP. Additionally, numerical data has been extracted from many of these primary sources to construct both a "Police Scout" and a "Scout Duties" database; and quantify and represent police surveillance levels around First Nations reserves from 1876 to 1916.

The Police Scout database is the result of examining and interpreting hundreds of the primary documents listed above. It spans from 1887 to 1939, aiming to document each scout's name, ethnic identity, district of employment, pay rate, date of hire, date of termination, length of service, and reasons they left the service. While the initial objective was to track the length of service of every Indian Scout, large gaps periodically appear in the archival record. The document trail before 1890 and after 1909 is incomplete, but the period between them is comprehensive, allowing for the construction of employment timelines for 162 Niitsitapi men. Overall, it identifies 205 Indigenous men employed as Indian Scouts in the Canadian Prairie

[117] Yannakakis refers to these groups as the "Indian Conquerors" as they initially helped the Spanish subdue the region; see *Yannakakis, Art of Being In-between*, 17, 30, 205-209, 223.

West. A similar process helped construct a "Scout Duties" database, which illustrates the duties these men performed regularly. In examining the same types of primary sources, between 1887 and 1919, there were 718 times that scouts were depicted as performing a particular duty or an officer's recommended that a specific task be performed (though they overwhelmingly fall into the first category). The Scout Duties database illustrates the role that Indian Scouts were supposed to play in the policing of Niitsitapi communities. Each task performed was categorized as general police work (such as daily patrolling, making arrests, investigating crime), enforcement of the Indian Department policy (mostly related to the *Indian Act*), court duties (issuing summons, escorting prisoners, giving witness testimony), quarantine work (dealing with sick animals and people), logistical support (caring for horses, delivering mail and messages, freighting supplies), and community-directed duties (those done at the behest of Niitsitapi communities).

The expansion of surveillance over Indigenous people in the Canadian Prairie West is a phenomenon that can be quantified, processed in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, and expressed visually as a map. Great Plains historian Geoff Cunfer argues that maps can identify relationships that can be made immediately understandable by "visually detecting spatial patterns that remain hidden in texts and tables."[118] An effective map can convey an argument or tell a story in an instantly perceptible way, one that might not be as readily apparent from reading narrative text or examining statistics. Cunfer maintains that GIS helps to "remember the denominator" by quickly putting raw data into perspective. Spatial data is not represented well in written text and can be misconstrued easily, especially when numbers are very large or very small. Maps produced by GIS applications put these numbers into their proper context.[119] Maps effectively demonstrate that variation exists over space and that this space matters in shaping historical experience. In this dissertation, GIS readily illustrates that police surveillance in the Canadian Prairie West has shifted over time and space, revealing the NWMP and the Indian Department's most pressing concerns. It reveals the existence and priorities of Canadian Indian policy – or policies – in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The

[118] David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris, eds*., The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), vii.
[119] Geoff Cunfer, *On the Great Plains: Agriculture and Environment* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2005), 238.

University of Saskatchewan's Historical GIS Lab (www.hgis.usask.ca) supported this work by providing computer resources, training, and workspace.

This project was made possible by the availability of archival maps of the North-West Territories, police distribution data tables, and censuses of the whereabouts of Indigenous peoples, contained in the annual reports of the Indian Department. Archival maps are the products of Canadian federal agencies, illustrating where towns and cities, police posts, patrol routes, First Nations reserves, post offices, railways, major trails, telegraph lines, watersheds, and other physical features were in geographical space. These archival maps have been digitized, creating a series of point layers for police posts, and polygon layers for First Nations' reserves, numbered treaties boundaries, police district boundaries, and political-administrative boundaries (provinces, territories, territorial districts, etc.).[120]

These sources allow for the situation of the above features in historical space over specified time points. Police distribution tables are found in the annual reports of the NWMP. They list every post that the force was occupying and the total number of men stationed there by rank, giving both an aggregate total and a tally of officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men for each *police district*. A police district refers to a geographic space that encapsulates all the police posts manned by a NWMP division (or "troop"), analogous to a military company containing about one hundred men. In some instances, two or more divisions occupy a police district and administer it together. A superintendent (comparable to a military captain) was the highest-ranking officer of the division, responsible for the administration of all police functions. The police district consisted of a *headquarters* – which concentrated commanding officers and many of the division's men – and police *detachments* (sometimes called *posts*), responsible for administering Euro-Canadian law in more specific locales within that district. These documents are useful not just for the numerical data they contain, which can be used to quantify Mounted Police surveillance; they sometimes signify specific posts' mere existence. Not every post listed in the distribution tables appears on the archival maps. In fact, the archival maps never perfectly coincide with the list of posts in the annual reports; they either omit posts that should be there or include those that should not. Maps lag behind the annual

[120] To clarify, police districts and territorial districts are not the same type of geographic entity. Territorial districts refer to administrative divisions of the North-West Territories. From 1881 to 1916, this included the Districts of Alberta, Assiniboia, Saskatchewan, Athabasca, Keewatin, Yukon, Mackenzie, and Ungava. They were administered by the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories and the bureaucracy that supported him.

reports, being at least one or two years out of date. To map each post, it is necessary to use distribution statistics as the base reference.[121]

The Department of Indian Affairs endeavoured to track Indigenous people's movement, publishing a census of their whereabouts in every year's annual report until 1893. This document provides a snapshot in time for where they were located – most often in December – indicating the permanent locations of reserves and the more regular haunts of those off hunting or participating in a variety of other economic or social activities. Indian Agents listed the Indian Department's numerical band designation, the band leader's name, tribal designation (Niitsitapi, Nehiyaw, Nakoda, etc.), how many were present on the reserve, and the whereabouts of those not present. These censuses are important, as no archival maps illustrating the location of reserves have been discovered for the 1870s and the first half of the 1880s. It was necessary to digitize reserve boundaries using archival maps from 1886 and 1887, then work backward from those years using censuses, surveyor's reports, and returns of reserves surveyed included in the Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, to establish when a specific reserve was officially established. The census documents produced by the Indian Department are invaluable as base reference materials, situating Indigenous peoples in historical space. After 1893, censuses of religious affiliation or simple lists of reserves replaced the census of whereabouts in the annual reports, enabling the tracking of communities over time.

Incorporating these three sets of primary sources into GIS makes it possible to illustrate NWMP surveillance networks and their intensity between 1876 and 1916. Initially, this dissertation intended to represent these phenomena at five-year intervals so that Canadian census data could make comparisons with Euro-Canadian communities in terms of crime rates,

[121] Until 1886, the annual police report published one statement of distribution for the end of December. Beginning in 1887, two statements were provided: one for the summer months and one for the year ending November 30. This format was discontinued in 1910, reverting to the one distribution statement that captured where men were at the end of September, which corresponds to the summer statement in the dual-distribution format. In addition to the one or two main distribution tables, beginning in 1886 there were sometimes distribution statements that accompanied the district superintendent's report. Occasionally, they offer direct contradictions as to where their men were stationed in comparison to the "official" statement of distribution, although they often conserve the aggregate number of total men for each division. Some superintendents also remarked on the state of distribution within the text of their reports. Having multiple inputs that did not always agree, it was necessary to interpret the data and produce a consolidated statement of distribution, prioritizing the distribution tables accompanying the superintendent's reports and comments within the reports themselves. The reasoning for this was the local officer was more knowledgeable of the workings of the district than bureaucratic officers at the force's headquarters in Regina.

agricultural production, patterns of settlement, and ethnic composition of communities, etc. at a later time. Two more time points – 1884 and 1888 – were added to show the state of affairs on the eve of the 1885 Resistance and the accelerating rate of surveillance (a leery general watchfulness) as the Kainai conflict with Fort Belknap intensified.[122] But how is surveillance defined and measured? What factors indicate high or low intensity? One factor focuses on the accumulation of manpower resources by the overall proportion of the entire NWMP force in a specified area. The more men assigned to it, the greater the potential that manpower can be used for the surveillance of Indigenous peoples. It is expressed as a normalized value, calculated by taking the aggregate of each post's manpower (the number of men) and dividing by the total strength of the force for that year, which ArcGIS expresses as a map utilizing graduated colours; the darker the colour, the higher the proportion of men dedicated to the specified area (either numbered treaty boundaries or police districts). The first measure indicates how many resources were being expended by treaty territory (Figure I.3).[123] Analysis of police districts allows for the measurement of surveillance within narrower slices of the treaty boundaries, highlighting significant manpower investments (Figure I.4).[124]

The second factor for measuring surveillance is the diffusion of manpower and the overall field of vision a division possesses. Is manpower concentrated, or is it spread out? How

[122] The 1876, 1881, and 1884 timepoints are based on a year-end counting of men (the only one available) while subsequent ones are based on summer counts. Overall, this dissertation's objective was to examine the seasons of highest activity for both the NWMP and Indigenous peoples, which was during the spring and summer months. Unfortunately, historians often grapple with fragmentary historical records and must do their best with the sources available. A solid comparison of the proportion of police resources invested in a specified area can still be made as the winter season tended to concentrate men in districts, not remove them altogether. For example, in 1884 there were seven posts manned by "C" Division in the summer statement of distribution: Fort Macleod, Old Fort Macleod, Pincher Creek, Kootenai, St. Mary's, Coal Banks, and the Peigan Reserve. The winter distribution lists six posts: Fort Macleod, Kootenai, Crow's Nest Pass, Peigan Reserve, Whoop-Up, and St. Mary's. Old Fort Macleod was only being used temporarily to house men while a new Fort Macleod barracks was being constructed. This post was not a detachment and was slated for closure. Whoop-Up was close to the Coal Banks and Crow's Nest Pass is a little further west of Pincher Creek. There was no recall of men from the detachments in 1884, just minor shuffling. See Superintendent John Cotton to Commissioner A.G. Irvine, June 4, 1884 (LAC RG18-V1016-F1348.

[123] For reference, Treaty Four was predominantly made up of the Nehiyaw and Anishinaabe, with a smattering of the Nakoda and Sioux; Treaty Six the Plains-branch of the Nehiyaw and Nakoda, the Woodland Nehiyaw, and some Sioux and Dene peoples; and Treaty Seven the Niitsitapi, the Tsuu T'ina, and the Nakoda Stonies in the vicinity the Rocky Mountains. Treaties One, Two, and Five were mostly composed of Woodland and Swampy Nehiyaw, and Anishinaabe, though some Siouan peoples were also present.

[124] For example, after 1884 Treaty Seven can be divided into the Calgary, Macleod, and Lethbridge districts: Treaty Six into the Fort Saskatchewan, Battleford, and Prince Albert districts, and Treaty Four into the Maple Creek and Regina districts

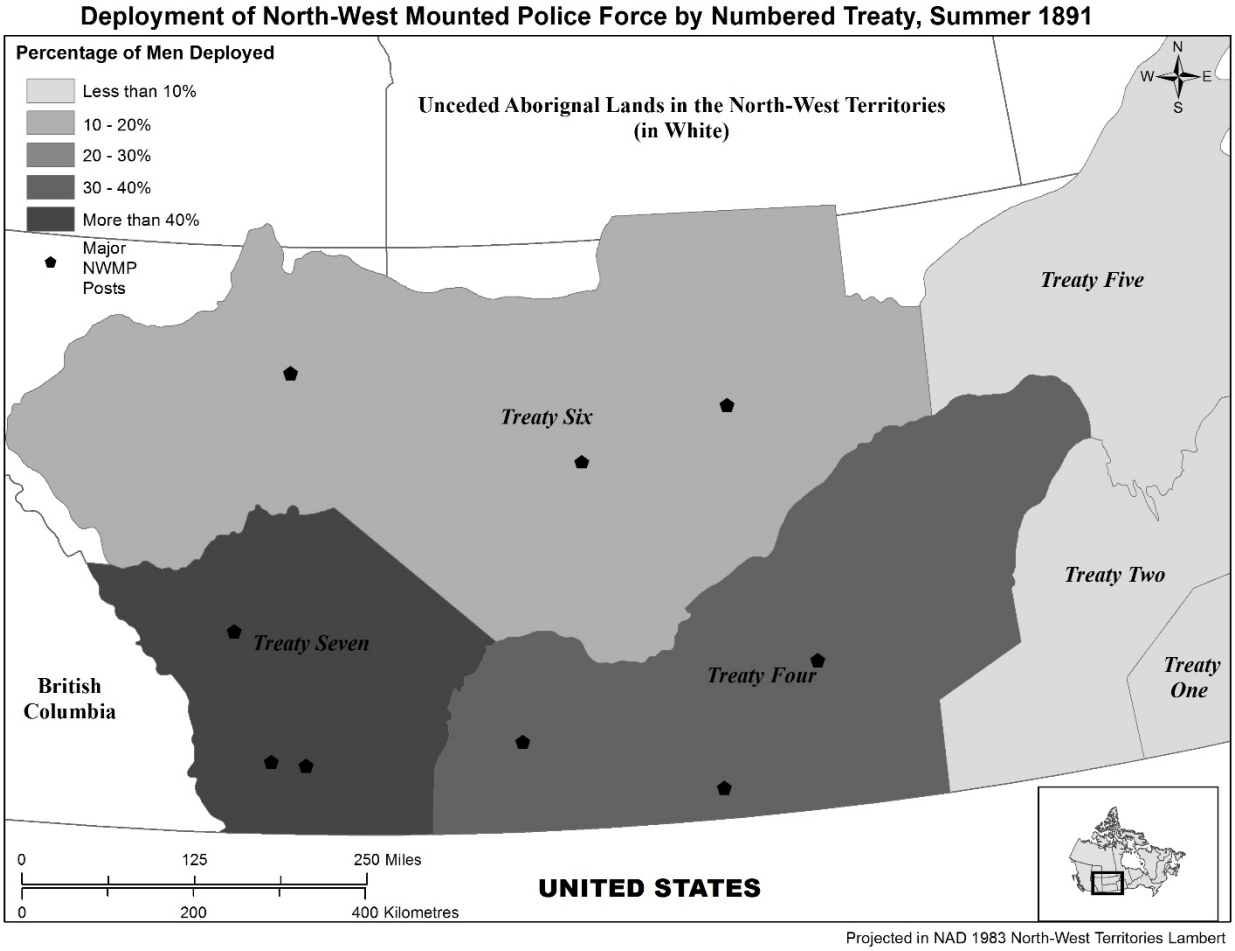

Figure I.3: Example of Manpower Proportion Graduated Colour Map by Treaty Boundaries. In this example, Treaty 7 – the darkest colour – has a greater proportion of NWMP manpower than the other Treaty areas, which have lighter shades.

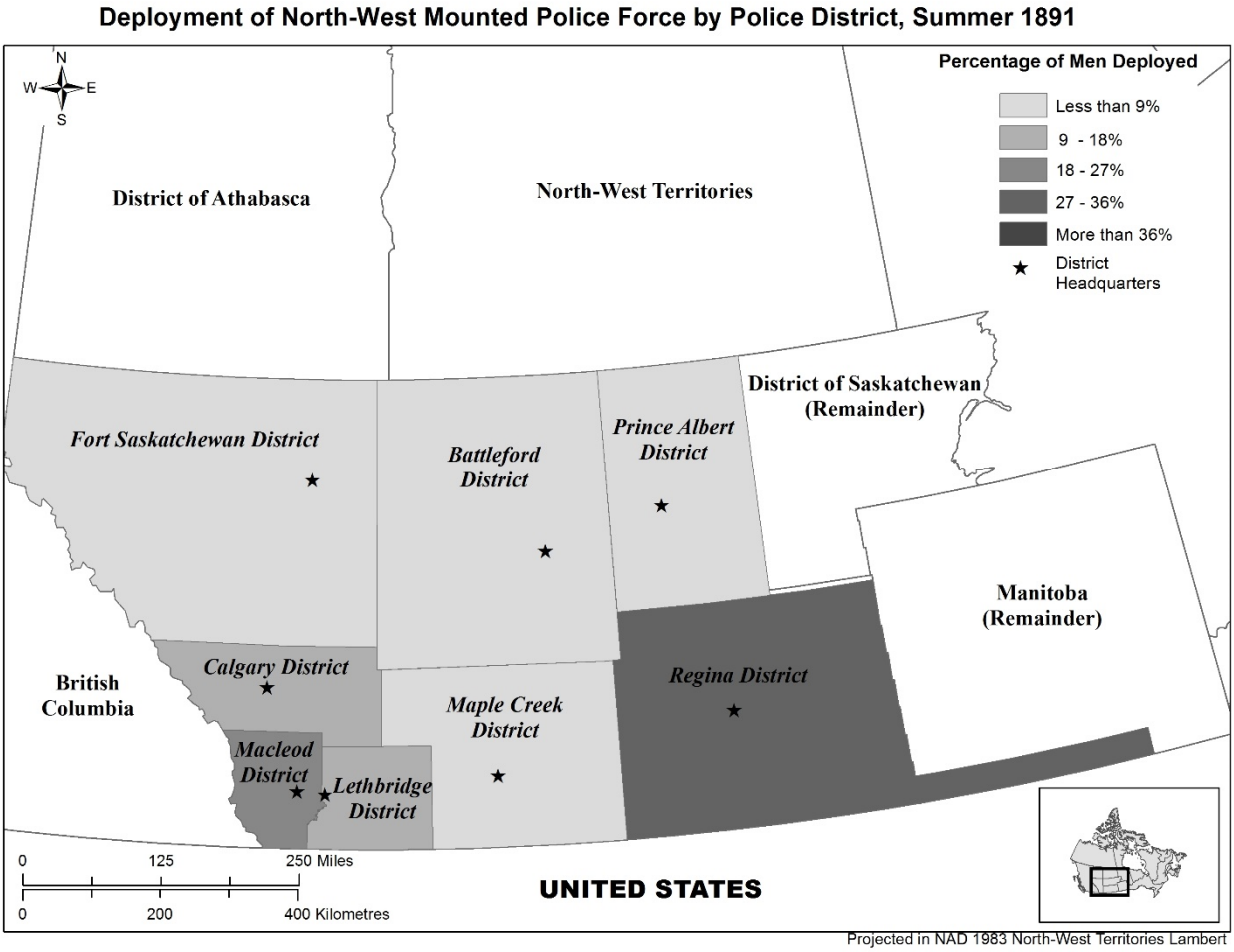

Figure I.4: Example of Manpower Proportion Map by Police District, with Graduated Colours. In this example, the Regina District – the darkest colour – has a greater proportion of NWMP manpower than other police districts, which are lighter.

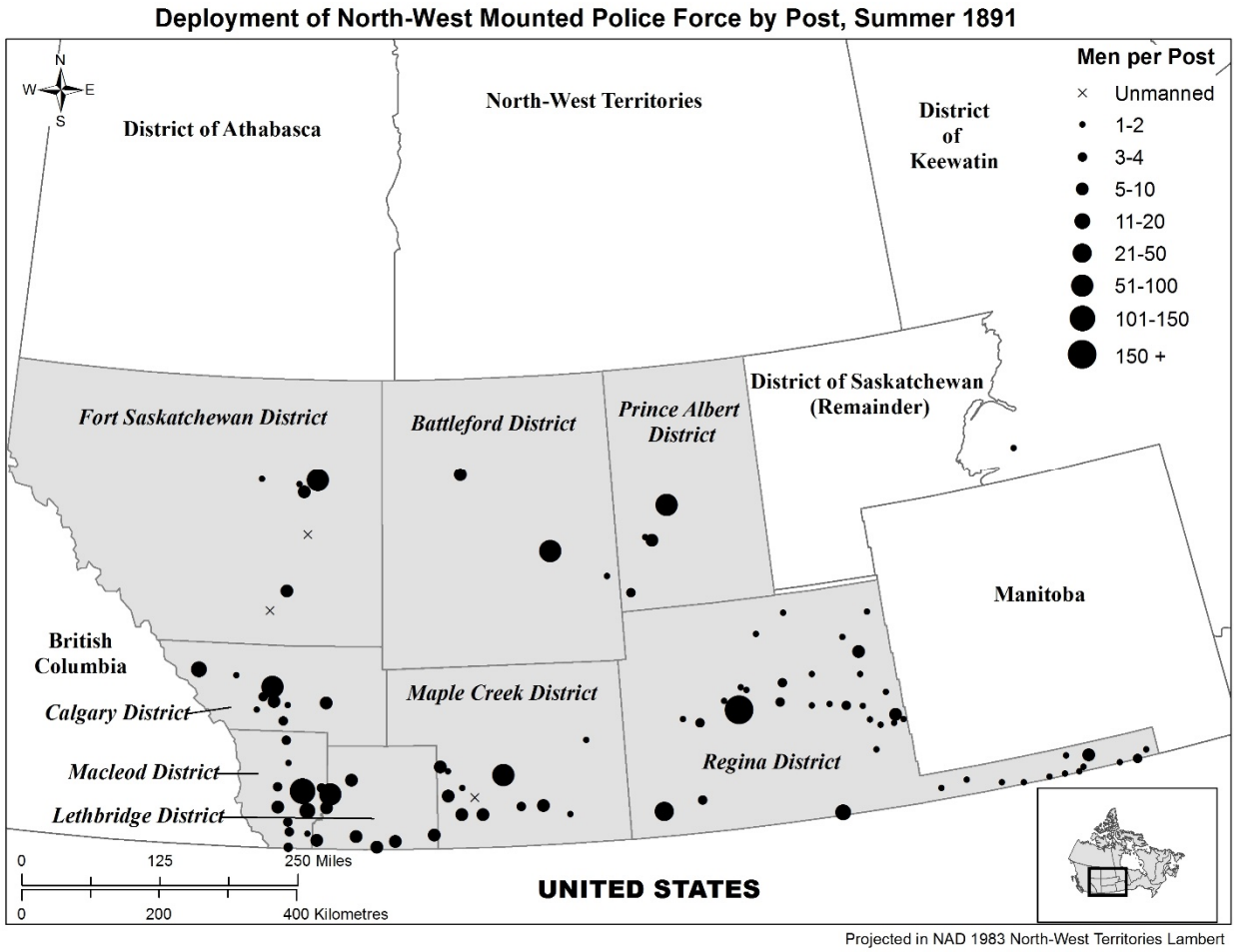

Figure I.5: Example of Manpower Proportion Map by NWMP Post (Headquarters and Detachments), with Graduated Symbology. Circles represent NWMP headquarters and detachments, the bigger the circle, the more policemen present at that location.

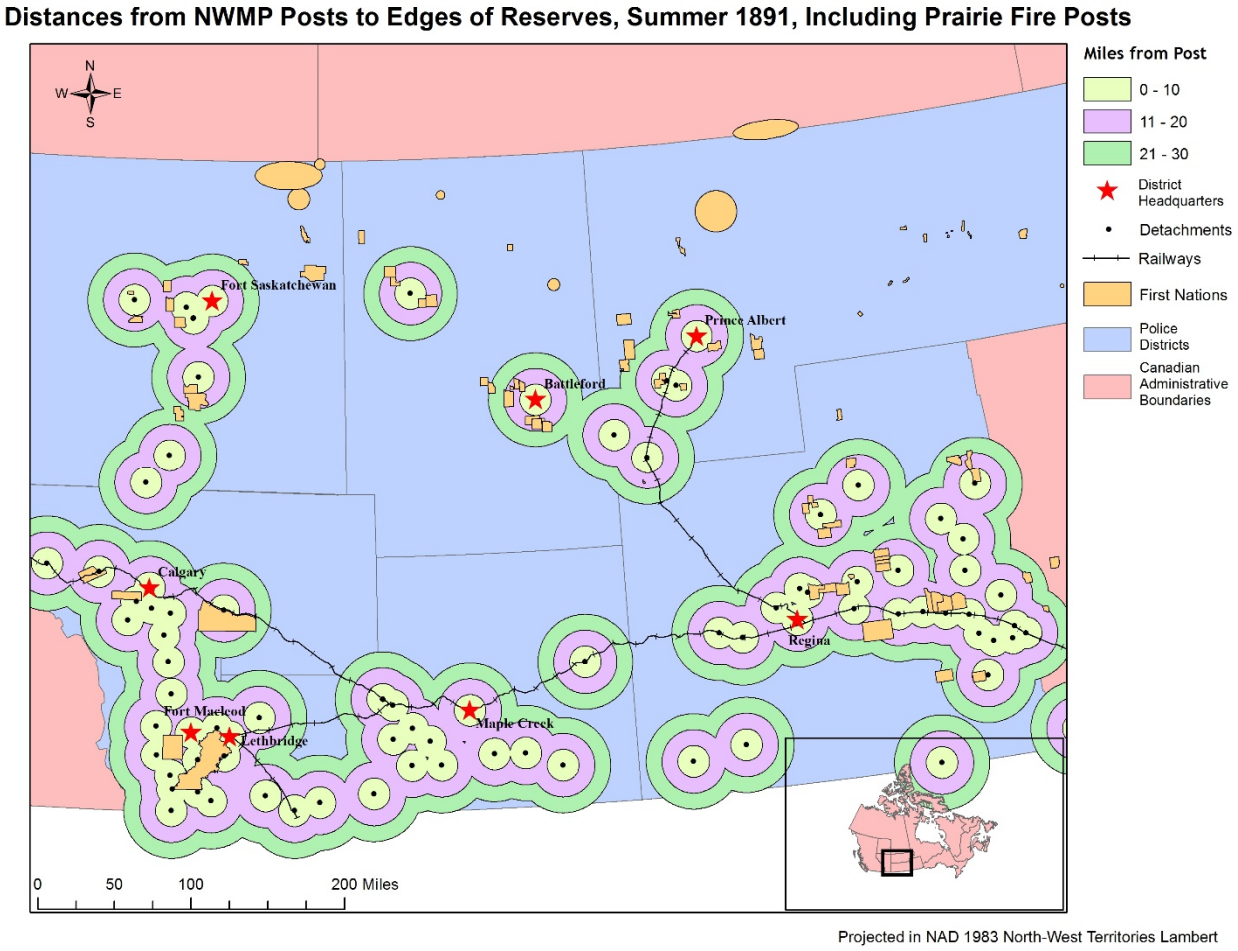

Figure I.6: Example of NWMP Posts in Proximity to Indigenous Peoples Map. Reserves with more police posts within a 10- to 30-mile radius have higher surveillance levels than reserves with few or no posts.

many satellite detachments does the district headquarters have?[125] A district with many detachments has a higher potential for continuous surveillance over a wider area due to its constant presence than a district with few. Additionally, they provide a base for patrolling a more local area, allowing the police gaze to wander further afield than it otherwise could from one or two central points. It is more efficient to linger in one place than to travel back and forth

[125] Output maps denote district command centres as "major posts" (before 1886) or "district headquarters" (after 1886).

from a point further abroad. Long marches tire out horses, which hinders the establishment of a steady gaze. Commanding officers knew that detachments were more efficient than patrols at establishing effective surveillance and responding to criminal activities. Euro-Canadian civilians knew it too, which is why the records of the NWMP are filled with requests from villages, towns, and isolated ranchers demanding that detachments be established in their neighbourhoods to deal with their concerns. The more detachments a district has, the better the potential for surveillance. Both headquarters and detachments are represented on maps by graduated symbology – the bigger the circle, the more men present (Figure I.5).

The last factor in evaluating the intensity of surveillance is police posts' proximity to the edges of reserve boundaries (or other places Indigenous people gathered). How close was district headquarters or a detachment to a known conglomeration of Indigenous people? One that was five to ten miles away was easier to monitor than one that was twenty or more miles away. The NWMP performed a wide variety of duties, rendering them the regularized face of government in the North-West Territories. Aside from trying to prevent crime and maintain order, they acted as customs officials, provided medical services, gathered meteorological records, conducted exploratory expeditions to remote parts of the territory, and issued government aid to the destitute.[126] It cannot automatically be assumed that just because a detachment was in the vicinity of a reserve, they were necessarily monitoring Indigenous peoples, or that a detachment nowhere near one was not. In the Maple Creek District, many of the detachments operating between 1886 and 1889 were there for the express purpose of monitoring Niitsitapi horse raiders going to or returning from Montana. Annual police reports and other textual documents reveal why particular posts were necessary. However, many detachments established and maintained around reserves between 1881 and 1891 *were* there for the surveillance of Indigenous people, especially the Niitsitapi. In this dissertation, NWMP proximity to Indigenous peoples is represented on maps with a multi-ring buffer, demarcating areas within ten, twenty, and thirty miles of a police headquarters and the detachments.[127] The more police posts present and closer

[126] Macleod, *NWMP and Law Enforcement*, 35-26, 167. Carl Betke argues that the NWMP were not popular because of their success in bringing law and order to the region but because of their less heroic contributions: performing welfare checks on settlers, administering quarantines, battling prairie fires, and offering veterinary care to livestock; see Carl Betke, "Pioneers and Police on the Canadian Prairies, 1885-1914" in Baker, *The Mounted Police and Prairie Society*, 210, 229.

[127] The thirty-mile radius is a distance that allowed for comfortable daily patrolling and a quick reaction to developing crises. In 1886, Superintendent P.R. Neale ordered the establishment of a string of detachments in the

to a reserve, the heavier the surveillance (Figure I.6). These maps have various polygonal shapes, with most being the actual reserve boundaries created by georeferencing and digitizing archival maps. Circles, ellipses, and the outlining of various rivers and railways indicate the approximate location of Indigenous people. In the Indian Department census, some of the annotations are vague, such as "hunting at Duck Mountain," "along the line of the C.P.R.," or "gathered on the Red Deer River." In these cases, polygons appear large as the feature shown on the archival map is large. However, this was necessary because it is impossible to determine with certainty where Indigenous people were.

Considering the three above factors, intense police surveillance can be defined as the presence of a high proportion of Mounted Police manpower and many detachments within at least thirty miles of a reserve boundary. Being within ten or twenty miles indicates even stronger police surveillance. On the other hand, districts exhibiting weak surveillance have lower proportions of manpower, fewer detachments, and little presence where Indigenous people gathered. Based on Historical GIS, this analytical method demonstrates that during the 1880s surveillance over the Niitsitapi expanded dramatically. There was a higher proportion of the force in Blackfoot Country, more detachments when compared to Nehiyaw or Nakoda territories in present-day Saskatchewan and Manitoba, with these detachments clustered closer to Niitsitapi reserve boundaries.

The GIS-produced maps that appear in later chapters are not only themselves a significant contribution to the existing body Canadian Prairie West historical literature, they also drove both this dissertation's research trajectory and narrative structure. The construction of

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eastern portion of the Macleod district to watch for horse raiders and Americans crossing the border. Neale ordered the founding of the Forty-Mile Coulee detachment approximately seventy-five miles east from Lethbridge, and then established Bull's Head Coulee seventy-five miles from Forty-Mile Coulee. Neale ordered the men stationed at these posts to send out two patrols of two men each day, one for patrol each for the east and the west. This indicates that the optimal patrol range of a detachment was approximately thirty-seven-and-a-half miles, one that could be patrolled in a day without unduly exhausting men or horses; see Superintendent P.R. Neale to Commissioner N.W.M.P, April 12, 1886 (LAC RG18- V1045-F110-1886 and Superintendent P.R. Neale, "Instructions for Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of Detachment at Bull's Head Coulee," April 26, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1045-F110-1886). In the Regina District that same year, the distance between the string of outposts erected between Wood Mountain and Moose Mountain were not equal. The average distance between the posts for the former was fifty-one miles, an optimal patrol range of twenty-five-and-a-half miles. At Moose Mountain, the average was approximately forty-nine miles with an optimal patrol range of twenty-four-and-a-half miles. These differences are likely related to the differential ease of travel in the two districts. In the Macleod District, the land was mostly open prairie that lacked large rivers. All in all, the thirty-mile buffer is conservative estimate for the optimal range of activity for a NWMP detachment based on the primary documents available.

several kinds of map layers – NWMP posts, First Nations reserves, North-West Territories administrative boundaries, and numbered treaty boundaries – for eleven separate time points was necessary for their production, representing a substantial investment of time creating digital resources that did not exist previously. The police post layers alone, using archival maps and textual documents, identifies 549 NWMP headquarters or detachments and situates them in historical space. These datasets have made a significant contribution to the HGIS project "Building Borders," which visually represents the increasing solidification of the Canadian-United States border since 1860. In the Canadian Prairie West, the NWMP was instrumental to this process, so this dissertation's data was invaluable in creating digital resources and output maps.[128] For this dissertation project, GIS made the abundant statistical data contained in NWMP annual reports comprehensible. Early research into Niitsitapi-NWMP relations revealed that the Indian Scout System was unique to Blackfoot Country. Still, a key question remained, why had it taken the police so long to implement it? What approach had they used beforehand? The distribution tables revealed that the Calgary, Macleod, and Lethbridge districts steadily increased in manpower and the number of detachments during the 1880s. However, these tables did not indicate the precise location of these new posts and NWMP annual reports only gave sparse clues as to why manpower increases were confined mostly to Blackfoot Country. The only way to discover where the police were was to orient them in space in relation to significant landmarks like urban centres, resource extraction sites, railroads, and First Nations reserves. Doing so revealed that surveillance networks became increasingly more extensive near Niitsitapi reserves but remained static or even absent around Indigenous spaces elsewhere. The GIS-produced maps then directed textual research to explain why this expansion in surveillance occurred. They also illustrated the increase in manpower and surveillance over time far more succinctly than descriptive text ever could. In succeeding chapters, the accompanying text points out major developments and explains why the NWMP presence steadily swelled, but the maps most effectively document its expansion over time. The maps and text should be considered in conjunction with each other.

[128] See "Home" and "About Us," Building Borders: Visual Representations of the Canadian-United States Border 1860-1916, Benjamin Hoy & John Bath, accessed December 15, 2020, http://www.buildingborders.com/. The study's comprehensive findings will be published next year: Benjamin Hoy, *A Line of Blood and Dirt: Creating the Canada– United States Border across Indigenous Lands* (New York: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming).

Increasing rates of surveillance over the Niitsitapi in the 1880s reveals a story of declining relations between them and the NWMP – which jeopardized the former's incorporation into the Canadian State – and then the rehabilitation of that relationship, the Indian Scout system playing a fundamental role. It is a story divided into seven chapters, the first being focused on constructing the Dangerous Blackfoot image. Throughout the nineteenth century, fur traders, missionaries, explorers, and other visitors to the northwest told lurid stories about the Niitsitapi, suggesting they were more aggressive, violent, and capricious than other Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West. This image became solidified in federal government officials' minds and raised fears about the inevitability of an "Indian War." Finally, it examines the dissemination of this image to the Canadian public through newspaper media, specifically the *Toronto Globe*, one of Canada's biggest and most successful publications during the late nineteenth century. When the NWMP arrived on the western plains in the mid-1870s, the Dangerous Blackfoot image had even found its way into the minds of NWMP recruits. Chapter Two illustrates rising Niitsitapi anger and resistance as the police deviated from their initial approach that emphasized patience and negotiation to one that demanded immediate Niitsitapi compliance. Police officials decided that the best way to deal with Niitsitapi intransigence concerning stolen horses and other criminal matters was to "overawe" them with the threat of police force. This ill-conceived policy undermined NWMP-Niitsitapi relations as violent confrontations became increasingly common until the eve of the 1885 North-West Resistance. Chapter Three reveals that this relationship did not improve over 1885 and 1886. The Kainai waged intertribal warfare against Indigenous peoples of Fort Belknap, Montana, causing the former to congregate in the Cypress Hills before descending into the United States to steal horses. When the police tried to arrest the perpetrators or recover stolen stock, violent resistance often ensued, and Canadian officials feared another more destructive conflict involving the dangerous Niitsitapi. In response, the NWMP concentrated its manpower in Blackfoot Country and established a surveillance apparatus to contain horse raiders and overcome resistance. However, Chapter Four reveals that these measures were ineffective, and NWMP officials eventually realized that the Niitsitapi had to play a role in policing their communities. To this end, the police implemented an Indian Scout pilot project, which produced good results. However, the police could not find recruits because of the poor relationship that persisted in the late 1880s. Chapter Five documents a shift in police policy that emphasized positive, non-enforcement engagement. Throughout the 1890s, NWMP officials

endeavoured to help build reserve economies and advocated on Niitsitapi behalf when Indian Department policy interfered with the police function of upholding peace and order. As a result, the rapport between the police and the Niitsitapi grew, and the latter consented to serve as Indian Scouts. Chapter Six demonstrates how important these Niitsitapi men were to maintaining Canadian law in reserve communities. By the 1910s, local NWMP officials believed their service was indispensable, but better economic opportunities lured Niitsitapi men away from the posts they had manned faithfully for almost twenty years. Finally, by comparing the manhunts to capture the Niitsitapi fugitive Charcoal and the Nehiyaw fugitive Almighty Voice in the mid-1890s, Chapter Seven dramatically demonstrates that the Indian Scout system improved law enforcement outcomes in reserve communities. It made life more safe and secure not only for policemen but for Indigenous persons as well. While police shootings of Indigenous peoples were not common in the Canadian Prairie West during the settlement period, there were several shocking incidents in which the NWMP killed or severely wounded Nehiyaw and Anishinaabe men on the run from the law. Police officials justified these shootings in terms of avoiding another "Almighty Voice incident," which claimed the lives of several policemen. In contrast, these kinds of incidents did not occur in Blackfoot Country because the NWMP was confident Niitsitapi communities would assist them in apprehending suspected lawbreakers involved in even the most serious crimes. While NWMP policy in the early 1880s – emphasizing militarized power and intimidation – was a serious misstep that threatened peace and order in the Canadian Prairie West, Commissioner Herchmer and officers in the Macleod District formulated solutions – community-involved policing and positive, nonenforcement contact – then worked diligently to implement them. Overall, the nineteenth century NWMP was a more flexible and adaptive organization than many twenty-first century police departments in Canada and the United States – who today also struggle to be seen as legitimate by the minority communities they purportedly protect and serve.

CHAPTER ONE
"Breathing Pillage and Carnage": The Niitsitapi in the Anglo-Canadian Imagination, 1843-1879

Shortly after the Conservative government tabled its Throne Speech in early February 1882, the opposition Liberals attacked the government's Indian policy. They were outraged by the tremendous expense incurred by rationing Indigenous peoples in the North-West Territories and attempting to make them self-sufficient through agriculture. Rising to parry the barbs of his opponents, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald reminded them that the money spent on beef and flour was unavoidable. The bison were not returning to Canada and the population of small game had melted away with advancing settlement. In the face of widespread famine, the government had two options: feed Indigenous peoples or fight them. Macdonald's government had opted to feed them, the most economical alternative given any violent incident involving Indigenous peoples might have sparked an expensive conflict and disrupted settlement for years to come. Regarding progress, Macdonald explained, "The government did their best to induce Indians to settle and to take up cattle raising. The experiment on the whole has been very successful, and strange to say, it is most successful among the Indians who have been the wildest. The Blackfeet were supposed to be irreclaimable, but the Bloods and Piegans did very well."[1] Here, Macdonald acknowledged that not all Indigenous peoples in the North-West were seen in the same light. The Niitsitapi had defied expectations and even impressed Macdonald with their efforts. But why did Macdonald refer to them as "irreclaimable"? What kind of people did Macdonald and his government imagine the Niitsitapi to be?

A month later, Macdonald offered insight into this question during a debate over increasing the size of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP). Brandishing a letter recently written by an unnamed *Toronto Globe* correspondent, he deemed it a "very able and sensible" analysis of matters on the far western prairie frontier. It declared, "There may be serious trouble brewing, for the Bloods, Blackfeet, and other wild Indians of the South are not the class of men to be trifled with. They are, I think, more resolute and warlike than the Crees and Saulteaux [sic]

[1] Canada. *House of Common Debates*, 10 February 1882 (Sir John A. Macdonald), 15.

of the North, and should they once break out in defiance of the police, I cannot but shudder to think of the possible results."[1] While the police had been previously successful in arresting Kainai (Blood), Piikani (Peigan), and Siksika (Blackfoot proper) lawbreakers, the time when three or four scarlet-clad troopers could "overawe" large bands of them was over. Reading on, Macdonald exclaimed, "In the future the greatest caution will have to be exercised in dealing with these lawless, half-starved savages."[2] Horse stealing and cattle-killing were increasing, and the police found it difficult to stop. The correspondent feared that vigilante action from farmers and ranchers might spark a bloody conflict with the Niitsitapi, which would lead to the ruin of the entire country.[3]

Macdonald considered the Niitsitapi to be more dangerous than any other Indigenous peoples in the North-West Territories. They were purportedly wild, lawless, stubborn, aggressive, a nation of "savage" warriors. They took what they wanted if it was not given to them, evidenced in the recent reports of horse and cattle theft. This larceny was somewhat expected since they would not – and could not – grow the fruits of the soil. If settlers tried to chastise the Niitsitapi violently, the latter would strike back, resulting in an orgy of bloodshed. Macdonald's perceptions of the Niitsitapi were not aberrant; they were commonplace in Canadian political and administrative circles, seen clearly in parliamentary debates, government correspondence, ministerial reports, and newspaper editorials. In 1877, Minister of the Interior David Laird described the Niitsitapi as "some of the most warlike and intelligent but intractable bands of the North-West."[4] At a speech given at an annual missionary meeting for the Dominion Methodist Church in 1878, Senator James Cox Aikins happily reported that the future "progress" for Indigenous peoples in the North-West was favourable because "the Blackfoot Indians, formerly the most bloodthirsty, had become more tractable."[5] A year later, journalist and future politician Frank Oliver cautioned against reducing NWMP manpower for fear that the country would revert to its former state of "lawlessness." Comparing Blackfoot Country to the dark

[1] Canada. *House of Common Debates*, 24 March 1882 (Sir John A. Macdonald) 541-542. The letter that Macdonald read was printed several months earlier appearing as "The Great Lone Land," Toronto *Globe*, November 24, 1881.
[2] Canada. *House of Common Debates*, 24 March 1882 (Sir John A. Macdonald) 541-542.
[3] Canada. *House of Common Debates*, 24 March 1882 (Sir John A. Macdonald) 541-542.
[4] Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, Including the Negotiations on Which they were Based, and Other Information Relating Thereto* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, & Co., Publishers, 1880; reprint Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1979), 246.
[5] "Notes from the Capital," *Toronto Globe*, December 11, 1878.

"interior of Africa," he explained that in the recent past, "neither white, half-breed, nor Cree dared venture into it, except in large and well-armed bodies, and no whites resided in it except a few Yankee whiskey traders, who held their…forts by the power of their sixteen shooters."[6] Oliver's implicit suggestion was that the Niitsitapi were hostile and dangerous people who could only be constrained by an armed police presence. During a House of Commons debate in April 1880, the Member of Parliament for Lisgar, Ontario – John Christian Schultz – suggested that it would be better if the Niitsitapi were removed to the north, far away from settler populations altogether. He declared, "It must be remembered that our Blackfeet, peaceful and quiet as they have been, are but another branch of the powerful, warlike, and treacherous "Dakotah" nation to which the Sioux belong."[7] Ten days before Macdonald rose to address Liberal criticism, NWMP Commissioner Acheson G. Irvine declared in his annual report that the Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani "have led a lawless and roving life, that they have been accustomed from infancy to regard other men's cattle and horses as fair plunder, and that the habits of a lifetime are not easy to unlearn."[8] This cross-section of opinions illustrates there was a widespread belief across government departments that the Niitsitapi represented a greater danger to the lives and property of Euro-Canadian settlers than the Nehiyaw (Cree), Nakoda (Assiniboine), Dene (Chipewyan), and Anishinaabe (Salteaux or Ojibway) peoples of the North-West Territories and Manitoba.

This perception was that the Niitsitapi were aggressive, treacherous, lawless, violent, and ultimately dangerous, underpinned divergent patterns of police surveillance in the North-West Territories in the 1880s and 90s. The NWMP invested more manpower, maintained more detachments, and kept them in closer vicinity to concentrations of Indigenous peoples or reserves in Blackfoot Country than anywhere else. The Canadian State did not anticipate trouble with the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe in the same way it did with the Niitsitapi. If there was any conflict with Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West, government officials figured that it would happen in Blackfoot Country. Along the North Saskatchewan, the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe had more sustained contact with European and Euro-American peoples as

[6] "False Charges Against the North-West Mounted Police," *Toronto Globe*, February 3, 1879.
[7] Canada. *House of Common Debates*, 23 April 1880 (John Christian Schultz), 1695.
[8] "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1882," 12 in *Settlers and Rebels: Being the Official Reports to Parliament of the Activities of the Royal North-West Mounted Police from 1882-1885* (Toronto: Coles Publishing, 1973).

trading partners, labourers, and relatives.[9] Christian missionaries had more stable ties with these peoples, even convincing some bands to accept European religion, settle down around the missions, and try their hand at farming. Americans saw the Ktunaxa (Kutenai), Schitsu'umsh (Coeur d'Alene), Qlispé (Pend d'Oreille), and Plateau Salish (Flathead) in a similar light. Euro North-Americans did not see the Niitsitapi in the same way; they were brigands and murderers who menaced hapless travellers who were unfortunate enough to happen upon their territory. Throughout the nineteenth century, this was the message conveyed by the authors of travel literature, religious tracts, and government reports that focused on Rupert's Land, Oregon country, and the Upper Missouri River Valley. The popular writings of Christian evangelizers, fur traders, travelling painters, government explorers, and army officials illustrate that the representation of Niitsitapi men as wild, territorial, warlike, and cruel was consistent over decades. By the time Canadian colonizers were ready to extend their political and economic control across the broad swath of territories held by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) – formulating Indian and law enforcement policies for that purpose – the "Dangerous Blackfoot" image was firmly etched into the psyche of politicians and government officials. Anglo-Canadian newspapers like the *Toronto Globe* – possibly the most successful Canadian publication during the late nineteenth century – disseminated this same image to the Canadian reading public. The *Globe* serialized travel literature and government reports – and wrote articles and editorials about the Niitsitapi – for a wider audience. The Dangerous Blackfoot myth was so prevalent by the 1870s that NWMP recruits brought it westward with them. The force concentrated manpower resources in Blackfoot Country instead of emerging population centres along the North Saskatchewan River because government officials were terrified of the Niitsitapi and expected conflict with them.

Until the mid-1770s, fur traders from the HBC and North West Company carried on a profitable if peripheral trade with the Niitsitapi for provisions, buffalo robes, and wolf skins, writing complimentary missives about the Piikani and Kainai to their superiors. But in the 1890s, the Niitsitapi garnered a reputation for iciness, stubbornness, unpredictability, and violence. Fur trade historian Theodore Binnema argues it was the fracturing of an alliance between the

[9] See Arthur Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Roles as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1680-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974); Jennifer H.S. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980); and Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwywer, 1980).

Niitsitapi and Nehiyaw that precipitated this change. Certain Niitsitapi bands resented the traders for selling weapons and ammunition to their enemies, which threatened their dominant military position on the northwestern plains.[10] In the first three decades of the nineteenth century, they assaulted and robbed HBC traders, threatened others with death and cannibalization, and murdered free traders and Iroquois trappers. In 1821, they were so hostile to an expeditionary force of more than a hundred men scouting the Bow River country – the heart of Niitsitapi territory – that the HBC abandoned establishing a trading post there and retreated northwards, where they remained for decades.[11] The story of the "Old Bow Fort" became a favourite for authors trying to illustrate that the Niitsitapi were fierce and dangerous.

In the Upper Missouri country, Niitsitapi bands were even more inhospitable to American interlopers. This state of affairs was seemingly inaugurated in July 1806 when Meriwether Lewis clashed with Piikani men at the Marias River and left several dead. Over the next two-and-a-half decades, the Niitsitapi attacked parties of American traders and trappers they found in or near their hunting territories.[12] Americans accused British traders of inciting the Niitsitapi against them. However, Binnema and William Dobak argue that the Americans had earned Niitsitapi hostility through their provocative behaviour. Traders armed the Apsáalooke (Crow), Ktunaxa, Newe (Shoshone), and Plateau Salish – all foes of the Niitsitapi – while trappers took furs and game from Niitsitapi territory without permission or recompense.[13] Other historians emphasize lingering enmity against Americans that stemmed from Lewis's initial attack and a desire to avenge murdered kin.[14] American newspapers had carried word of Niitsitapi aggression from St. Louis to the eastern seaboard by the mid-1820s.[15]

While it is difficult to ascertain whether news of Niitsitapi hostility reached the British

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[10] Theodore Binnema*, Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004 c2001), 144-145, 154-160, and 175-178.
[11] Ted Binnema, "Allegiances and Interests: Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) Trade, Diplomacy, and Warfare, 1806-1831" *Western Historical Quarterly* 37 (2006), 338-342.
[12] Binnema, "Allegiances and Interests," 340-341; Ted Binnema and William A. Dobak, "'Like the Greedy Wolf': The Blackfeet, the St. Louis Fur Trade, and War Fever, 1807-1831," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29, No. 3 (Fall, 2009), 419.
[13] Binnema and Dobak, "'Like the Greedy Wolf,'" 412-418.
[14] See, for example, John Ewers*, The Blackfeet: Raiders on the Northwest Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), David J. Wishart, *The Fur Trade of the American West, 1807-1840: A Geographical Synthesis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), and Lesley Wischmann, *Frontier Diplomats: Alexander Culbertson and Natoyist-Siksina' among the Blackfeet* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004).
[15] Binnema and Dobak, "'Like the Greedy Wolf,'" 411, 420, 424, and 429-431.

North American colonies, it likely would have attracted little attention in political circles during the first half of the nineteenth century. Historian Doug Owram – who wrote about the Canadian expansionist movement – argues that before the mid-1840s, there was little interest in the lands exploited and administered by the HBC. Britons and Canadians alternatively imagined Rupert's Land as a subarctic forest good only for the extraction of fur or as a sterile desert best left for nomadic Indigenous peoples. Neither image allowed for an expansion of a British Empire based on agricultural settlement. Not even the continued survival of the Selkirk colony challenged this assessment – it was a mere island of "civilization" in a cold, distant, and dangerous corner of empire.[16] This image changed after the HBC's involvement in a massive 1843-44 international undertaking to study terrestrial magnetism, generating newfound Canadian interest in the HBC territories.[17] The relationship between HBC governor Sir George Simpson and John Henry Lefoy – British North America's representative to the "Magnetic Crusade" effort – encouraged a painter named Paul Kane to tour the HBC territories in 1846.[18] After his return to Upper Canada in 1848, Kane drew the interest of British North American elites to the formerly neglected region. Kane developed robust connections with the recently established Canadian Institute, Toronto's first influential scientific organization. Its members included Simpson, *Globe* founder George Brown, a prominent educator and *Christian Guardian* newspaper founder Egerton Ryerson, and future Father of Confederation George-Étienne Cartier. Binnema argues that the Canadian Institute became "*the* place in which scientific travellers, politicians of all stripes, promotors, and expansionists interacted."[19] In the early 1850s, its members had a voracious appetite for information about the HBC territories: they listened to public lectures, visited ethnographic exhibits of Indigenous peoples, and read scientific papers and books, including travel literature.[20] It was through these publications that Anglo-Canadian elites first discovered the Niitsitapi.

This body of literature included several books written by Jesuit missionary Peter-Jean de

[16] Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1956-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 12-15.
[17] Theodore Binnema*, Enlightened Zeal: The Hudson's Bay Company and Scientific Networks, 1670-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2014), 42-43.
[18] Binnema, *Enlightened Zeal*, 215-216.
[19] Binnema, *Enlightened Zeal*, 221; the italics belong to Binnema.
[20] Binnema, *Enlightened Zeal,* 221-222.

Smet between 1843 and 1863.[21] De Smet established at least a dozen missions in the Oregon country and evangelized to Indigenous peoples on the far western plains in the late-1830s and 40s. After his return to St. Louis in 1846, de Smet managed the accounts of the Society of Jesus, raised money, recruited for the missions in the trans-Mississippi West, and played the role of occasional Indian Commissioner or special envoy for the American government until he died in 1873. His biographer, historian Robert C. Carriker, asserts that de Smet was the most famous Jesuit missionary in the nineteenth century, well-known by Americans and Europeans, Catholics and Non-Catholics alike. He also had a reputation for being an amateur botanist, geographer, and ethnographer.[22] De Smet raised a substantial amount of money because of his books' immense popularity, each of them enjoying frequent reprintings in the United States and Europe because de Smet did not ask for royalties.[23] He wrote for several publications, including the *Precis Historiques* (Missionary notices for the Belgian Society of Jesus), *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, and the *Baltimore Catholic Magazine*. These writings were often reprinted without his permission in other American and European Catholic magazines as well.[24] The *Toronto Globe* illustrates he enjoyed a modest level of readership in British North America. In both 1859 and 1863, the newspaper referred to de Smet's second published book – *Oregon Missions* (1847) – to describe the suitability of the HBC territories for agriculture and its abundance of timber and mineral resources.[25] In 1878, the *Globe* eulogized de Smet when the paper reported the unveiling of a monument to him in his native country of Belgium. It noted that his prolific writings had raised a considerable amount of money for the many missions he helped establish and stimulated public interest about North American Indigenous peoples. Concluding its commemoration of the famous Jesuit, the *Globe* remarked, "these books are filled with interesting information and with loving-kindness for the Indians."[26]

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[21] De Smet published four books similar in format and content, commenting generally on the progress of the western missions, the ethnography of Indigenous peoples of the plains and those west of the Rockies, and topics of natural history. *New Indian Sketches* (1863) is surprisingly bereft of any content particular to the Niitsitapi in comparison to his three other texts.

[22] Robert C. Carriker, *Father Peter John de Smet: Jesuit in the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), xix, 237-238.

[23] Carriker, *Father Peter John de Smet*, 246.

[24] Carriker, *Father Peter John de Smet*., 247. For a substantive list of the publications that these letters appeared in see Phyllis R. Abbot, "Publicizing the Missions" (M.A. thesis, Gonzaga University, 1952).

[25] "The North West: Proposed Route to British Columbia," *Toronto Globe*, May 23, 1859; "The North West," *Toronto Globe*, January 26, 1863.

[26] "Father de Smet, SJ," *Toronto Globe*, September 28, 1878.

One would be hard-pressed to marshal supporting evidence for the *Globe*'s statement that de Smet's books were filled "loving-kindness" for the Niitsitapi. Rather, his representations of them were typically awash with loathing and condemnation, especially evident in his first book – *Letters and Sketches* (1843) – which documented his progress in establishing a mission among the Plateau Salish in 1841-42. While de Smet represented them as proverbial "Good Indians," he demonized the Niitsitapi as lawless thieves and murderers who cruelly oppressed their hapless Indigenous neighbours. The Plateau Salish were a peaceable and friendly – yet courageous and militarily proficient – people who only fought "in consequence of the warlike temper of the Black Feet tribe, who are their neighbours and implacable enemies." Indicting the Niitsitapi further, de Smet remarked, "that marauding people appear to live only for murder and pillage. They are the terror of the savages of the west, who endeavour, as much as possible, to avoid that fatal encounter."[27] The Niitsitapi were also hostile to Euro-Americans, offering them no quarter when met on the plains.[28] Towards the book's conclusion, de Smet wrote, "Heaven has preserved me…[we] travelled in three days, a distance of 150 miles, crossing two chains of mountains, in a section of country frequently visited by the Black Feet warriors, without, however, meeting with any of these scalping savages."[29] Overall de Smet's impression of the Niitsitapi was that they were a "terrible people," mostly because of the terrible injuries they had inflicted on Plateau Salish men during their many attacks.[30]

Oregon Missions – de Smet's second book – offered similar interpretations. It perpetuates the Good/Bad Indian divide by emphasizing that the Plateau Salish had turned to agriculture and livestock rearing, erected permanent dwellings, and embraced Christianity. On the other hand, the Niitsitapi persisted in their nomadic ways. By the book's end, they were only tentatively expressing interest in the Catholic faith, mostly because Niitsitapi men were impressed by Jesuit "war medicine."[31] De Smet dedicated a considerable chunk of the narrative to his travels through Niitsitapi territory north of the American border in the autumn of 1845, which emphasizes

[27] Pierre-Jean de Smet, *Letters and Sketches with a Narrative of a Year's Residence Among the Indian Tribes of the Rocky Mountains*, (Philadelphia: M. Fithian, 1843), 42.
[28] de Smet, *Letters and Sketches*, 48.
[29] de Smet, *Letters and Sketches,* 235.
[30] de Smet, *Letters and Sketches,* 149-150.
[31] Pierre-Jean de Smet, *Oregon Missions and Travels over the Rocky Mountains, 1845-46* (New York: E. Dunigan, 1847), 293-295. This theme is also explored in Peter John de Smet's *New Indian Sketches* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier & Co., 1863), 100-101.

Niitsitapi hostility towards strangers. Highlighting their impulsivity and violence, de Smet explained it was a frequent event that the grieving and angry relatives of a Niitsitapi man just murdered would often "despatch the first stranger they meet, scalp him – and then abandon to the wolves and dogs, the palpitating limbs of the unfortunate victim of their vengeance, hatred, and superstition."[32] While recalling his stay at Rocky Mountain House – the closest HBC post to the heart of Blackfoot Country – the missionary wrote of a Niitsitapi chief named "Partisan," which highlighted the nation's martial prowess. With a mere six men, Partisan stood off eight hundred Nehiyaw fighters for hours, only succumbing after running out of ammunition. Partisan's party had killed seven and wound fifteen.[33] A European or Euro-American reader would have been impressed by Niitsitapi ability, bravery, and tenacity. De Smet's *Western Missions and Missionaries* – his third book published some fifteen years later – highlighted the Niitsitapi proficiency for war too. Waxing philosophically on the effort that would be needed to colonize the plains after he witnessed the signing of Fort Laramie in 1851, de Smet asserted that the hostility of plains Indigenous peoples would be a formidable obstacle. He pitied future settlers "from the bottom of his heart" because "the enemies whom they would have to meet are still too powerful: Crows, Black-Feet, Sioux, Sheyennes [sic], Rapahos [sic], and Snakes, are the most feared and warlike of the desert."[34] The book included an 1855 letter written by Father Nicholas Point – a Jesuit who also carried out evangelizing activities in the region – which characterized young Niitsitapi men as thieves and assassins who continuously lusted for war with intertribal foes west of the Rockies.[35] Over the three books, de Smet consistently represented the Niitsitapi as a powerful, aggressive, warlike nation bent on terrorizing their Indigenous and Euro-American neighbours

Americans saw the Niitsitapi as just one of several menacing Indigenous nations, but north of the international boundary, they were *the* dangerous "Indians." This perception is evident in the writings of British and Canadian travellers. The first was Sir George Simpson's *An Overland Journey*, a narrative documenting the HBC governor-in-chief's trip across British North America, the west coast of the United States, several Pacific Islands, and Siberia in 1841-

[32] de Smet, *Oregon Missions*, 146-148.
[33] de Smet, *Oregon Missions*, 171-172.
[34] Peter John de Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries: A Series of Letters* (New York: James B. Kirker, 1863), 113-114.
[35] de Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries*, 255.

42. Published in 1847, historian Hugh Dempsey characterizes the volume as bland, mostly because editors cut out many of Simpson's more interesting anecdotes.[36] However, it was widely read in British government circles. During an 1857 House of Commons Special Committee hearing into the HBC monopoly over Rupert's Land, British parliamentarians used it to challenge Simpson's testimony on the fertility of the region, its abundance of natural resources, and its suitability for settlement. For months, Simpson's testimony caused a furor in the columns of the *Globe* because he had wholly repudiated assessments he made about the region in his book, opting to represent it as a barren wasteland before the committee.[37] Americans also read the book for information about the HBC regions. In 1858, prospective miners in St. Paul, Minnesota, referred to it in their discussions to select the best possible route to the Fraser Valley goldfields.[38] After Simpson's death, the *Globe* referenced *An Overland Journey* in 1863 to make a case for the settlement of the Cumberland district.[39]

Simpson's narrative does not contain direct statements about Niitsitapi character like de Smet's books. Instead, it illustrates it through a series of anecdotes as Simpson and his travelling companions make their way from Fort Garry to the Rocky Mountains. Simpson did not mention the Niitsitapi until his party reached the South Branch of the Saskatchewan, which he considered to be close to the heart of Blackfoot Country. Declaring the region infested with warlike tribes, Simpson lamented the abandonment of HBC posts in the past, but too many Company men had died trying to defend them. Turning his attention to the cruelty and violence of "savage warfare" – which did not spare defenceless women, children, or old people – Simpson recounted the tale of a Niitsitapi war party who infiltrated Nakoda territory and decimated a large encampment. When the Niitsitapi returned home laden with "scalps and other spoils," they found their women and children slain, presumably in revenge for their own raid.[40] Simpson denigrated the constant warfare between the Niitsitapi and Nehiyaw as stemming from "trivial" causes, maintaining that

[36] Hugh Dempsey, ed., "Simpson's Essay on the Blackfoot, 1841," *Alberta History* 38 no. 1 (Winter, 1990), 2.
[37] See for example, "The Hudson's Bay Company in England," *Toronto Globe*, March 18, 1857; "Hudson's Bay Company: Evidence of Sir George Simpson," *Toronto Globe*, March 26, 1857; "Correspondence: Hudson's Bay Territory," *Toronto Globe*, March 30, 1867; "The Hudson's Bay Company Versus Magna Charta and the British People," *Toronto Globe*, August 10, 1857; "Hudson's Bay Monopoly: Public Meeting of the Citizens," *Toronto Globe*, August 26, 1857.
[38] "Frazier Valley Gold Mines," *Toronto Globe*, July 28, 1858.
[39] "The North West," *Toronto Globe*, January 26, 1863.
[40] Sir George Simpson, *An Overland Journey, Round the World during the Years 1841 and 1842* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1847), 57-58.

the latest round of violence resulted from a dispute over gambling. Near Fort Pitt, the two sides had made peace, in Simpson's words "perhaps for the hundredth time," and they decided to hold a series of horse races in celebration. When some Niitsitapi men observed a Nehiyaw man removing his horse from the betting pool, they saw it as a violation of the peace and secretly conferred as to the course of action. Soon after, they marched through the camp and murdered a celebrated chief named Crow's Shoes, along with several other unarmed men.[41] While ostensibly asserting the triviality of causes behind plains warfare, Simpson also managed to paint a picture of the Niitsitapi as treacherous and easily provoked to violence.

For the remainder of the narrative, Simpson casts the Niitsitapi as "Bad Indians" who were dangerous to Euro-Canadians that needed to be avoided or mollified. An incident near Fort Pitt clearly illustrates this tendency. One evening after the travelling party had retired to their beds, Simpson heard a cry: "Indians are coming!" Instantly, the roused men grabbed their weapons and prepared for "the worst." The panic quickly subsided when they discovered that it was merely a party of Nehiyaw, who Simpson allowed to stay for the night.[42] From the geographical context, threatening "Indians" could have only meant the Niitsitapi. When the march to Fort Edmonton resumed, Simpson explained that the Saskatchewan River's north bank was a safer route because the territory to the south was considered Blackfoot Country. But Simpson wanted to reach Fort Edmonton, and the south bank route was faster. To mitigate the danger, the party exercised "unremitting caution": marching in close order, mounting a guard each night, and hobbling all the horses to prevent their theft.[43] In late July, Simpson met with nine chiefs who represented the Niitsitapi and Tsuu T'ina (or Sarcee).[44] While they were all peaceable, satisfied with the tobacco Simpson had given them as a gift, Simpson himself was still anxious about their presence and feared that the chiefs would send runners to other bands who might "annoy" or try to plunder them. Early the next morning, Simpson's party crossed the Saskatchewan and took to the woods to evade pursuit.[45] A few days later, his party met a band of Tsuu T'ina on the plains as they marched towards the Rockies. Both sides pointed weapons at the other, a situation Simpson diffused by offering tobacco and ammunition as gifts. While

[41] Simpson, *An Overland Journey*, 59.
[42] Simpson, *An Overland Journey*, 65.
[43] Simpson, *An Overland Journey*, 66.
[44] See Dempsey, "Simpson's Essay," 3. Simpson states that the "Blackfoot, Peigan, Sarcee, Blood, and Gros Ventres" were considered by the English traders to be considered "Blackfoot," "Slave," or "Plain" Indians.
[45] Simpson, *An Overland Journey*, 70.

separating on friendly terms, Simpson's party marched until dark to put distance between them, then set up camp on a high piece of ground to watch for approaching riders. The men loaded every gun and posted a four-man mounted guard for the night.[46] In contrast, other Indigenous peoples did not merit this reaction. Meetings between the Nehiyaw at Gull Lake, the Ktunaxa on the road to Oregon country, and the Plateau Salish near Kullespelm Lake featured warm welcomes, the sharing of camp and food, and mutually beneficial trade.[47] Simpson's narrative illustrates that the HBC governor believed that the Niitsitapi were the most dangerous Indigenous nation in the HBC territories.

When Paul Kane's *Wanderings of an Artist* appeared twelve years later, it made similar distinctions between the Niitsitapi and their Indigenous neighbours. Between 1845 and 1848, the Irish-born artist travelled the far west, sketching Indigenous peoples at HBC posts from Fort Garry to Fort Victoria, from the North Saskatchewan River valley to Oregon Territory. Kane was inspired by the belief – a majority one held by British North American society – that the original people of the land were vanishing because of the effects of disease, dislocation, and alcohol.[48] Shortly after his return to Upper Canada in October 1848, Kane displayed a selection of his sketches at Toronto's "Old" City Hall on Front Street, including 240 portraits of the Indigenous peoples he had met on his journey. Newspapers like the *British Colonist*, the *Globe*, *The Christian Guardian*, and the *Patriot* all gave enthusiastic reviews, saving high praise for a sketch that featured a Niitsitapi chief on a grey horse (now lost). [49] Kane petitioned the Upper Canadian government for financial assistance in turning his pencil sketches into full-blown canvas paintings, some of which eventually found their way into the Library of Parliament. In 1855, he exhibited a selection of these pieces at the World's Fair in Paris, where his painting "Big Snake, a Blackfoot Chief, Recounting his War Exploits" (Figure 1.1) was singled out for praise by the public and art critics alike.[50] Over the next three years, Kane wrote and delivered ethnographic papers about Indigenous peoples of the Pacific coast, which significantly helped increase his scientific profile. Kane's travels and writings stimulated interest in the HBC territories and

[46] Simpson, *An Overland Journey*, 74.
[47] Simpson, *An Overland Journey*, 73, 86-90.
[48] J. Russell Harper, ed*., Paul Kane's Frontier Including Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America by Paul Kane* (Kingsport, TN: Kingsport Press, 1971), 14-15.
[49] Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier*, 28.
[50] Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier*, 34.

Figure 1.1: "Big Snake, Chief of the Blackfoot Indians, Recounting his War Exploits to Five Subordinate Chiefs" by Paul Kane gave the Canadian public one of its first visualizations of the Niitsitapi of the far western plains. The title emphasizes a supposed Niitsitapi penchant for war. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kane-Big_Snake,_Chief_of_the_Blackfoot_Indians.jpg, accessed July 24, 2020.

helped launch the movement meant to wrest Rupert's Land from the HBC.[51] The published narrative of his journey was an immediate success and sold out quickly.

Kane's narrative divided the Indigenous peoples of Rupert's Land into "Good" and "Bad Indians." He described the Dakota near Red River as warlike, the implacable enemies of the Métis, while the Anishinaabe bands were more peaceable. Kane's party occasionally sought out the Anishinaabe – as well as the Woodland and Swampy Nehiyaw – to trade for buffalo meat

[51] Binnema, *Enlightened Zeal*, 226.

and tongues, as well as beaver tails. When Kane met them on the trail, there were warm greetings, news exchanges, and invitations to travel together. Several times, Kane wandered into their encampments unannounced looking for shelter from the rain or mosquitos.[52] There was no anxiety whatsoever about meeting Indigenous peoples on the road from Fort Garry to Fort Carleton. In contrast, the reaction to an anticipated meeting with the Niitsitapi was quite different. About twenty miles outside Fort Carleton in early September 1846, Kane's party was startled by a great splashing in the river. HBC Chief Factor John Rowand, travelling with Kane at the time, believed that it was a large war party of the Niitsitapi driving horses from one bank to the other. According to Kane this announcement caused alarm, "the Blackfeet being the most hostile tribe on the continent." The ruckus involved the employees from a nearby HBC fort, who were driving back horses that had been sequestered on a large island to protect them from wolves. [53]

Kane subsequently shared several stories that illustrated, in his words, the "violent disposition of the Blackfoot tribe, who are, without exception, the most warlike on the northern continent."[54] One of them was about a Niitsitapi warrior named Big Horn, who bears a striking similarity to de Smet's "Partisan." Big Horn took six other men into Nehiyaw territory to find a camp to raid. However, they came upon a sizeable Nehiyaw force that suddenly attacked them. Big Horn and his men entrenched themselves, then launched a counterattack with guns and bows. In Kane's version, Big Horn is more dashing, emerging from improvised fortifications to rush forward and taunt his enemies about the many Nehiyaw scalps he kept in his lodge.[55] Kane's further anecdotes illustrate that peoples like the Anishinaabe and the eastern Nehiyaw were peaceful and friendly, while the western Nehiyaw were militarily powerful yet still on good terms with the HBC because of their close economic ties. The Niitsitapi were independent and aggressive, hostile to both their Indigenous neighbours and those of European-descent. Kane impressed upon his audience that the Niitsitapi were not men to trifle with. A story about Big Snake, a Niitsitapi war chief whose image he painted in June 1848, and an encounter he had with the American Fur Company reinforced these themes. Accustomed to entering the trading post as he pleased, Big Snake felt slighted when a new commander rudely refused him admittance. He

[52] Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier*, 67-77.
[53] Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier*, 78.
[54] Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier*, 146.
[55] Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier*, 144-145.

and two companions immediately rode off towards the post's herd of cattle and slaughtered thirteen of them. At the fort, a sentinel saw what was happening and told the commander, who sallied out with a well-armed party. Big Snake hid behind a small hill and waited. Fearing there was more Niitsitapi lurking about, the American party hesitated to get within gunshot range. An African-American employee volunteered to investigate, approaching the hill with great caution. As he crested it, Big Snake suddenly emerged and shot him down. In another instant, he took the man's scalp as a prize and taunted the remaining Americans with it. Not knowing what more awaited them, they sullenly retreated.[56] Kane's stories reinforced the idea that the Niitsitapi were easily offended, treacherous, violent, and above all, dangerous.[57] Kane's travels were significant for the development of the Dangerous Blackfoot image among the political, economic, and social elite of English British North America, given the broad exposure his art and writings received in the 1850s.

While the separate expeditions of Henry Youle Hind and Captain John Palliser are better known for their evaluation of Rupert's Land's agricultural potential, they helped buttress the Dangerous Blackfoot image. In April 1858, the legislature of the Province of Canada engaged Hind to conduct an exploration of the Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba, Assiniboine River, and Qu'Appelle River country to ascertain the region's natural resources, water drainage, and soil quality. In 1859, Hind produced a general report for the Legislative Assembly. A year later, he published his two-volume narrative of his travels, which Doug Owram argues was significant in convincing expansionist Anglo-Canadians that a "fertile belt" suitable for the cultivation of grains and livestock existed from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains, sparking a movement to annex the HBC territories.[58] Hind categorized Indigenous peoples as either Wood Indians or Prairie Indians. Wood Indians lived in small bands subsisting on woodland game, fish,

[56] Harper, *Paul Kane's Frontier*, 149.

[57] Kane left out – or did not know about – important pieces of context to the Big Snake story, which he heard from the man's brother. Historian Lesley Wischmann describes the incident in her biography of famous American Fur Company officer Alexander Culbertson. In 1843, the American Fur Company ordered Culbertson to leave Fort Mackenzie in the hands of his subordinates Francis Chardon and Alexander Harvey. Culbertson had orders to go to Fort Laramie near the Platte River and rehabilitate the trade in that region. But Culbertson was reluctant to leave the profitable Blackfoot trade in the pairs' hands because of several incidents – beginning in 1838 – where Harvey murdered Kainai and Piikani men. In the winter of 1843-44, shortly before the Big Snake incident, Harvey killed a Kainai raider who had tried to drive off the fort's cattle. Kane insinuated it was Big Snake's wounded pride and wrathful nature that sparked the entire episode, but it was really just a flashpoint for long lingering tensions between the Niitsitapi and Harvey; see Wischmann, *Frontier Diplomats*, 77-78. 80-81, 84, 98,107-112.

[58] Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 61-68.

and only occasionally bison. During the winter, they hunted fur-bearing animals for the HBC.[59] They included the Woodland and Swampy Nehiyaw bands, as well as the Anishinaabe, which he characterized as being friendly with each other and the Company. [60] Conversely, the Dakota, Plains Nehiyaw, and Niitsitapi were Prairie Indians who lived by the bison hunt. According to Hind, they varied "the monotony of their existence by forming war parties against their enemies."[61] While the Plains Nehiyaw were friends of the Euro-Canadian traders – acting as provisioners so that the fur trade could function – the Dakota and Niitsitapi were "the most warlike tribes of the North-West."[62] Hind illustrated this by detailing the experience of two Métis men he encountered at Fort Ellice. Sometime earlier, they had run into a Niitsitapi party some sixty men strong while hunting near the Grand Choteau and the Missouri River. They fled for their lives, finding refuge at Fort Union in present-day North Dakota. The Niitsitapi demanded the men be turned over to them, which the traders refused to do. The Niitsitapi set up camp and waited outside the fort. Under cover of night, the Fort Union people gave the Métis provisions, led them out onto the prairies, and told them to run, which they did until they reached British territory.[63] Such stories affected Hind's perception of the Niitsitapi. His party was positively paranoid as they skirted the periphery of Blackfoot Country. In the Nehiyaw camps Hind visited, individuals not only told him the party's horses would be the target of raids, there was also a good chance that the Niitsitapi would try to "lift a scalp."[64] To avoid the Niitsitapi while travelling the South Saskatchewan, Hind's party eschewed making large fires and ate dinner on one section of the river before floating down a few more miles and making camp for the night. He ordered the camps be set up on high bluffs overlooking the water so Niitsitapi raiders could not take them unaware.[65] Hind's narrative reinforced the suggestions made by de Smet, Simpson, and Kane: that the Niitsitapi were a dangerous people best avoided.

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[59] Henry Youle Hind, *North-West Territory. Reports of Progress Together with a Preliminary and General Report on the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition Made Under Instructions from the Provincial Secretary, Canada. Printed by Order of the Legislative Assembly* (Toronto: John Lovell, 1859), 110.
[60] Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Expedition of 1858, In Two Volumes* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), Volume II: 170.
[61] Hind, *Reports of Progress*, 110.
[62] Hind, *Reports of Progress*, 115.
[63] Hind, *Reports of Progress*, 47.
[64] Hind, *Reports of Progress*, 57.
[65]Hind, *Reports of Progress*, 63-65

Palliser offered a similar interpretation of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West after his three-year tour of the HBC territories – which included significant incursions into the mostly unexplored Blackfoot Country. The British government published his official report as a "blue book" in 1863, few copies being produced, making it difficult to obtain.[66] Still, it attracted attention among political and social elites in Britain and Canada because of the expedition's controversy. In Britain, individuals who were ardent supporters of the HBC and their monopoly in Rupert's land criticized it for not producing any new knowledge at much government expense. Whenever Palliser and associates gave lectures in Britain – such as before the Royal Geographical Society – this accusation was trotted out repeatedly.[67] In the Canadian context, Owram suggests that it was mainly read by intellectual elites and those invested in the expansionist movement.[68] Many of the report's findings were later popularized in newspapers and other types of print media, especially those related to advertising the agricultural potential of the west.

Palliser's final report was a bulky document that was difficult to read because of its minute detail on a range of subjects: flora and fauna, rainfall, temperatures and wind, soils, geological formations, day-to-day occurrences, and more.[69] Scattered throughout are references to the Niitsitapi, which coalesce into one central message: that the Niitsitapi were the most dangerous "Indians," and the likelihood of trouble with them was high unless government control preceded settlement. Palliser noted he had struggled continuously to keep guides, porters, and hunters employed in 1858 and 1859 for fear of them.[70] On nine occasions, his men voiced concerns that Blackfoot Country was not safe and expressed a desire to turn back, or they abandoned the expedition outright because Palliser decided to press on.[71] Some of these men had very good reason to be scared because they were fugitives from Niitsitapi justice. For example, a

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[66] Irene M. Spry, *The Palliser Expedition: The Dramatic Story of Western Canadian Exploration, 1857-1860* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishing, 1995), xiii.
[67] Spry, *The Palliser Expedition*, 292-293.
[68] Owram, *Promise of Eden*, 66-67, 70.
[69] Spry, *The Palliser Expedition*, 293.
[70] John Palliser, *Exploration-British North America: The Journals, Detailed Reports, and Observations Relative to the Exploration by Captain Palliser of that Portion of British North America which in Latitude Lies between the British Boundary Line and the Height of Land or Watershed of the Northern or Frozen Ocean Respectively, and In Longitude between the Western Shore of Lake Superior and the Pacific Ocean During the Years 1857, 1858, 1859, and 1860. Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, 19th May 1863* (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1863), 18.
[71] Palliser, *Exploration-British North America*, 55, 92, 134-140.

Niitsitapi guide named Amoxapeta, who Palliser engaged at Fort Edmonton, was reluctant to cross the Bow River for fear of death. He had been married to a Piikani woman but at some point murdered her. He was anxious about encountering his former relations who might take vengeance on him, their right under Niitsitapi law in the absence of an offering of material goods that "covered the dead."[72]

Palliser's second piece of evidence that the Niitsitapi were dangerous was the abandonment of two posts in Blackfoot Country: one at the confluence of the Bow and Red Deer River, the other at the Old Bow Fort (previously mentioned by Simpson). Palliser asserted that they had been too difficult to maintain, as many men lost their lives defending them.[73] When recounting the fate of the Old Bow Fort, Palliser referred to the Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika as "tribes…considered by all who know them as the wildest and most dangerous of the aborigines in British Territory." They had frequently attacked the post, killing employees and ultimately wrung out the little profit found in the region's fur trade.[74] While Palliser's party wintered in Niitsitapi lodges during 1858-59, traded with various Niitsitapi camps, and treated as guests of honour in several others, Palliser represented the Niitsitapi as brigands or marauders. In one instance, a young Siksika man took three guns and a blanket out of a wagon that had been abandoned by one of Palliser's Métis teamsters, who panicked at the appearance of what he believed was a Kainai war party. In the end, Kainai leaders tried to smooth things over by recovering the guns and promising restitution for the blanket.[75] In another incident, a Siksika party attacked a Nakoda Stoney guide and hunter that Palliser had dubbed "Nimrod," robbing him of his property and killing his dogs.[76] Members of his tribe had recently stolen horses from the Siksika and under Niitsitapi custom – and most Indigenous customs prevailing on the western plains at the time – this was a legitimate response to an injury against equine property. Palliser himself was never the target of any malice from the Niitsitapi during his entire residence in Blackfoot Country. He had been treated with great hospitality, patience, and respect, even though

[72] For how the Niitsitapi viewed injury to individuals and property in the second half of the nineteenth century – and the remedies for such injuries –see Christopher Marsh, "The Last of the Horse Wars: Intertribal, Cross Border Warfare in Southern Alberta and Northern Montana Territory, 1878-1893" (MA Thesis, University of Calgary, 2012), 54-58.
[73] Palliser, *Exploration-British North America*, 18-19, 55
[74] Palliser, *Exploration-British North America*, 93.
[75] Palliser, *Exploration-British North America*, 139.
[76] Palliser, *Exploration-British North America*, 135.

he had brought undesirable characters with him (from the Niitsitapi point of view) and had on at least one occasion traded in bad faith by knowingly giving a Siksika party a "sore-backed horse" in exchange for a good one. Palliser did this because he suspected they were merely sizing him up for something nefarious later.[77] Palliser's final verdict was that the North Saskatchewan country's settlement would be peaceful, while what happened in Blackfoot Country depended on the government firmly establishing authority in the region before settlers arrived. Whereas the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe were "on the best of terms" with HBC employees, free traders, missionaries, and other visitors, the Niitsitapi were not as peaceably disposed and would cause conflict by targeting Euro-Canadian livestock.[78] Overall, Palliser believed the Niitsitapi were wild and treacherous, had a penchant for strong alcoholic drink, and naturally given to "acts of rapine."[79]

The writings of William Francis Butler – one a report to the Canadian federal government in 1871, the other a travel narrative of the western territories entitled *The Great Lone Land* published in 1872 – did not undermine the fundamental narrative about the Niitsitapi put forth by previous authors. Butler – an Irish-born British army officer who sailed for Canada in late 1869 hoping to play a role in quashing Louis Riel's Red River Resistance – later toured the North Saskatchewan River valley and part of the western plains at the behest of Manitoba's first Lieutenant-Governor: Adams G. Archibald. Archibald had received reports from further west that there was substantial disorder in the region – mostly due to intertribal warfare and the incursion of American whiskey traders into Blackfoot Country – and local authorities were unable to protect life and property. Butler was to give his opinion on the claims of lawlessness and offer recommendations as to how to eliminate it. In late 1871, he travelled from Red River Colony to Fort Edmonton, then down to Rocky Mountain House in hopes of meeting with the Niitsitapi. But Butler was unable to procure a guide to take him into Blackfoot Country. Even with the offer of high wages, qualified men refused for fear that the Niitsitapi would find them, steal their horses, and, in Butler's words, "do even worse."[80] In March the following year, Butler delivered his report to Archibald, recommending that the federal government organize a mounted

[77] Palliser, *Exploration-British North America*, 135-136.
[78] Palliser, *Exploration-British North America*, 18.
[79] Palliser, *Exploration-British North America*, 205-206.
[80] William Francis Butler, *The Great Lone Land: A Narrative of Travel and Adventure in the North-West of America* (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig. 1968 c1872), 263-264.

police force to establish Canadian authority in the region. The Toronto *Globe* serialized portions of the report soon after, allowing for public consumption. In 1872, Butler published *The Great Lone Land*, which Edward Alexander McCourt – a scholar on western Canadian prairie literature and Butler's biographer – describes as a classic piece of travel literature and Butler's most popular book.[81] Historian Stan Horrall argues that Butler's report publicized the conditions prevailing in the North-West Territories during the 1870s, which had an enormous impact on the federal government's decision to form the NWMP.[82]

Like his predecessors, Butler pointed out that woodland tribes were friendlier and more industrious than those who lived on the plains. Because of the plentiful bison, plains peoples gathered in larger numbers, allowing them to dedicate more time to martial pursuits. Butler wrote they were "accustomed to regard murder as honourable war, robbery and pillage as the traits most ennobling to manhood, free from all restraint, these warring tribes of Cree, Assiniboine, and Blackfeet form some of the most savage among even the wild races of Western America."[83] He maintained that the Niitsitapi – who he characterized as a "wild, lawless, erring race" – outdid other plains peoples by being at war with neighbours from all directions: the Nehiyaw, the Nakoda, the Ktunaxa, the Plateau Salish, and the Americans.[84] The Niitsitapi especially detested miners who came north from Fort Benton and Helena to pan for gold in Blackfoot Country, occasionally attacking them. Since the Niitsitapi were "proverbially hostile," Butler feared a massive gold rush would lead to a wholesale Indian War as "their usual spirit of robbery and murder" would prompt a furious American backlash.[85] Butler also invoked the pillaging of the Old Bow Fort to justify the fear that HBC traders had for the Niitsitapi, which led the builders of Rocky Mountain House to install bolts, bars, and places to fire down on possible attackers.[86] Towards the end of his report, Butler struck a more conciliatory tone, recounting how the Catholic missionary Father Albert Lacombe moved freely among the Niitsitapi, sharing in their

[81] Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, x-xii.
[82] S.W. Horrall, "John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police for the Northwest Territories" in R. Craig Brown and Robert Bothwell, eds., *Canadian Historical Review: Continuing the Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada, Founded at the University of Toronto in 1896* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 199.
[83] "Lieutenant Butler's Report to the Hon. Adams G. Archibald, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba" in Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 358.
[84] Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 376.
[85] Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 364-365.
[86] Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 281.

hunts and occasionally their martial forays.[87] With careful management, Butler believed they could be turned into "trusty friends." He mused, "we have been too inclined to believe all the bad things said of them by other tribes, and, as they are at war with every nation around them, the wickedness of the Blackfoot has grown into a proverb among men."[88]

Father Nicholas Point shared some of Butler's misgivings about how Euro-North Americans perceived the Niitsitapi. As Point prepared an edited manuscript recounting his experiences evangelizing to western Indigenous peoples between 1859 and 1865, he wrote, "at the mere mention of the bloody Blackfeet, American travellers have visions of the worst possible things in Hell. A hundred times they have heard travellers preceding them say that these terrible enemies of the whites breathe only pillage and carnage, and this is not without some foundation in truth." But the missionary pointed out that in many instances, they did it to avenge similar crimes their accusers perpetrated.[89] Despite such conciliatory remarks, Point still portrayed the Niitsitapi as treacherous brigands given to wanton cruelty, relentless in the pursuit of war against their neighbours. In comparison to his kind, honest, generous, brave, and pious Plateau Salish neophytes, Point painted the Niitsitapi as murderous "savages" only interested in Christianity insofar as it could be used for war medicine. Point likely relied too heavily on the stories the Plateau Salish had told him – which emanated from a bitter history of competition over plains resources and armed conflict stretching back centuries. Likewise, Point – as did his British and Canadian contemporaries – likely paid too much heed to the old tales of fur traders that had been regurgitated ad nauseam over the decades (like the pillaging of the Old Bow Fort). Much like Palliser, Point had spent several winters with the Niitsitapi who fed him, sheltered him, and protected him despite not seeing eye-to-eye on spiritual matters, marriage, the use of alcohol, and gambling. Yet Point perpetrated the stereotype that they were hostile to outsiders, especially Euro-North Americans. Whether the Niitsitapi deserved their reputation as being the worst of the worst Plains Indigenous peoples in Canada, it was how many Anglo-Canadians saw them.

Travel writings provide incontrovertible evidence that the Dangerous Blackfoot image dwelled in the imaginations of Canada's most influential social, economic, and political elites.

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[87] Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 288.
[88] Butler, *The Great Lone Land*, 282.
[89] Nicholas Point, *Wilderness Kingdom: Indian Life in the Rocky Mountains: 1840-1847, The Journals and Paintings of Nicholas Point*, Translated and Introduced by Joseph P. Donnelly (New York: Holy, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), 111.

However, these works alone were not potent enough to disseminate it throughout Anglo-Canadian society in the second half of the nineteenth century. Communications historian Paul Rutherford identifies the period as one of increasing literacy, one that saw the rise of reading as a popular pastime, helpful for the propagation of select narratives or *myths*.[90] Shared myths are essential for boosting shared identities, encouraging cultural stability and social harmony, justifying status systems and power structures, and defending social or political revolutions. Rutherford argues that the daily press played the primary role of mythmaker in Victorian Canada.[91] While Canadian elites may have read titles by Simpson, de Smet, Kane, Butler, and other contemporary authors, the working-class – farmers, resource extractors, and urban labourers – often did not. There was a class gap in reading tastes because of the cost of books, which resulted in the working-class being a literary generation behind the middle- and upper-classes. Working-class people mostly read works in the public domain because of the lower cost of publishing them. They seldom read new books written by nineteenth century authors. Even the first public libraries focused on accumulating books written by public domain authors because of their lower cover price.[92] The Toronto Mechanics' Institute library did not purchase Kane's book for its members because of the six-dollar cover price.[93] It was nineteenth century newspapers that exposed the working-class to more recent works by publishing sections of them over time. Of course, a reader also browsed through news articles, editorials, and travel pieces.

The *Toronto Globe* helped nurture the image of the "Dangerous Blackfoot" in the minds of the Anglo-Canadian reading public during the nineteenth century. It was widely read in English-speaking central Canada, having a weekly circulation of 18,000 people in 1856; 28,000 in 1861; and 45,000 in 1872.[94] To get an idea of the extension of the *Globe*'s reach compared to newspapers just a decade earlier, in 1841, the combined total circulation of all fifty newspapers

[90] Paul Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 34, 156. Rutherford utilizes Graeme Peterson's definition of myth: "'a complex of symbols and images' which works 'as a sort of lens or screen, whereby certain features of a subject are ignored or suppressed, while others are emphasized or distinctly organized." While a certain representation of a person, idea, or event may be distorted or even caricatured, it does not necessarily mean that it is false.
[91] Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 156.
[92] Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 34; Jonathon Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working-Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 115-140.
[93] "The Mechanics' Institute," *Toronto Globe*, June 17, 1859; "The Mechanics Institute," *Toronto Globe*, June 20, 1859.
[94] Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 42.

and journals in Upper Canada was approximately 40,000 issues per week.[95] The *Globe* was the first Anglo-Canadian newspaper to merit the term "popular." It highlighted the spectacular and sensational – such as trials for notorious crimes – and included ferocious editorials that touched on all the hot-button topics of the day: slavery, temperance, education, trade policy, race, and religion. They were often so blistering – usually against Conservative party politicians – that Canadians dubbed the newspaper the "Thunderer." Further, the *Globe* earned huge advertising revenue, easily making it the Dominion's most successful and profitable daily. For a long time, no other newspaper came close to matching the *Globe*'s success.[96] It was hugely influential in English Canada at a time when the Dangerous Blackfoot image was ascendant. Between 1857 and 1875, the Globe published at least forty-five articles about the Niitsitapi, describing purported acts of aggression – horse raiding, assaults, or murders – or expressing anxiety about the potential fate of prospective migrants to Blackfoot Country

The Anglo-Canadian reading public's first glimpse of the Niitsitapi was through the eyes of Euro-North American gold miners planning expeditions through the far western plains. Gold was discovered in the Fraser River Valley in 1857, with subsequent rumours of strikes in the Cariboo Mountains and even along the Saskatchewan. The best route to get to them was a matter of fierce debate because of time constraints, the availability of provisions, and the possibility of an "Indian" attack, which almost always meant the Niitsitapi. For example, when prospective miners in St. Paul had a town hall meeting, they noted two routes to the Fraser Valley based on Simpson's account in *An Overland Journey*. The north route from Pembina to Fort Edmonton offered plentiful grass, water, timber, and game. There was a string of HBC trading posts that offered "conveniences," such as the prospect of purchasing provisions or trading off worn-out horses. There was also less of a chance of being attacked by Indigenous peoples. However, the northern route was time-consuming. The southern way through the Cypress Hills, then along the Bow River, was more direct but still unattractive because, according to the article's writer, "a party might be annoyed by Blackfeet Indians." The route cut straight through a no man's land where the Nehiyaw and Niitsitapi constantly fought and then through the heart of Blackfoot Country itself. In case of an "unforeseen accident," there would be no HBC to fall back on.[97] A

[95] Jeffrey L. McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 129-130.
[96] Rutherford, *A Victorian Authority*, 40-42.
[97] "Frazer River Gold Mines," *Toronto Globe*, July 28, 1858.

couple of years later, George Fleet and some Red River colonists planned a similar trip. Fleet asserted that with a knowledge of local Indigenous language and customs, they need not "be scared of even the dreaded Blackfeet." The prospective miners could take the direct route through Blackfoot Country, a good one abundant with bison and other victuals. While he acknowledged that the Niitsitapi were "hostile and dangerous," he assured a *Nor'Westor* interviewer that "if we do not trouble the Indians, they will not trouble us." Fleet's planned to find their camps on the plains, reasoning that once they were actually among the Niitsitapi they "would be safe as within the walls of Fort Garry."[98] Given Kane and Palliser's experience among the Niitsitapi, where they were both well-treated, Fleet's assertions were not outlandish. Fleet's neighbours did not share his confidence though. When some 150 migrants departed Red River Colony in June, they took the safer North Saskatchewan route.[99]

Other parties had similar anxieties about the Niitsitapi. Dr. Alex Reid – originally from London, England – spent five months in North America's western reaches as his party travelled from Red River to the Columbia in the second half of 1861. In a letter originally printed in a Colville Valley, Washington Territory newspaper, Reid revealed that his fellow travellers were nervous because Indigenous peoples were at war with the Americans; the Niitsitapi purportedly gave the most trouble. While Reid admitted his party had no trouble with them, they were always well-armed, just in case.[100] A year later, the *Globe* reminded its readers in a short blurb on developments in Montana that the Niitsitapi were still dangerous. Gold had been recently discovered, attracting hordes of miners looking to make their fortunes. The paper reported a string of military posts erected for the miners' protection, as the Niitsitapi and Apsáalooke who inhabited the territory were "the most warlike tribes on the continent."[101] This characterization was incredible in light of the 1862 conflict between Euro-Americans and the Dakota in Minnesota, which was extensively covered in a lurid and even hysterical fashion by newspapers in both the United States and Canada.[102] Throughout the 1860s, the *Globe* consistently delivered

[98] "Gold in the Rocky Mountains – The Eastern Slope," *Toronto Globe*, February 2, 1862.
[99] Joachim Fromhold, *The Western Cree (Pakismotan Wi Iniwak) – Ethnography* (Blackfalds, Alberta: Heritage Databank Consulting, 2010), 57-58.
[100] "On Route to Columbia," *Toronto Globe*, March 6, 1862.
[101] "The Latest: The Midnight Report," *Toronto Globe*, March 3, 1864.
[102] The Dakota War of 1862 – also known as the Dakota Uprising or Little Crow's War – saw the deaths of hundreds Euro-American settlers in Minnesota and resulted in the largest mass execution in American history. Newspapers accused the Dakota of brutally torturing their victims, mass raping white women, and murdering children. For a comprehensive examination of how the conflict was reported on by American print media, see June Namias, *White*

the backhanded message that the Niitsitapi were dangerous by highlighting the anxieties of miners, would-be settlers, and other travellers of the HBC territories.

Euro-North Americans on both sides of the 49th Parallel feared what Niitsitapi might do, but there were few concrete examples of Niitsitapi aggression. The *Globe* printed less than a dozen of these types of stories before 1875 – and several of them had to be retracted as false. The longest and most detailed of them seemed to confirm the worst fears about Niitsitapi aggression, capriciousness, and violence. In October 1859, two survivors of a thirteen-month overland journey staggered into Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island, recounting a harrowing tale of the southern Canadian prairies. The two men had joined an unspecified number of would-be miners in St. Paul, Minnesota, which left in August 1858 for the Fraser River. Things had gone well until the twentieth night, when "Southern Indians" surprised the camp, robbed them of their provisions and horses, and took them captive. The unnamed informant claimed they were kept prisoner for over three weeks until he and several others managed to escape. During that time, the "Southern Indians" tortured one man before burning him to death. Two other men did not survive their captivity either; the paper did not state whether they had been tortured too. The survivors fled westward, where forty days after their escape they were accosted by "Blackfoot Indians" who demanded their horses. The "Blackfoot Indians" attacked them several times over the next month or so, culminating in a firefight that left only six of the Americans alive. The Americans' luck took a turn for the better as they approached the Rocky Mountains and met up with a band of Ktunaxa (Kootenay), who fed them and treated their wounds. After the Americans recovered, they continued their trek west until twenty "Blood Indians" attacked them. The Bloods killed half the party and wounded the rest, taking the survivors to a nearby camp. They apologized, telling the Americans that they had mistaken them for intertribal foes. The Americans spent some time recuperating in the Blood camp; then guides led them through the Rockies. Another of the party died on the road to Fort Victoria from previously sustained

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Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 204-261. The *Globe* reproduced the accusations leveled against the Dakota both during the conflict and in the years after, including the cold-blooded murder of women and children; see "Six Indians Kidnapped from the Red River," *Toronto Globe*, February 9, 1864. In this case, the *Globe* reprinted excerpts of the St. Paul Press without offering any comment whatsoever. In an editorial commenting on the kidnapping of several Dakota chiefs accused of committing atrocities in Minnesota, the *Globe* wrote of the conflict: "In 1862, the Indian tribes came suddenly down upon the western settlements robbed and massacred the unprotected people, burned their homesteads, and desolated the country"; see "The Kidnapping of the Two Indian Chiefs," *Toronto Globe*, February 10, 1864.

injuries.[103] It was an incredible tale with glaring inconsistencies – such as how the party managed to still have weapons and horses for their encounter with the "Blackfoot" when "Southern Indians" had already taken them. The clarion call of the piece was that Blackfoot Country *was not* a safe place for white men.

Globe readers waited nearly eight years for another example of Niitsitapi aggression. In a February 3, 1868 article, a correspondent at Red River gave an update on the mining activities on the North Saskatchewan. The miners had had a tough year: flooding forced them to abandon their digs and turn to the Athabasca River for the season, where the pickings were slim. Meanwhile, the price of provisions had steeply increased because of Niitsitapi aggression. The correspondent accused them of pillaging HBC servants "wherever they met them," keeping provisions in short supply and expensive.[104] But when a *Globe* correspondent interviewed HBC officers William J. Christie and Richard Hardisty at St. Paul, Minnesota, in May 1869, they made no mention whatsoever of any such Niitsitapi depredations. Christie only mentioned that there had been a tremendous reduction in the quantity of bison near Fort Edmonton due to Euro-North American migration to the region, which caused the Niitsitapi, Plains Nehiyaw, and Plains Nakoda to resent the presence of Red River and HBC hunters.[105] There were tensions between the Niitsitapi and the HBC over access to bison, but neither Christie nor Hardisty made any reference to attacks on their employees – which would have made for an infinitely more spectacular story for *Globe* readers.

In subsequent years, the Niitsitapi occasionally made the columns of the *Globe* for overt acts of aggression. In late July 1870, a correspondent from St. Paul reported that the Niitsitapi were on the warpath, capturing Fort Carleton and killing the chief trader in command.[106] However, the paper had to take back the story. An HBC employee later clarified that they had not been attacked, and the officer in charge was quite alive. What had happened was the Niitsitapi had taken some goods and property belonging to HBC and issued threats, annoyed to hear that the company had purportedly sold their land to Canada. They were also perturbed that expected annual gifts might not come.[107] The next spring, Methodist missionary George

[103] "A Brechin Man's Adventures – An Unlucky Party," *Toronto Globe*, January 28, 1860.
[104] "Gold on the Athabasca," *Toronto Globe*, February 3, 1868.
[105] "The North-West: Fort Edmonton and Vicinity," *Toronto Globe*, June 2, 1869.
[106] "News of the Day," *Toronto Globe*, July 28, 1870.
[107] "Indian Outbreak Denied, The Blackfeet Troublesome," *Toronto Globe*, July 29, 1870.

McDougall reported that some Niitsitapi had stolen a horse from him and killed one of his cows. He asserted that the losses were "small matters compared to the loss some had sustained." The Niitsitapi were purportedly annoyed because they believed McDougall had harboured those who had murdered their people.[108] In 1872, the *Globe* reported that Americans had set-up trading posts near the Old Bow Fort and were causing "infinite damage" among the Niitsitapi by inundating them with liquor. They were purportedly giving away all their possessions to attain it.[109] Less than a year later, the paper reported "hard fighting" between Americans and the Niitsitapi on the Canadian side of the international border. Forty Niitsitapi had been killed in addition to a "large number of Americans." The *Globe* feared that this was "the beginning of troubles in the Blackfeet country."[110] As with the purported Carlton troubles, the *Globe* had to retract the story a few days later because the reported incident had not happened.[111] Although it was commendable that the editors did so upon discovering the story was untrue, it demonstrates the shortcomings of newspapers as sources for historical facts. The *Globe* frequently used reports not vetted or substantiated, a common practice across the North American newspaper industry.[112]

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[108] "Wesleyan Missionary Notices for February 1871 and the North-West," *Toronto Globe*, March 8, 1871. Hugh Dempsey argues that the murder of Fort Edmonton-area Nehiyaw chief Maskepetoon and three members of his family by a Niitsitapi band in the winter of 1869 caused outrage and reignited intertribal warfare. When a prominent Nehiyaw diplomat named Maskepetoon approached a Niitsitapi camp to broker a peace treaty, he was killed instead. The Nehiyaw called for their kin and relations as far east as the Qu'Appelle Valley to avenge the death and more than 100 Niitsitapi subsequently lost their lives in the renewed violence;.see Hugh A. Dempsey, *Maskepetoon: Leader, Warrior, Peacemaker* (Surrey, B.C.: Heritage House, 2010), 223-227.

[109] "North-West Affairs: The Saskatchewan," *Toronto Globe*, June 27, 1872.

[110] "Latest from Manitoba," *Toronto Globe*, April 28, 1873.

[111] "America, United States: Indian Disturbances Discredited," *Toronto Globe*, May 2, 1873.

[112] In his examination of newspaper reporting on Indian Wars in the United States from 1862 to 1891 Hugh J. Reilly argues that may of those who wrote articles were "more gifted in imaginative writing than accurate reporting." They gave highly coloured accounts of Indian "raids" and "massacres," including the 1867 Fort Buford "massacre" that never actually happened. Frontier newspapermen – whose works were picked up by larger papers out east – happily exaggerated incidents if it would sell newspapers. Reilly also suggests that articles depicting alarming news of Indian trouble sent to the eastern press were propaganda aiming to influence the federal government to send more soldiers to "threatened" areas so that local merchants might have more opportunities to sell their wares. Further, stories that were said to be the result of "eyewitness accounts" and "reliable intelligence" were sometimes complete fabrications. Reilly ultimately concludes that all newspapers made inaccurate claims and utilized racial stereotypes in their reporting, though some were more prone to do it more than others; see Hugh J. Reilly, *The Frontier Newspapers and the Coverage of the Plains Indian Wars, 1863-1891* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Publishing, 2010), xvii-xviii, xxiii, & 135. Other historians have come to the same conclusion. For example, Sharon Murphy described many articles about Indigenous peoples in the United States as "outright lying"; see Sharon Murphy, "American Indians and the Media: Neglect and Stereotype," *Journalism History* 6 no. 2 (1979), 40. In their analysis of Canadian newspapers, Anderson and Robertson argue that the conclusions made about American newspapers can also be said for Canadian ones as well; see Mark Crunland Anderson and Carmen L Robertson, *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 39.

So prevalent was the Dangerous Blackfoot image, a May 27, 1873 editorial suggested that since Blackfoot Country would not be required for settlement any time soon, the federal government should not needlessly antagonize the Niitsitapi by erecting a military post within their territory. "Best let sleeping dogs lie," it declared.[113]

The Dangerous Blackfoot image was firmly entrenched in the minds of NWMP recruits in the 1870s too. An April 22, 1875 article – published only months after the force reached the Macleod region – features an unidentified constable giving uninhibited commentary about the character of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West. "With regard to all Indians," it stated, "many a tale of cruelty have I heard from men who have traded with them in this country since. The free traders call them mean, d--ds [sic] mean, and that is just the term for them." [114] "All Indians" were dangerous, and any White man caught on the prairie alone was "certain to be potted by an unseen foe." Emphasizing their treacherous nature, he asserted that their favourite method of dispatching a foe was to kill them while they slept. The constable painted a grim picture of all Indigenous peoples, saying they were "hostile, treacherous, and in every way dangerous." However, the Niitsitapi were more dangerous than the rest. He notes that they were at war with all their neighbours and had a greater proclivity towards casual murder. The reason there were so many Niitsitapi bands was that intratribal murder was common. In such cases, it fell upon kin to avenge the victim's death. But the perpetrator sometimes evaded the avenger by fleeing the camp, which prompted relatives and friends to join them. Eventually, it would attract such a large enough following that a new band was established.[115] His entire characterization was problematic given it demonstrated a degree of implicit racism latent within the rank-and-file body of the force, undoubtedly nurtured to some extent by the stories propagated by newspapers like the *Globe*.

The perception that the Niitsitapi were more aggressive and dangerous than other Indigenous peoples was a major reason why the NWMP maintained such a large presence in Blackfoot Country, rather than more equally dispersing the force along the North Saskatchewan

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[113] "Our Great West," *Toronto Globe*, July 18, 1873.

[114] "The North-West Mounted Police," *Toronto Globe*, April 22, 1875. It is apparent that the unnamed correspondent was an enlisted man as he gives commentary on performing various police duties; the state of clothing, shelter, and provisions; the progress in the construction of the fort; and a recent New Year's celebration. He clearly differentiates himself from the higher-ranking officers, stating that he and the other men had no complaints to make about them.

[115] "The North-West Mounted Police," *Toronto Globe*, April 22, 1875.

River where the majority of the territory's settlers congregated. The NWMP's major objectives in 1874 were to drive American whiskey traders out of Blackfoot Country and establish Canadian authority in the Cypress Hills, the site of an infamous June 1873 massacre of Nakoda men, women, and children by American wolfers.[116] Both were meant to establish Canadian sovereignty and prevent a bloody conflict between Euro North-Americans and Indigenous peoples. Canadian newspapers like the *Globe* extensively speculated that the police might have to fight the whiskey traders, who were well-armed and hunkered down behind heavy fortifications. But the Americans melted away even before the NWMP arrived. Suddenly, the whiskey trade was over, and the NWMP remained to make sure the traders did not return. Commissioner George Arthur French's next objective was to eliminate intertribal warfare.[117] The bison found in Niitsitapi hunting grounds encouraged other Indigenous peoples to congregate near them. Since police officials perceived the Niitsitapi as more hostile, aggressive, and capricious, *they* were the root of the problem and likely to spark a new round of conflict, which would create disorder and discourage Euro-Canadian migration. This perception was a significant reason why the NWMP was still concentrating manpower in Blackfoot Country at the end of 1876 rather than in the north, where the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, Anishinaabe, and Métis were predominant (Figures 1.2 and 1.3). The NWMP needed to surveil the Niitsitapi and be ready to intervene if conflict arose, as the latter bluntly told the former that had the police not been present, they would have declared war on the interlopers.[118] By the end of 1876, 44 percent of the force's 335 policemen were in the Macleod region. All of Treaty 4 territory had a slightly higher proportion of police manpower (45 percent), but it was spread over a wider geographical area.[119] The Treaty 6 region lagged far behind with only 25 percent. Blackfoot Country had two major NWMP posts – defined as those with thirty or more men – within its boundaries: Fort Macleod and Fort Calgary, which had been established as Fort Brisebois in late 1875 (Figures 2.4). Fort Macleod was the largest post in the whole territory, housing 112 men.[120] The Niitsitapi's fearsome reputation was the initial reason for such heavy NWMP surveillance.

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[116] Horrall, "John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police," 179-180, 198-200.
[117] "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1876," 25-26 in *Opening Up the West, Being the Official Reports to Parliament of the Activities of the Royal North-West Mounted Police from 1874-1881* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973).
[118] "Report of the NWMP, 1876," 24.
[119] Christopher Marsh, "NWMP Distribution Stats by Post," Tab1876C (Spreadsheet in author's possession).
[120] Christopher Marsh, "NWMP Distribution Stats by Post," Tab1876C (Spreadsheet in author's possession).

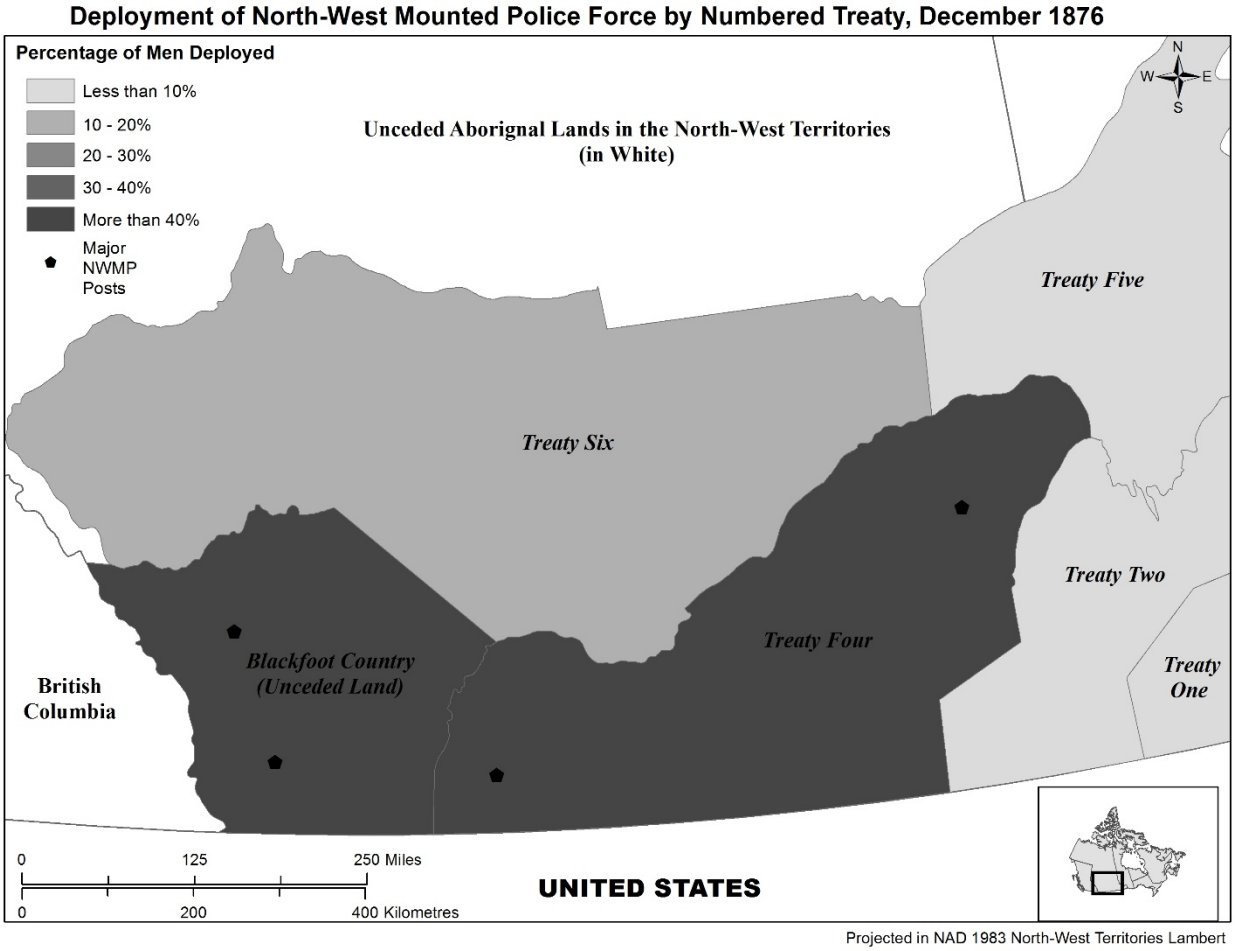

Figure 1.2: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Numbered Treaty, December 1876. The bulk of police manpower was roughly equal in Treaty 4 territory and Blackfoot Country, while there was a lower proportion in Treaty 6 territory.

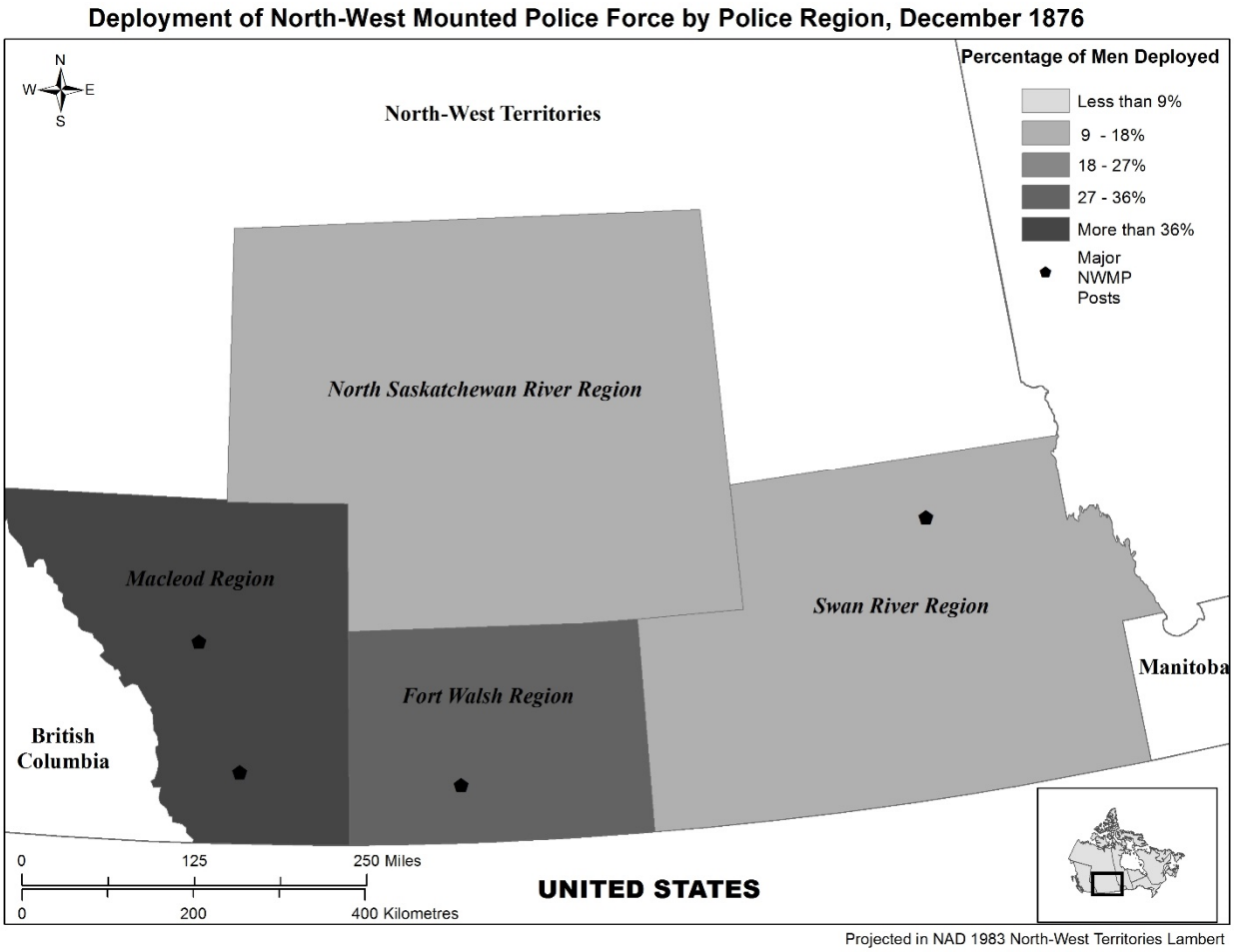

Figure 1.3: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Police Region, December 1876. The largest proportion of policemen were stationed in the Macleod region, which overlooked large populations of the Niitsitapi.

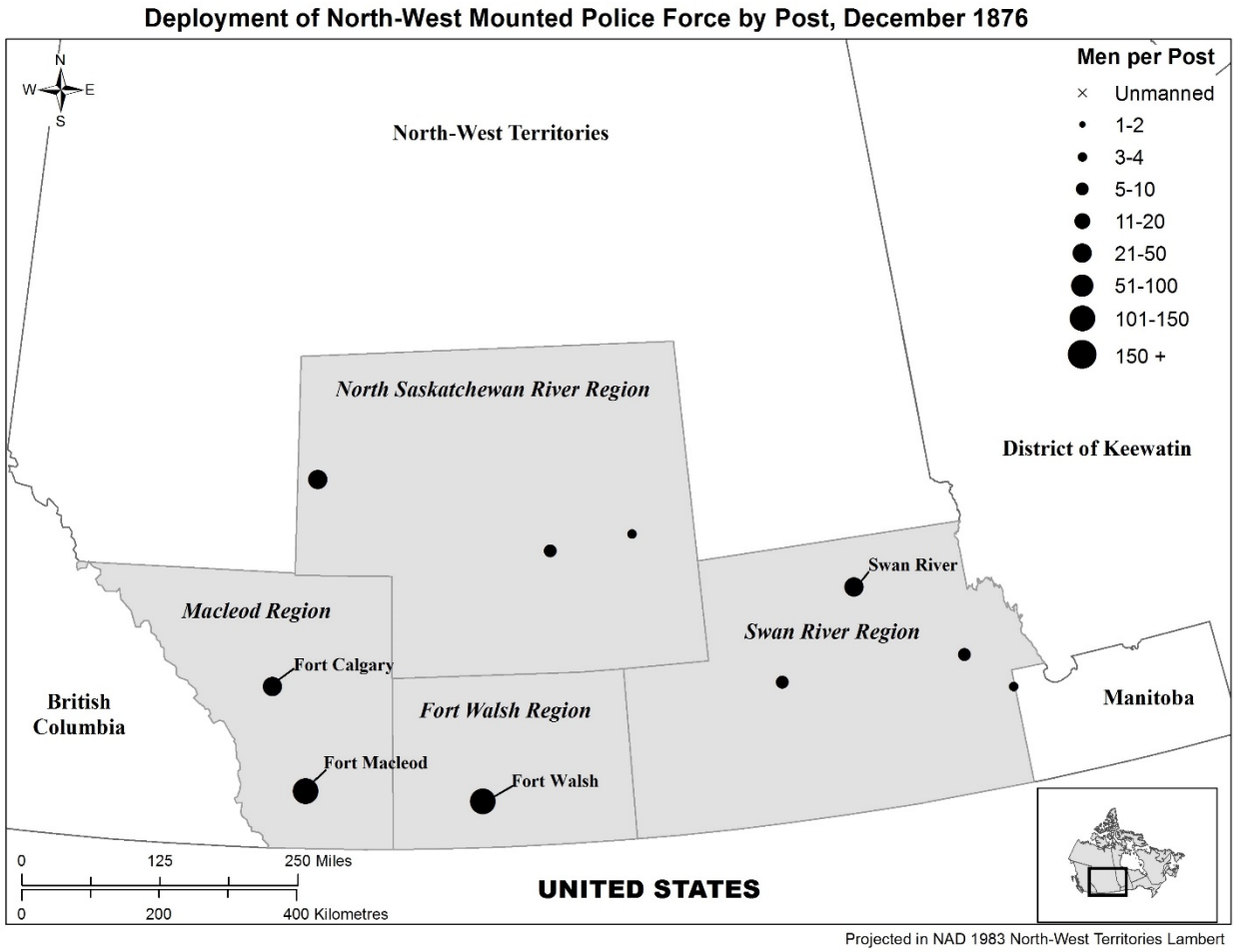

Figure 1.4: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Post, December 1876. Two of the force's major posts (more than 30 men present) - Fort Macleod and Fort Calgary - were in Blackfoot Country.

In the eyes of Anglo-Canadians, the Niitsitapi were unequivocally Canada's most dangerous "Indian": aggressive, hostile, proud, treacherous, and violent. Between 1858 and 1875, the *Globe* helped popularize the Dangerous Blackfoot image first set out by Simpson, de Smet, Kane, Hind, Palliser, and Butler – from its position as English Canada's most influential daily newspaper. Editors like George Brown – active in the expansionist movement and familiar with HBC territory travel literature – repackaged and re-presented images that made claims to the character of the foreboding Niitsitapi in a more readable and accessible format. Not only did

the *Globe* reinforce the mythology that had been formulated by missionaries, travellers, and government explorers, they contributed it to by adding the voices of miners, fur traders, farmers, and even rank-and-file policemen. Whether the stories about the Niitsitapi were always entirely accurate, they reveal deep anxiety, fear, and even terror at the prospect of just encountering them in the most unknown country surrounding remote HBC outposts. The Dangerous Blackfoot image had a profound impact on policy decisions surrounding the surveillance of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West. From the beginning, the police made straight for Blackfoot Country, focusing most of their manpower in the region while portioning out fewer resources along the Saskatchewan River Valley. The Niitsitapi were more heavily surveilled than other plains Indigenous peoples from the beginning. Anglo-Canadians perceived the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe who resided further north as friendlier, more compliant, and more amenable to "civilizing" influences. The Dangerous Blackfoot image did not fade over the next decade as the Niitsitapi resisted the attempts of the Indian Department and NWMP to impose Canadian conceptions of "civilization" – most notably Euro-Canadian law – on their culture and society, which led to ever-increasing levels of surveillance.

CHAPTER TWO
"Trembling on the Brink of a Volcano": Early Discord Between the Niitsitapi and the North-West Mounted Police, 1881-1884

On January 2, 1882, Inspector Francis Jeffery Dickens – the son of English novelist Charles Dickens – ordered the arrest of a Siksika (Blackfoot) chieftain named Bull Elk. Bull Elk had shot at Charles Daly, a beef contractor for the Indian Department, after the two had a misunderstanding over the ownership of a beef cow's head. The Siksika man believed he had paid one dollar for it to another contractor, William Barton, who on his part thought he was selling the paunch. But Daly did not see the transaction and believed that Bull Elk's wife – who he saw carrying it away – had stolen it. Daly roughly took the head back and threw it on a charnel pile. Bull Elk and Daly exchanged harsh words before the former angrily stormed off. He shortly returned with a long-barrelled gun and fired, the ball passing on Daly's right before thudding into a log. Terrified, Daly scurried off to report the matter to the nearby North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) post. But arresting and then holding Bull Elk did not go smoothly. Sergeant Joseph Howe first had to pursue Bull Elk across the prairie. When his party finally caught up, Eagle Shoe – a Siksika man accompanying the police – warned the sergeant not to get too close, fearing Bull Elk would shoot. Eagle Shoe convinced him to stand down and accept arrest. When Howe and three other policemen tried to get Bull Elk into the post, a large crowd of Siksika, brandishing knives, axes, and carbines, blocked them. They pushed and grabbed at Howe and the other policemen. An older woman snatched Bull Elk's gun from the sergeant before melting back into the crowd. Several young men fired their weapons in the air. Growing desperate, Howe let off three shots of his own over the heads of the crowd and pushed towards the fort with the prisoner in tow. After the police got inside, the armed Siksika remained, confining the thirteen-member garrison. Dickens sent for head chief Crowfoot (or Isapo-Muxika) to resolve the impasse. Upon arrival, the chief declared that Bull Elk was innocent and demanded that he not be sent to Fort Macleod. If Dickens released the minor chief to his custody, Crowfoot promised that Bull Elk would appear when summoned. Given that Dickens and the rest of the police stationed at Blackfoot Crossing had "never saw the Indians in such a state before,"

Dickens reluctantly agreed. The Siksika outside the fort hollered loudly and fired their guns in celebration when they heard the news.[1]

Dickens sent word about what had happened to Fort Macleod Superintendent Leif Newry Fitzroy Crozier, who immediately mustered twenty men and set out for Blackfoot Crossing. Marching all day and night, Crozier arrived on the morning of January 6. He ordered his men to make the detachment more defensible, erecting bastions on the north-west and south-east ends of the structure, lining the walls with bags of flour and oats, cutting small holes into the walls for communication and returning fire, and partially destroying an old corral that the Siksika might have used for cover. In a later report about the incident, the superintendent asserted that he was "determined to arrest the offender, and having done so, to hold him, even if it was necessary to resort to extreme measures."[2] Crozier wanted to impress upon the Siksika that Canadian law could not be resisted with such impunity. The preparations piqued Siksika curiosity and a now tentative Crowfoot asked Crozier if he intended to fight. Crozier told the chief only if the Siksika attacked first. The superintendent then asked Crowfoot to turn Bull Elk over, which the head chief did. Upon arriving back at the police quarters, Crozier began a preliminary examination. When the first day of testimony was over, Crowfoot approached the superintendent and asked Crozier to return Bull Elk to his custody. Crozier "positively refused," which cause consternation among the Siksika but no immediate hostile action. The next day, concluding that there was enough evidence to hold a criminal trial at Fort Macleod, Crozier prepared to take Bull Elk to Macleod. When Crowfoot objected, Crozier bluntly asked whether the chief would assist him in upholding the law or resist. After some back-and-forth, Crowfoot acquiesced and on January 8, Crozier returned to Fort Macleod with the prisoner in tow. Bull Elk appeared before stipendiary magistrate James Farquharson Macleod, who convicted him, then sentenced him to fourteen days

[1] "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1881," 50-53 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West, Being the Official Reports to Parliament of the Activities of the Royal North-West Mounted Police from 1874-1881* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973). This would the beginning of what has been popularly referred to as the "Bull Elk Affair." Hugh A. Dempsey writes about this event, incorporating Niitsitapi oral testimony, in *The Vengeful Wife and Other Stories* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 207-219.

[2] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 54 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.

in the guardhouse.[3] The sentence hardly seemed worth it considering the police had nearly started a war with the Niitsitapi.

Historian Hugh Dempsey – who has written prodigiously on Niitsitapi history – argues that the "Bull Elk Affair" undermined the foundation of trust existing between the Niitsitapi and the NWMP. Since 1875 relations between the two had been cooperative, even friendly. Niitsitapi leaders like Crowfoot conferred to the police force a high degree of honour and trust based on the words and deeds of men like Judge Macleod (the second commissioner of the force). But Crozier's heavy-handed approach, specifically insulting Crowfoot by failing to uphold the custody arrangement that he and Dickens had agreed to, had diminished this esteem. Thereafter, Crowfoot treated the police with more caution and suspicion.[4] The Bull Elk Affair also shaped how the police related to the Niitsitapi, informing policy on how to deal with criminality and resistance to law enforcement. The danger that Dickens and his detachment had been subjected to by crowds of angry Niitsitapi men and women convinced Crozier and other high-ranking NWMP officials that the Niitsitapi had to be firmly dealt with, with no hint of hesitation or compromise. Every Niitsitapi individual accused of a crime had to be immediately arrested. All stolen horses had to be taken away. And all those who obstructed the police had to be punished. This approach was the only way to teach the Niitsitapi respect for Euro-Canadian law. But it was a sharp departure from the NWMP's initial policy of dealing with the Niitsitapi, which relied on personal relationships between community leaders and police officials, negotiation, and compromise.

While the Bull Elk Affair was a spectacular instance of Niitsitapi resistance to police authority, it was only one in a string of such incidents that began in the spring of 1881 and continued until the eve of the 1885 North-West Resistance. During this period, Niitsitapi all over Treaty 7 territory obstructed the police – sometimes violently – and took the law into their own hands to punish the wrongdoings of their Indigenous neighbours, who continuously raided their horse herds. The relationship between the NWMP and the Niitsitapi became further strained because of the latter's conviction that the Canadian State was not fulfilling the promises it had made during Treaty 7 negotiations. Or that the police – despite past assertions – was fairly

[3] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 53-54 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.
[4] Dempsey, *The Vengeful Wife*, 217-219.

enforcing Canadian laws regardless of racial identity. The NWMP had long promised that both Euro-Canadians and Indigenous peoples would be equally protected – and when necessary – punished under the law. Among police and other government officials, these violent and near-violent encounters reinforced the Dangerous Blackfoot image, constructed throughout the nineteenth century in newspapers, government reports, and travel literature; they were hostile, aggressive, capricious, and, above all, dangerous. Continuing Niitsitapi resistance bolstered the newfound police assertion that the Niitsitapi had to be dealt with firmly, even if it meant risking open conflict. Close surveillance of Niitsitapi reserves, a conspicuous police presence, and swift, uncompromising action when confronting criminality became the preferred NWMP policy. However, it was difficult to implement during this period because of the many demands the NWMP faced all over the North-West Territories, most notably with the Métis, Nehiyaw (Cree), and Nakoda (Assiniboine) in the North Saskatchewan River Country. Police power was too dilute to apply the necessary pressure to force the Niitsitapi to behave in the way the force wanted. This chapter illustrates the discord between the Niitsitapi and the NWMP, and how lawlessness in Blackfoot Country shaped the formation of police policy. It demonstrates how these encounters influenced the spatial distribution of police manpower during a period when the Canadian government was already heavily burdened trying to deal with Indigenous dissatisfaction in the north, which culminated in the North-West Resistance of 1885.

Dickens's experience with the Siksika during the Bull Elk Affair was not his first brush with Niitsitapi resistance. The spring and early summer of 1881 were rife with horse stealing by both Indigenous peoples and Euro-North Americans, though newspapers in Montana placed all the blame on "Canadian Indians." The Kainai (Blood) were just as frustrated with Euro-Americans stealing their horses as Montana settlers were with the Niitsitapi and Nehiyaw taking theirs.[5] Commissioner A.G. Irvine reported general frustration on both sides of the border, given that few horse owners had not lost at least a few animals to thieves. Even the police had been victimized. American bandits made off with a large and valuable herd from the Police Farm near Fort Macleod that year. The police only recovered them with "a great deal of trouble and considerable expense." Irvine complained that while the police did their utmost to see Americans

[5] Dempsey, *The Vengeful Wife*, 173.

reunited with their stolen property, American authorities seldom returned the favour.[6] In this context, Dickens, Sergeant F.W. Spicer, and another NWMP constable escorted a party of Americans to the Blood Reserve in early June 1881 to look for some stolen horses.

Upon arrival, Dickens sought out Red Crow (or Mékaisto) – Head Chief of the Kainai – and urged him to help recover the horses before there was further trouble. But the chief had little control over the young men, who were decidedly uncooperative. Dickens eventually rounded up fourteen horses that the Americans identified as theirs, putting them in a corral for safekeeping. But then Many Spotted Horses – described by Dickens as a minor chief – suddenly arrived on the scene and gave a "violent speech." He called for the Kainai to not give up the horses and denounced the Americans as thieves. Dickens refused to acknowledge the outburst and left briefly to chat with Anglican missionary Samuel Trivett. When he returned, matters had worsened significantly. Another Kainai man named Joe Healy had accused one of the Americans of stealing horses from another Kainai leader, Bull Back Fat, while he had been in the United States, setting the whole camp afoot the previous winter. The robbery had forced his band to walk back to Canada. Ignoring the American's denials, the assembled Kainai started to threaten them, forcing their withdrawal to the corral. Another man named White Cap then called for the seizure of the Americans, leading to a chorus of "howling and yelling." Dickens tried vainly to calm things down, but the Kainai would not listen to him. He ordered the Americans to mount their horses in anticipation of having to make a quick escape. Desperate to stop the advance Dickens mounted his horse and put himself directly between the two sides, causing the Kainai to pause briefly. Simultaneously, Sergeant Spicer – who Dickens complimented for his "coolness and tact" later – called to them from behind that he wanted to talk.[7] Spicer had long experience with the Kainai and may have been married into the tribe.[8] He managed to de-escalate the situation, though Dickens noted they seemed "sulky" afterward. Although the police party

[6] "Annual Report, 1881," 14-16 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.

[7] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 17 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.

[8] Inspector Gilbert E. Sander's diary reveals that Spicer was married to the sister of one of six Kainai men killed in September 1886 by A'aninin (Gros Ventres) and Nakoda (Assiniboine) men from Fort Belknap in an ambush just north of the international boundary line. See Diary of Gilbert E. Sanders, June 3, 1887 (Glenbow Museum and Archives (Glenbow) M1093-40): "About ¼ mile from our camp is the place where the Blood Indians were killed last Autumn. Went & saw it. "Many Mules" one of the Indians with me showed me the leggings belonging to Spicer's brother in law (sic) & the sleeve of his coat."

managed to move the recovered horses without further incident, Dickens thought it best to put as much distance between himself and the Kainai as quickly as possible.[9]

It is significant to note that the police could not recover all the horses the Americans claimed had been stolen, nor were they able to make any arrests. Neither Irvine's report nor the return of criminal cases provides any evidence that the men involved in attempting to obstruct the police – notably Many Spotted Horses, Joe Healy, and White Cap – were charged with any offence. This inaction was unusual considering Dickens and Spicer knew who the offenders were. Additionally, reports of notable incidents in annual reports often included the charges brought against suspects, as well as the result of the trial. These details are conspicuously absent in the present case. Irvine considered the incident to be serious, one that he used to highlight a point in his annual report that the police made every attempt to recover the stolen American property "but not without trouble and personal risk."[10] For this reason, Canadian governmental authorities needed to make a serious effort to impart to American authorities in Montana that they should do the same to recover Canadian property stolen by Americans. That the NWMP at Macleod did not follow up on this case suggests that this was the first incident of its kind, leaving the police momentarily stunned as to how to respond. Indeed, Dickens's letters to his friend Emily Butts in England reveal that Blackfoot Country had previously been peaceful, even dull, for the NWMP. In October 1880, he said, "I am now back at dear old Fort Macleod. I am not clear as to why I was transferred to this relatively peaceful precinct near the Rocky Mountains."[11]

The police endured several more tense encounters with the Niitsitapi during the summer and autumn of that year. Dickens found himself caught in the middle of one in late August. An employee of the Cochrane Ranche Company complained to the police at Fort Calgary that two Siksika men had drawn rifles on him when he tried to recover a horse in their possession, then chased him all the way to the NWMP barracks. Commissioner Irvine despatched Dickens to pursue them, who tracked the suspects back to Blackfoot Crossing. Their arrest attracted the attention of a large crowd of "scowling" Siksika. Many of them levelled rifles at Dickens and his

[9] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 17 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.
[10] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 17 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.
[11] Eric Nicol, ed., *Dickens of the Mounted: The Astounding Long-Lost Letters of Inspector F. Dickens, NWMP, 1874-1886* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1989), 179.

men. Recalling the standoff, the inspector explained to Butts that he had faced two choices: surrender the prisoners or "die in a fusillade of bullets." The fortuitous appearance of Crowfoot – who quickly defused the situation – spared Dickens from having to make a decision. Dickens quipped, "I have my missed my chance to be the first officer of the North-West Mounted Police to be killed in a massacre. *Sie transit gloria mundi*, and Canadian history is cheated of Dickens's Last Stand."[12] Despite Dickens's glibness, where he played on stereotypes about Indigenous peoples' penchant for scalping and referenced Custer's disastrous June 1876 battle at Little Big Horn (or Greasy Grass as the Lakota remember it), he worried about future incidents with the Niitsitapi. He told Butts that the police had come to rely too much on bluffing and feared one day Crowfoot would not be there to slip them "an ace."[13]

In an October 1881 incident, the NWMP had tremendous difficulty getting any cooperation from the Kainai when they tried to recover horses for an American named Albert Harrison. While there was no violence, the Kainai stonewalled police efforts until the latter offered to pay certain Kainai men $5.25 a head to search for the horses. The cost was passed on to Harrison, who demanded to know why Crozier had done such a thing. The officer allegedly replied that "there were more Indians than white men."[14] Harrison was incredulous that the NWMP seemed to have no power to compel the Kainai to cooperate. Judge Macleod also helped matters along when he told several Kainai men implicated in the raid that they would not be punished if they returned the stolen horses. Within a few days, the Kainai rounded up thirty head of stolen horses and handed them over to Harrison.[15] However, few of the horses actually belonged to him, so he turned the horses over to Fort Benton authorities to be reunited with their

[12] A Latin phrase that translates to "Thus passes the glory of the world"; Nicol, *Dickens of the Mounted*, 216-217; "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 24 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*, 24.

[13] Nicol, *Dickens of the Mounted*, 217.

[14] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 16 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.; "The Mounted Police," *Toronto Globe*, December 2, 1881; "Indian Depredations," *Toronto Globe*, May 6, 1882; T.F. Bayard to the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., April 10, 1896 (Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Record Group10-Volume3958-File141049).

[15] Blood Indian Agent James Wilson to A.E. Forget (Indian Commissioner), August 3, 1896 (LAC RG10-V3958-F141049); Blood Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, September 9, 1896 (LAC RG10-V3958-F141,049).

owners.[16] Fifteen years later, Harrison sued the Canadian federal government for $6700 to recoup his losses.[17]

These incidents demonstrate that the NWMP was having difficulties with the Niitsitapi long before the Bull Elk Affair. The development was a stark departure from the warmer relationship that the two sides enjoyed just a few years earlier. The Niitsitapi had worked closely with the police to rid Blackfoot Country of whiskey, which ultimately led to a Niitsitapi leap of faith to sign Treaty 7 – since they saw Macleod as an honest and reliable actor who would work to uphold the agreement. Shortly after a Sioux refugee crisis began in the late-1870s – the consequence of the American army's brutal winter campaign against them in retaliation for Custer's defeat – Crowfoot promised the NWMP two thousand warriors in case the Lakota and their allies ever attacked the police.[18] In January 1880 – even though the Niitsitapi were hungry as the bison disappeared and were receiving only limited famine relief – then Fort Macleod Superintendent William Winder wrote in his annual report that while many rumours were swirling about the possibility of Niitsitapi revolt, "not one instance of hostile feeling against us has been evinced or expressed."[19] But by the end of 1881, the police were having severe incidents involving the Niitsitapi every few months. This state of affairs undoubtedly aroused Crozier's desire to put his foot down in early-1882, given the Niitsitapi were becoming all too willing to resist the police.

The Bull Elk Affair was a dangerous escalation over past incidents. In its wake, Crozier maintained that the only effective way to deal with bad Niitsitapi behaviour was to demonstrate that the police's power was too great for them to defy. The quick arrival of reinforcements from Macleod had purportedly, in Crozier's words, "astonished and awed them," bringing them from a high state of excitement to "rationality."[20] Crozier wanted full compliance from the Siksika

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[16] "The Mounted Police," *Toronto Globe*, December 2, 1882.
[17] T.F. Bayard to the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., April 10, 1896 (LAC RG10-V3958-F141049).
[18] "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1877," 21 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West: Being the Official Report to Parliament of the Activities of the North-West Mounted Police Force, 1874-1881* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973). For an account of the Sioux refugee crisis see David G. McCrady, *Living with Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux and the Canadian-American Borderlands* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).
[19] "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1879," 9 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West: Being the Official Report to Parliament of the Activities of the North-West Mounted Police Force, 1874-1881* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973).
[20] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 56 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.

without question, without hesitation, whenever and wherever it was demanded by any member of the force. In his report about the incident, he wrote, "I certainly had fully determined to resort to extreme measures, if any attempt was made to prevent my carrying out the law in the regular manner."[21] Crozier opted to utilize rank intimidation and, if necessary, force to compel the Niitsitapi to comply. In fairness to Crozier, the Kainai and Siksika had already opted for this approach themselves in their dealings with the police throughout 1881. Crozier's move to a more aggressive policy was a reaction to increasing Niitsitapi intransigence and resistance. When the police overcame it during the Bull Elk Affair by "awing" the Siksika, Crozier became convinced it was the correct way to deal with them in the future. Commissioner Irvine agreed with the "determined steps" taken by Crozier. He too wanted the Niitsitapi to show "strict obedience and respect" to the police, even if it meant having "to resort to the most extreme measures."[22] It was vital to demonstrate to them that the police were determined to carry out the letter of the law and punish any attempt to resist. Irvine was satisfied with the conclusion of the Bull Elk Affair, stating that it "forcibly reminded" the Siksika that "resistance on their part would not be tolerated for a moment, or in any way allowed to interfere with the impartial administration of justice, in the case of Indians and white men alike."[23]

While Crozier and Irvine certainly wanted to take a more hardline approach with the Niitsitapi, they faced a considerable obstacle in doing so: a lack of manpower. Shortly after the Bull Elk Affair, Irvine transferred 30 non-commissioned officers and men from Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills to Fort Macleod (see Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 for the state of NWMP distribution in late-1881).[24] This number was not near enough though, and Irvine petitioned Ottawa to increase the force's total manpower, then capped at 300 men and officers. Irvine had been calling for an increase since 1880, citing that with the bison's disappearance, the police

[21] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 55 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.
[22] "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1882," 8 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels: Being the Official Report to Parliament of the Activities of the North-West Mounted Police Force, 1882-1885* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973).
[23] "Report of the NWMP, 1882," 8 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels.*
[24] "Report of the NWMP, 1882," 8 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels.*

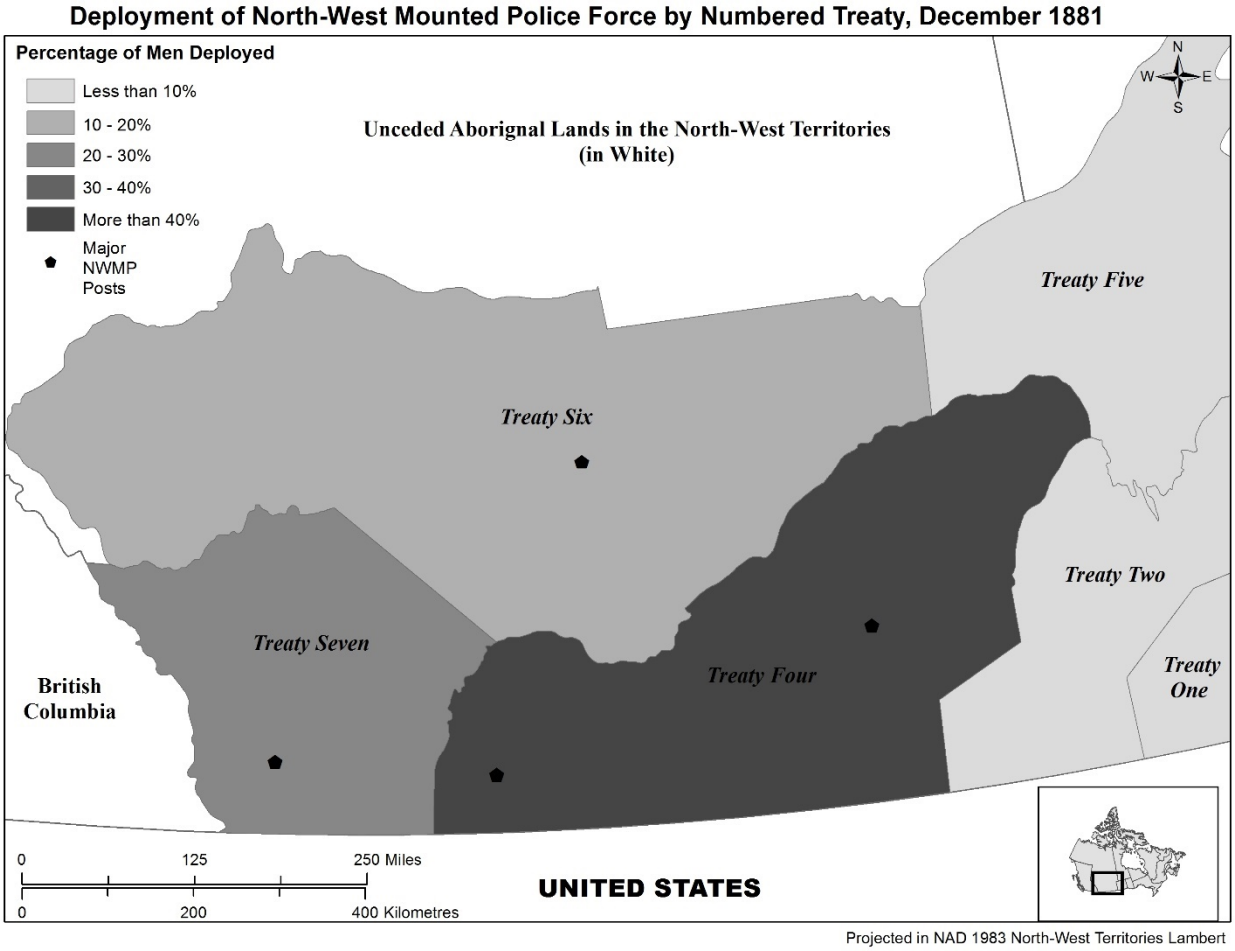

Figure 2.1: Deployment of the North-West Mounted Police Force by Numbered Treaty, December 1881. In late-1881, more police manpower was concentrated in Treaty 4 territory because of the presence of Fort Walsh near the Cypress Hills, where many Indigenous peoples congregated to hunt bison in the United States. It had also been a focal point during the Sioux Refugee Crisis, which was mostly concluded at the end of 1881.

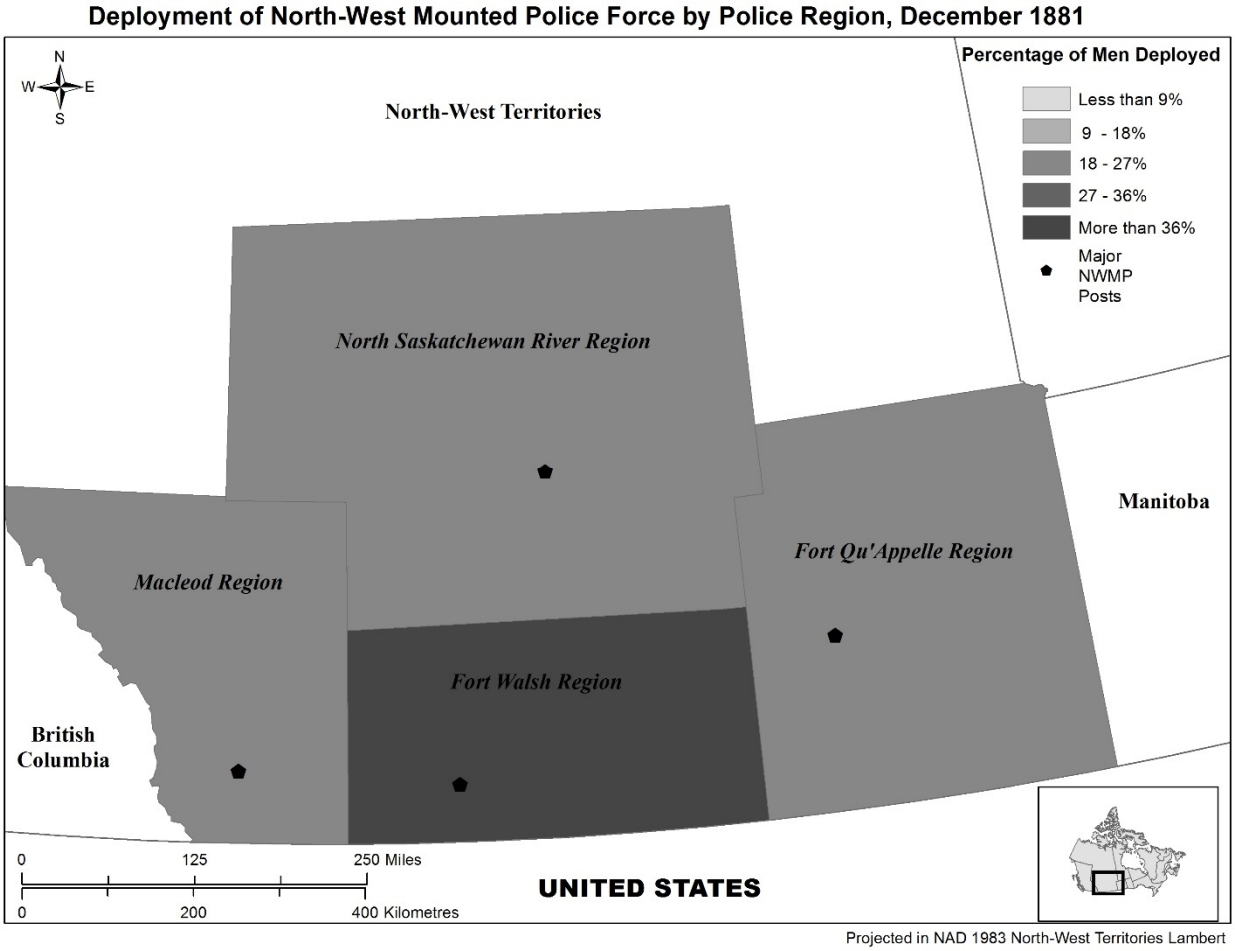

Figure 2.2: Deployment of the North-West Mounted Police Force by Police Region, December 1881. The Fort Walsh region had a high concentration of police manpower for the reasons mentioned above. Other police districts – including the Macleod region occupied by the Niitsitapi – had lower concentrations of manpower. In Commissioner Irvine's 1881 annual report, he asked for more manpower for the Macleod region.

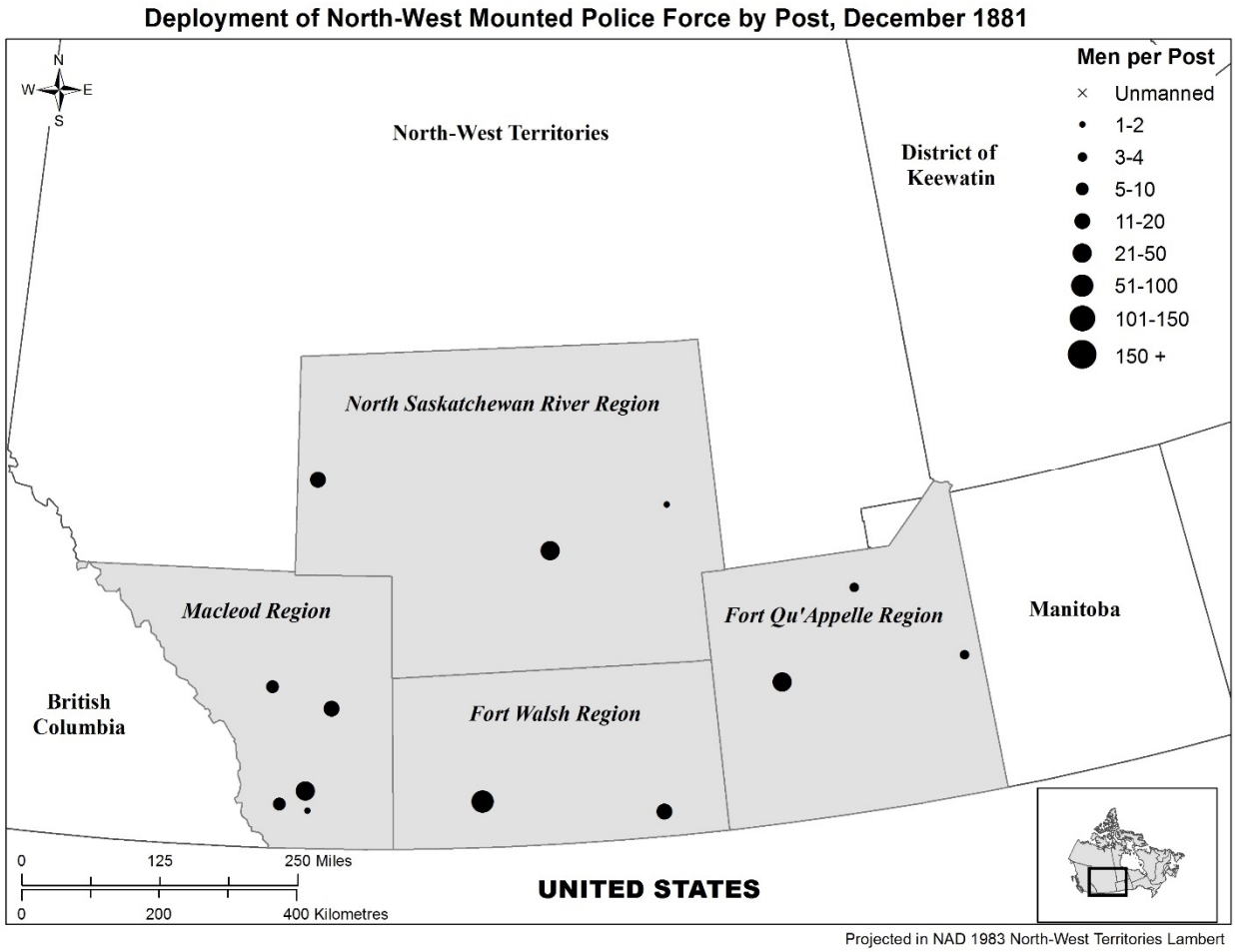

Figure 2.3: Deployment of the North-West Mounted Police Force by Post, December 1881. The NWMP had established more posts in the Macleod region to surveil a greater area because of the dispersion of the Niitsitapi.

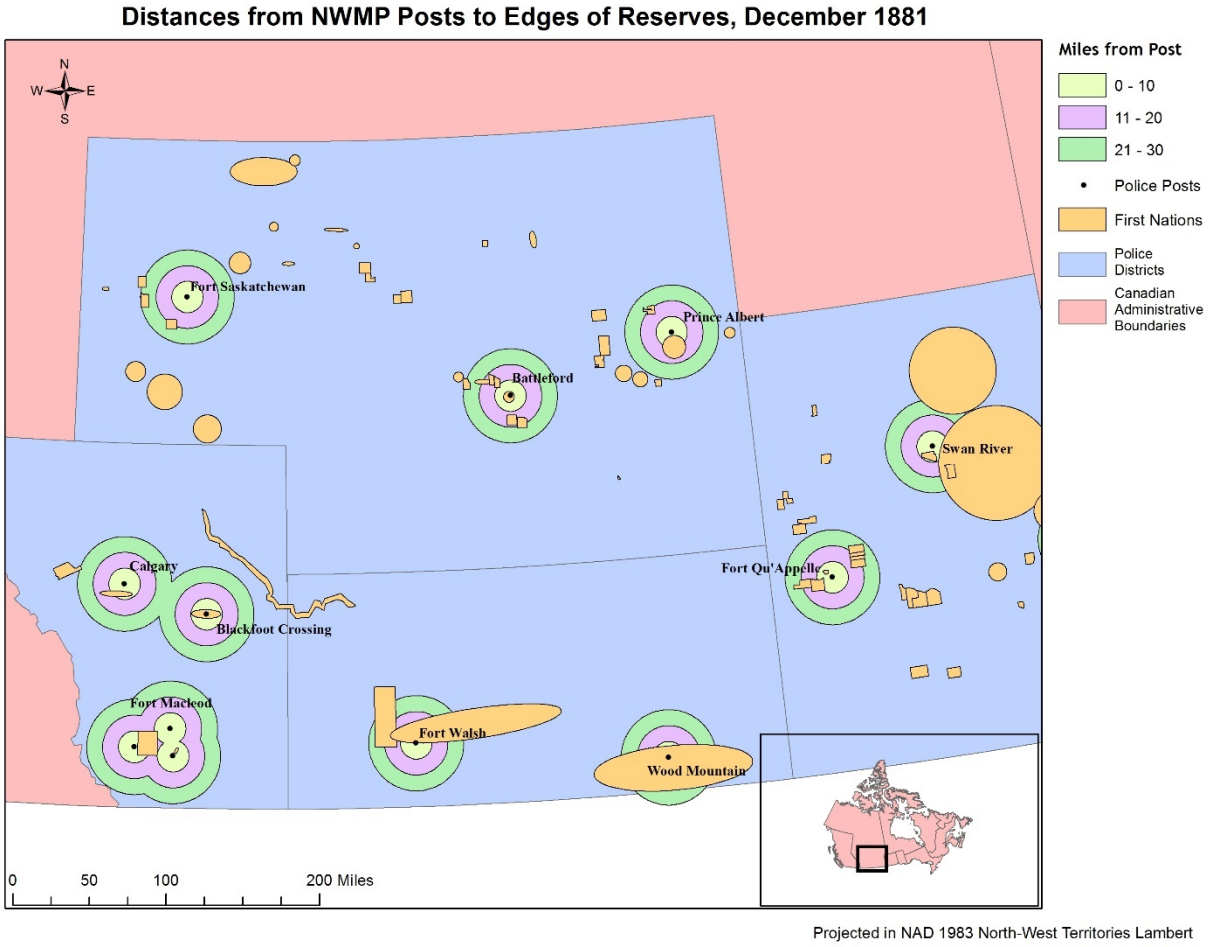

Figure 2.4: Distances from North-West Mounted Police Posts to Edges of Reserves, December 1881. In the Macleod region, police posts were located near concentrations of the Niitsitapi (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, and Tsuu Tina). In what is present-day southern Alberta, the Kainai and Piikani were heavily surveilled (the Kainai reserve had not been surveyed yet).

would soon face a large, starving, dangerous class that required strength to handle.[25] In his 1881 report, Irvine reiterated the danger, stating that the entire Blackfoot Nation had returned to Canadian territory. The commissioner emphasized the volatility of this development by appealing to the Dangerous Blackfoot image, writing:

[25] "North-West Mounted Police Force, Commissioner's Report, 1880," 6 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West: Being the Official Report to Parliament of the Activities of the North-West Mounted Police Force, 1874-1881* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973).

"The Blackfoot nation are composed of the Blackfeet, Bloods, and Piegans, notable wild and warlike, three numerically strong and savage tribes, forming the most powerful Indian nation in the North-West Territory…these Indians have led a lawless and roving life, that they have been accustomed from infancy to regard other men's cattle and horses as fair plunder, and that the habits of a lifetime are not easy to unlearn."[26]

The commissioner feared hunger would exacerbate the Niitsitapi's undesirable traits. In early 1882, Irvine leveraged the Bull Elk Affair and other documented instances of Niitsitapi resistance to appeal for more men again. In late March, Prime Minister John A Macdonald asserted in a parliamentary debate, over whether to increase the size of the force, that Irvine had continuously declared that the NWMP was not large enough to perform all its duties. On more than one occasion, there had been a "great hazard" of a collision between the police and large forces of hungry and disgruntled Indigenous peoples. Macdonald then read from a November 1881 *Globe* article to accentuate his point: "It is known that while there has been no actual outbreak…I regret to say, on two or three occasions, the forces of Indians were so overwhelming and their conduct so threatening, to the handful of police, that, *ex necessitate*, they were obliged to yield to the demands, sometimes [made] insolently and arrogantly."[27] The time when three or four troopers could bluff or dazzle large bands of Kainai, Piikani (Peigan), and Siksika men with stern words and posture was over. The force had to be at least doubled to avert an outbreak in Blackfoot Country – and to deal with increased instances of horse stealing and cattle-killing that had begun in "some quarters."[28]

When the issue of NWMP manpower reached the Canadian Senate two months later, Senator Sir Alexander Campbell – the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General – spoke in a similar vein. He read the very same *Globe* article nearly word-for-word, proclaiming the newspaper's correspondents were well informed on such matters.[29] Campbell argued that the incidents between the police and the Niitsitapi proved that the latter were in a restive state and the only way to prevent a further slide into chaos was to increase the size of the force from 300 to 500 men. Campbell maintained it was "the best way of preventing an uprising, which, if it

[26] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 11-12 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.
[27] Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 24 March 1882 (John A. Macdonald), 542.
[28] Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 24 March 1882 (John A. Macdonald), 542.
[29] Canada, *Debates of the Senate*, 5 May 1882 (Alexander Campbell), 605.

took place, would entail consequences of a disastrous nature to the country. The beginning of an Indian war might be a serious affair; no one knows how far it might go or what the cost of it might be."[30] Conservative Senator Robert Read echoed Campbell's concerns, reading into the record another *Globe* article from April 1882 that expressly referenced the Bull Elk Affair. It emphasized the danger that the police had been in:

"Had it not been for the presence here of an efficient officer of the time of the recent disturbance with the Blackfeet at the crossing [sic], it is very probable that most serious trouble, and possibly a massacre might have been the consequence… The least sign of fear on the part of the police would have been certain death, the calm determined spirit that was shown by Crozier and his men was the only thing that saved the peace."[31]

The Liberals only offered token resistance, meekly pointing out that the force's cost was still very high. But the bill passed, and by the end of the year, fifty new policemen were on their way west. It is clear from police reports and parliamentary debates that recent encounters with the Niitsitapi had raised concerns about a prospective uprising among Indigenous peoples; this fear was responsible for the increase of NWMP manpower.

Tensions between the police and the Kainai escalated in 1882 and did so until the end of 1884. The source of Kainai frustration was the police's inability to recover stolen horses, which they interpreted as a NWMP failure to fulfill promises made before and during the signing of Treaty 7. Niitsitapi oral tradition reveals that Niitsitapi saw the police as interlopers when they first arrived in Blackfoot Country in late 1874. Niitsitapi leaders told them they could stay for the winter but had to return to the east come spring.[32] Of course, the police did not do so, but the Niitsitapi accepted police defiance because the imposition of Canadian law and order was initially beneficial with the suppression of the American whiskey trade.[33] In subsequent years,

[30] Canada, *Debates of the Senate*, 5 May 1882 (Alexander Campbell), 606.
[31] Canada, *Debates of the Senate*, 5 May 1882 (Robert Read), 607.
[32] Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, Dorothy First Rider, and Sarah Carter, *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 9, 50, 135; The Blackfoot Gallery Committee, *Niitsitapiisinni: The Story of the Blackfoot People* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2001), 61.
[33] Mary Joan Mayfield, "The Interlude: The North-West Mounted Police and the Blackfoot Peoples" *in The Mounted Police and Prairie Society, 1873-1919*, William Baker, ed. (Regina: University of Regina Press, 1998)17-40; for the impact of the whiskey trade and appreciation among the Niitsitapi for doing so see Treaty 7 Elders et al, *True Spirit of Treaty 7*, 111, 290 and Hugh A. Dempsey, *Firewater: The Impact of the Whisky Trade on the Blackfoot Nation*, (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 2002), 220, 225. For a story about some of chaos engendered by the whiskey trade – written with input from the Niitsitapi community – see "The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt" in Hugh A.

NWMP officials repeatedly told the Niitsitapi that the police were there to ensure that all of the Queen's subjects, whether "white or red," received justice when wronged. Lieutenant-Governor David Laird maintained this rhetoric during Treaty 7 negotiations in September 1877, proclaiming in front of the hundreds of Niitsitapi present that "The Great Mother loves all her children, white and red man alike; she wishes to do them good. The bad white man and the bad Indian she alone does not love, and them she punishes for their wickedness."[34] For a culture steeped in orality, Laird's speech held the weight of a promise.[35] Treaties were sacred contracts that implied continuing diplomatic and economic relations with outsiders, carrying mutual obligations and benefits.[36] The Niitsitapi reluctantly accepted that the police would seize the horses they stole and arrest the thieves, provided horses stolen from them were recovered and returned as well. Given their experience with the American government and treaties – where delivery of annuities owed to them by the 1855 Lame Bull Treaty was intermittent while two agreements in the 1860s went completely unfulfilled before a drastic and unilateral reduction of the Blackfeet Reservation in 1873 – the Niitsitapi were wary of Canada would break their promises as well.[37] When the NWMP demonstrated that they were relatively powerless to recover stolen horses, especially in cases of cross-border theft, the obligation to turn over stolen

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Dempsey, *The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories: Three Hundred Years of Blackfoot History* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1994), 47-58.

[34] Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, & Co., Publishers, 1880; reprint, Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1979), 267.

[35] Jean Friesen, "Magnificent Gifts: The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of the North-West" *in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series V*, 1 (1986), 44.

[36] Friesen, "Magnificent Gifts", 44, 51. See also J.R. Miller's *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) for a comprehensive examination of the types of treaties Europeans negotiated with Indigenous peoples in North America from the seventeenth century onwards and how the latter interpreted such agreements.

[37] Since the Niitsitapi were a cross-border people, they travelled freely across the northwestern plains, disregarding Euro-North American imposed boundaries. In the early 1850s, the American government wanted to build a railroad through Niitsitapi territory and needed their assurances of peace, between both their Indigenous neighbours and white settlers. By 1855, the Americans decided to build the railroad further south, but Washington Governor Isaac I. Stevens still wanted to secure a peace treaty. For $20,000 a year in annuities, the Niitsitapi (mainly the Kainai and Piikani) promised to keep the peace with other Indigenous plains and mountain peoples, allow passage through their lands, and share a large common hunting ground for a period of ten years. In both 1865 and 1868, representatives of the American government negotiated agreements to extend the treaty, but they were not ratified by Congress, leaving the Niitsitapi angry and confused when annuities were not distributed as expected. In 1871, the American government abandoned the practice of treaty making altogether and in 1873 the Grant administration unilaterally reduced the Blackfeet Reservation and abolished the common hunting ground through executive order. See Hugh A. Dempsey*, The Great Blackfoot Treaties* (Victoria: Heritage House, 2015), 31-53. Also John C. Ewers*, Ethnological Report on the Blackfeet and Gros Ventres Tribes of Indians, Commission Findings* (New York: Garland, 1974).

horses grated on the Niitsitapi, especially the young men. In the early 1880s, the possession of horses was still vital to accruing wealth and a reputation for bravery, a mark of masculinity within Niitsitapi society.[38] It was unacceptable that the police could not recover the much-beloved animals, driving restiveness and a willingness among the Niitsitapi to take the law into their own hands. The appearance of a large and heavily-armed Kainai force at the gates of Fort Walsh in June 1882 aptly demonstrates this disposition.

While the Kainai often complained about Euro-American horse thieves, Nehiyaw (Cree) and Nakoda (Assiniboine) raiders were also a threat to their horse herds. In late 1880, Superintendent Crozier feared a "serious collision" between Canadian Indigenous peoples because they were raiding horses from each other to an "immense extent."[39] During the summer of 1881, police authorities noted that raiding between the Nehiyaw and Niitsitapi was prolific, sparking many altercations and quarrels at Fort Walsh.[40] Over the winter of 1881-82, the Nehiyaw and Nakoda continued raiding and did so into the spring. That the theft of horses was extremely significant to the Kainai can be illustrated by the 1882 entry into Bad Head's (Father-Of-Many-Children) winter count, which read "Red Crow – when he was robbed."[41] Winter counts record the most important and defining event of the year; in 1882, the big story was Nehiyaw raids on the Kainai.[42] Their patience ended in May after a Nehiyaw or Nakoda party stole forty Kainai horses near the Belly River and then escaped to the Cypress Hills.[43]

After receiving letters of introduction from their Indian Agent, Cecil Denny, 200 Kainai men collected their Winchester repeating rifles – superior to any firearm possessed by the

[38] On the topic of horses and their importance to the accumulation of wealth and the building of personal reputation in Niitsitapi society, see Christopher Marsh, "The Last of the Horse Wars: Intertribal, Cross-Border Warfare in Southern Alberta and Northern Montana Territory, 1878-1893" (Master's Thesis: University of Calgary, 2012), 30-53.

[39] "Report of Superintendent L.N.F. Crozier, 1880," 30-31, 33 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West, Being the Official Reports to Parliament of the Activities of the Royal North-West Mounted Police from 1874-1881* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973).

[40] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 23-24 in in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.

[41] Adolf Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People, A Division of the Blackfoot Confederacy: An Illustrated Inter Interpretation of the Old Ways* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1977), 199.

[42] Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 196. See also Hugh A. Dempsey, *A Blackfoot Winter Count*, Occasional Paper No. 1 (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1970).

[43] "Report of the NWMP, 1882," 11 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*; Napistsetoma's (White-Man-Running-Around) Statement to Annie McGowan, N.D. (Glenbow M8764).

NWMP – their horses, and plenty of ammunition, then set off to Fort Walsh. [44] Upon their May 29 arrival, they complained to Commissioner Irvine that the Nehiyaw had been stealing their horses all winter and they intended to go "the Lake" east of Walsh to get them back. Fearful that violence would erupt, Irvine told them that he would send an officer and a party of police to accompany a few Kainai representatives who would speak with the Nehiyaw.[45] The Kainai agreed, but the "police party" that Irvine promised was – according to Napistsetoma (or White-Man-Running-Around) – only two men: Inspector Frechette and one other constable.[46] When the party arrived at "the Lake," the Kainai representatives offered tobacco to signify their desire for peace, which the Nehiyaw contemptuously threw into a fire; then they verbally insulted the Kainai diplomats.[47] Frechette stepped in to salvage the situation and somehow managed to convince the Nehiyaw to return the horses. However, they only produced three. The latest raid had seen the Kainai lose forty alone. In a follow-up meeting with Irvine, the Kainai were "much disappointed," sullenly grumbling that the Nehiyaw had held some back, a notion Irvine tried to dissuade them of.[48] Although Irvine painted a picture of civility in his dealings with the Kainai leaders, a correspondent for the *Globe* described the meeting as "stormy" and suggested it was borderline explosive. In the newspaper's version, the Kainai accused a Métis police interpreter named La Vallee of helping the Nehiyaw hide their ponies and protecting the thieves' identities. They called him a son of a bitch and threatened to kill him.[49] Given what happened next, the *Globe*'s version of events might have been more accurate.

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[44] Sir John A. Macdonald admitted this during a March 1882 debate, "The truth is, our men are unevenly matched with the Indians in this respect. There are very few Winchester rifles owned by the force, while the western Indians are armed with these rifles which they obtain in the United States, and have besides, plenty of ammunition. Our men with the Snider carbine are therefore, not on equality with them." Macdonald then floated the idea of exchanging these Winchester rifles for fowling pieces. See Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 24 March 1882 (John A, Macdonald), 543.

[45] "Report of the NWMP, 1882," 11 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.

[46] Napistsetoma's (White-Man-Running-Around) Statement to Annie McGowan, N.D. (Glenbow M8764). Although Irvine reports that Inspector Frechette was the accompanying officer, Acting Indian Agent J.H. McIllree reported to the Indian Department that it was one Inspector Norman, see J.H. McIllree to the Indian Commissioner, June 21, 1882 (LAC RG10-V3604-F2589).

[47] J.H. McIllree to the Indian Commissioner, June 21, 1882 (LAC RG10-V3604-F2589).

[48] "Report of the NWMP, 1882," 11 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.

[49] The Globe article was later reprinted in the Manitoba Free Press: "Rampant Redskins: How They Amuse Themselves in the North-West*," Manitoba Daily Free Press*, September 4, 1882. The newspaper actually said, "son of a _____" and I have made a guess as to what profanity was used for the sake of narrative.

Late in the evening on May 30, the headmen left Irvine's office and returned to their camp. Napistsetoma recalled that the Kainai went into council to discuss what to do next. Although he gives no details about the discussion, the Kainai must have surely chaffed at the lack of effort the police had put into the recovery, especially compared to the time and energy devoted to American settlers back on their reserve. The police at Macleod had spent days labouring on American behalf, while Frechette and Irvine barely worked one afternoon. As such, the Kainai resolved to go to war that very night.[50] If the police were not going to punish the Nehiyaw, the Kainai would have to do it themselves. At around 2 AM on May 31, the Kainai began singing war songs, then marched to a nearby small camp where they expected to find the Nehiyaw. As they approached, they fired volley after volley into the tipis with their Winchesters, then closed in and started ripping open the flaps of the lodges. Fortunately for the camp's inhabitants, they had – depending on the account given – abandoned the camp earlier in the evening or had fled when the Kainai began to vocalize. However, there was one nearly blind old man found in one of the tipis. He was murdered, shot and stabbed multiple times. The Kainai took his scalp before they left. Others looted the Nehiyaw camp; what they could not take was destroyed. When it was all done, the Kainai mounted their horses and rode off into the darkness towards Macleod, firing their rifles into the air and yodelling as they went.[51]

In the aftermath, the *Globe* reported that Irvine sent a large police force to arrest the Kainai.[52] However, Irvine does not appear to have done anything of the sort. It is certainly not mentioned in his report. In his concluding remarks about the incident, Irvine only mentions the importance of preventing such incidents in the future by not allowing Indigenous peoples to leave their reserves in such large numbers.[53] There is no evidence in the returns of crimes for 1882 or any subsequent year that suggests any of the perpetrators were prosecuted for what happened at Fort Walsh. And if the Kainai were concerned about reprisals from the police stationed in the Cypress Hills, they certainly did not act like it. Acting Indian Agent at Fort

[50] Napistsetoma's (White-Man-Running-Around) Statement to Annie McGowan, N.D. (Glenbow M8764).
[51] "Report of the NWMP, 1882," 11 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*; Napistsetoma's (White-Man-Running-Around) Statement to Annie McGowan, N.D. (Glenbow M8764) verifies many of the major details given by Commissioner Irvine.
[52] "Rampant Redskins: How They Amuse Themselves in the North-West*," Manitoba Daily Free Press*, September 4, 1882.
[53] "Report of the NWMP, 1882," 11 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.

Walsh, J.H. McIllree, reported that in the wake of the incident, the Kainai had declared "open war" on all the Nehiyaw and "half-breeds" of the region. The hills seemed infested with Kainai warriors as McIllree regularly received reports of war parties.[54] At the time, the police were doing all they could – at the behest of the Indian Department – to convince the Nehiyaw and Nakoda residing in the vicinity of Fort Walsh to move to reserves further north. The Canadian government feared a concentration of Indigenous peoples in the region that would have been difficult to control and would have strengthened their resolve to press for a more generous Treaty 6.[55] Although they had been resistant to moving – even after the Indian Department reduced and then refused to issue rations – Kainai aggression prompted some bands to leave. While Nehiyaw chief Piapot reacted by camping closer to the fort, Nakoda chiefs Bear Head and Poor Man, representing approximately 500 followers, finally decided to make for Qu'Appelle and Battleford. But as they approached the Red Deer River in late June, Kainai raiders made a bold dash on the column and stole thirty-one horses.[56] Soon after, Piapot decided to make for Qu'Appelle too, and Irvine assigned a strong NWMP escort to protect them. Other chiefs who had consistently proven to be a thorn in the side of the Canadian federal government – notably Big Bear, Lone Pine, and Lucky Man – decided to cross the border into the United States to hunt bison. Irvine credited these developments to him refusing to offer them any rations if they remained in the neighbourhood.[57] The commissioner gloated that "perfectly enacted" government policy – which essentially amounted to starving out Indigenous peoples who refused to cooperate – was responsible for finally making Fort Walsh "Indian-free." However, it is abundantly clear that the Kainai war effort played a part in this development. The police could do little to rein in the Kainai who stalked the Cypress Hills, a trend that continued for years.

Unfortunately, the Kainai's aggression against the Nehiyaw and Nakoda prompted retaliation. Correspondence between the NWMP and the American garrison of Fort Assiniboine in northwestern Montana shows a significant intensification of Indigenous horse raiding in April

[54] J.H. McIllree to the Indian Commissioner, June 21, 1882 (LAC RG10-V3604-F2589).
[55] John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1979-1885" *Canadian Historical Review* 64, No. 1 (1983): 528, 530-531.
[56] J.H. McIllree to the Indian Commissioner, June 21, 1882 (LAC RG10-V3604-F2589).
[57] "Report of the NWMP, 1882," 4 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.

1883, which drew in the South Piikani from the Blackfoot Agency.[58] In August, Canadian Nakoda raiders stole some sixty horses from the Kainai, half of them belonging to Red Crow. The thieves escaped towards the Cypress Hills before turning south towards the Fort Belknap Agency on the Milk River. They distributed the horses as gifts to relatives before Indian Agent W.L. Lincoln discovered what was happening and seized twenty of the animals.[59] In the meantime, Nehiyaw and Nakoda bands had re-congregated in the Cypress Hills, where they were once again targets for Kainai and South Piikani raiders. In late August, Superintendent A. Shurtleff at Maple Creek – the post that succeeded Fort Walsh after it was dismantled in the spring of 1883 – told Irvine, "There is more horse stealing going on now than I have ever known before and horses are stolen from this vicinity nearly every night."[60] The Nehiyaw continued to respond in kind. In late summer, Kainai chiefs Blackfoot Old Woman and Bull Shield were camped in Seven Person's Coulee, south-west of Medicine Hat, when they discovered a Nehiyaw raiding party. They surprised the raiders, stripped them of their blankets, and ordered them to go home.[61] Just a couple of weeks later, raiders hit the Kainai twice in rapid succession, again victimizing Red Crow but also White Calf, who had the second-largest following on the reserve. On September 9, Denny issued thirty-five lbs. of beef to Red Crow and his men so they could follow the raiders and try to recover the stock.[62] Affairs continued in this vein during the spring of the following year, with the Nehiyaw extending their raids to Blackfeet Agency in northwestern Montana.[63]

By May 1884, the Kainai were frustrated with the inadequate police response to their stolen horses. Superintendent J.H. McIllree – still stationed near the Cypress Hills – reported the

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[58] Lieutenant-Colonel Guido Ilges to Major A.H. Shurtleff, Commanding Fort Macleod, April 16, 1883 (LAC RG18-V1007-F340); Lieutenant-Colonel Guido Ilges to Commanding Officer Fort Walsh, N.W. Territory, April 21, 1883, Fort Assiniboine (LAC RG18-V1007-F340); Superintendent A. Shurtleff to Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine, Commissioner NWM Police, Regina, April 22, 1883 (RG18-V1007-F340).

[59] "Town Notes," *Macleod Gazette*, August 14, 1883; Fort Belknap Indian Agent W.L. Lincoln to Major of the 18th Infantry, Fort Assiniboine, August 16, 1883 (National Archives and Record Administration- Denver, CO (NARAD) 8NS-075-96-440, Box 1).

[60] Superintendent A. Shurtleff to Commissioner Irvine, August 25, 1883 (LAC RG18-V1007-F502).

[61] "Blood Reserve," *Macleod Gazette*, August 24, 1883.

[62] List of Orders of Issued to Destitute Indians at Fort Macleod for the Month Ending September 30, 1883 (LAC RG10-V1550).

[63] Blackfeet Indian Agent R.A. Allen to Captain Cotton, Commanding NWM Police, Fort Macleod, NWT, April 29, 1884 (LAC RG18-V1016-F1274); Sergeant James Percy to Superintendent Cotton, Commanding NWMP Fort Macleod, May 13, 1884, (LAC RG18-V1016-F1274); Superintendent John Cotton to Commissioner Irvine, May 27, 1884, (LAC RG18-V1016-F1274).

Kainai had complained to him that the Nehiyaw were stealing their horses, and they intended to deal with it themselves. On May 25, a party of between fifteen and twenty Kainai (Blood) men appeared at the door of Corporal Walter Stanley Jones of Hay Creek, about six miles from Maple Creek. After affirming that Jones was a policeman (on leave at the time) through plains sign language, the Kainai told him that they had come from Macleod to fight the Nehiyaw (Cree) for stealing their horses. They intended to attack them when they were sleeping and wanted to know where they were. Jones told them the Nehiyaw were far away to dissuade the Kainai party. Before they left, they told Jones that if he or any other policemen tried to arrest them, they would be shot.[64] Because of the threat to the Nehiyaw, McIllree sent out all the men he could muster to bring in the headman Front Man and his band to the post for protection. McIllree pleaded for more men, pointing out that horse raiding and cattle-killing were so widespread that he could not provide adequate protection for the settlers scattered all over that section of the country. By the end of October, the Kainai had stolen dozens of horses and allegedly murdered two settlers.[65] Wolf Pawing and Man Eating were the only Kainai charged and convicted in connection with the disorder in the Maple Creek District throughout 1884, despite some grave crimes. The police were unable to contain, catch, or punish them. The *Macleod Gazette* complained the police treated the Kainai far too leniently. Horses had been repeatedly stolen and found in the Kainai's possession, but "still the Indians go unpunished for crimes that would give a white man five or ten years in the penitentiary."[66]

Despite the complaints, at least some settlers' horses were being recovered and returned; the same could not be said for Kainai livestock. The only hint in the police record that the Kainai recovered any of their horses in 1883 and 1884 occurred in August 1883, when the Fort Belknap Indian Agent seized stolen horses brought in by Canadian Nakoda and turned them over to the U.S. Army at Fort Assiniboine. They were in turn given to the police at Maple Creek in late

[64] Statement of Corporal Walter Stanley Jones, June 1, 1884 (LAC RG18-V1016-F1326).
[65] Superintendent J.H. McIllree to Commissioner Irvine, May 26, 1884 (LAC RG18-V1016-F1252); Superintendent J.H. McIllree to Commissioner Irvine, May 29, 1884 (LAC RG18-V1016-F1326); Sergeant D. Paterson to Commissioner NWMP, June 2, 1884 (RG18-V1016-F1326); "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1884," 11-12 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels: Being the Official Report to Parliament of the Activities of the North West Mounted Police Force, 1882-1885* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973).
[66] "The Red Deer Raid," *Macleod Gazette*, November 7, 1884.

August.[67] For both years, Irvine made an extensive recounting of instances of horse stealing but did not mention any Kainai horses being recovered, although there were instances in which Nehiyaw or Nakoda stock was.[68] In fact, Irvine did not acknowledge that the theft of horses from the Kainai was even a problem, even though local NWMP records and newspapers illustrate the Kainai were consistently raided by the Nehiyaw and Nakoda. In his 1884 report, Irvine admitted that horse raiding was prevalent in the Territories, but it was difficult to recover animals because of the border's proximity. American authorities were not forthcoming in offering assistance.[69] Although it was not necessarily the NWMP's fault that Kainai horses could not be recovered – Nehiyaw and Nakoda raiders used the border to escape the police just as the Kainai sometimes did – it must have been tremendously annoying that the police took horses from them while their horses remained lost. In the wake of the Cypress Hills incident in 1882, the Kainai complained to the Blood Indian Agent Cecil. E Denny, "How is it we have to give up horses stolen while we cannot recover ours from the Cree?" Denny pointed out that as long as the situation existed, it would be difficult to stop the Kainai from retaliating.[70] In their purview, it did not look like the white and red man were the equal beneficiaries of the Queen's justice, which contradicted the spirit of Treaty 7. This animated the younger men to take the law into their own hands and strike back at Nehiyaw and Nakoda communities.

While the Kainai were the most consistent source of trouble for the police, there were other flare-ups in Blackfoot Country in 1883 and 1884 that reminded the latter that the threat of a serious collision was always present. In mid-May 1883, a farm instructor on the Sarcee Reserve complained to the NWMP at Fort Calgary that a Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) man named Crow Collar had entered the ration house and broken the scales, along with some other articles. Superintendent McIllree sent a sergeant to arrest him, but the Tsuu T'ina chief, Bull Head (or Chula or Stamixo'tokan) refused to give him up. The chief sent word back to McIllree that the

[67] Captain Jacob Kline to Superintendent, Mounted Police, Maple Creek, N.W. Territory, August 20, 1883 (LAC RG18-V1008-F502).

[68] "Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1883," 16-19 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*: *Being the Official Report to Parliament of the Activities of the North West Mounted Police Force, 1882-1885* (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1973).and "Report of the NWMP, 1884," 14-19 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.

[69] "Report of the NWMP, 1884," 16-17 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.

[70] Indian Agent C.E. Denny to the Right Honourable, the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs in Canada. Department of Indian Affairs, *Sessional Paper No. 5, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December 1882* (Ottawa, 1883), 177.

superintendent might send all the men he pleased, but they would not arrest Crow Collar. When McIllree went out leading a stronger party, he faced a similar situation that Dickens had with Bull Elk. Unable to convince Bull Head to relent, McIllree tried to arrest the Tsuu T'ina chief. It sparked violent resistance, with Bull Head drawing his rifle and levelling it at McIllree. He then called out to the Soldier's Lodge to help him. Many younger men were quickly on the scene, drawing bows and guns on the police. Some women even participated in the obstruction, grabbing at the police's rain cloaks to hinder their movement. Fearing that there would be bloodshed if he persisted, McIllree ordered his men to withdraw to the farm instructor's house. He sent word back to Calgary to send out as many men as possible the following morning. With the arrival of reinforcements, McIllree stormed the Soldiers' and Bull Head's lodges. But they were not there, having fled the previous night.[71] The police searched the camp and eventually found Crow Collar. Bull Head surrendered the next day at Fort Calgary. McIllree "put him in a cell" and kept him there for a couple of days. When the chief appeared before him, McIllree lectured Bull Head on the "very wrong manner" in which he had behaved, then released him after a promise to act better in the future.[72] McIllree left a detachment of police on the reserve to watch over the Tsuu T'ina.

McIllree blamed the trouble on certain Tsuu T'ina men being held in Fort Calgary's guardhouse too long without trial. McIllree wrote, "They are beginning to believe in this section that no one is ever coming to try them and rather than go to the guard room for an offence committed, they will resist and create a disturbance."[73] These long periods of incarceration resulted from the police not extending bail to the Niitsitapi and Tsuu T'ina as they did with Euro-Canadian settlers. This fact did not actually come to light until 1887, when the Siksika (Blackfoot) became furious over a shooting incident where Siksika men and white settlers exchanged fire over an alleged housebreaking incident. A man named Thompson fired a shot that initially wounded The-Man-That-Shakes (or Trembling Man), who died a short time later. Another Siksika man called The Meat fired his weapon at Tucker Peach, Thompson's companion, wounding him in the arm. Police arrested both Thompson and The Meat, but Thompson was released shortly after, even though his victim had died. The Meat remained in jail

[71] Superintendent J.H. McIllree to Commissioner Irvine, May 18, 1883 (LAC RG18-V1007-F399).
[72] "Report of the NWMP, 1883," 15 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.
[73] Superintendent J.H. McIllree to Commissioner Irvine, May 18, 1883 (LAC RG18-V1007-F399).

despite Peach being alive and on the mend. Compounding the situation further was that another man named Lloyd had also been released on bail after he beat and shot at a Siksika boy at Gleichen. The Siksika were outraged and officials in the Indian Department requested that the police explain the concept of bail to Crowfoot to de-escalate matters. Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer recounted his effort to do so:

"Thompson and Lloyd were out on bail: this rather perplexed the Indians who did not understand the law particularly as the Indian 'The Meat' who had shot Peach in the Thompson affair was in our Guard Room, a close prisoner. I explained to Crowfoot the meaning of bail and that his Indian 'The Meat' could claim bail if he wished."[74]

In their ten years in Blackfoot Country, the NWMP had never explained the concept of bail to the Niitsitapi, which casts doubt as to whether British law was being applied as equally as other police historians have claimed. While it is difficult to determine how long the Tsuu T'ina were being held in the guardhouse before trial, in 1884, the *Macleod Gazette* revealed that a man named Hair Face was sentenced to six months after being convicted for cattle-killing. However, he had already spent seven months in the guardhouse waiting for his day in court![75] If Hair Face's experience represents what Tsuu T'ina men routinely endured, it is easy to see why Bull Head was so stubborn when the police came to arrest Crow Collar.

Seven months later, the NWMP at Fort Calgary had another run-in with the Siksika in which members of the force were "roughly treated." On January 13, 1884, Superintendent Samuel Steele sent a sergeant, a constable, and the post interpreter to arrest a Siksika man accused of horse stealing. They found and arrested the suspect easily enough, but as they brought the prisoner towards a wagon, some seventy to eighty Siksika crowded around them. Some tried to pull the prisoner away, others jostled and pushed at the police, while still others shouted threats. Steele reported, "they did everything they could to intimidate the non-com officer and the constable making the arrest but without effect."[76] When the police finally succeeded in

[74] Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner, October 28, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887). See also L. Vankoughnet to Indian Commissioner E. Dewdney, September 21, 1887 (RG10-V3787-F42389) and Indian Commissioner E. Dewdney to the Right Honorable the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, September 12, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3787-F42389).
[75] "Criminal Court," *Macleod Gazette*, September 19, 1884; See also "Report of the NWMP, 1884," 50 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*, which verifies the newspaper article.
[76] Inspector S.B. Steele to Officer Commanding NWMP, Regina, February 12, 1884 (LAC RG18-V1013-F937).

getting the suspected thief into the wagon, White Cap – described as "the head soldier of the Blackfeet" – grabbed the horse by the bridle, holding it fast. White Cap refused to let them leave until the farm instructor issued extra rations. The sergeant refused and after further parley, White Cap relented, allowing the police to take their prisoner back to Fort Calgary. Hearing about the obstruction, Steele decided that he had "to make an example of some of these Indians." He led twenty policemen back to the reserve to arrest White Cap and the other ring leaders. Steele gave a speech to the assembled Siksika, imploring them to give up the troublemakers, but White Cap was already gone. The police later arrested him in Calgary. They could only find one other man – Red Meat – who was recognizable for obstructing the police.[77]

This incident can partially be traced to Siksika dissatisfaction with how the Canadian government had carried out its treaty promises. White Cap promised to stop interfering if the police ordered the Indian Department employees to issue them extra rations, suggesting he was upset with the food aid received. If not for this provocation, White Cap and the others might not have interfered at all. Although the text of Treaty 7 did not specifically promise rations to the Niitsitapi, Lieutenant-Governor David Laird implied before hundreds of assembled Niitsitapi men, women, and children that the government would feed them. Laird couched his entire speech in the language of kinship, representing the Queen – and by extension, the Canadian State – as a nurturing provider. Laird declared, "The Great Spirit has made the white man and the red man brothers, and we should take each other by the hand. The Great Mother loves all her children, white man and red man alike; she wishes to do them all good."[78] Surely, a loving mother who wished good on all her children would not allow them to starve. Laird gave the impression that the government would not let them starve either by speaking to government plans to protect the bison as a food source for years to come.[79] He also explicitly stated that cattle and potatoes would be provided to them, a reference to the terms of the proposed treaty that promised seed and livestock to families to facilitate agricultural development on Niitsitapi reserves. But this condition was sandwiched between promises of annuity money and a yearly allowance of ammunition, so the promise of cattle and potatoes was interpreted as a promise to

[77] Inspector S.B. Steele to Officer Commanding NWMP, Regina, February 12, 1884 (LAC RG18-V1013-F937).
[78] Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 267.
[79] For a breakdown of these conservation efforts see Bill Waiser, "A Legislator's View of the Bison's Collapse: The 1877 North-West Territories Bison Protection Ordinance" in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History* Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser, eds. (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 2016), 245-262.

provide rations regularly.[80] Niitsitapi oral tradition maintains that this promise was made during Treaty 7 negotiations.[81]

In early 1884, there was widespread discontent among the Siksika over the rations' quantity and quality. Just before the 1882 Bull Elk incident, rations had been cut off or drastically curtailed several times because contractors had run out of beef and flour.[82] These were the developments that had given entrails and cow heads such a premium among the Siksika, helping to spark the crisis in the first place. In February 1882, Cecil Denny took over as Indian Agent at Blackfoot Crossing and dealt with the ration shortage. But he also looked at the rolls, declaring there was "a great deal of cheating" going on, there being more Siksika individuals drawing rations than there were actual persons on the reserve. Denny reduced the number of ration tickets from 3,000 to 2,150.[83] With the stroke of a pen, Denny reduced the total rations available to the Siksika community by nearly-one third. Niitsitapi padding of the rolls was common subterfuge meant to ensure they had access to the food they needed for survival.[84] What the government offered was miserly. In mid-1880, the Niitsitapi received just one-half pound of beef and flour per head per day. John C. Kittson, a medical officer connected with the NWMP, wrote to then Indian Agent Norman T. Macleod, telling him that this was insufficient for men trying to do the intense labour associated with farming. The many gaunt-looking and hungry Niitsitapi men, women, and children proved this. Kittson suggested better rations, comparable to prisoners in Siberia (which had similar climatic conditions to the Canadian Prairie West): 1 lb. of meat, 4 lbs. of bread, one-quarter lb. of buckwheat, and one-quarter lb. of fat or butter. Apples, beans, sugar, tea, and coffee "in goodly quantities" needed to be issued as well, to ensure optimal health.[85] However, the Indian Department believed that Indigenous peoples would not work to sustain themselves if given "too much" help, so by 1881 they had only increased the ration to one lb. of beef and flour each daily. Hugh Dempsey argues that such a ration was not satisfactory for a people like the Niitsitapi, who had always eaten copious amounts of meat.[86]

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[80] Morris, *Treaties of Canada,* 269.
[81] Treaty 7 Elders et al, *True Spirit of Treaty 7*, 71, 80, 82, 120-122.
[82] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Crowfoot, Chief of the Blackfeet* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972; reprint, Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1976), 139-142.
[83] "Indian Affairs Annual Report, 1882," 169.
[84] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Charcoal's World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), 8-9.
[85] John C. Kittson to Lieutenant Colonel N.T. Macleod, July 1, 1880(LAC RG10-V3726-F24811).
[86] Dempsey, *Charcoal's World*, 9.

Although the amount of meat issued stayed constant, during 1882 and 1883, flour rations were intermittently cut in half, as the Indian Department tried to save money while Canada struggled with an economic recession.[87] As 1884 rolled around, these cuts generated frustration on the Siksika Reserve, poignantly illustrated by White Cap's January demand. Little had improved by summer, and in August Crowfoot angrily burst into the ration house and complained about the smallness of the flour ration. Inspector J.P. Wadsworth admitted Crowfoot was right; the amount issued at the time was only five ounces.[88] Similar circumstances on the Blood Reserve fueled hostility towards the government as well, represented by the police. The substitution of bacon rations for beef – part of the economy measures taken – was a bigger issue to the Kainai than short flour rations. In early August, an angry headman flung the bacon issued to him into the face of an Indian Department employee, while other community leaders refused to let anyone else take the offending foodstuff. Red Crow accused the government of breaking treaty promises and demanded that they distribute beef as before.[89]

Recognizing disparate treatment under the Canadian legal system and the Canadian government's failure to fulfill Treaty 7 promises, the Niitsitapi increasingly engaged in resistance in response to police efforts to uphold Euro-Canadian law. Because of police insistence on arresting Niitsitapi raiders and seizing their spoils, policemen had been threatened, assaulted, drawn upon with rifles, and even besieged in their forts. Although earlier contact with the Kainai (Blood), Siksika (Blackfoot), and Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) had been cooperative and peaceful, the period between 1881 and 1884 aroused the worst fears of government officials and the police: that the Niitsitapi were dangerous when aroused. Incidents between them and the NWMP had the potential to quickly spiral out of control, potentially engulfing the entire North-West Territories in conflict. This could not be allowed to happen. In the wake of the Bull Elk Affair Superintendent Crozier and Commissioner Irvine decided that the Niitsitapi had to be kept in check by overawing them, demonstrating that the police would respond with numbers and an uncompromising demeanour. Those who obstructed the police and defied the law would be arrested and punished, even if "extreme measures" had to be taken. Still, it is clear from continuing instances of obstruction and criminality in the form of horse raiding, cattle-killing,

[87] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Red Cow: Warrior Chief 2nd Edition* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishing, 1995), 160-161.
[88] Inspector J.P. Wadsworth to Indian Commissioner E. Dewdney, August 14, 1884 (LAC RG10-3696-F15040).
[89] Dempsey, *Crowfoot*, 161-162.

murder, and threats to do bodily harm that the NWMP was not successful in enacting this policy between 1881 and 1884.

The problem was there was not enough police manpower in Blackfoot Country; there was serious discontent along the North Saskatchewan that siphoned it. A potent resistance movement had emerged in the early 1880s, led by Nehiyaw leaders such as Big Bear, Little Pine, Poundmaker, and Piapot. During Treat 6 negotiations in 1876, the Canadian government promised the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe famine relief, material assistance (seed, implements, livestock, and education) in the transition to agriculture, and a free selection of reserves. When the bison population tumbled precariously around 1880, instead of freely distributing rations to everyone, the Indian Department decreed that only the old, sick, and orphaned would get them. Everyone else had to perform some form of service for the Indian Department, a "work for rations" policy. At the same time, material assistance was only issued to bands who were deemed "ready" to make effective use of it. In a country mired in recession, Indian Department officials believed these measures were necessary to demonstrate their prudence with taxpayer money. Then, the government reneged on the free selections of reserves too. Many Treaty 6 leaders wanted reserves near the Cypress Hills, where they could access traditional sources of game, fish, and plants – and so they could concentrate their political power to force the Canadian government to abide by the treaty or renegotiate it for better terms.[90] But Indian Department officials believed that the region was unsuitable for agriculture, which defeated the government's policy of progress and assimilation.[91] They subsequently used the promise of rations as a coercive tool, forcing Nehiyaw bands to move north or face starvation. After Fort Walsh closed in 1883 – to discourage Nehiyaw congregation in the region once and for all – Treaty 6 leaders worked to consolidate reserves near Battleford. They reached out to all Indigenous leaders in Treaty 4 and 6, hoping to create a unified movement of western Indigenous peoples that could force the government to acquiesce to their demands. The Indian Department tried to break the leaders they considered restive by withholding rations, which only inflamed the situation. The NWMP had to be brought in to deal with a series of crises where angry and hungry people threatened or assaulted Indian Department employees. Then, the police began to arrest

[90] Tobias, "Subjugation of the Plains Cree," 520-530.
[91] "Report of the NWMP, 1881," 13-14 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Opening Up the West*.

Indigenous leaders when they tried to discuss treaty issues, a tactic historian John Tobias dubbed "sheer compulsion." Doing so sparked more confrontations with the police, forcing its abandonment, but tensions were still high at the end of 1884.[92]

Meanwhile, the Métis – who had been driven from their homes in Red River partly by Anglo-Canadian intimidation and government machination in the early 1870s – feared another round of alienation, this time from the farms they had built in the South Saskatchewan River Valley. Euro-Canadian settlers were migrating to the region, prompting the Métis to petition the Canadian government to recognize their land claims.[93] However, by the end of 1884, there had been no response, leaving the entire region a smouldering powder keg. It would be lit by the return of Louis Riel, seen as a hero by the Métis for his leadership during the Red River Resistance of 1869/70, which had forced Canada to recognize their claims to the land and created the province of Manitoba.[94]

Discontent in the north forced the NWMP to shift manpower to regions that had previously been lightly surveilled. In contrast to December 1881 (Figure 2-1), the highest concentration of NWMP manpower was now in Treaty 6 territory (Figure 2-5). A further breakdown reveals that many policemen were in the North Saskatchewan River country (Figure 2-6). Of the 560 men engaged by the force, 219 lingered at Battleford, Prince Albert, Fort Carleton, Fort Pitt, and Frog Lake (Figures 2-7 and 2-8).[95] The latter three – which took advantage of existing Hudson's Bay Company infrastructure – were new posts compared to 1881 (Figure 2-4), but all of them were in close vicinity to Nehiyaw and Nakoda reserves. Few reserves in the region were not within thirty miles of some concentration of policemen. Yet the

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[92] Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree," 534-535.

[93] D.N. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University, 1988), ix-x, 89-139, 162-172. For a counterpoint to Sprague's argument as to why the Métis left Red River, see Gerhard Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Ens argues that the opportunities provided by the buffalo-robe trade, contraction of the bison herds, and the closure of American markets accessible by Red River due to high tariffs and anti-smuggling measures encouraged many Métis to leave Red River even before the loss of their land base. Red River could no longer function as homeland not because the Métis lost access to land, but because they could no longer engage in the buffalo robe trade from the colony.

[94] For Riel's role in the Red River Resistance and the sources of Métis discontent leading up to the North-West Resistance of 1885, see George F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: The History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, reprint 1961, c1936); W.L. Morton, Ed., *Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and Other Papers Related to the Red River Resistance of 1869-1870* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1956); and Thomas Flanagan*, David 'Louis' Riel: Prophet of the New World* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

[95] Christopher Marsh, "North-West Mounted Police Stats by Post," Tab 1884C (spreadsheet in author's possession).

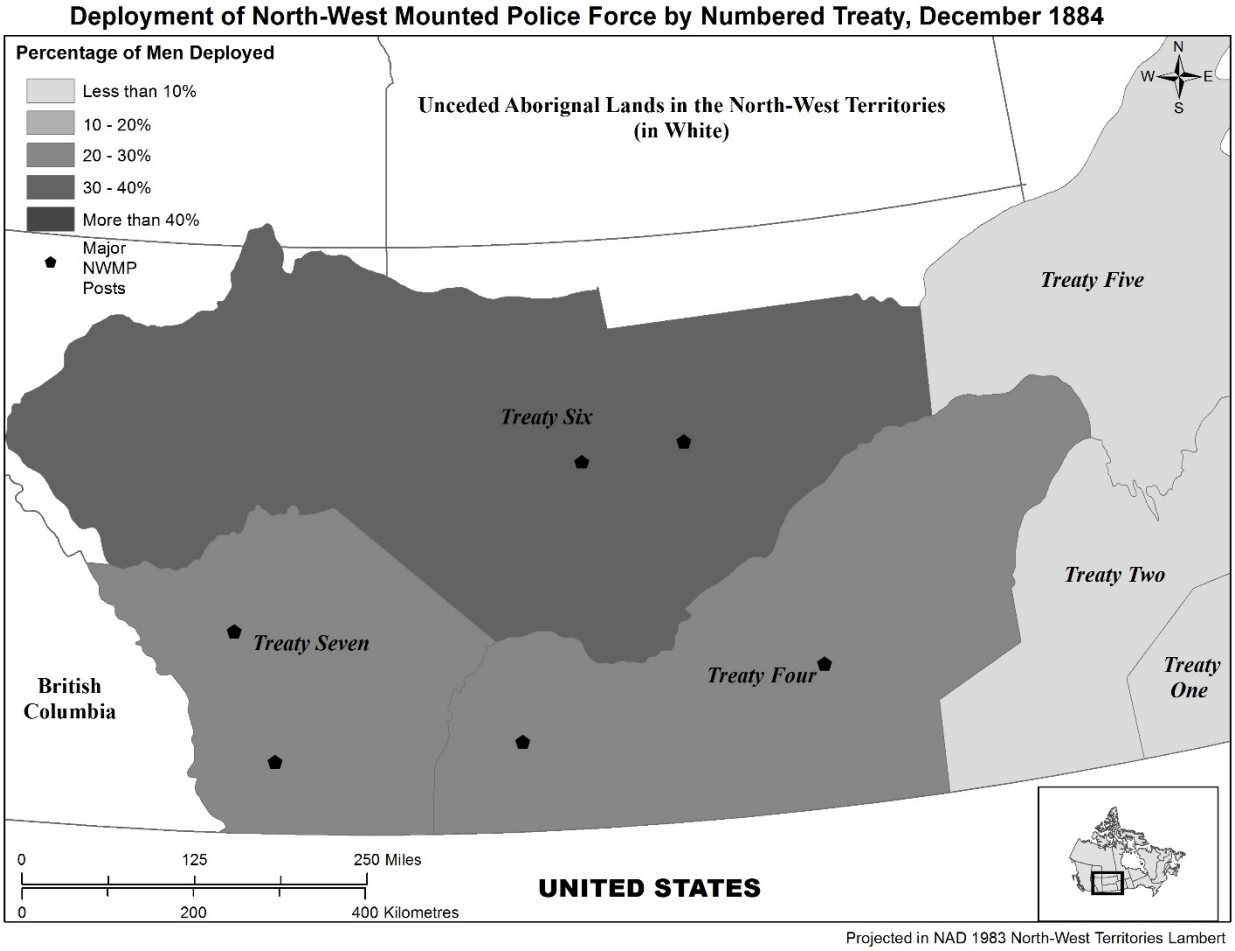

Figure 2.5: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Numbered Treaty, December 1884. Because of Indigenous discontent over Canada's implementation of Treaty 6, most police manpower resources were allocated to this Numbered Treaty's boundaries, a sharp contrast to previous years.

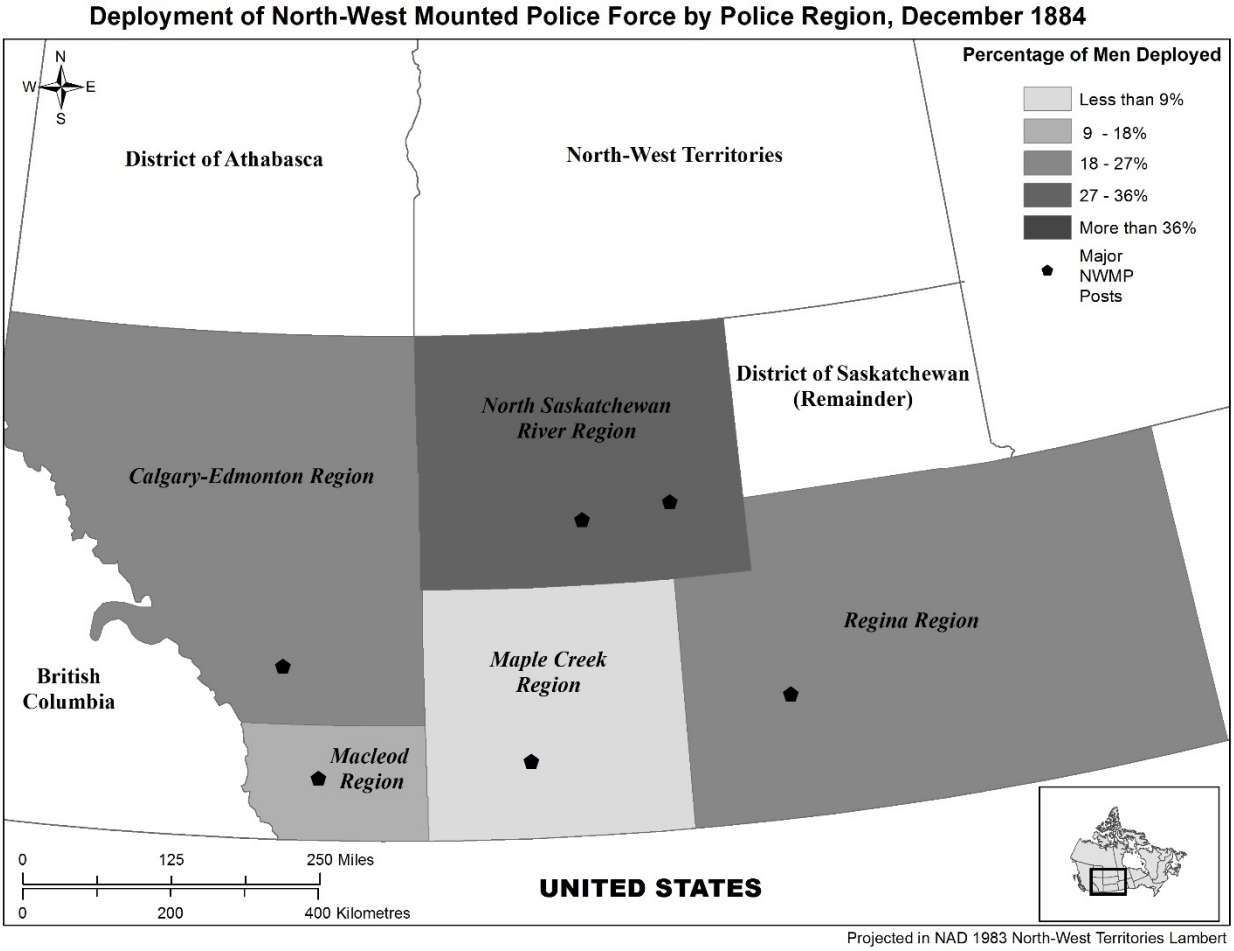

Figure 2.6: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Police Region, December 1884. Many policemen were assigned to the North Saskatchewan River region because of Indigenous people's discontent over Canada's implementation of Treaty 6. There is a noticeable difference in police manpower in the Macleod region compared to previous years.

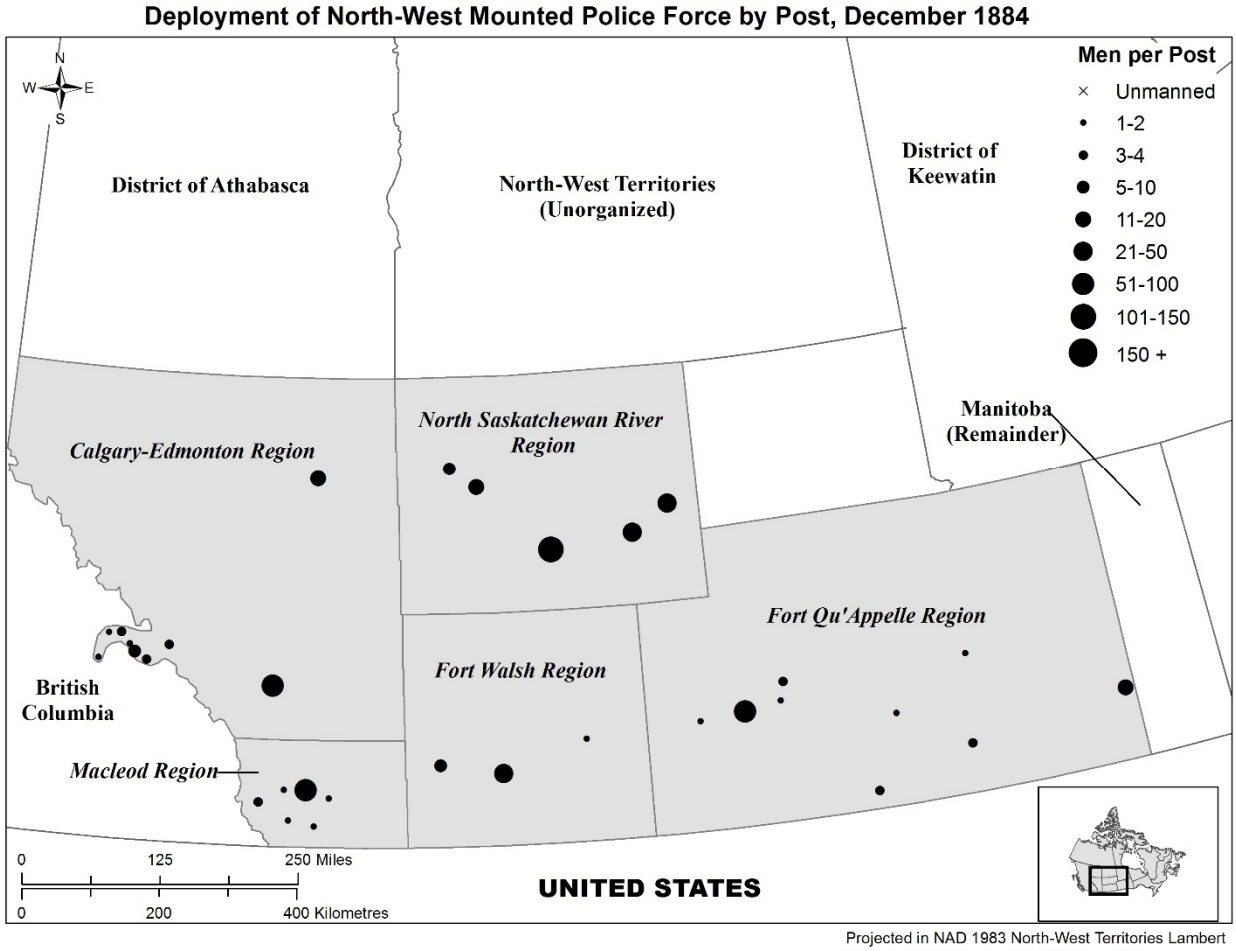

Figure 2.7: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Post, December 1884. Many of the NWMP posts with large numbers of policemen were in the North Saskatchewan River region. However, some of the North-West Territories' largest posts were still in Blackfoot Country (the Calgary and Macleod regions).

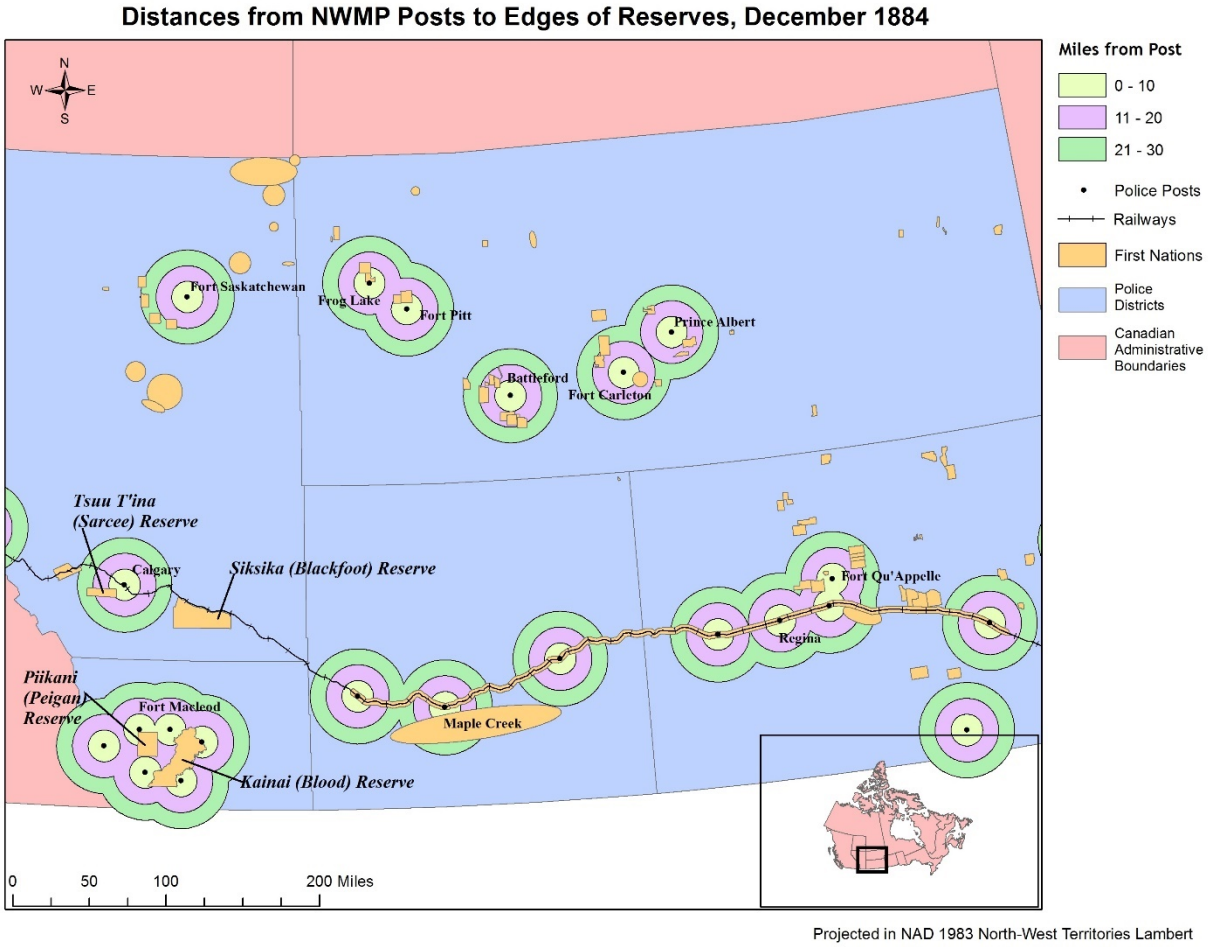

Figure 2.8: Distances from North-West Mounted Police Posts to Edges of Reserves, December 1884. Because of Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe discontent in the north, the NWMP erected more extensive surveillance networks. However, the Kainai were perhaps the most surveilled group of Indigenous peoples in the entire North-West Territories due to their horse raiding activities and resistance against police efforts to make arrests and recover stolen livestock.

NWMP kept a wary eye on the Macleod region too. While there were only 68 policemen present, there was a more comprehensive surveillance network compared to other regions, evident in a cluster of four posts surrounding the Kainai reserve: two each in the north and south. While many reserves fell within the range of at least one police post, the Kainai reserve was unique in that it was within ten miles of four of them. No other concentration of Indigenous people attracted this kind of surveillance in the Canadian Prairie West during 1884. At a time when

there were so many demands on the force, Irvine was trying to make do with what he had. He had to contain increasing Niitsitapi intransigence at the same time the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Métis in the north were also a potential threat. Indeed, Irvine *wanted* more police in the Macleod region to suppress the disorder that was boiling to the surface. Regarding Kainai depredations in the Maple Creek district during 1884, the commissioner warned, "I allude elsewhere to the necessity for strengthening the division at Fort Macleod…the work there in the future will be much more arduous than it has in the past. The Indians in the neighbourhood, Bloods, Blackfeet, and Piegans number close on 1,000 warriors, with blood relations on the other side of the line within easy distance…They are the most warlike, and the best armed and mounted Indians in the territories."[96] He estimated that the number of the police in the Macleod district needed to be at least doubled to keep the Niitsitapi on their reserves – and protect the lives and property of Euro-Canadian settlers.[97]

Between 1881 and 1884, the Niitsitapi increasingly came into conflict with the NWMP, resisting efforts to arrest individuals suspected of criminal activity or recover stolen property taken during horse raiding adventures. In these instances, crowds of Niitsitapi men and women intimidated and sometimes assaulted members of the force. These incidents stemmed from Niitsitapi frustration over the Canadian government's implementation of Treaty 7 (particularly the distribution of rations), disparate treatment before the law (the issue of stolen horses and long periods of confinement before trial), and a change in NWMP arrest policy. In the past, NWMP officials had cultivated close relationships with Niitsitapi leaders, using them as intermediaries to facilitate the apprehension of suspected lawbreakers. But in the early 1880s, police officials did an about-face, eschewing negotiation and suddenly expecting immediate and unconditional compliance. They opted for a policy of "overawing" the Niitsitapi through intimidation. This policy entailed concentrating police manpower that moved quickly and was willing to enact "extreme measures" to smash defiance, even if it meant risking open conflict. But between 1882 and the end of 1884, the NWMP could never accumulate the police manpower necessary for this policy to succeed. In the north, the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe had fomented resistance to the implementation of Treaty 6, so the police were forced to disperse their manpower

[96] "Report of the NWMP, 1884," 12 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.
[97] "Annual Report, 1884," 13 in The Commissioners of the Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Settlers and Rebels*.

resources to confront it. It was not until the end of the North-West Resistance of 1885 – after the insurgent Métis, Nehiyaw, and Nakoda had been defeated – that the NWMP could bring the necessary manpower to bear against the Niitsitapi. Even then, as will be seen, the new policy to suppress Niitsitapi criminality and resistance remained ineffective.

CHAPTER THREE
Seeking "A Perfect Feeling of Confidence": Resistance and the Fear of Resistance, 1885-1886

On March 26, 1885, Gabriel Dumont – the Adjutant-General of Louis Riel's Provisional Government – clashed with Superintendent Leif Newry Fitzroy Crozier near Duck Lake, sparking the North-West Resistance of 1885. Leading a combined force of ninety-five Prince Albert volunteers and North-West Mounted Policemen (NWMP), Crozier failed to defeat Dumont's larger Métis force.[1] Shooting from the cover of a tree line, Dumont's men killed twelve and wounded the same, forcing Crozier's retreat to Fort Carleton. Hundreds of miles to the southwest, Inspector W.D. Antrobus noted the Kainai (Blood) were in an unsettled state, which stemmed from Kainai horse raiding and police attempts to arrest the perpetrators. On March 1, Constable Christopher Hilliard at the Stand Off detachment learned that Kainai men had returned home with stolen horses. Hilliard set out with a police party to find those responsible, but the lack of an interpreter stifled his efforts. The next day, Hilliard received a tip that Owl Talker – the son of Head Chief White Calf – was one of the raiders. Hilliard tried to arrest Owl Talker but was met with "great resistance" by Calf Shirt (or Onistahsi-sokasim) and several other Kainai men. Calf Shirt went so far as to threaten the police by pointedly pumping the cartridge in his rifle.[2] Though Antrobus referred to Calf Shirt as "the Blood war chief," he understated the man's stature within the Kainai community. Calf Shirt commanded respect – and at times inspired fear – because of the strength of his spiritual power, which allowed him to handle, tame, and command rattlesnakes. He seldom went anywhere without one coiled around his waist under his shirt or carried in a bag. He occasionally used his Rattlesnake Power to doctor

[1] At Duck Lake, the Métis were a far greater constituent to Dumont's force compared to the Nehiyaw. Only a few of them joined voluntarily, the majority were coerced; see Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion* (Calgary: Fifth House Publishing, 2010), 77-80.

[2] Inspector W.D. Antrobus to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, March 26, 1885 (Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Record Group18-Volume1021-File2874).

various ailments and could reportedly make a woman sterile (at her request of course).[1] Calf Shirt was a hero of the Battle of Belly River in which the Niitsitapi inflicted a crippling defeat upon the Nehiyaw (Cree) near the present city of Lethbridge in October 1870.[2] Kainai resistance was not restricted to some young hotheads but manifest among some of the community's most prominent men.

Hilliard somehow managed to overcome the Kainai resistance, arresting both Owl Talker and Calf Shirt. Superintendent John Cotton lectured the "war chief," who was then released. The police charged Owl Talker with horse stealing, remanding him to the guardhouse in the hopes he would give up the identities of his accomplices and encourage the Kainai community to return the stolen animals. Much dissatisfaction arose when Owl Talker was not released even after all the horses were turned over, leading to another display of Kainai resistance on March 12, when another police party tried to arrest four men on undisclosed charges. They all refused to go with the police and one of the suspects assaulted Sergeant Hilliard, who withdrew to Fort Macleod to raise a stronger party. Doing so turned out to be unnecessary as the four men walked to the post and gave themselves up soon after.[3] Two days later, Red Crow, Calf Shirt, and many other Kainai arrived in Fort Macleod, demanding Owl Talker's release. Unable to convince or intimidate Cotton, they returned the next day to speak with Judge James Farquharson Macleod, who also refused their request.

With some difficulty, Antrobus convinced the Kainai to return to their reserve quietly. However, unsettling rumours swirled that they were holding councils and talking about sending their women and children to Montana. They then intended to come to the fort and, as Antrobus put it, "make demands which they will insist upon being granted."[4] Other whispers claimed the Kainai meant to shoot a policeman for every one of theirs sent to the Manitoba penitentiary.[5] While the inspector doubted the veracity of the latter statement, it was not such a farfetched claim. After all, a Kainai party had made a similar face-to-face threat to a policeman the previous autumn near Maple Creek. In the end, such drastic action was unnecessary. Owl Talker was

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[1] Adolf Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People, A Division of the Blackfoot Confederacy: An Illustrated Interpretation of the Old Ways* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1977), 271. See also Hugh A. Dempsey, "The Snake Man," *Alberta History* 29, no. 4 (1981), 2-3.
[2] Dempsey, "The Snake Man," 1-2.
[3] "Summary of Events, Fort Macleod, N.W.T.," March 13 & 14, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1021-F3105).
[4] Inspector W.D. Antrobus to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, March 26, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1021-F2874).
[5] Inspector W.D. Antrobus to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, March 26, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1021-F2874).

found not guilty because only hearsay evidence implicated him. No witness positively identified him as one of the raiders bringing stolen horses to the reserve.[6] No doubt the Kainai community was pleased with his eventual release, but it must have caused annoyance as well. Owl Talker had been imprisoned for twenty-eight days on a charge that he was ultimately cleared of. Is that what the Queen's justice entailed? Punishment before the trail? Perhaps the initial arrest caused so much consternation because the Kainai were sincerely convinced Owl Talker had done nothing wrong.

The Owl Talker incident illustrates that the relationship between the NWMP and the Kainai had improved little since the previous autumn. It would not improve over the short-term either. Rather, it steadily deteriorated until the end of 1886, sparking fears in government circles of armed resistance in Blackfoot Country. There were more standoffs, more threats, and on occasion exchanges of gunfire. The Cypress Hills region continued to be a scene of disorder and danger for the police, cattlemen, and the Métis residing there as Niitsitapi war parties congregated in and passed through the region. The accelerating cross-border warfare between the Kainai and the tribes of the Fort Belknap Agency – the A'aninin (Gros Ventres) and Nakoda (Assiniboine) – was primarily responsible for this state of affairs. Since 1882, the Niitsitapi had been at war – according to their definition of it – with the Nehiyaw (Cree). In short order, the Canadian Nakoda were drawn into the conflict because of their kin ties to the Nehiyaw, then their relatives, the American Nakoda at Fort Belknap were pulled in too. When the Kainai and South Piikani (Peigan) retaliated against the Fort Belknap Nakoda, they indiscriminately stole horses from the A'aninin – who the Nakoda shared the reservation with – provoking them to join the fray in 1884.[7] Continuous horse raiding heightened Kainai frustration – even when they were not on the losing end of it – because there were more opportunities for friction as police tried to recover stolen animals and arrest raiders. Of course, when these instances of resistance happened, it greatly concerned police officials – especially after the conclusion of the 1885 Resistance – as it signified potential new conflicts in the Canadian Prairie West. The Indian Department and the police incessantly worried that each spring would spawn a new conflict. Either discontent among the Niitsitapi would draw the Métis, Nehiyaw, and Nakoda into one, or

[6] Inspector W.D. Antrobus to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, March 30, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1021-F2874).
[7] Christopher Marsh, "The Last of the Horse Wars: Intertribal, Cross-Border Warfare in Southern Alberta and Northern Montana Territory, 1878-1893" (Master's Thesis: University of Calgary, 2012), 59-82.

new troubles along the North Saskatchewan would prompt the Niitsitapi to throw their support behind their erstwhile enemies. Whatever the case, a new uprising meant more expense that Canada could not afford and would scare off would-be immigrants. Spatial analysis of police distribution after 1886 indicates there was more concern that any new conflict would originate in Blackfoot Country. Hence, there was a greater concentration of police manpower in Treaty 7 territory when compared to the end of 1884, though the force was roughly dispersed equally (Figure 3.1). Most of these policemen found their way to Macleod District, 201 men out of an entire force of just over a thousand. There were 108 more policemen in the Calgary District, for a grand total of 309 in Treaty 7 – which was a much smaller geographical region than those occupied by the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe (Ojibwe or Salteaux) – thus making for a larger number of policemen by area (Figure 3.2).[8] Most telling was the increase in Kainai surveillance with the establishment of new police detachments within the district (Figures 3.3 and 3.4). Three new posts cropped up within ten miles of the Kainai Reserve while older established posts possessed larger contingents of men compared to 1884 (Figure 2.7). Lastly, the NWMP founded a new string of posts extending from Lethbridge to the head of the Cypress Hills to discourage horse raiding. With the northern country relatively quiet in comparison, this shuttling of police resources was the first sustained effort by the NWMP to control Niitsitapi malfeasance according to Crozier's prescription: an uncompromising dedication to upholding the law, a mass concentration of police manpower, and the establishment of the ability to strike forcefully and quickly at lawbreakers. This chapter illustrates how the war between the Niitsitapi and the Fort Belknap tribes, as well as the Canadian government's fear of renewed conflict with Indigenous peoples, provided the impetus for the police to concentrate manpower and extend networks of surveillance in Blackfoot Country during 1885 and 1886.

That the Kainai – and their South Piikani cousins – were engaged in their war with the tribes of Fort Belknap by early 1885 is evident in that they were raiding for horses during winter, which was not a usual time to carry it out. Winters in southern Alberta feature bitterly cold weather and often heavy precipitation. Chinooks *can* send warm dry winds over the Rocky Mountains to raise temperatures and scour the plains of snow but relying on the phenomenon to

[8] Christopher Marsh, "North-Mounted Police Stats by Post," Tab 1886 BC (spreadsheet in author's possessions).

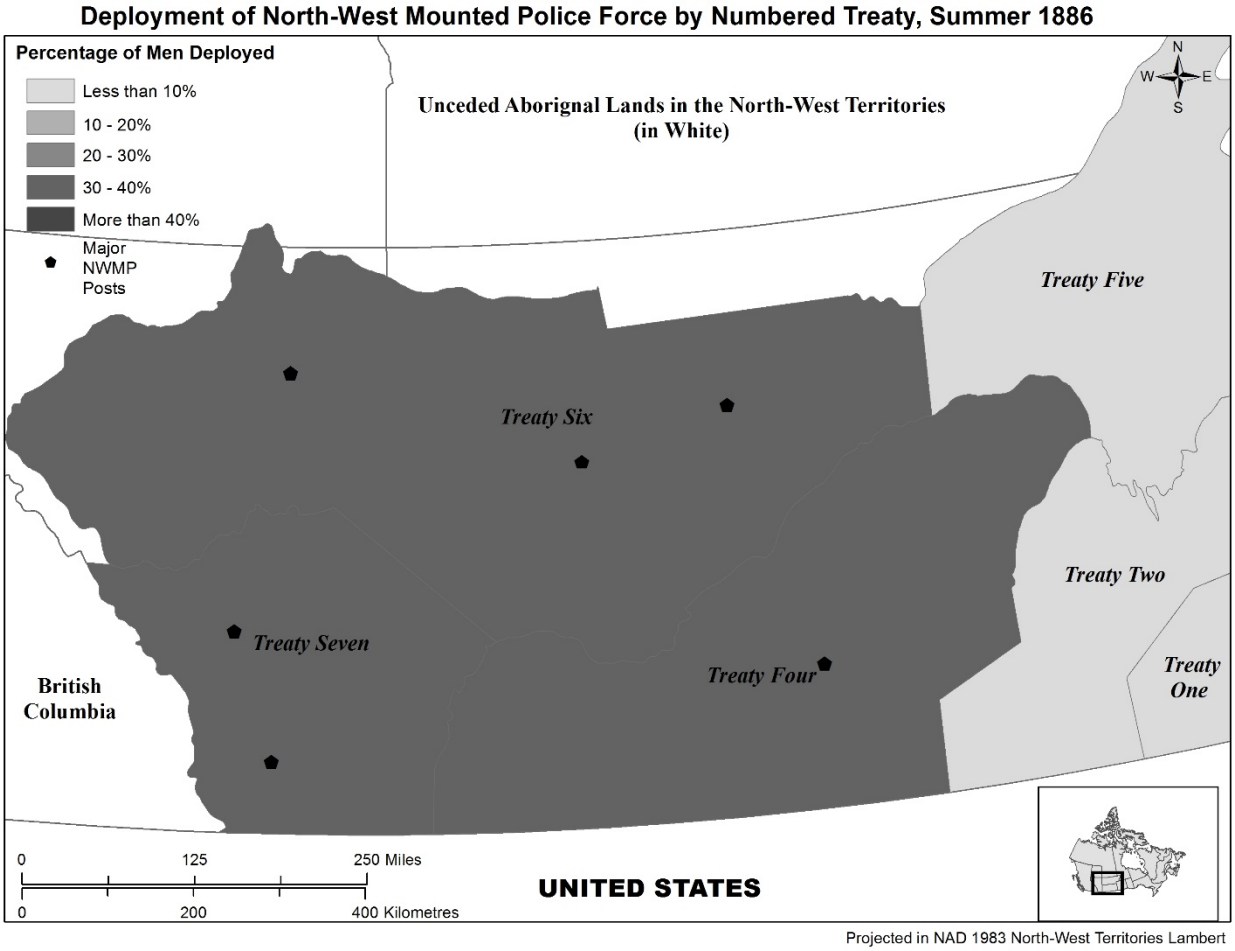

Figure 3.1: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police by Numbered Treaty, Summer 1886. While the distribution of police was roughly even across all Numbered Treaties compared to the end of 1884, more manpower resources had been dedicated to Treaty 7 compared to two years earlier.

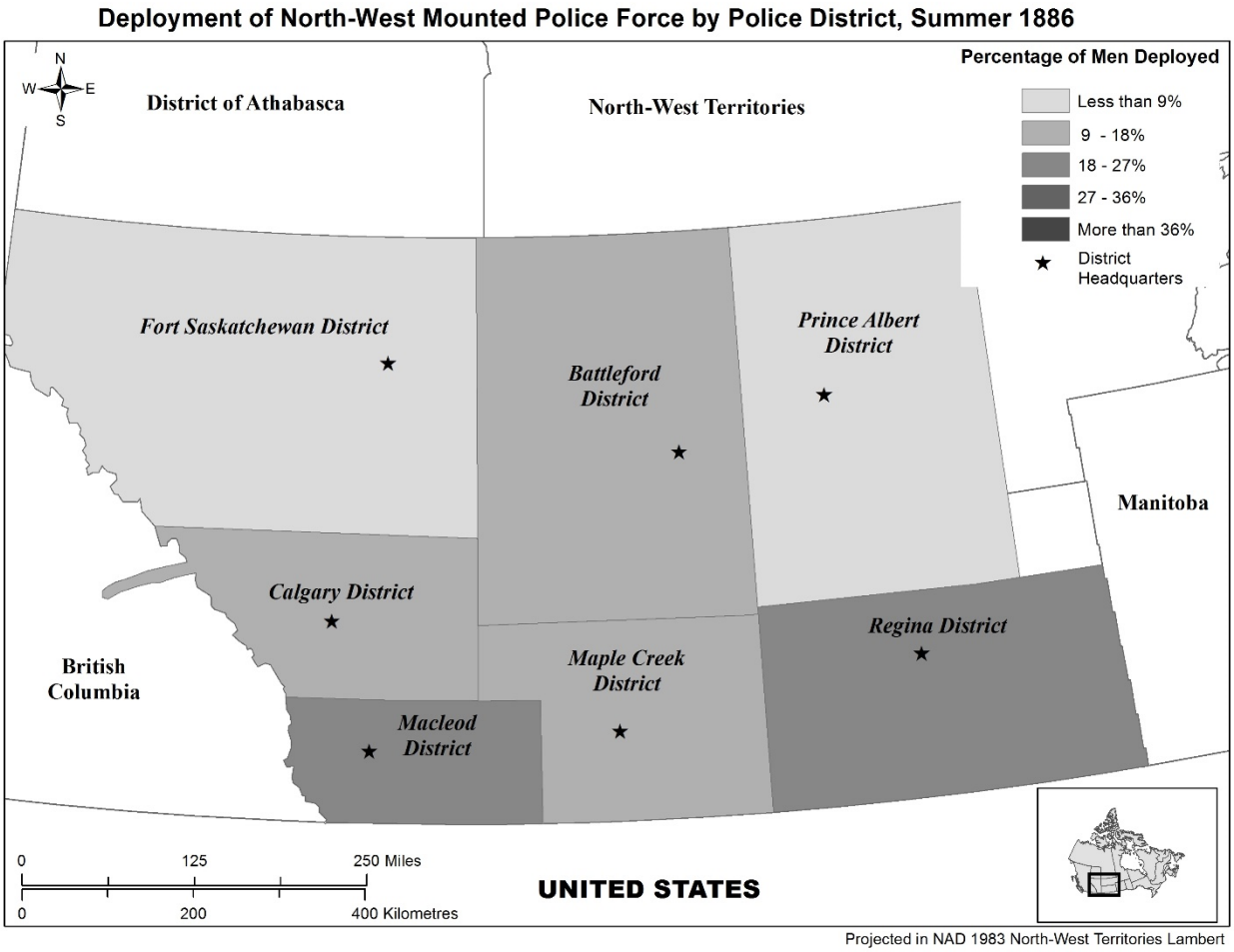

Figure 3.2: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police by Police District, Summer 1886. The Macleod District - where the Kainai Reserve was located - featured the highest concentration of police manpower in the entire North-West Territories. While the Regina District seems comparable, its large administrative and training depot had many policemen who did not engage in day-to-day law enforcement activities.

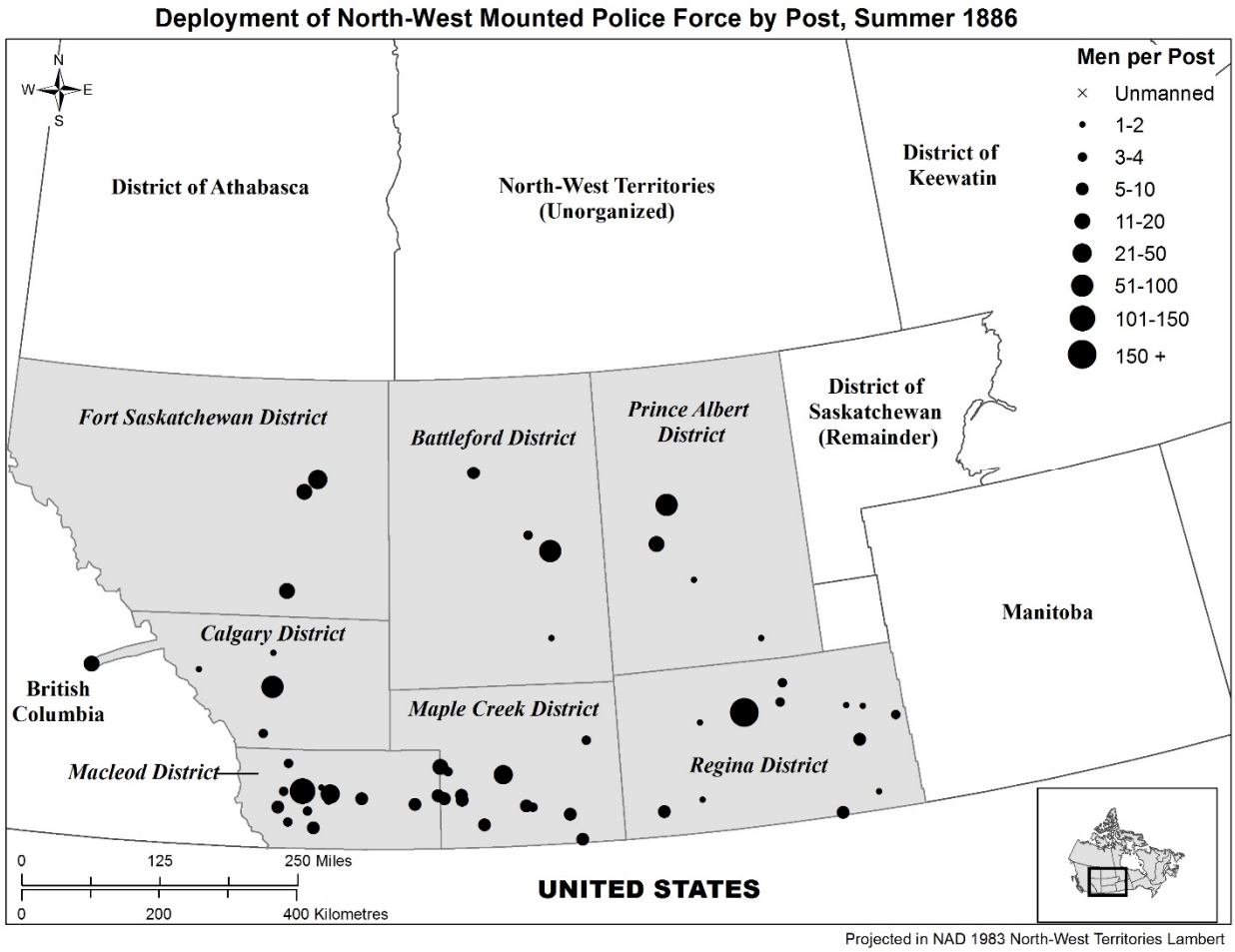

Figure 3.3: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Post, Summer 1886. Compared to the end of 1884, there were more police posts in the Macleod District and more men were stationed at them. There was also a new string of detachments stretching across the Macleod and Maple Creek Districts to discourage Niitsitapi horse raiding.

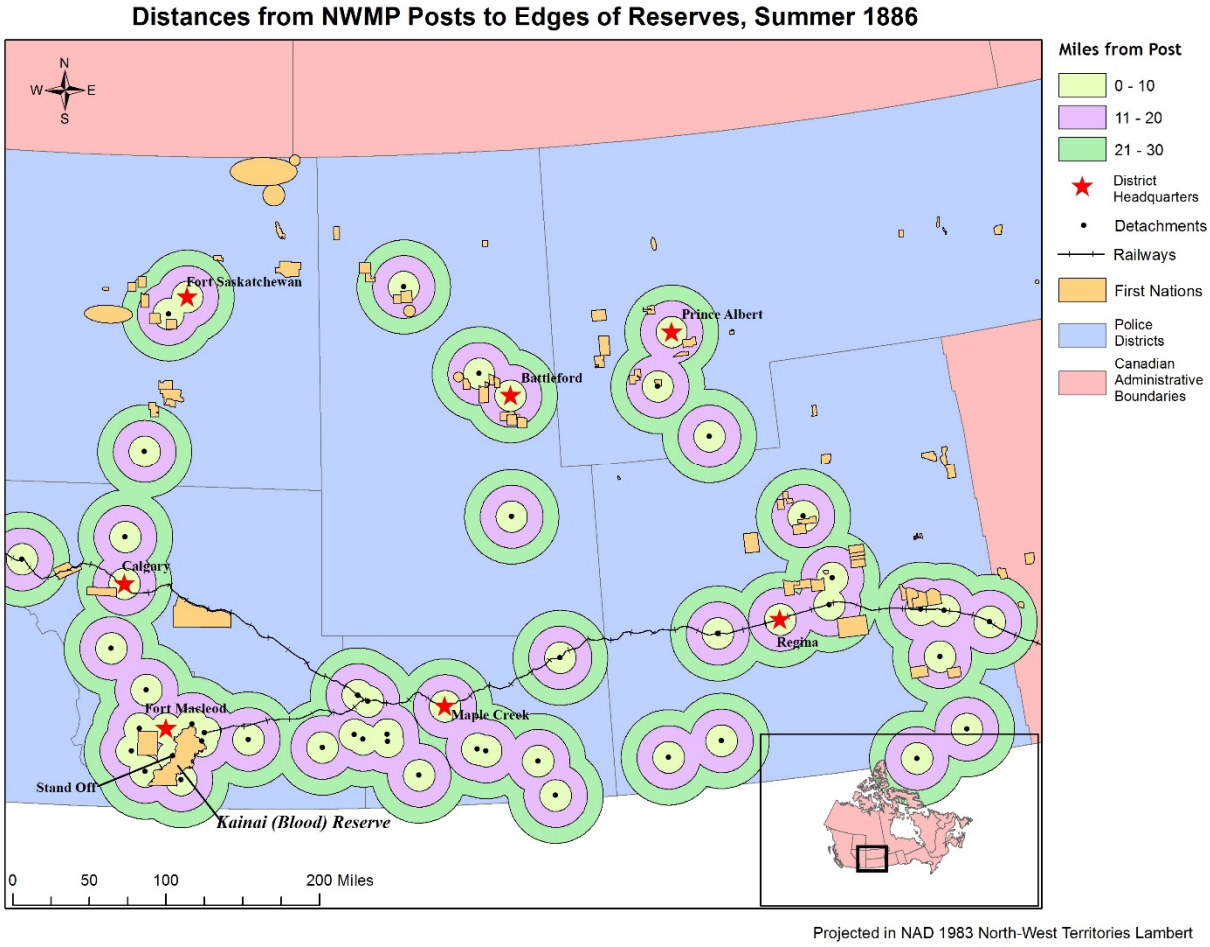

Figure 3.4: Distances from North-West Mounted Police Posts to Edges of Reserves, Summer 1886. Seven NWMP posts surrounded the Kainai Reserve in 1886, making it the most heavily surveilled reserve in the North-West Territories.

travel is treacherous. It was not uncommon for temperatures to plunge quickly in a matter of hours as cold winds swirled and snow poured down.[9] Crossing the plains at this time of the year

[9] Robert Nathaniel Wilson wrote about such a sudden shift in weather on his first trip to Fort Macleod in January 1882. Wilson states after his troop arrived at the fort chinook weather melted much of the snow from the ground in a single night. However, four or five days later the wind shifted suddenly, and the temperature dropped to thirty-five degrees below zero. See Diary of R.N. Wilson, January 23, 1882 (LAC MG29E-47)

could be risky and lead to death.[10] In December 1884, Fort Belknap Indian Agent W.L. Lincoln complained to the American Indian Commissioner that South Piikani raiders from the Blackfoot Agency had been stealing horses from the A'aninin and Nakoda since September, and Lincoln was doing his best to prevent his charges from retaliating.[11] What had sparked the raids was an attempt by Otter Robe – the son of a prominent A'aninin headman and healer – to recover some Apsáalooke (Crow) horses from the Blackfeet Reservation. The South Piikani had unleashed their ire against the Apsáalooke throughout 1884 after a group of latter murdered three of the former earlier that year.[12] When Otter Robe tried to claim the horses, he declared what side of the conflict he was on. By Indigenous plains custom, he implicated the entirety of the tribes at Fort Belknap.[13] There was little doubt that the Kainai were involved in these raids. Mixed Kainai and South Piikani raiding parties were common during the previous autumn's disorder in the Maple Creek District. They were in constant contact with their relatives just across the border and once news of Otter Robe's misdeeds reached Kainai ears, it was difficult for young men to resist the urge to strike back. The Kainai's Indian Agent – William Pocklington – reported that many young men had left the reserve in war parties.[14] Although Pocklington did not state where they went, the annual police report of 1884 did not indicate any Kainai horse raiding in Canadian territory during this period.

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[10] In late December 1874, Cecil E. Denny experienced this firsthand when he travelled from Fort Macleod to Fort Kipp to retrieve mail brought in from Montana. The weather was fine when Denny started out but a sudden shift in the wind fomented a blizzard so intense that he could not make any headway. The temperature plunged to twenty degrees below zero just as quickly. Denny managed to make it to Fort Kipp but two other men – Baxter and Wilson – were not been so lucky. They were due to return to fort after being on leave but never made it. A search party found them on the open prairie frozen. When the blizzard struck, they quickly became disoriented and wandered about in a big circle before falling unconscious in the snow. See Cecil E. Denny, *The Law Marches West* (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1939), 53-56.

[11] R.A. Allen to W.L. Lincoln, September 9, 1884 (National Archives and Record Administration at Denver: RG75-8NS-075-96-439-1). W.L. Lincoln to Major Allen, September 14, 1884 (NARAD-RG75 8NS-075-96-440-1); W.L. Lincoln to Indian Commissioner's Office, January 4, 1885 (NARAD RG75-8NS-075-96-436-1).

[12] Department of Dakota, Roster of Troops No. 2, Notes: April 3, 1884, (Montana Historical Society (MHS) MC46-4-6); Department of Dakota, Roster of Troops No. 3, Notes: September 2, 1884, (MHS MC46-4-6); Department of Dakota, Roster of Troops No. 3, Notes: September 2, 1884, (MHS MC46-4-6) Anthony R. McGinnis*, Counting Coup and Cutting Horses: Intertribal Warfare on the Northern Plains, 1738-1889* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 176-178; R.A. Allen to W.L. Lincoln, September 9, 1884 (NARAD-RG75-8NS-075-96-439-1). W.L. Lincoln to Major Allen, September 14, 1884 (NARAD-RG75 8NS-075-96-440-1)

[13] For a more detailed account as to how the Niitsitapi assigned culpability for acts of criminality, such as murder and theft, see Marsh, "The Last of the Horse Wars," 53-58.

[14] William Pocklington to Indian Commissioner's Office, January 6, 1885 (LAC RG10-1550:C14841).

Much of January 1885 was bitterly cold, but a chinook swept through the region towards the end of the month, lasting for nearly a week.[15] Young Kainai men took advantage of the break in the weather to go horse raiding. Agent Pocklington reported to Superintendent J.H. McIllree that Red Plume – the son of the Minor Chief Bull Shield – Flint, and Soldier Boy had slipped away from the reserve on the night of February 7. For some days they talked of leaving while friends tried to convince them not to, likely because they knew the good weather was only temporary. Pocklington considered the three men a "bad lot" and told McIllree that they bore watching.[16] No doubt they aimed for Fort Belknap; if they came up empty there or a bad omen forced the expedition's abandonment prematurely, they could collect spoils from settlers near Maple Creek or from the Nehiyaw who resided near Medicine Hat.[17] That the Kainai raided Belknap over an extended period was a phenomenon observed by Indian Agent Lincoln, who stated in May that the South Piikani and the Kainai were allies in raiding "his Indians," both in the present and recent past.[18]

What measure of success Red Plume's party had is unknown; regardless, young Kainai men continued their raiding in March by targeting the Nehiyaw at Medicine Hat, the raid that had implicated Owl Talker. While the Kainai community and the police dealt with the fallout, more raiders made their way there. On March 12, Sergeant Maurice Duchesnay investigated reports that a Kainai party had been lurking around the Nehiyaw camp near the town.[19] Until the North-West Resistance's eruption, the Kainai focused on the Nehiyaw near Medicine Hat and the tribes at Fort Belknap, still angry about the murder of their South Piikani kin and the targeting of their horse herds by the Nehiyaw. On the eve of the conflict, the Kainai were only marginally interested in the difficulties that the Canadian government was having with the Métis, Nehiyaw, and Nakoda along the North Saskatchewan.

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[15] "Summary of Events, Fort Macleod," January and February 1885 (LAC RG-18-V1021-F2864 & 2878).
[16] William Pocklington to Captain J.H. McIllree, Commanding North-West Mounted Police, Maple Creek, February 8, 1885 (LAC RG10-V1552).
[17] Members of war parties were sensitive to any signs that indicated disaster loomed if they continued on their way, like a troubling dream, the appearance of particular animals or weather patterns, the loss of a medicine bundle or pipe, or an encounter with a ghost or spirit. Rather than tempt fate, members of these parties would turn around and go home.
[18] W.L. Lincoln to Colonel J.J. Coppinger, May 27, 1885 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-440, Box 1); W.L. Lincoln to Major Allen, U.S. Indian Agent, June 8, 1885 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-436, Box 1).
[19] "Chronology of Events for March, Maple Creek" March 12, 1885 (RG18-V1024-F3269)

Historians of the North-West Resistance have long suggested that the Métis and First Nations peoples of the West were allies in confronting the Canadian government in 1885. For example, George F.G. Stanley – who wrote a seminal account of the two Riel-led resistances – argues they were natural allies because of their designations as "primitive peoples." Both of them rose in arms against the Canadian intrusion into their ancestral lands, the imposition of an "alien civilization," in a "last effort… to withstand the inexorable advance of white civilization."[20] Bill Waiser and Blair Stonechild argue Stanley's interpretation "casts a long shadow" over the historiography of the 1885 Resistance and displays of public history around it. First Nations peoples are still generally regarded as being the confused, angry allies of the Métis.[21] Desmond Morton's interpretation is along the same lines as Stanley. Lee F. Murphy, then the Curator of the Canadian War Museum, declared in the monograph's foreword that, "1885 heard the last war drum sound in Canada. It was the last desperate chance for the Indians and Metis [sic] to impose their own terms on the settlement of the West."[22] Morton argues that Riel sought to make common cause with the First Nations because of their recent mistreatment at the hands of the Indian Department, most notably the coercive rations policy.[23] However, Morton had to wrestle with the fact that few First Nations communities participated in the conflict. He argued that "some" of them welcomed any chance to revolt because they were reluctant to accept reserve life. Others sat back, waiting to see how the government fared against the Métis before making their decision whether to join or not.[24] The Indian Department placated others by issuing extra rations.[25] Morton's implicit suggestion was that most First Nations peoples had latent rebellious tendencies and would have gladly joined the fray if they believed it could be successful. As far as the Niitsitapi were concerned, Morton declared much later in his narrative that they had no intention of joining the Nehiyaw and Nakoda, crediting the calming efforts of Father Albert Lacombe and the promise of more government assistance.[26] Bob Beal and Rod Macleod also noted Indian Department policy as one of the conditions that helped spark the

[20] George F.G. Stanley, *Birth of Western Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1936; reprint 1961) XXVI.
[21] Stonechild and Waiser, *Loyal Till Death*, 2.
[22] Desmond Morton, *The Last War Drum: The North West Campaign of 1885* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1972), ix.
[23] See James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2014).
[24] Morton, *The Last War Drum*, 16-17.
[25] Morton, *The Last War Drum*, 97.
[26] Morton, *The Last War Drum*, 97-98.

conflagration in the North-West. They argue that it created a disgruntled population that could be easily incited. There is little discussion of the Niitsitapi in their account, though Beal and Macleod do reprint several unsubstantiated rumours contained in primary sources that suggest that they were ready to join the uprising on behalf of Crowfoot's adopted son, Poundmaker (or Pihtokahanapiwiyin).[27] Only later is the spectre Niitsitapi participation laid to rest, the authors stating that although the Niitsitapi were excited by the news of the Resistance, there was little chance of them joining in common cause with the Nehiyaw. Instead, the Niitsitapi offered to fight on the side of the federal government.[28]

No account of the North-West Resistance dedicates much attention to the Niitsitapi, which is understandable as much of the action took place far away from Blackfoot Country. Still, few scholars offer an in-depth explanation as to why the Niitsitapi chose to sit the conflict out, which should be a significant topic. Had the Niitsitapi joined in, it would have complicated the situation immensely. The Resistance's timeline would have certainly been extended, necessitating the maintenance of Canada's militia force over a longer period and possibly requiring a wider mobilization. Niitsitapi hostilities would have added millions of dollars to the Resistance's already five-million-dollar price tag. There was even the possibility of an international crisis because of the international border's proximity, one similar to the flood of Sioux refugees into Canada after Custer's defeat in 1876.[29] Thousands of old men, women, and children would have fled to the Blackfeet Agency in Montana, putting a tremendous strain on their kin's resources. Niitsitapi men would have struck at Canadian armed forces then retreated across the border, just as they did to escape the police's pursuit when they committed depredations in the Cypress Hills. These circumstances would have ignited a diplomatic firestorm between Canada and the United States, just as Sitting Bull seeking refuge in Canada had half a decade before.

Hugh Dempsey investigated the question of Niitsitapi involvement through separate biographies of Crowfoot and Red Crow. He argues that the Siksika head chief was more amenable to joining the Nehiyaw, mostly because of the relationship he had with his adopted

[27] See for example Bob Beal and Rod Macleod, *Prairie Fire: The 1885 North-West Rebellion* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1984), 207.
[28] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 281.
[29] A good account of this event appears in David McCrady's *Living with Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux and the Canadian-American Borderlands* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

son, Poundmaker. He sympathized with the plight that all Indigenous peoples faced because of Indian Department policy. Crowfoot too had to deal with short rations and worried about building a viable economy on his reserve, which was in doubt because of what he saw as a lack of government support. But Crowfoot refused to throw his full support behind the Nehiyaw unless he had the support of the Kainai and Piikani. The head chief of the latter – Eagle Tail – was firmly against joining the Nehiyaw; generally, the Piikani were less excitable than either the Kainai or Siksika during the 1880s. A peaceable man by nature, Eagle Tail was dedicated to making cattle raising and agriculture successful.[30] As for Red Crow, Dempsey states that he saw the Nehiyaw and Métis as longstanding enemies from the buffalo days. Further, the other Head Chief – White Calf – also disliked them. Bull Shield – a Minor Chief – told Agent William Pocklington that if given food and ammunition, the Kainai would show the government how to defeat their Indigenous enemies. When Crowfoot sent tobacco to the Kainai and Piikani to gauge their interest in supporting the Nehiyaw, Red Crow rejected it and sent it back. [31] A moderate man, Crowfoot respected Red Crow's opinion and did not want to act in a way that would have invariably affected all the Niitsitapi. In mid-April, Crowfoot solidified his opinion not to intervene after a Nehiyaw messenger came to Blackfoot Crossing to solicit aid. When Crowfoot explained his position, the messenger told him that if the Siksika did not help, the Nehiyaw would come south after defeating the government and destroy them. Enraged at the crude threat, Crowfoot immediately ordered him to leave. Shortly after, he informed the section men at the train station at Gleichen that he would provide a hundred warriors for their defence if any Nehiyaw force appeared in the region.[32] While Red Crow and Crowfoot leveraged the paranoia of the public and the Indian Department to make demands for more rations (which rose to one pound each of flour and beef per person per day during the conflict)[33] – which they felt they were entitled to under Treaty 7 anyway – the Kainai Head Chief had already decided that he would not help the Nehiyaw. And without Red Crow's support, Crowfoot could not act.

While Dempsey's interpretation is generally correct, it is incomplete. While he makes it clear that Red Crow had a strong dislike for the Nehiyaw, he attributes this animus to grudges

[30] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Crowfoot: Chief of the Blackfeet* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972; reprint Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1976), 164-168.
[31] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Red Crow: Warrior Chief 2nd Edition*(Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1995), 176-179.
[32] Dempsey, *Crowfoot*, 167, 170.
[33] Dempsey, *Crowfoot*, 191 and Dempsey, *Red Crow*, 177.

that lingered from past intertribal conflicts. Dempsey minimized the more recent animosities of the early 1880s. Nehiyaw raiding had relieved Red Crow of his horses at least twice, sparked the trouble at Fort Walsh, and temporarily driven Nehiyaw from the Cypress Hills. Because Dempsey does not take these events into account, he imagines the possibility of some Kainai sneaking off to fight on the side of the Nehiyaw.[34] However, only months earlier, Kainai parties openly declared to the police that they were at war with the Nehiyaw, intended to kill them wherever they found them, and would shoot anyone who tried to arrest them for it. The number of young men willing to ally the Nehiyaw must have been tiny indeed. It surely would not have qualified as a community initiative.

Scholars of the North-West Resistance have focused too much on the relationship between the Niitsitapi and the Canadian government while not considering their southern orientation because of their connection to kin at the Blackfeet Agency. Daniel K. Richter has argued that too many traditional American historical narratives have been westward looking, neglecting the perspective from "Indian Country," *which perceives itself as the center with its own concerns, aspirations, and internal struggles*.[35] This criticism can be levelled against Canadian historians as well. The perception among scholars is that the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government must have been at the forefront of concerns. The Kainai did not see the Canadian government as the centre of the universe, easily illustrated by referring to Niitsitapi winter counts. 1877 was an important year for the Canadian government because representatives successfully negotiated a treaty with what they considered the most hostile, aggressive, capricious, and dangerous Indigenous nation in the North-West. The accomplishment was widely celebrated by central Canadian newspapers, capturing many front-page headlines. Yet, the winter count of Kainai chief and record keeper Father of Many Children (or Manistokos) – who was one of the signatories of Treaty 7 – did not mention it at all. His entries for 1876, 1877, and 1878 focused on the severity of the weather or the availability of bison. Dempsey argues that Niitsitapi leaders placed no particular significance on the negotiation and signing of Treaty 7 at the time. [36] Similarly, after Father of Many Children died in 1884, his successor did not mention the North-West Resistance, which so occupied the Canadian

[34] Dempsey, *Red Crow*, 175, 177, 179

[35] Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 7. The italics are my own.

[36] Hugh A. Dempsey, Th*e Great Blackfoot Treaties* (Vancouver: Heritage House, 2015), 105-106.

government at the time and for many years after. Instead, the chronicler documented an epidemic of erysipelas – an infection of the upper dermis and superficial lymphatic nodes that causes a painful rash, high fever, chills, headaches, and vomiting – that killed many middle-aged and older adults.[37] In 1885, the most notable event was "plenty cattle died," and in 1886, it was that Niitsitapi chiefs had visited Ottawa.[38] From the Kainai perspective, the most critical diplomatic developments were the horse raiding done by the Nehiyaw and the murder of their South Piikani kin by the Apsáalooke, not Canada's internal northern difficulties. Considering the Kainai's recent hostility towards the Nehiyaw and their orientation towards kin in the United States, the likelihood of them throwing their lot in with Riel was nil. [39]

That the Kainai were oriented towards their southern kin can be seen in their response to the A'aninin murder of a South Piikani horse raider in early May 1885. While trapping for beaver near the Bear Paw Mountains one morning, an A'aninin camp discovered that two raiders were absconding with their horses. Some men immediately set off in pursuit, calling upon another nearby A'aninin band for assistance. As they closed in, a gunfight erupted, which killed one of the latter. The other made it back to the Blackfeet Reservation.[40] On May 8, some young men left the Kainai reserve for the United States to steal horses.[41] Because Agent Lincoln did not give an exact day for the murder of the South Piikani Raider, it is impossible to tell why these Kainai left their reserve. Was it because South Piikani messengers had reached the camp with the news of the murder, or had they merely departed to inaugurate that season's raiding against people that they already considered enemies? By the end of May, the murder was undoubtedly prompting Kainai men to raid for horses near Fort Belknap. On May 27, Lincoln appealed to Colonel J.J. Coppinger at Fort Assiniboine for aid. The South Piikani "and their allies" were

[37] Phillip H. Godsell, ed., *The R.N. Wilson Paper*s, Volume 1 (Calgary: Glenbow Foundation, 1958), 373 (Glenbow Museum and Archives (Glenbow) M4421); Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, Sessional Paper No. 3 *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December 1884* (Ottawa, 1885), 87.
[38] Godsell, *R.N. Wilson Papers*, 373, (Glenbow M4421).
[39] This spirit of antipathy towards the Nehiyaw was still evident during the summer. Blood Indian Agent William Pocklington reported that when a man named Joe Tanner came to the reserve in the company of a Nehiyaw man named Bird to search for stolen horses, several Kainai men met with Pocklington and warned him if the interlopers did not leave immediately, they were at risk of being murdered. Because of this reception, Pocklington did not think there would be any more Nehiyaw visitors; see William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, November 29, 1885 (LAC RG10-V1553).
[40] W.L. Lincoln to Major Allen, U.S. Indian Agent, Blackfeet Agency, June 8, 1885 (NARAD 8NS-075-96-436, Box 1).
[41] "Summary of Events, Month of May 1885," May 8, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1021-F3105).

continually raiding the Nakoda and A'aninin, which had been going on "for some time."[42] The next day, the Indian Commissioner and Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories Edgar Dewdney sent a telegram to Coppinger warning him that the South Piikani had induced the Kainai to attack Fort Belknap with a promise of horses and ammunition. Some forty young men had left the reserve, ignoring the exhortations of Pocklington and the Kainai chiefs to remain.[43] Red Crow even went out in pursuit but was unable to convince them to turn back.[44] A week later, Lincoln complained that Fort Belknap was raided nightly, losing several horses each time. On the night of June 5, raiders targeted an A'aninin camp and managed to run off "many horses" in their most successful raid to date. Gunfights broke out on a few occasions, leaving another South Piikani man wounded and one Nakoda defender dead.[45] In his June report, Lincoln stated that the raids continued for two solid weeks, producing, in his words, "plentiful in excitement, the most in several years." South Piikani and Kainai raiders stole some fifty horses and mules from Montana settlers, killed about thirty sheep, slaughtered range cattle for meat, and broke into ten cabins. One desperate Euro-American settler shot one of the raiders and Lincoln advised him to seek the protection of Fort Assiniboine or risk death.[46] While Canadian troops confronted Riel, Poundmaker, and Big Bear, the Kainai helped their South Piikani cousins pursue vengeance against Fort Belknap and generate chaos on the northern Montana frontier.

Kainai raiders and the police soon contested the spoils of successful raids against Fort Belknap. In the middle of June, the *Macleod Gazette* reported that raiders were bringing many stolen horses onto the Kainai reserve. Sergeant F.W. Spicer went out with a small party to recover the animals but was, in his words, "met with determined opposition on the part of the Indians and no encouragement whatever from Indian Department officials."[47] The newspaper did not offer details of the resistance, but Spicer managed to recover twenty-six horses in the end. For its part, the newspaper believed that there were still more cached away on the reserve. Agent Pocklington denied the paper's accusation that he had not offered any assistance to the police,

[42] W.L. Lincoln to Colonel J.J. Coppinger, May 27, 1885 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-440, Box 1).
[43] Telegram, Edgar Dewdney, Regina, North West Territories to Commanding Officer Assiniboine, May 28, 1885 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-439, Box 2).
[44] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 31, 1885 (LAC RG10-1552)
[45] W.L. Lincoln to the Indian Commissioner, June 5, 1885 (NARAD RG 75 8NS-075-96-436, Box 1); W.L. Lincoln to Major Allen, U.S. Indian Agent, Blackfeet Agency, June 8, 1885 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-436, Box 1).
[46] W.L. Lincoln to the Indian Commissioner, July 5, 1885 (NARAD RG 75 8NS-075-96-436, Box 1).
[47] "Indian War Parties," *Macleod Gazette*, June 23, 1885.

mostly because they had not asked for any. According to the agent, Calf Shirt played a significant role in assisting Spicer with the recovery efforts.[48] Shortly after, police from the Stand Off detachment patrolled the reserve, indiscriminately seizing any branded horse mixed in with the Kainai pony herds. They automatically assumed the horses belonged to white settlers, but some were the bona fide property of Kainai individuals. Pocklington stated the high-handed actions of the police "naturally vexed the Indians a good deal." The young men grumbled, swearing that they intended to resist the police the next time they tried to make an arrest.[49] The discontent over the seizure of stolen horses was for the same reasons as in 1881: when thieves based in the United States stole their horses, the police never recovered them. The Kainai stole horses south of the border to make up for horses stolen from them. They told Indian Commissioner Dewdney, "Our horses are taken from the very people whose horses we have stolen; we invariably fail in getting ours back, so it is unfair to us to ask us to make restitution of the animals we have taken to recoup ourselves for the losses sustained."[50] There would be plenty of opportunity for the Kainai and the police to clash over the stolen horse issue late into 1885 and throughout 1886.[51]

The police also endured Siksika (Blackfoot) resistance during the summer of 1885. In late July, seven Indigenous men on horseback arrived at Sand's Mill, forty-five miles southwest of Maple Creek near the head of the Cypress Hills. They asked the labourers at a nearby logging camp for a meal, which they granted. Afterward, the party went up a nearby mountain to the camp of a Nehiyaw man named Wild Cat. They stole Wild Cat's horses, destroyed his property, and kidnapped his wife. Returning to the logging camp, they turned their horses into an oat field, forcefully took more provisions from the labourers, and lit a large bonfire that they sang and danced around into the early hours of the morning. They allegedly threatened to burn the mill down. Badly frightened, the workers fled, some of them swimming to the middle of a nearby lake for safety. Upon investigation, the police discovered that the suspects were likely Siksika, who had also stolen horses near Medicine Hat.[52] On August 11, Superintendent William

[48] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, July 4, 1885 (LAC RG10-V1552).
[49] William Pocklington to the Honourable the Indian Commissioner, November 29, 1885 (RG10-V3727-F2511671).
[50] Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Sessional Paper No. 4 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December 1885* (Ottawa, 1886), 144.
[51] See Marsh, "Last of the Horse Wars," 89-92.
[52] Superintendent J.H. McIllree to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, August 4, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1023-F3239); Superintendent J.H. McIllree to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, September 3, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1023-F3239).

Herchmer left Fort Calgary with a party of thirty-two men, its objective being to arrest those suspected of the depredations at Sand's Mill. Herchmer spoke to Crowfoot before searching the camp, but the chief seemed "sulky" and refused to interfere with the search one way or another.[53] Unable to secure the chief's assistance, the police unsuccessfully combed the reserve. Herchmer ordered the Siksika to gather before him, exhorting them to produce the wanted men – but to no avail. The commissioner was certain the fugitives had been warned of the police's approach, facilitating their escape. Reflecting on the incident, Herchmer explained there had been "great excitement" in the Siksika camps and that had the suspects been discovered, the police would have certainly had to fight to affect their capture. Herchmer was prepared to do so but was thankful he did not have to.[54]

In late October, Superintendent John Cotton of the Macleod District wrote a long letter to the NWMP Commissioner warning of serious trouble with the Kainai. Cotton warned:

> "I now express it as my positive opinion that the feeling of the Blood Indians towards the Government and white men generally is at this present moment very far from one of a friendly character. In this respect the past year has brought about a most marked change, particularly among the young men who plainly show that a spirit of unrest and disquiet is not dormant within them."[55]

Cotton blamed this development on inflated reports in which the Métis and the Nehiyaw had inflicted severe losses on the NWMP and Canadian militia during the Resistance. The ease in attaining strong alcoholic drink in the United States was also a contributing factor. But the most significant source of Kainai discontent was the police seizure of stolen horses. Cotton declared that the young men were becoming "professional horse thieves" because horse raiding was the only path open to emulate their forefathers' bravery. He feared that any police attempt to recover stolen horses might lead to an armed confrontation with the Kainai because the very act of defying the NWMP was now a signifier of personal courage. Further fueling the determination to resist was the near impossibility of police recovering stolen Kainai horses driven into the United States.

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[53] Crowfoot was in mourning, not sulking. In late May, one of his daughters began to cough up blood and a little more than a week later she died. Crowfoot also recently learned that his adopted son Poundmaker had been found guilty of treason-felony and sentenced to three years in the Stony Mountain Penitentiary. He had been sick for much of July and was still recovering when Herchmer arrived on the reserve. See Dempsey, *Crowfoot*, 192-196.
[54] Superintendent W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, August 20, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1023-F3239).
[55] Superintendent John Cotton to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, October 26, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3554).

Cotton justified his concerns by referring to a recent incident on the Kainai reserve. Believing American property was still there, Cotton ordered Sergeant Spicer to make inquiries at a large encampment that had assembled in anticipation of annuity payments. Spicer was to be extremely cautious and make no arrests. His only job was to ascertain the identities of the thieves and the location of stolen property. Even though Spicer had a long experience with the Kainai and was married into the community, he made no headway on the case. The young men regarded him with suspicion and would not speak to him. On one occasion, Spicer asked one to come chat with him. The young man moved off quickly, telling Spicer without looking back that if he tried to follow him, he would open fire. Then the young man defiantly pumped a cartridge into his rifle. Several other young men reacted similarly. Alarmed Red Crow demanded that Spicer stop. Cotton apologized for the apparent alarmism in his letter but stated he felt duty-bound to report the attitude of the Kainai since they, in his words, could inflict a "loss of human life and destruction of property" in a region that had seen a "vast amount of capital investment in cattle."[56] Any repetition of the 1885 troubles in Blackfoot Country would have been "in a very much aggravated form."[57]

While Cotton identified some facets of Kainai discontent, he did not grasp the entire context. From the Kainai perspective, the Canadian government had not acted as a good faith treaty partner during the North-West Resistance or demonstrated that it really wanted to be friends at all. The Canadian government refused to accept Kainai aid to fight the Nehiyaw, a severe diplomatic misstep. For hundreds of years on the northwest plains, maintaining peaceful relations with foreign peoples meant fighting mutual enemies together.[58] In early April, several

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[56] For a general overview of the investment that taken place see David Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier, 1874-1924* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983). See Warren Elofson, *Somebody Else's Money: The Walrond Ranch Story, 1883-1907* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2009) for a microhistory on the topic.

[57] Superintendent John Cotton to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, October 26, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3554).

[58] This can be clearly seen in Theodore *Binnema's Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwestern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001; reprint Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004). Binnema illustrates through many examples that the Niitsitapi and Nehiyaw formed mixed war and raiding parties to strike at their enemies, most notably the Shoshone in the mid-eighteenth century. These mixed parties persisted until the fracturing of the alliance in 1806. The point of no return for the "northern coalition" was the breakdown of a massive raiding party of 800 Niitsitapi, Nehiyaw, and Nakoda over the spoils of war (see page 196). Jean Friesen argued that treaties carried the weight of mutual moral obligation for resource sharing and assistance during emergencies (which the North-West Resistance of 1885 surely was); see Jean Friesen, "Magnificent Gifts: The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of the North-West" *in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series V,* 1 (1986), 47.

Kainai headmen offered to bolster the government's efforts in subduing the Nehiyaw and Métis, a subject that arose in the Senate. Liberal Senator Lawrence Geoffrey of Halifax argued that "a warlike tribe like the Blackfeet" would join the fight at some point, so the government might as well recruit them. Conservative Senator Josiah Burr Plumb disagreed, declaring "nothing could be more disastrous than to employ them in any way."[59] According to Beal and Macleod, Prime Minister Macdonald liked the idea of using the Niitsitapi because it offered a cost-cutting alternative compared to the militia. He pestered Dewdney on the matter for much of April.[60] Dewdney asked the Special Agent of Treaty 7 – Cecil Denny – whether the Niitsitapi could act in such a capacity. Denny advised against it because every able-bodied man would want to go and he doubted that such a large body could be controlled.[61] Ultimately, the government declined the Kainai's offer because they did not trust them. It is unclear if the Kainai suspected that this was the case, but Agent Pocklington constantly had to reassure Red Crow the government held them in confidence.[62] It must have irked the young Kainai men to sit on the sidelines while their Nehiyaw counterparts collected martial honours through victories over government forces. It was strange behaviour for so-called allies, given their history of diplomacy with both Indigenous peoples and Euro-North Americans on the northwestern plains. Real allies fought enemies together.

A more serious challenge to the purported friendliness of the Canadian government was the issue of fixed ammunition. By the terms of Treaty 7, Canada had to distribute two thousand dollars' worth of it per year to the Kainai, Piikani, Siksika, Tsuu T'ina, and the Stony Nakoda. By early 1884, both the police and the Indian Department were concerned about the unsettled state of Indigenous peoples, evidenced by a violent incident at Crooked Lakes in Treaty 4 territory, where hungry plains Anishinaabe assaulted the Indian Agent, then ransacked a warehouse storing rations after he refused to increase the quantity issued.[63] Consequently, the Indian Department moved to restrict access to firearms and ammunition, proposing a law that forbade traders from selling the latter to Indigenous peoples unless given express authority from

[59] Canada, *Debates of the Senate*, 30 April 1885 (Lawrence Geoffrey & Josiah Burr Plumb), 805.
[60] Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 281.
[61] Denny, *The Law Marches West*, 225.
[62] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, April 6, 1885 (LAC RG10-V1552).
[63] A detailed account of the incident is found in Beal and Macleod, *Prairie Fire*, 81-86.

Department officials (passed by Parliament later that year).[64] The Department also planned to exchange hunting shotguns to individuals possessing the more military-oriented repeating rifles. While initially aimed at the Nehiyaw and Nakoda, Dewdney proposed that the program be applied to the Niitsitapi, believing it would make the region more secure. On the matter, he wrote, "the fact of knowing these Indians are not armed with Winchesters gives a sense of greater security."[65] Then, the Indian Department tried to render Niitsitapi rifles useless by refusing to issue ammunition. In 1883, Treaty 7 tribes received $2419.52 worth.[66] The next year this amount dropped to $477.50, and the year after, the government distributed none at all.[67] The Canadian government never fulfilled this treaty promise again, and in 1973 Niitsitapi bands successfully sued for $250,000 worth of back payments and interest.[68]

The decision not to issue ammunition to the Kainai during the Resistance caused great consternation. On May 13, Agent Pocklington reported Red Crow came to see him several times about it, fearing that the Nehiyaw intended to kill the Niitsitapi and steal their horses. The Kainai needed ammunition to protect themselves, but Pocklington did not have the authority to grant Red Crow's request. Pocklington stated that matters were quiet on the reserve in a report to the commissioner, but the ammunition issue caused real dissatisfaction. The Indian Agent believed distributing some would show Red Crow that the government trusted the Kainai.[69] However, Dewdney refused and on May 22, Red Crow and several other Kainai headmen met with Superintendent Cotton, asking for permission to buy ammunition from local merchants. Cotton declined their request as well, which engendered more distrust.[70] The Canadian government would not share a valuable resource in a time of great need; friends and allies did not act in such a manner. The failure to accept the Kainai offer of help and distribute ammunition – a condition of Treaty 7 – contributed to the unfriendly attitude Cotton noted in late October 1885.

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[64] NWMP Comptroller Fred White to L. Vankoughnet, March 5, 1884 (LAC RG10-V3677-F11582 Pt. 2); Hayter Reed to the Right Honourable Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, March 17, 1884 (LAC RG10-V3677-F11582 Pt. 2).
[65] Edgar Dewdney to the Right Honourable Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, November 13, 1884 (LAC RG10-V3677-F11582 Pt. 2).
[66] Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Sessional Paper No. 4 Annual Report of the Department of Indians Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December 1883* (Ottawa, 1884), Part II 138.
[67] Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs*, 1884, Part II, 155; Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs*, 1885, Part II, 159.
[68] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Treaty Research Report, Treaty Seven* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1987), 51.
[69] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 13, 1885 (LAC RG10-V1552).
[70] "Summary of Events Month of May," May 22, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1021-F3105).

Cotton's report touched off a flurry of activity within the Indian Department to discover the truth of the matter. Dewdney hired former Indian Agent Denny to speak with and observe the Niitsitapi. Denny found that the police had caused a great deal of trouble when they entered Kainai camps to seize stolen horses, which had been sold to them by the South Piikani who had stolen them elsewhere. Since the owners had bought them in good faith, they were reluctant to give them up. Denny maintained this would always be a source of trouble because these kinds of horses were always on the reserve. Denny also noted an emerging traffic in liquor and the Niitsitapi acquiring ammunition in the United States. To combat these problems, Denny suggested building police posts along the international border and having continuous patrols move along the trails coming from the Blackfeet Agency in Montana.[71] Assistant Commissioner Hayter Reed also visited the Kainai. Although he could sense no enmity emanating from community leaders towards government authorities or Euro-Canadians generally, he did discern a spirit of restiveness among the young men. Reed believed this was because American scoundrels were selling them whiskey. There were also many stolen horses on the reserve, which the Kainai feared the police would seize. Reed explained the Kainai were sensitive about handing over horses they had stolen in the United States because any horses they lost to American thieves were often gone forever. The Kainai told Reed, "Our horses are taken away from the very Indians from whom we have stolen, and on attempting to get them we have invariably failed, consequently the treatment towards us is unfair."[72] Reed declared that had American officials showed reciprocity in recovering stolen horses, there would have been no difficulty with the Kainai at all.

In fact, the Assistant Indian Commissioner questioned the wisdom of continuing to recover American horses, given this reciprocity did not exist. But if the policy did remain in place, there would have to be a larger police contingent in Blackfoot Country. They would need to be stationed closer to the reserves, not concentrated in large posts like Calgary. To stamp out horse stealing, the police needed to be always on the move, patrolling the country from the Cypress Hills to the Rocky Mountains. Such patrols would suppress the liquor traffic and the smuggling of fixed ammunition too. Reed recommended that the NWMP send seventy-five to a

[71] C.E. Denny to E. Dewdney Lieutenant-Governor of the N.W. Territories, November 21, 1885 (LAC RG10-V3727-F2511671).
[72] Hayter Reed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 24, 1885 (LAC RG10-V3727-F2511671).

hundred men out to Fort Macleod immediately. Further, he suggested that only large parties be sent out to make arrests, warning "every rebuff to the Police greatly emboldens the Indians."[73] Reed essentially reiterated Crozier's policy of concentrating manpower and overawing the Niitsitapi.

Police officials agreed with Reed's recommendation, and on December 14, 104 men of the NWMP "H" Troop arrived in Fort Macleod, augmenting the 213 men already stationed in Blackfoot Country: 112 in the Macleod District and 101 in Calgary District to the north. With the addition of "H" Troop, a total of 317 policemen now watched over the Niitsitapi, almost one-third of the entire force. This concentration of police resources was possible with the expansion of the force from 500 to 1,000 men. In June 1885, Prime Minister Macdonald introduced a bill for this increase, arguing that there were not enough men to watch First Nations peoples on their reserves and prevent them from wandering about the country. The outbreak of the North-West Resistance proved that 500 men were not enough for the job. More were required to maintain law and order, and to put down further uprisings. Additionally, the police had to prevent horse raiding and cattle rustling all along the American border. The police had to cover a vast territory, and a force of 500 would become overworked and exhausted.[74]

Despite the increase, the police and the Indian Department still fretted about further conflicts with Indigenous peoples. Not even three months after the North-West Resistance ended, frantic correspondence from Indian Agents and the police near Battleford, Prince Albert, and Batoche warned of discontent and disobedience among the Nehiyaw and Nakoda. Persistent rumours regarding the intent of these bands to "break out" continued until the next spring. This state of affairs was directly attributable to the Indian Department's policy of harshly punishing those deemed "disloyal" during the recent troubles. In July, Assistant Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed prepared a memorandum concerning the future treatment of First Nations peoples in the North-West. In it, he suggested that those deemed disloyal be deprived of their annuity payments until they fully paid the cost of the destruction. It called for a strictly enforced work-for-ration policy, which had been responsible for much of the discontent preceding the Resistance in the first place. The Indian Department planned to curtail gifts of clothing and make clear to Indigenous people that any such allotments were rewards for meritorious action (that is,

[73] Hayter Reed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 24, 1885 (LAC RG10-V3727-F2511671).
[74] Canada, *Debates of the House of Commons*, 30 June 1885 (John A. Macdonald), 2421-2423.

being industrious and obedient), not on any inherent right to them. Indian Agents would continue to hold seized rifles to minimize the chance of more "mischief." Reed wanted to seize horses for the same reason and sell them off to purchase cattle. Bands accused of the most egregious acts – like those belonging to Big Bear and One Arrow – faced dissolution and reabsorption into others. Finally, the government wanted to mandate a pass system that limited Indigenous peoples' ability to move around the county. They would need to obtain permission from the Indian Agent before leaving their reserves.[75] Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs Lawrence Vankoughnet agreed with Reed's proposals, suggesting that the harsh treatment of disloyal bands continue for at least two to three years before "they may be again put upon the same footing as the others."[76] While the government rewarded loyal bands with cattle, implements, wagons, and money, they impressed upon disloyal bands the folly of trying to stand against the government.

Reed's policy fomented discontent in the Battleford and Prince Albert districts, especially near Batoche and Duck Lake. The government deemed many of the Battleford Nehiyaw and Nakoda disloyal – as were the One Arrow and Beardy reserves – denying them their annuities that year. Poverty and suffering soon followed because of an acute shortage of food and clothing. Now Assistant NWMP Commissioner Crozier advised the Indian Department to increase rations straightaway, suggesting the substitution of beef for bacon and the addition of tea. The Battleford bands knew that the Niitsitapi received beef, and they wanted it too. Crozier recommended that the Indian Department distribute clothing immediately to relieve the many people walking around nearly naked. Others needed better protection against the coming severe winter weather, or they would be unable to work outside.[77] Similar conditions existed for One Arrow and Beardy's bands, who subsisted on gophers and rabbits they could kill with arrows or snare with old rawhide strips. Superintendent A.B. Perry warned that hunting this quarry would be impossible when winter set in because they lacked warm clothing.[78] Crozier pointed out there was much sickness on the Battleford reserves and predicted many would die for lack of medicine. Rumours swirled that the police planned to make more arrests related to late troubles

[75] "Memorandum for the Honourable, the Indian Commissioner Relative to the Future Management of Indians," Hayter Reed, July 20, 1885 (LAC RG10-V3710-F19550-3).
[76] Lawrence Vankoughnet to Edgar Dewdney, October 28, 1885 (LAC RG10-V3710-F19550-3).
[77] Assistant Commissioner Leif Crozier to Lieutenant-Governor Edgar Dewdney, November 2, 1885(LAC RG18-V1025-F3533).
[78] Inspector A. Ross Cuthbert to Superintendent Perry, January 20, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68); Superintendent A. Bowen Perry to NWMP Commissioner, February 19, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).

during the winter, which added to the discontent.[79] By the end of October, there were rumours that the Nakoda and Nehiyaw from the Sweetgrass, Grizzly's Head, Poundmaker, and Little Pine reserves had left their reserves, going south to join the Niitsitapi.[80] Some wanted better rations without the requisite work. More worrisome gossip suggested they were making ready to help the Niitsitapi, who planned to rise in the spring if the government stopped feeding them.[81]

Although many of the rumours were unsubstantiated hearsay – many individuals had left to just hunt or fish – the police frequently conducted extra patrols and investigated reserve conditions to reassure skittish settlers that everything was under control. But such chatter continued throughout the winter as the conditions on the reserves worsened. In mid-January, Perry warned that people on the One Arrow and Beardy reserves "were in a wretched condition, starving and suffering extremely for want of clothing." When Inspector A. Ross Cuthbert toured the reserves looking to alleviate their suffering, he found most of the inhabitants "poorly clothed, and huddled in their huts like a sheep in a pen." Cuthbert distributed tea, sugar, tobacco, old horse blankets, and five worn police buffalo coats to those in need, but much more had to be done. When Indian Department officials berated Cuthbert's meagre but well-meaning efforts as interfering with Indian policy, Perry warned them that such inhumane treatment was sure to foment further trouble.[82] Shortly after, Prince Albert residents spread the rumour that the disaffected Nehiyaw intended to attack "loyal" chiefs Attackacoop and Mistawasis if they refused to join a general pillaging of the region come spring. Crozier stated that the rumour had no basis in fact but had caused a good deal of panic in the settlement, especially among the women and children.[83]

So, what did troubles in the north have to do with the Niitsitapi? Crozier maintained that peace in one part of the territories was contingent on having peace everywhere. If the Nehiyaw were quiet, the Niitsitapi would be quiet and vice versa. If one was discontent and restive, it

[79] Assistant Commissioner Leif Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, October 26, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3533).
[80] Extract from Mr. Acting Indian Agent Carney's Letter, October 5, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3533); John Carney to Indian Commissioner, October 12, 1885, Battleford (LAC RG18-V1025-F3533); Inspector W.S. Morris to NWMP Assistant Commissioner, October 21, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3533); W.M. Good (For Commissioner of Indian Affairs) to NWMP Assistant Commissioner, October 22, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3533) Assistant Commissioner Leif Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, October 24, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3533)
[81] Assistant Commissioner Leif Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, October 24, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3533).
[82] Superintendent A. Bowen Perry to NWMP Commissioner, February 19, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).
[83] Superintendent A. Bowen Perry to NWMP Assistant Commissioner, January 5, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68); NWMP Assistant Commissioner L.N.F. Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, January 6, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).

would encourage the other to be as well. In the wake of the Prince Albert rumour above, Crozier wrote to Commissioner Irvine:

> "If next spring or summer the northern Indians are contented, and have confidence in their future good treatment…the effect upon the Blackfeet and other Southern tribes of such feeling cannot but be good, while, if the northern Indians are discontented, unsettled, and have no confidence in the manner in which they are to be treated for the future…if discontent does not exist among the southern tribes, knowing that such a feeling existed among the Northern Indians they would feel that if they wish to make mischief at any time their hands for that purpose would be greatly strengthened..."[84]

Two weeks later, Crozier reiterated his views, writing, "I believe if steps were taken to ensure the peace of that part of the territory it would be an absolute assurance of peace throughout the whole country."[85] In reporting to the Indian Department about living conditions on the Battleford reserves, Anglican missionary John Alexander MacKay expressed similar sentiments. He too was convinced that if there was no trouble in Blackfoot Country come spring, there would be no trouble on the Battleford reserves either.[86] In early 1886, keeping peace in the North-West Territories meant making sure all Indigenous peoples were content. There was a palpable belief that any discontent and turbulence would spread from one part of the territory to another, sparking another conflict more destructive than 1885.

In the months after the Resistance, Indian Department officials were preoccupied with compiling loyalty and disloyalty lists to reward the former and punish the latter. Meanwhile, the primary mission of the police was to maintain the peace of the country. Thus, police officials tried to mitigate against their fellow institution's worst instincts. Assistant Police Commissioner Crozier and Superintendent Perry pointedly criticized the Indian Department's approach, especially when it spawned horrendously impoverished conditions on northern reserves. Crozier believed that the punishment of disloyal bands could not be ongoing; these bands' "privileges and pleasures" had to be restored.[87] Treating them with decency, humanity, and civility was the

[84] NWMP Assistant Commissioner L.N.F. Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, January 6, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).
[85] NWMP Assistant Commissioner L.N.F. Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, January 20, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).
[86] J.A. MacKay to the Indian Commissioner, February 10, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).
[87] Assistant Commissioner Leif Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, October 26, 1885 (LAC RG18-V1025-F3533).

key to securing the country's future peace and prosperity.[88] From Prince Albert, Perry told Irvine the same thing, writing, "I consider that all the Indians irrespective of the part they took in the late troubles should be clothed and fed… a liberal and considerate policy toward the Indians will tend to maintain the peace which is so earnestly desired."[89] The kind and liberal treatment of all Indigenous peoples – loyal or disloyal – was the best safeguard against future outbreaks.

A well-trained and powerful force ready to cope with a sudden uprising – especially in Blackfoot Country – was also important. Crozier doubted that the force's size – even though it had been increased only a month earlier by one hundred men – was large enough to enforce the law or inspire a feeling of safety among settlers. He was not sure how much of an increase was necessary – doubling it might not have been enough – but he asserted that "it must be increased until there is a perfect feeling of confidence not only on the part of the public but on the part of all executive officers."[90] It had to be large enough to convince Indigenous peoples that there would be no opportunity for "mischief" and that even their most determined effort at revolt would fail. To Crozier, no amount of expenditure building such a force could be too high, considering the expense of the late uprising. Perry did not give an optimal number as to the force's size either but did state that it had to be big enough to maintain a close watchfulness over Indigenous peoples: their movements, intentions, and grievances.[91] But Perry also argued that friendly feelings and trust had to exist for the police to be able do this. They needed to visit reserves freely, talk with the people, and make small gifts, that is, in Perry's words, "follow the old well tried rules of this Force in its dealings with them."[92] Crozier and Perry's prescription for preventing future outbreaks meant fulfilling Indigenous peoples' physical needs (providing food, shelter, and clothing), fostering friendly relationships with them, concentrating police manpower, and establishing extensive surveillance networks.

Young Kainai men continued to be unsettled in the first half of 1886, but unlike the Nehiyaw and Nakoda on "disloyal" northern reserves, they had no difficulty heading out into the winter cold. South Piikani and Kainai horse raiders struck the Fort Belknap herds repeatedly

[88]NWMP Assistant Commissioner L.N.F. Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, January 20, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).
[89] Superintendent A. Bowen Perry to NWMP Commissioner, February 19, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).
[90] NWMP Assistant Commissioner L.N.F. Crozier to NWMP Commissioner Irvine, January 20, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).
[91] Superintendent A. Bowen Perry to NWMP Commissioner, February 19, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).
[92] Superintendent A. Bowen Perry to NWMP Commissioner, February 19, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F68).

from January until April. They were so persistent that American troops from Fort Assiniboine had to send out patrols to the Sweet Grass Hills and Fort Belknap.[93] The NWMP set out a considerable number of new detachments in the eastern Macleod district and the Maple Creek district (Figures 3.3 and 3.4) in late April to discourage Kainai raiders. Standing orders for the Bull's Head and Forty Mile detachments in the Macleod District declared that the police's "principle duties will be to…intercept the passage of any party or parties driving horses either from North or South who cannot give a strictly satisfactory account of themselves supported by documentary evidence"[94] By summer there had been a sweeping expansion of surveillance, especially in the ability of the police to see and operate farther afield from larger administrative posts like Fort Macleod and Lethbridge. It was a sharp contrast to the Fort Saskatchewan, Battleford, Calgary, and Prince Albert districts, which had few detachments.

Despite government efforts on both sides of the border to ameliorate raiding, the A'aninin and Nakoda became so frustrated with the situation that Colonel Otis – the commanding officer at Fort Assiniboine – warned the Department of Dakota that the two tribes, along with their Nehiyaw allies, planned to "invade with hostile intent the North West Canadian Territory."[95] Too many raids had occurred during the winter, and they intended to strike back at their tormentors.[96] To soothe matters, Otis provisioned a party of nine Fort Belknap men to travel to the Kainai reserve and recover their ponies.[97] When they arrived at the end of May, Agent Pocklington and Red Crow promised they would do all they could to help. However, not many others in the community had such a conciliatory mindset. When the search began, two Kainai men drew rifles and threatened to shoot the Belknap party. Pocklington promised "dreadful consequences" from the police if the A'aninin came to harm and the two hotheads withdrew. There was little cooperation with the search, and after three days, no progress had been made at all. Eventually, fifteen horses were recovered, which must have been an enormous disappointment, as one of the A'aninin men had lost sixty-six horses that winter alone. The young men were not about to let

[93] Marsh, "Last of the Horse Wars," 91-92.
[94] "Instructions for the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Detachment at Forty Mile Coulee" and "Instructions for the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Detachment at Bull's Head Coulee" (LAC RG18-V1045-F110-1886).
[95] C.S. Otis to Headquarters, Department of Dakota, May 6, 1886 (MHS MC 46 Volume 4); Fort Assiniboine Post Orders No. 86, May 3, 1886, C.S. Otis (MHS MC46 Box 4, File 2).
[96] D.J. Thomson to the Lieutenant-Governor North West Territories, May 5, 1886 (LAC RG10-V3727-F251672).
[97] W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner's Office, June 4, 1886 (LAC RG10-1554:C14842); Fort Assiniboine Post Orders No. 97, May 20, 1886, C.S. Otis (MHS MC-46-3).

the stolen animals go though; they broke into the Red Crow's corral one night and took the horses back. Determined to see that their trip was not a total waste of time, Red Crow gave the A'aninin party ten of his own horses and then escorted them a distance beyond the reserve as a precaution for their safety.[98]

The young Kainai men were just as defiant away the reserve. Throughout May, they continued to race towards Fort Belknap, congregating in the Cypress Hills, where they stole Canadian horses and killed cattle for meat. By the end of the month, Superintendent McIllree was beside himself. He declared to superiors that the region was infested with Niitsitapi horse thieves, a constant annoyance to the police. McIllree wrote, "They lurk around in the thickest part of the wooded coulees during the day time and at night come around the Camps and try to steal our horses. The parties are usually mixed Bloods and Piegans [sic] and they are very bold and impudent. They have stolen in the past a great many horses in this section of the country, killed stock, and murdered two white men, a halfbreed and an Indian."[99] Their behaviour created a feeling of insecurity among the new settlers, who often gave up their stock without resistance when confronted by marauders. McIllree stated they did not want to risk their lives, fearing the Niitsitapi were "ever ready" to use their rifles. Annoyed, McIllree wrote to the new commissioner Lawrence W. Herchmer, "It is a great pity that we cannot shoot a few of these Indians. They are continuously infesting these hills and knowing as they do that we are not allowed to shoot them on sight, they are very bold and impertinent and give a great deal of trouble and annoyance to the Detachments."[100] McIllree endured repeated censures for suggesting such tactics, with high-level officials in the Indian Department and the NWMP emphatically telling him not to shoot Indigenous suspects unless certain they were "foreign Indians" and only if they fired on the police first.[101] McIllree's frustrated musing illustrates that Kainai-police relations were unlikely to improve soon.

Throughout 1885 and 1886, the NWMP and Indian Department worried about further armed conflict with Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West. The North-West Resistance was tremendously expensive and undoubtedly scared off potential immigrants, which

[98] C.S Otis to W. Pocklington, October 8, 1886 (LAC RG10-3797-33238:C10192); W. Pocklington to Indian Commissioner's Office, June 11, 1886 (LAC RG10-1554:C14842); Dempsey, *Red Crow*, 188-189.
[99] Superintendent J.H. McIllree to Commissioner L.W. Herchmer, May 26, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1045-F110-1886).
[100] Superintendent J.H. McIllree to Commissioner L.W. Herchmer, May 17, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1045-F100-1886).
[101] Clerk of North-West Territories Council A.E. Forget to Commissioner of the NWMP, May 20, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1045-F110-1886); Comptroller Fred White to NWMP Commissioner, May 31, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1045-F110-1886).

stymied settlement and Canadian nation-building. The relationship between the Niitsitapi and the police was strained over the issue of stolen horses even before the Métis under Louis Riel challenged the sovereignty of the federal government. The Kainai thought it unfair that the police seized horses from them but did not return property taken by American Indians and Euro-American thieves. From their perspective, the police were not administering justice equally to "white and red men alike," which had been the NWMP's constant refrain since 1874. The South Piikani conflict with the Fort Belknap tribes assured that such disparate treatment would remain a pertinent issue. It further annoyed the Niitsitapi that the Canadian government had broken both the spirit and the terms of Treaty 7 by not allowing them to participate as wartime allies and denying them ammunition. Meanwhile, the NWMP – whose primary purpose was to maintain peace – were convinced that preventing another outbreak meant managing all Indigenous peoples carefully, by treating First Nations kindly by providing them adequate food and shelter. At the same time, a large and powerful force of police needed to be maintained to surveil them constantly. Intimate relationships were also necessary to build trust within Indigenous communities and engender a more cooperative atmosphere. By the summer of 1886, this program had been mostly enacted regarding the Niitsitapi. They received the lion's share of food aid compared to the Nehiyaw and Nakoda, indicating that the Indian Department was much more concerned about keeping them content. In 1886, Treaty 7 reserves received 3,030,500 lbs. of beef compared to 171,429 lbs. of bacon for Treaty 6 (where most of the "disloyal" bands were located). Each treaty area had an approximate population of 6300 people.[102] Meanwhile, the police worked to erect a robust police presence in Blackfoot Country. Between the end of 1884 and the summer of 1886, there was a far greater concentration of manpower in the Macleod District compared to the Battleford and Prince Albert districts. By the end of 1886, this concentration of men was further increased with the transfer of the entire "K" Troop – commanded by the now mythical Mountie Superintendent Sam Steele – from the Battleford to the Macleod district. There was also an impressive expansion of surveillance, with many police detachments cropping up in the southern portion of the country to prevent Kainai horse raiding in the Cypress Hills and the United States. However, the concentration of men and the expansion of

[102] Statistics compiled from Canada, Department of Indian Affairs*, Sessional Paper No. 8 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ending 31st December 1886* (Ottawa, 1887) Part I, 252-256 and Part II, 163-173).

surveillance networks did little to stop subsequent Kainai raids. Supplementary tactics were needed; the NWMP had to build a more cooperative model for enforcing Canadian law in Niitsitapi communities. Their first attempt – and failure – is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR
Murders and Manhunts: A Cooperative Policing Model Falters, 1887-1888

In the spring and summer of 1886, A'aninin (Gros Ventres) and Nakoda (Assiniboine) men from Fort Belknap were a common fixture at Fort Assiniboine, an American army base situated on the northern plains of Montana. It was common knowledge that the Kainai (Bloods) and South Piikani (South Peigan) had relentlessly pillaged their horse herds, a topic of some mirth around the post among the motley crowd of hangers-on. They openly taunted the Belknap men for their alleged cowardice, daring them to strike back.[1] In mid-August, Colonel C.S. Otis learned that a small party of A'aninin that had stopped briefly to camp by the fort were on their way to "go to war" with the Kainai. Otis immediately sent out cavalry troopers to turn them back.[2] A couple of weeks later, the Kainai raided near Fort Assiniboine and made off with Belknap horses. A mixed party of twenty-three A'aninin, Nakoda, and Apsáalooke (Crow) set off in pursuit, so deftly that it did not attract the garrison's attention. Pursuing the raiders' trail, they crossed the Canadian border and came upon six Kainai individuals on the plains shortly after.[3] It was not the party they sought, but four Kainai men and two teens who had been searching for the horses of their friend, Elk Horn.[4] When the Kainai noticed the pursuers, they fled for the refuge of a high butte. Two of them – the only ones with weapons – fired on the Belknaps while the others worked frantically with knives and axes to dig pits to fortify their positions. The Belknaps strafed the hill with rifle fire and quickly killed five of the defenders. The last survivor took flight, then was gunned down as he ran.[5] Taking six scalps, the victors

[1] W.L. Lincoln to the [American] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 11, 1886 (National Archives and Records Administration at Denver (NARAD) RG75-8NS-075-96-436, Box 1).
[2] Colonel C.S. Otis, Fort Assiniboine, to W.L. Lincoln, September 6, 1886 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-439, Box 2).
[3] C.S Otis to W. Pocklington, October 8, 1886. (Library and Archive Canada (LAC) Record Group10-Volume3797-File33238); John T. Bell, *The Life of Ne-cot-ta: The Last of the Great Warrior Chiefs*, 419-421 (Montana Historical Society (MHS) M321).
[4] Gilbert E. Sanders to L.W. Herchmer, June 25, 1887 (Glenbow Museum and Archives (Glenbow) M1093-56).
[5] C.S Otis to W. Pocklington, October 8, 1886 (Library and Archive Canada RG10-V3797-F33238).

returned to Fort Belknap on September 2 and held a victory dance, which was broken up by Indian Agent W.L. Lincoln.[1]

The Belknaps undoubtedly enjoyed some measure of cathartic release with their attack on the Kainai. But if they believed it would stem the tide of Niitsitapi raids, they were sorely mistaken. Killing the six Kainai men only ramped up the hostility. Upon hearing the news, Calf Shirt organized some one hundred men to go south and avenge their comrades' deaths.[2] The expedition was not going to be a massive horse raiding party but a revenge party, one whose intent was to kill as many of the enemy as possible. Kainai informant Red Arrow once told former policeman and Indian Agent R.N. Wilson that Niitsitapi war chiefs marshalled these kinds of expeditions only when "hatred of the enemy was popular."[3] While the community chose Calf Shirt to lead it, the reserve men were the ones who determined the course of action after a long meeting.[4] While Agent Pocklington convinced Calf Shirt to hold off until he determined "the truth" of the matter, many young men could not restrain themselves and went raiding.[5] Pocklington wrote, "I am keeping a sharp lookout after any war parties coming or going. *There always are several small parties of youngsters slipping away* and sometimes returning with a few horses but often empty-handed."[6] As in previous years, the departure of Kainai war parties – often in partnership with their South Piikani cousins – created chaos in the Maple Creek District as they passed through.[7] By early October, reports reached Superintendent J.H. McIllree with disturbing regularity that large bands of Niitsitapi men roamed between Medicine Hat and the Head of the Cypress Hills stealing horses, waylaying travellers, and clashing with police patrols.[8]

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[1] W.L. Lincoln to the [American] Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 11, 1886 (NARAD RG75-8NS-96-436, Box 1).

[2] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, September 24, 1886 (LAC RG10-V1554).

[3] Phillip H. Godsell, ed., *The R.N. Wilson Papers*, Volume 1 (Calgary: Glenbow Foundation, 1958), 124 (Glenbow Archives M-4421).

[4] Superintendent P.R. Neale to NWMP Commissioner, September 30, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1037-F66).

[5] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, September 24, 1886 (LAC RG10-V1554).

[6] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, October 10, 1886 (LAC RG10-V1554); the italics are mine. Methodist missionary John Maclean – who went out to the Kainai camps to urge the young men to stay home – admitted that "some" of them had gone across the boundary line in the wake of the murder of the six men; see John McLean to Reverend Dr. Sutherland, Methodist Mission Rooms, October 8, 1886 (LAC RG10-V3797-F33238).

[7] Positive proof of this occurring is given by Superintendent J.H. McIllree, who reported in June 1886 a Nehiyaw man travelling from Fort Belknap asserted that two Kainai men asked him where the A'aninin were camped at so they could steal horses from them; see Superintendent J.H. McIllree to NWMP Commissioner, December 1, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1037-F66).

[8] Superintendent J.H. McIllree to NWMP Commissioner, October 4, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F75); Corporal J.C. Gordon, Sand's Mill, to Superintendent J.H. McIllree, October 2, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F75); Superintendent J.H. McIllree to NWMP Commissioner, October 23, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F75); Superintendent J.H. McIllree to

McIllree desperately pleaded that he needed more men. In the meantime, he wanted permission to close posts in the western part of the district to focus on the eastern reaches, where the Niitsitapi were most active. He reiterated his opinion that the police should be able to shoot Indigenous suspects who did not surrender upon demand. McIllree complained:

"It goes on year after year [Niitsitapi depredations in the district] and the only way I can see to stop it is to have plenty men in the Hills, and if the Indians will not surrender at once when called upon to do so to shoot them. They know perfectly well now that we have orders not to shoot them, and it makes them very bold."[9]

McIllree's law enforcement philosophy approximated that of L.N.F. Crozier immediately after the Bull Elk Affair, meaning that the NWMP needed to concentrate manpower, demonstrate an ability to respond to emerging circumstances rapidly, and convey an uncompromising resolution to uphold the law and punish wrongdoers. But Crozier had softened his stance after the 1885 Resistance – possibly because of the high financial and human costs of the late troubles – convinced that such a thing could never be allowed to happen again. He advised then Commissioner A.G. Irvine that all Indigenous peoples be treated kindly to prevent mass dissatisfaction and that the police force be tremendously bolstered in strength. Superintendent A.B. Perry echoed Crozier's sentiments but added that a more cooperative policing model had to be implemented, one that engendered friendlier ties and fostered trust. Perry's way of thinking had other adherents, including the next commissioner of the force, L.W. Herchmer. According to historian R.C. Macleod, the Resistance severely damaged the police's reputation, and Prime Minister John A. Macdonald insisted that only a change in leadership could restore it. Herchmer served for two years each in Ireland and India after receiving a commission in the 46th Regiment of Foot before ending his military career and immigrating to Canada. In 1872, the Canadian government offered him a commission in the mounted police force that was being organized. Because the force materialized too slowly, Herchmer joined the International Boundary Commission as Commissariat Officer instead. In 1878 he became an Indian Agent and by 1885,

NWMP Commissioner, October 7, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F75); Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney to Commissioner NWMP, October 12, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F75).

[9] Superintendent J.H. McIllree to NWMP Commissioner, October 4, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1038-F75).

was an Inspector of Indian Agencies.[10] His long experience with Indigenous peoples influenced his ideas for how to police the Canadian Prairie West.

As commissioner, Herchmer made a significant contribution to the establishment of community-engaged policing on Niitsitapi reserves, a much-needed initiative. Despite a large concentration of manpower and continuing expansion of surveillance in Blackfoot Country, Kainai horse raiding continued unabated, fostering disorder in the Cypress Hills and on the reserve as raiders – and the community itself – continued to resist law enforcement. Attempting to overawe the Kainai had done little to remedy matters and the NWMP needed a more cooperative model to effectively administer Canadian law. Though Crozier maintained that the force had to be increased until a perfect feeling of security existed among Euro-Canadian settlers and police officials, this idea was never going to be accepted by the opposition Liberals, who repeatedly demanded a reduction in its size for the sake of budgetary constraint. While McIllree advocated for a rougher style of frontier justice to keep the Niitsitapi in line, Herchmer wanted to incorporate them into the NWMP as "Indian Scouts" to keep the peace and enforce Canadian law within their communities. This Indian Scout System would become a permanent fixture in southern Alberta that lasted into the late twentieth century. Inaugurated in 1887, it was a novel innovation that eventually reduced friction between the police and Niitsitapi communities. But the initiative had a rough start. In the summer of 1887, the force employed several Kainai men as an experiment, and they performed so well that Herchmer recommended the system's implementation across the North-West Territories. The next year the NWMP hired scouts in the Calgary, Battleford, and Prince Albert districts but could get few applicants among the Kainai. The ongoing conflict between the Kainai and the Belknaps continued to prompt cross-border horse raiding. When the police tried to recover stolen animals, it maintained an atmosphere of distrust and animosity towards the police. Further contributing to it was the belief the NMWP was not making good on its long-vaunted promise to uphold the law equally for both white settlers and the original inhabitants of the land, fueled by the police's seeming inability to solve serious crimes involving Niitsitapi victims. The police shooting of a Kainai man named Bad Dried Meat (or Running-Backwards-And-Forwards) – mistaken for a wanted Siksika man named Deerfoot – fomented more indignation. There was little community will for participation in a

[10] R.C. Macleod, *The North West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 43.

cooperative police model given the bad feeling that existed, which lasted until the end of the decade. Since the Kainai refused to play a role in policing their communities, the NWMP had little choice but to fall back on old policy to try to quell lawlessness and disorder: concentrating manpower and increasing surveillance networks by building more detachments. Doing so made the Kainai the most heavily policed Indigenous people in the Canadian Prairie West.

The disorder inflicted by the Kainai in Montana and the Maple Creek District in the spring of 1887 demonstrated that the police needed to implement a better system to combat Niitsitapi horse raiding. What happened during April and May might have been a final impetus to organizing the Indian Scouts. While there was great anxiety among Indian Department and NWMP officials about whether the Kainai would go south to attack Fort Belknap in spring, this did not happen. Pocklington managed to keep Calf Shirt on the reserve while the agent investigated the case of the six murdered Kainai, a difficult task considering the haze of contradictions that surrounded it. For example, when a Kainai raiding party returned on October 4, they told Pocklington they had heard that Montana cowboys had committed the murders.[11] Only several days later, Pocklington read an affidavit to Calf Shirt, declaring that the A'aninin had killed the six.[12] The Kainai war chief momentarily deferred to the Indian Agent's counsel, rebuffing a party of Siksika in early November who urged the Kainai to go south. Pocklington asserted that the Siksika pushed the matter "a good deal" but because Red Crow was touring central Canada at the government's request and expense – an endeavour designed to reward the chief for his conduct during the Resistance and demonstrate the power of the Canadian State – Calf Shirt promised to do nothing until he came back.[13] When Calf Shirt wavered as community pressure mounted, Pocklington was successful in convincing him to wait again. Between December 9 and 16, the agent, an escort of police, and two Kainai men travelled 320 miles up and down the coulees along the international boundary line.[14] They failed to find the murder site, but matters remained peaceful until Big Wolf told Pocklington in mid-January 1887 that he had found the six Kainai bodies. While no flesh remained, their clothing revealed that they had been

[11] Superintendent P.R. Neale, Fort Macleod, to NWMP Commissioner, October 8, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1037-F66).
[12] Superintendent P.R. Neale, Fort Macleod, to NWMP Commissioner, October 9, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1037-F66).
[13] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, November 5, 1886 (LAC RG10-V1554).
[14] Superintendent P.R. Neale, Fort Macleod, to NWMP Commissioner, December 18, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1037-F66); NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Indian Commissioner, December 23, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1037-F66).

killed by gunfire, not hanged by cowboys.[15] While Calf Shirt was determined to wait until he saw the government's response to the situation, but by the end of the month younger Kainai men challenged the bitter winter cold, then returned with stolen horses.[16] By mid-February, Pocklington reported that they were unresponsive to the authority of the older men. Two or three parties containing twelve to thirty men struck out for Fort Belknap, according to the agent, "with a view of stealing as many of their horses as possible."[17]

Young Kainai men continued to leave the reserve throughout March, April, and May, which led to the worst season of depredations on the Canadian frontier since the North-West Resistance, perhaps ever. They stole horses, killed cattle, and menaced travellers from Medicine Hat to Fort Benton, and from the edge of the Rocky Mountains to the Cypress Hills. At the beginning of April, the *Medicine Hat Times* complained about the Kainai, declaring in an editorial:

"It is high time the government should take decisive action on the Indian question. The redman is the only curse hanging over the prosperity and growth of the Northwest Territories… Horses are stolen, cattle are killed, and houses broken into by these miscreants, and nothing is safe within their reach… As long as the Indian is allowed to roam unchecked so long will the domains of the TIMES inevitably be filled each week with accounts of the depredations of these lawless redskins."[18]

At the same time, the *Macleod Gazette* reported that between fifty and sixty Kainai men had gone south to "secure locks of Gros Ventres hair but would not object to securing a few white man's horses."[19] Two weeks later, the *Macleod Gazette* remarked on the severity of Kainai raids from "Maple Creek to the Mountains":

"Indian deviltry along the frontier seems more prevalent this spring than it has in some years. The GAZETTE is in receipt of complaints from a great many different sources of depredations committed by Indians and it is generally concluded that the Bloods are the guilty ones… These

[15] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, January 20, 1887 (LAC RG10-V1555); Superintendent P.R. Neale, Fort Macleod, to NWMP Commissioner, January 25, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1037-F66).
[16] Severity of weather forced the post quartermaster at Fort Assiniboine to issue extra stove fuel and feed for horses to due to very cold weather over 20 days, see Fort Assiniboine Post Orders, February 2, 1887, Major G.G. Huntt, (MHS MC46-4-3). William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, February N.D., 1887 (LAC RG10-1555).
[17] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, February 16, 1887 (LAC RG10-V1555).
[18] "The Aborigines," *Medicine Hat Times*, April 2, 1887.
[19] "The Annual Scare," *Macleod Gazette*, April 12, 1887.

continual depredations on the part of the southern Indians are a strong argument for carrying out the plan suggested in last weeks [sic] GAZETTE."[20]

That plan referred to was to move Niitsitapi reserves north. The *Lethbridge News* agreed, asserting that the Kainai continuously killed cattle and stoles horses near Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. They were a "standing source of uneasiness to the inhabitants of this district and of Northern Montana… they have every facility for carrying on a profitable trade in stolen horses, interchanging them with their allies for these stolen on the other side."[21]

NWMP police records corroborate the claims of these editorials. On at least seven occasions, police parties went to the reserve to either recover horses or head off returning raiders.[22] In his April monthly report, Superintendent Neale alleged that the Kainai had accosted a freighting party a few miles south of Lethbridge and gone south to steal horses. When they returned, the police relieved them of six head. But there were still many branded horses on the reserve, and settlers complained that the police had not seized them immediately. Neale pointed out that he was not empowered to do so by law unless the owner or an accredited agent positively identified the stolen stock.[23] In his annual report to Parliament, Herchmer remarked that while Indigenous peoples in the north and east had been remarkably behaved, staying at home and working on their farms, the Kainai "caused a great deal of trouble." He explained, "Early in the Spring…a number of their young men, tired of the reserve and anxious to distinguish themselves, made a dash on Medicine Hat and vicinity and on U.S. Territory, stealing a number of horses."[24] In a June letter to Comptroller Fred White, Herchmer complained that the Kainai had not lived up to promises they had agreed to in Treaty 7, which bound them to respect settlers' property. In the commissioner's eyes, the fact that stolen Medicine Hat horses had been found on the Kainai reserve proved his point.[25] Herchmer's comments were meek compared to Superintendent S.B. Steele's more emphatic denunciation of Kainai misbehaviour, declaring that they were continually leaving for the United States to steal horses. In comparison to their Piikani

[20] "Indian Depredations," *Macleod Gazette*, May 3, 1887.
[21] "Remove the Bloods," *Lethbridge News*, May 11, 1887.
[22] Superintendent P.R. Neale to NWMP Commissioner, May 1, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3778-F39063); Superintendent P.R. Neale to NWMP Commissioner, May 14, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1079-F384-1887); Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 28 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1887* (Ottawa, 1888) 47, 57, 59; Journal of Gilbert E. Sanders, April 29, May 10 & 11, 1887 (Glenbow M1093-40).
[23] Superintendent P.R. Neale to NWMP Commissioner, May 1, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3778-F39063).
[24] Canada *Report of the NWMP, 1887*, 9.
[25] L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller, Ottawa, June 5, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1079-F384-1887).

neighbours, the Kainai were more restless, less law-abiding, and were, according to him, "never so pleased as when roaming about the country." He obliquely supported new approaches to Niitsitapi policing, writing, "These Indians keep us in constant watchfulness…constant supervision had to be exercised over them, and although there were 200 men in the district, it was found that even that number was not sufficient. It would appear that three divisions would be little enough. The craftiness of these people makes it difficult to watch their movements."[26] In NWMP records, 1887 stood out as a year of vigorous Kainai raiding.

Officers in the Macleod and Maple Creek districts responded in a manner that suggested Kainai depredations were greater than in previous years as well. Rumours swelled throughout the winter that the Kainai were going to leave the reserve en masse come spring to strike back at the tribes of Fort Belknap. Before the end of March, Superintendents Steele and McIllree sat down in Lethbridge to arrange patrols along the border between Lethbridge and the Cypress Hills. On March 28, Jerry Potts – long-time police interpreter and scout, the son of an American fur trader and a Piikani woman – set out to help select new detachments in the Milk River country.[27] The previous year, the NWMP had established three of them that acted as base camps for patrolling the country. These posts – Chin Coulee, Forty Mile Coulee, and Bull's Head Coulee – were set out mostly to reign in horse stealing. Each week patrols from the Macleod and Maple Creek districts met at a midpoint to exchange intelligence. However, the sites were poorly chosen. The water between Chin Coulee and Forty Mile Coulee was alkaline and unsuitable for men or horses to drink during the summer, causing a tremendous amount of illness that year. There was no water to be found at all between Forty Mile and Bull's Head Coulee unless the men dug for it. Much of the feed for horses was sparse and inadequate because of the sandy nature of the soil. Neale pointed out bluntly in a report that "the country ten miles east of the Lethbridge to Bull's Head Coulee, and south to Milk River is a barren."[28] That the police made such a poor choice of posts demonstrates that they needed Indigenous knowledge of the land to pick the best spots to surveil the country.

In every instance where the police suspected Niitsitapi depredations, the trail led south, to either find freshwater or to prepare for an evasive dash across the international boundary line to

[26] Canada, *Report of the NWMP*, 1887, 62.
[27] "[History of] Milk River Ridge" (LAC RG18-V11-F326-76).
[28] Canada, *Report of the NWMP*, 1887, 36-37.

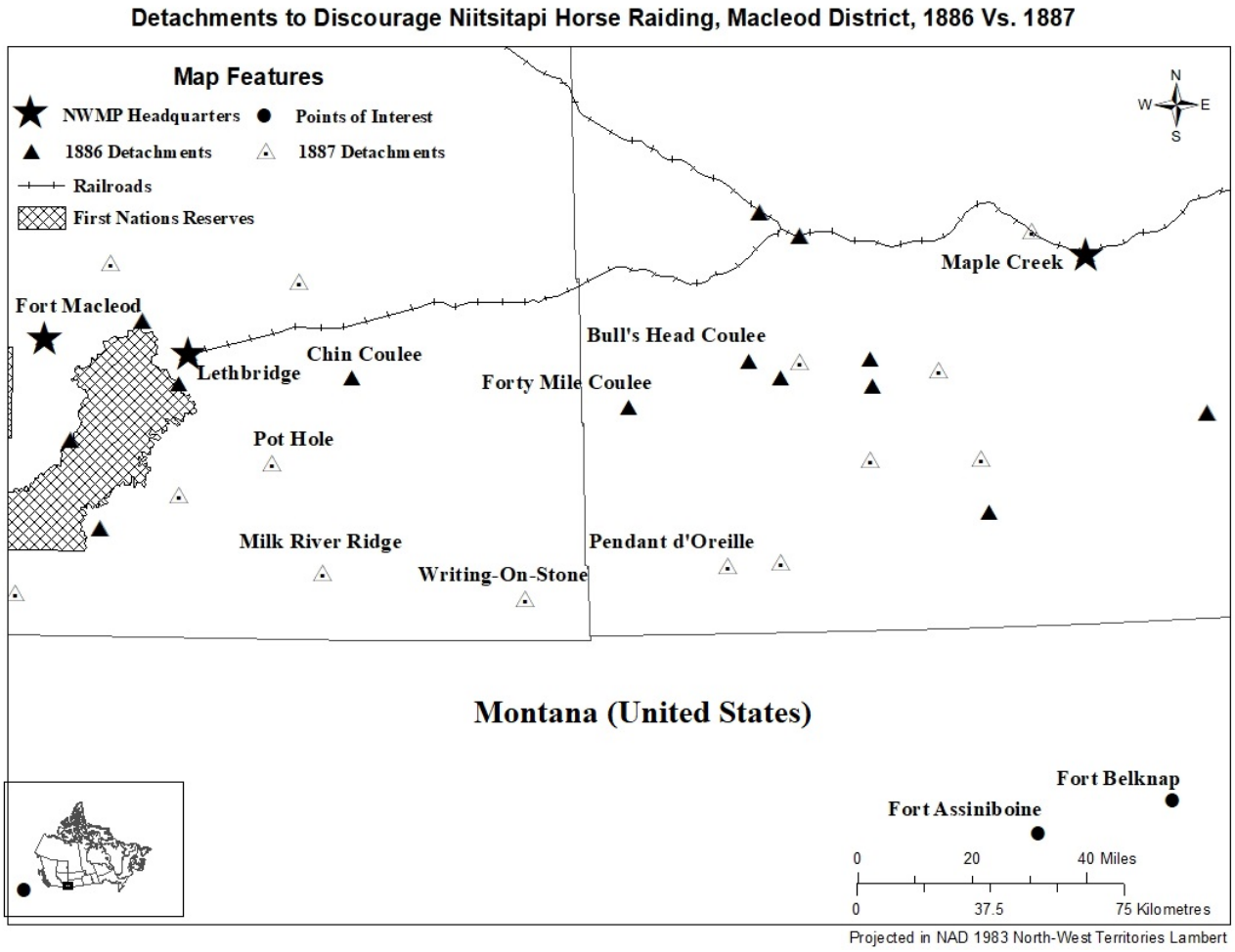

Figure 4.1: Detachments Meant to Discourage Niitsitapi Horse Raiding, 1886 vs. 1887. The NWMP established detachments at Chin Coulee, Forty Mile Coulee, and Bull's Head Coulee in 1886. However, poor water and forage, as well as their distance from the international boundary forced, forced their abandonment. The next year, the NWMP erected Milk River Ridge, Writing-On-Stone, and Pendant d'Oreille further south to assure access to better water and forage. Writing-On-Stone also held cultural significance to the Niitsitapi.

avoid pursuers. For these reasons, the line of posts from Lethbridge to Maple Creek shifted to the south for the 1887 season (Figure 4.1). By April 8, the police were ready to meet the spring challenge of the Kainai by manning new detachments at Milk River Ridge, Writing-On-Stone, and Pendant d'Oreille. The police set out these posts nearly a month earlier compared to the previous year. While most of the new posts were picked because of their proximity to good water and firewood, Writing-On-Stone held cultural significance for the Niitsitapi. The site was prominent in legend: many years earlier, a bison hunting party had perished there after being caught in a tremendous blizzard. Before they died, they etched pictographs detailing their tragic experience into the rocks.[29] Because of its solemn nature, raiding parties stopped there to pray and leave offerings for luck.[30] With this expansion of detachments, Neale believed he needed more men than already allocated the previous December. Without them, the district would be shorthanded, unable to operate the new outposts effectively. Worse, he needed to put out additional detachments to watch the cattle ranges north and west of the reserves.[31] Although one non-commissioned officer and nineteen men came from Regina to Macleod in early May, the police had to dash from place to place for most of the spring trying to rein in the young Kainai men. [32]

As in the past, Kainai horse raiding led to encounters with the police, ranging from passive non-cooperation to violent confrontation. When two Americans arrived from the Sweet Grass Hills on April 11, complaining of Kainai depredations, two policemen went out to the reserve. They found the Americans' horses in a common herd, not in the possession of any "particular Indian." While the Kainai did not offer any overt resistance, they did not help either. When police questioned witnesses, they claimed to "know nothing" about the animals, so no suspects were arrested.[33] In contrast, eleven days later, when a party of policemen tried to recover property belonging to American J.M. Christopher, they were forced to retreat. They found Christopher's horses in the possession of an unidentified individual easily enough, but he pulled out a knife and threatened the officers. It drew the attention of a "large number" of other Kainai, prompting the police to withdraw to the Stand Off detachment. After mustering

[29] "[History of] Milk River Ridge" (LAC RG18-V11-F306-76).
[30] Adolf Hungry Wolf*, The Blood People, A Division of the Blackfoot Confederacy: An Illustrated Interpretation of the Old Ways* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1977), 290.
[31] Superintendent P.R. Neale, Fort Macleod, to NWMP Commissioner, April 26, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1079-F384-1887).
[32] NWMP Commissioner, Regina, to NWMP Comptroller, May 4, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1079-F384-1887).
[33] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1887*, 59.

reinforcements, the police returned to recover the horse successfully, but they did not apprehend any of the obstructers. When Steele heard the news, he angrily ordered the police party back to rectify their failure. Arriving around 11:00 PM, they could not find any of the suspects. Kainai sentries had watched the NWMP's approach and raced ahead to warn the camps, which allowed the suspects to flee to the United States.[34]

Perhaps the most serious incident occurred on April 26, after Sergeant F.W. Spicer led a police party to Medicine Hat to capture horse raiders who had also killed range cattle in the area. While looking to rendezvous with a corporal named Royce, Spicer sighted three men on horseback and gave chase. East of Ross Creek, the raiders rode up a high ridge, deliberately locked eyes with Spicer, and then descended into a coulee on the other side. When Spicer followed, fifteen to twenty Niitsitapi men sprang up from the thick brush thirty to forty yards away. Spicer claimed they that opened fire, strafing his position. Spicer wrote, "the bullets were hitting the ground all around us" as he raced for cover. When the Niitsitapi stopped firing, Spicer tried to manoeuvre to "get the drop on them and capture the whole of them." But the country was cut up by coulees, and any attempt to get close would have put his men's lives in jeopardy. Spicer left to get reinforcements, explaining, "it was useless to try to hold them there as they would have escaped once it became dark."[35] In response, Sergeant-Major Thomas Lake left Lethbridge "with instructions to arrest all Indians found making for the Reserve from the East." However, no such party was found. The NWMP asked Agent Pocklington to investigate which Kainai men were missing from the reserve.[36] Interestingly, while police officials presumed the Niitsitapi party had tried to kill Spicer, Assistant Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed found the claim alarmist. In a letter to the Deputy Superintendent Lawrence Vankoughnet, Reed stated that the Kainai opened fire not to cause damage but "with a view to keep them [the police] at a sufficient distance to prevent their discovering which our Indians decided to conceal." Reed scoffed at the idea that Kainai men firing at less than forty yards could miss their target unless "they wished to do so."[37]

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[34] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1887*, 59.
[35] Canada, *Report of NWMP, 1887*, 32-33; "Statement of J.W. Spicer to NWMP Officer Commanding Lethbridge," April 30, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3778-F39063).
[36] Superintendent P.R. Neale to the NWMP Commissioner, May 1, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3778-F39063).
[37] Hayter Reed to L. Vankoughnet, May 20, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3778- F39063).

On May 2, The Dog and Big Rib – two Kainai men involved in the recent shooting – rode onto the reserve driving a herd of stolen horses and "singing the war song," indicating that the police cordon to catch raiders travelling east was permeable and needed improvement.[38] The NWMP did not know they were involved in the shooting at the time though. This information came later – possibly from Calf Shirt – demonstrating that there was still some desire on the part of the community to cooperate with the police. When Inspector Gilbert E. Sanders arrived on May 6 on the reserve with eight men to arrest The Dog and Big Rib, he met Calf Shirt at the Blood Agency beforehand. Even though the party made their way quietly, they were unsuccessful in apprehending the suspects. Again, look-outs were on watch for the police, and riders dashed ahead to warn their compatriots. Sanders wrote in his journal of the affair, "Got in to the Mule Camp where I expected to make the arrests about 1 PM but found that the birds had flown. The same thing happened in the other camps."[39] Sanders succeeded a week later when he conducted a 3:00 AM raid on the same camps and caught both men sleeping.[40] The Dog and Big Rib were initially charged with shooting offences related to the Spicer incident, but this charge "fell through" – meaning there was not enough evidence to convict them – so they were tried for horse stealing instead. Upon conviction, the pair was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary, the harshest punishment ever handed out to the Kainai. Agent Pocklington believed the conviction would do much to stem depredations. Not only was the duo "two of the worst Indians on the Reserve," The Dog was the ringleader of all the horse raiding parties and the owner of the "war drums."[41] He had the reputation and influence on direct military matters on the reserve. Unfortunately for the NWMP, the drama was not over. Only a few days later, The Dog and Big Rib escaped – still handcuffed – by jumping out of a hotel window in Dunmore, a small town along the Canadian Pacific Railroad (C.P.R.) line some miles to the southeast of Medicine Hat. Aided by dark and stormy weather, the duo stowed away on a coal car heading west, got off at Chin Coulee, hid all day, and then "borrowed" a couple of horses before making their way back to the Kainai reserve.[42]

[38] Hayter Reed to L. Vankoughnet, June 2, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3778-F39063).
[39] Journal of Gilbert E. Sanders, May 6, 1887 (Glenbow M1093-40).
[40] Journal of Gilbert E. Sanders, May 6, 1887 (Glenbow M1093-40).
[41] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 18, 1887 (LAC RG10-V1555).
[42] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1887*, 57; Untitled Article, *Macleod Gazette*, May 24, 1887.

The escape diminished police assertions that all lawbreakers would be apprehended and punished. According to police records, the only men charged with any crime connected to the depredations of 1887 was The Dog and Big Rib.[43] Thus, their escape nullified the force's only real triumph that year. Neale admitted as much in his 1887 annual report, writing, "The escape of 'The Dog' and 'Big Rib' from the Sheriff [of Dunmore] …led the young men of the tribe to believe that they could, to use a Western expression, to 'get away' with the Police."[44] With the support of the Kainai community, the pair stayed on the lam until March 1890.[45] Though Lethbridge Superintendent Richard Burton Deane declared in 1889 that "the key to true repressive treatment of Indian delinquencies" was to make a "fuss" over every Kainai misdeed, the continued failure of the police to apprehend the two mocked Deane's assertion.[46]

Aside from denting the armour of police invincibility, efforts to recapture The Dog and Big Rib acted as a lightning rod for further Kainai resistance. For example, in September 1887, Big Rib walked into Stand Off, the site of one of the largest detachments in the Macleod District. He and a large group of young men then stood around drinking beer, seemingly without a care in the world. The act itself was a provocation. Doing so was illegal based on their status as "Indians"; the Indian Act declaring they were not permitted to possess or use intoxicants. Sergeant Williams and two other policemen tried to arrest the fugitive, managing to get a handcuff around one of Big Rib's wrists. Chaos erupted when one of the policemen fired his revolver, killing a Kainai horse. The crowd of young men rushed Williams, assaulting him with a series of strong shoves. Big Rib used the distraction to escape into the bushes. Wanting to avoid further trouble, Sanders told Williams to compensate the horse's owner for its death, a forty dollars cost.[47] A year later, The Dog ventured into Fort Macleod shortly after Agent Pocklington paid the Kainai treaty annuities. The town was full of Kainai men and women ready to spend their money. Despite the crowded conditions, a policeman recognized him and pounced. Several friends came to The Dog's aid, interfering with the police effort. Another handed The Dog a horse, who leapt on and

[43] See "Return of Criminal and Other Cases Tried in the North-West Territories" in Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1887,* 147-151.
[44] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1887*, 49.
[45] A full account of this story can be found in Hugh Dempsey, *The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1994), 104-118.
[46] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 13 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1889* (Ottawa, 1890), 42.
[47] Journal of Gilbert E. Sanders, September 11 to 13, 1887 (Glenbow M1093-40); Untitled Article, *Macleod Gazette*, September 13, 1887.

fled, the town patrol following behind. In the excitement, they fired at least two rounds, one of which hit the horse. But once again, The Dog got away.[48]

While The Dog and Big Rib drove a wedge between the police and the Kainai, the NWMP tried to address a longstanding Kainai complaint: that the force could not recover horses stolen by Americans. On the morning of May 23, four Fort Belknap Nakoda – including a man who had lost ten horses in a recent Kainai raid – struck back, making off with eighty head belonging to Red Crow and his family. When they arrived at their reservation three days later, the Fort Belknap tribal police – a police force made up of Indigenous men under the control of the local American Indian Agent – arrested them and seized the animals. New Belknap Indian Agent Edwin C. Fields was undecided about punishing the offenders given that he sympathized with the Belknap's plight. The Niitsitapi on both sides of the border had relentlessly pillaged Fort Belknap for years; by Fields' count, they had stolen at least 270 horses. He blamed the NWMP for the "horse stealing business" because they would not arrest the raiders. The police found few of the missing horses and those they did find were often sold in Canadian territory to pay the exorbitant fees the force charged owners for their upkeep. Fields did not think much of "Canadian justice" and asked permission to punish the Nakoda as leniently as possible.[49]

Back on the Kainai reserve, Red Crow was furious and threatened to take all available men to Fort Belknap.[50] What stopped him was a telegram from Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney and Assistant Commissioner Reed declaring they were on their way to visit the reserve. Reed had heard that Kainai raiders had just brought in forty-five stolen horses from Montana, which he intended to seize. But he decided it was inadvisable to do so while the Kainai were still smarting from their heavy loss, fearing, in his words, that "serious trouble might arise."[51] Sensing their palpable anger, Reed instead acceded to a request from Red Crow that he and some members of his family, Agent Pocklington, and Inspector Sanders travel to Fort Belknap to make a peace treaty. Reed did so because of Kainai criticism of the Canadian government: "that if they succeeded in bringing in stolen horses, we always make them give them up, while if they lose

[48] "Nearly Caught the Dog," *Macleod Gazette*, September 20, 1888.
[49] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 23, 1887 (LAC RG10-V1555); Edwin C. Fields, Fort Belknap Agency, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 28, 1887 (NARAD 8NS-075-96-436, Box 1).
[50] Copy of Cipher Telegram, Commissioner of N.W.M. Police to F White, May 23, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3797- F33238).
[51] "Lieutenant-Governor Visit," *Macleod Gazette*, May 31, 1887; Hayter Reed to L. Vankoughnet, June 3, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3778-F39063).

any, no trouble is taken in assisting them to recover theirs."[52] Reed sought to address this perceived injustice by putting departmental and police support behind the recovery efforts. Meanwhile, the Indian Department instructed the NWMP not to take any horses away from the Kainai unless their owners came forward to identify them.[53]

On June 20, the party arrived at Fort Belknap, warmly received by Agent Fields and his staff, who arranged a meeting to discuss the peace treaty. Red Crow let the glaring issue of the six murdered Kainai slide, agreeing not to speak of the matter at all. Although the Nakoda were reluctant, casting doubt on the sincerity of Kainai motivations, after a long talk, the two sides came to an agreement where Red Crow recovered his horses. The Belknaps held a feast and dance in the Kainai's honour, though Red Crow himself did not attend, pleading he was exhausted.[54] His companions did though, where they received a great many gifts for the Kainai community.[55] Perhaps it was an attempt to "cover the dead," that is, to compensate the murder victims' families.[56] It is impossible to firmly establish whether these gifts were used for such a purpose because how they were distributed upon Red Crow's homecoming is not recorded. Still, Kainai raiding activities stopped temporarily. They would not be implicated in another raid until the following April. In the afterglow of this peace treaty, the NWMP undertook their first experiment to incorporate Indigenous people into the force, an attempt to implement a more cooperative model for policing Indigenous communities.

Commissioner Herchmer and Macleod Superintendent Percy Reginald Neale presided over the project, but they were not the first Canadian officials to suggest Indigenous peoples be mobilized for such a purpose. After he toured the North-West Territories in 1872, Colonel Patrick Robertson-Ross recommended that three to four "half-breeds, or Indians" be attached to

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[52] J.D.C. Atkins to Edwin C. Fields, June 6, 1887 (NARAD 8NS-075-96-435, Box 3).
[53] Lawrence Herchmer to Fred White, June 8, 1887 (LAC-RG10-V3797-F33238).
[54] W. Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, June 23, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3797-F33238); Journal of Gilbert E. Sanders, May 25-June 21, 1887 (Glenbow M1093-40).
[55] Inspector G.E. Sanders to Superintendent P.R. Neale, June 23, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3797-F33238).
[56] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1680-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 50-93. White argues there were three ways Indigenous peoples of the Great Lakes region dealt with murders perpetrated against members of their communities: blood revenge (retaliatory murder), "raising the dead" (offering up a family member for adoption to replace the deceased), or "covering the dead." In the absence of the latter two remedies, a never-ending cycle of blood revenge could result. The Niitsitapi also saw murder and justice in similar terms; see Christopher Marsh, "The Last of the Horse Wars: Intertribal, Cross-Border Warfare in Southern Alberta and Northern Montana Territory, 1878-1893" (Master's Thesis, University of Calgary, 2012), 53-58.

any such Canadian force as scouts, acting as interpreters and mail carriers.[57] While the Niitsitapi did come to perform these kinds of duties, Herchmer wanted them to work intimately with their communities to reduce friction with the NWMP. An August 1887 letter written by Neale reporting on the effectiveness of four Kainai scouts hired that spring reveals Herchmer's intent. Neale stated that the scouts were successfully recovering horses that had been stolen or merely strayed onto the reserve. The resistance and sometimes violence that the police often met potentially threatened the peace of the entire country. Herchmer wanted to shift the burden of arresting suspects to Kainai individuals. The explicit purpose of using Indian Scouts was to eliminate a racial element of hostility to law enforcement to end Kainai resistance. Neale reported the scouts had not been able to do this though, acknowledging it was a difficult task. He wrote, "It invariably happens that when a prisoner is being taken the whole Camp surrounds the party."[58] Neale also reported on their ability to gather intelligence about what was happening on the reserve.[59] Given that the police had difficulty catching raiders in 1885 and 1886 – despite increasing manpower and an expanding surveillance network – the police desire for the scouts to do it made sense. The NWMP needed inside information to help guide their patrols meant to clamp down on the disorder that existed on the southwestern frontier. While Robertson-Ross perceived the Indian Scouts as only playing a supporting role in the police force, Herchmer wanted them to act as an integral component that could help establish peace and uphold Canadian law in Niitsitapi communities. Indeed, later that year Herchmer expressed this very sentiment to NWMP Comptroller Fred White, writing, "I consider that authority should be placed in the hands of these Indian Scouts *to perform all the duties of constables where Indians are concerned*, but when White Men are concerned the authority should cease except when accompanied by a member of the North West Mounted Police."[60] Herchmer wanted these men to surveil their communities, prevent crime, seize stolen property, and arrest suspected lawbreakers.

[57] Patrick Robertson-Ross, "Report of a Reconnaissance of the North-West Provinces and Indian Territories of the Dominion of Canada, and Narrative of Journey Across the Continent Through Canadian Territory to British Columbia and Vancouver" *The Journal of the Royal United Service Institution* Vol. XVII No. LXXIV (1873), 566.
[58] Superintendent P.R. Neale to the Commissioner N.W.M.P Regina, August 10, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1084-F513-1887).
[59] Superintendent P.R. Neale to the Commissioner N.W.M.P Regina, August 10, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1084-F513-1887).
[60] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller, October 2, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1084-F513-1887). The italics are mine.

By the end of the summer of 1887, the Kainai proved that they had a knack for Euro-Canadian-style law enforcement, which should not be surprising given that the Niitsitapi possessed analogous cultural institutions before contact with the Canadian State. The word for "policeman" in the Niitsitapi language is "iyinnakiikoan," or "one who catches." It stems from the verb "yinnaki," meaning to grasp, hold, seize, or capture.[61] Comparison to other Niitsitapi verbs suggests that the person seizing or capturing is imbued with legitimate authority, as words denoting stealing from a neighbour or taking a war trophy to enhance one's reputation have different roots (*ikamo'si* and *inaamaahkaa* respectively).[62] During the "Buffalo Days," the "Seizers" or "Catchers" kept the peace. They enforced the rules of the chase when many Niitsitapi bands came together for religious celebrations (like the *Ookaan* or "Sun Dance") or to hunt bison. They watched for danger and protected moving columns as communities travelled from place to place. Taken from the ranks of particular age-based warrior societies, the Seizers punished those offending community standards by seizing and destroying property, often clothes or lodgings.[63] Anthropologist Clark Wissler noted that several Indian Agents on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana had high praise for the South Piikani tribal police, describing them as adaptable, brave, and cognizant of the importance of the law. Of the many bodies of tribal police established on reservations across the United States, Wissler considered the South Piikani one of the best because of the structure and conventions of Niitsitapi society.[64]

Neale's report on the experiment reveals that he thought highly of the Kainai who participated, though there was room for improvement. He found the scouts were useful for obtaining information on the reserve and recovering stolen horses. They had "wonderful powers of endurance," capable of working long hours at demanding tasks. As of early August, they had not been able to arrest a suspect independently though; they still needed the support of Euro-Canadian policemen to do so. But in late September, Kainai scouts finally succeeded in making their first arrest after an intoxicated man assaulted his wife.[65] Neale warned that the scouts had to be carefully handled because they did not tolerate any harshness from those they worked with.

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[61] Donald G. Frantz and Norma Jean Russell, *Blackfoot Dictionary of Stems, Roots, and Affixes, Third Edition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 124, 315.
[62] Frantz and Russell, *Blackfoot Dictionary*, 43, 70.
[63] Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 214-215; Clark Wissler*, Indian Cavalcade, or Life on the Old-Time Indian Reservations* (New York: Sheridan House, 1938), 128.
[64] Wissler, *Indian Cavalcade*, 119-122, 129-132.
[65] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller, October 2, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1084-F513-1887).

He believed this temperamental nature could be overcome: "Anyone accustomed to Indians and understanding their nature can do good work with them and should any trouble occur no better scouts could be obtained anywhere."[66]

Herchmer deemed the experiment a resounding success and proposed hiring twenty-five scouts for all of the North-West Territories the next year. Scouts would be paid twenty-five dollars a month and supplied with rations, a carbine, saddle, and duck stable suit, which they would have to pay for if they did not complete four months' service.[67] Prime Minister Macdonald approved the plan, and Indian Scouts were hired in the Macleod, Calgary, Battleford, and Prince Albert districts. Still, the NWMP had difficulty recruiting all the scouts they wanted in Blackfoot Country. Herchmer initially wanted six Kainai and three Piikani scouts. In the latter case, Head Chief North Axe refused to allow his people to participate. He did not like that the police had engaged a man named Peigan Frank, who he believed to be of dishonest and mischievous character.[68] That the police had hired such a man may indicate that the force was not attracting men who held community esteem. However, the police had little choice, given they had trouble finding candidates. Neale was only able to secure the services of four Kainai men, leaving him short two. The saving grace was one of them was the distinguished Calf Shirt. This difficulty in finding recruits can be attributed to anger and distrust of the NWMP due to recent conflicts, the most serious being the police shooting of Bad Dried Meat.[69]

The case of Deerfoot – a Siksika man known for his competitive running ability – precipitated a chain of events that led to the shooting. The case reinforced Niitsitapi perceptions that the NWMP did not uphold the law in a way that offered uniform protection to both Euro-Canadian settlers and Indigenous peoples. It started on August 24 when a settler named George Madge complained at Fort Calgary that his house had been ransacked by unidentified "Indians," who had taken some blankets and a revolver. Corporal Racey, Interpreter Gladstone, and five constables set off to Langdon – a small railway town just east of Calgary – to capture the suspects and recover the property. They found Deerfoot – also known as Scabby Dried Meat –

[66] Superintendent P.R. Neale to the Commissioner N.W.M.P Regina, August 10, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1084-F513-1887).
[67] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller N.W.M.P, March 31, 1888 (LAC RG18-V22-F385-88); Assistant Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed to the Indian Agent Sarcee Reserve Calgary Alba., April 16, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1630).
[68] A.R. Springett to P.R. Neale Commanding N.W.M.P. Macleod, May 9, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1429); A.R. Springett to the Indian Commissioner, May 9, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1429).
[69] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, July 10, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557).

easily, as he was just lounging around the section house with some other Siksika men. He admitted to taking the blankets, and police placed him under arrest. He told Racey that another man had the revolver and was on his way back to the reserve. Racey, Gladstone, and two constables set out in pursuit while Constable McQuarrie and the remainder of the party took Deerfoot back to Calgary. The police failed to secure him with handcuffs – because they had not brought any – or the rope they did have, because he seemed cooperative. Shortly after Racey left, Deerfoot began to tear his clothes off, then bolted away. McQuarrie's party tried to recapture him, but Deerfoot acquired an axe and used it to keep them at bay before running off again. McQuarrie considered firing but decided against it because he did not want to hit bystanders.[70] Meanwhile, Racey and company had run into a traveller coming from the opposite direction, who told the corporal he had passed no one on the road. Racey turned back towards Langdon and soon encountered a preposterous scene: Deerfoot nakedly sprinting towards him with an axe in one hand while McQuarrie and another constable followed at a distance. Racey fired his revolver at the ground in front of Deerfoot to no effect. The police pursued him for nearly five miles before giving up the chase. Deerfoot showed no sign of stopping and Racey realized that unless he shot him in the back, he was unlikely to stop at all. No one in the police party – to their credit – believed that they had the right to shoot Deerfoot, given that he was not an immediate threat to anybody.[71]

Assistant Commissioner W.H. Herchmer disagreed with their assessment. Upon their return, Racey and three of the constables were arrested, tried, and sentenced to six months hard labour for allowing Deerfoot to escape. Herchmer stated that they had been careless in not bringing handcuffs or using the rope to secure the prisoner. Herchmer was also critical of Racey not doing everything in his power to stop Deerfoot. He noted in his report, "I will draw your attention to the fact that there is no general order on to cases of this sort as to firing on escaping prisoners. I suggest that one be issued at once."[72] Herchmer believed that escaping or resisting suspects should be shot, that it was the police's duty to do so. The harsh punishment meted out to Racey and his comrades was instructive to other members of the force; similar measures could

[70] Superintendent R.B. Deane to Comptroller NWMP, August 27, 1887 (LAC RG18-V609-1887).
[71] Superintendent R.B. Deane to Comptroller NWMP, August 27, 1887 (LAC RG18-V609-1887).
[72] Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner, August 25, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).

be inflicted upon them if they failed to do their duty in upholding the law by any means necessary.

Herchmer was not able to pursue Deerfoot immediately because there was already widespread discontent on the Siksika reserve. They were upset over the shooting of Trembling Man (or The-Man-That-Shakes) – which had happened one day before the Deerfoot incident – and Indian Agent Magnus Begg warned the Calgary NWMP not to try to make an arrest.[73] William Thompson – a farmer living near High River – came home after a day of haying to discover his door open and several items missing. A neighbour told him that he had seen "Indians" walking from that direction towards Pine Coulee. Thompson picked up his friend, Tucker Peach, and went to the camp to confront them. Thompson barged into their lodge – filled with women and children – and began rummaging through the Siksika's possessions. Thompson claimed he shot Trembling Man in self-defence following a scuffle, because another man – The Meat – shot Peach. According to the Siksika version, Thompson had fired immediately after he and the Siksika exchanged "harsh words." Whatever the case, Trembling Man suffered a grievous wound through the breast, while Peach received a minor injury to the arm. [74]

In the aftermath, Begg stated that "the Indians were in a great state of excitement and wanted to go out and kill the settler." Anger grew when The Meat handed himself over to the police, claiming he had fired at Peach in self-defence. The police charged him with stealing Thompson's revolver and shooting with intent, confining him in the guardhouse while Thompson went free.[75] To the Niitsitapi, this made little sense. Thompson had committed a more serious offence according to Niitsitapi law. It was reasonably certain from the wounds Trembling Man had suffered that he would die (which he did a week later). Wounding someone was a matter of material compensation, but murder was a different story. It necessitated massive material compensation or, failing that, the right to take blood revenge. By agreeing to Treaty 7, the Niitsitapi had agreed to submit to the Queen's law and promised to forego retaliatory murder.

[73] Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner, August 25, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).
[74] "Crime Report, Thompson Shooting," Inspector T. Wattam, August 24, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1085-F544); Sergeant R. Barker to the Officer Commanding 'E' Division, August 26, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1085-F544) Sergeant M.P. Whelus to the Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Calgary, August 26, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1085-F544).
[75] Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer to Commissioner L.W. Herchmer, August 29, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1085-F544).

But keeping The Meat in custody while releasing Thompson appeared unjust. The *Calgary Daily Herald* wrote:

"The Blackfeet… are nevertheless dissatisfied with recent events, and their attitude towards the Government's representatives has undergone a change. The Indians have all along been taught to believe that the Police were their friends, and that the Government would always treat them well. They are unable, though, to see an example of this in the High River shooting case, the victim of which died and was buried yesterday. The Indians say it is not right to let the man that killed an Indian go free (Thompson is out on bail) while the Indian 'The Meat' is kept in jail at Calgary for shooting a white man in the arm."[76]

In an interview with the Regina *Morning Call*, Dewdney explained that it was dangerous for the Siksika to believe that Euro-Canadian settlers were "privileged to shoot an Indian on sight." The Thompson shooting case suggested so, and for the peace of the country, that attitude could not be allowed to fester. Dewdney told the paper, "The Indians have been taught to believe that there is the same justice for him as there is for the white man, and it is imperative that faith in this matter should be kept with him."[77] A concurrent incident bolstered this sentiment. The police had recently charged a Gleichen-area settler named Lloyd for beating and firing three shots at a Siksika teenager. Lloyd had been drunk and wrongly believed that the teen had sexually assaulted a young Euro-Canadian woman. He too was out on bail, which caused further consternation on the reserve.[78]

Assistant Commissioner Herchmer also balked in searching the Siksika reserve because he believed that Crowfoot could convince Deerfoot to surrender.[79] Herchmer's overriding concern was to avoid a large-scale confrontation with the Siksika that might escalate into a full-blown conflict with the Niitsitapi. Indeed, Herchmer warned NWMP Comptroller Fred White:

"The arrest of a prominent Indian, or the shooting of one by the Police in the execution of their duty is liable at any time to cause the outbreak of these Indians and owing to the scattered

[76] "Daring Deerfoot," *Calgary Daily Herald*, September 5, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3787-F42389).
[77] "Indian Shooting: Interesting Interview with his Honor Lieutenant-Governor Dewdney," *Morning Call*, September 5, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3787-F42389).
[78] E. Dewdney to the Right Honorable the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, September 12, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3787-F42389); L. Vankoughnet to Indian Commissioner E. Dewdney, September 21, 1887 (RG10-V3787-F42389).
[79] NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to NWMP Comptroller, October 7, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).

settlements it would be quite impossible, even if I had twice the number of Police at my disposal as I have, to prevent outrages at first if these Indians broke up into small bodies."[80]

However, Crowfoot was unsuccessful, causing the police to fail to take definitive steps to apprehend Deerfoot until the second week of September. Superintendent Neale came from the Macleod District with fifty men to aid in the search.[81] Deerfoot had long flown though, going south with his wife.[82] From that point on, the police chased whispers of rumours. In early October, Inspector Sanders led early morning raids on both the Piikani and Kainai reserves in search of not only Deerfoot but Big Rib. In both cases, the fugitives eluded them; witnesses stated afterward that both had gone to the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana.[83] Shortly after, American authorities promised to drive Deerfoot, The Dog, and Big Rib over the border into the hands of the NWMP. Inspector T.W. Chalmers waited at the border for two days, but neither the fugitives nor their handlers appeared. The Blackfeet tribal police had managed to arrest Deerfoot and The Dog, but on the way north, the former attempted suicide by choking himself with a strip of blanket and nearly succeeded. Wanting to eschew blame for his death and mitigate against any more grisly business, the Blackfeet constables turned back to the Agency. They released the prisoners on the reservation, who immediately fled for Canada.[84] The last the NWMP heard, they had all headed to the Tobacco Plains in eastern British Columbia. Steele – who was there to prevent a Ktunaxa (Kutenai) uprising – had orders to "keep a sharp lookout for them."[85] Despite the surveillance networks established in Blackfoot Country, Deerfoot remained on the loose throughout the winter (he only surrendered in April 1889). Assistant Commissioner Herchmer faced much criticism from the top levels of the Canadian government – including Prime Minister

[80] L.W. Herchmer to Comptroller Fred White, November 7, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3787-F42389).
[81] Superintendent P.R. Neale to NWMP Commissioner, September 14, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).
[82] Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer, September 7, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887); Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer, September 8, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).
[83] Superintendent P.R. Neale to NWMP Commissioner, September 16, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887); Inspector G.E. Sanders to The Officer Commanding Macleod District, N.W. Mounted Police, October 1, 1887, (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).
[84] Fred White to L. Vankoughnet, October 10, 1887 (LAC RG10-V3787-F42389); Inspector T.W. Chalmers to Superintendent Neale, Stand Off, October 16, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887); Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner, October 17, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887); NWMP Commissioner to NWMP Comptroller, October 22, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887); NWMP Commissioner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 27, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).
[85] NWMP Commissioner to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 27, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).

Macdonald himself – for letting Deerfoot escape.[86] Because of the embarrassment the Deerfoot case generated, the force was eager – even desperate – to get their hands on him. This desire transformed a case of petty larceny into a near fissure with the whole of the Niitsitapi nation when a Euro-Canadian NWMP scout shot Bad Dried Meat – also known as Running-Backwards-And-Forwards – after mistaking him for Deerfoot.

In 1888, Robert Giveen was a special constable acting in the capacity of scout (more accurately described as a guide) to the 'H' Division at Fort Macleod. In the wake of Deerfoot's escape, he had standing orders to arrest the fugitive on sight. On January 6, Giveen was at the Leavings detachment north of Fort Macleod when he heard that someone matching Deerfoot's description had been seen at the local general store earlier that day. The man showed pictures of himself running in a race, a pair of running shoes, and a certificate from a racing association in Calgary. One Mr. Siler asked if his name was Bad Dried Meat and the visitor answered affirmatively.[87] Deerfoot's alias translated into English was actually "Scabby Dried Meat," Siler was not proficient enough in the Blackfoot language to discern its subtleties, a common deficiency among the Euro-Canadian population.[88] Giveen suspected that the man described by Siler was Deerfoot, and so he decided to go to his camp the next day. After speaking with him and reflecting on a picture he had seen of the fugitive, Giveen decided it was Deerfoot. Without identifying himself as a policeman, Giveen grabbed Bad Dried Meat by the arm. The scout wore no uniform and carried no badge. To Bad Dried Meat, Giveen was a stranger who had asked him strange questions before suddenly seizing him. In a later interview, Bad Dried Meat stated he took Giveen for a cowboy or a thief. Giveen was prodding him in the direction of the police detachment when Bad Dried Meat suddenly sprinted off, leaving the blanket covering his shoulders in the stunned scout's hands. Giveen fired two shots from his pistol as Bad Dried

[86] Assistant Commissioner W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner, October 28, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887); Indian Agent Magnus Begg to Assistant Commissioner Colonel Herchmer, October 31, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887); Statement of Crowfoot [on the Deerfoot case] at Gleichen, North-West Territories, N.D. (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887); Postmaster T. Beaupre and N.F. Williams, In Charge of C.P.R. at Gleichen, to Colonel Herchmer, November 5, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).

[87] "Robert Giveen's Statement," "Proceedings of an Investigation into the Arrest of a Blackfoot Indian named Bad Dried Meat", Fort Macleod, January 14, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132).

[88] Even with notable intermediaries such as Jerry Potts – who was himself half-Kainai – the less than decisive grasp of the Blackfoot tongue was problematic. Niitsitapi oral history asserts that Potts had very poor understanding of Niitsitapi dialects and was often unable to satisfactorily translate speeches in their entirety. See Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildebrandt, Dorothy First Rider, and Sarah Carter, *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 60, 69, 74, 76.

Meat's wife ran towards the fugitive to give him a rifle. One bullet hit Giveen's quarry in the fleshy part of the thigh, but Bad Dried Meat ran on, reaching the top of a cut bank where his wife passed him the rifle. A long standoff ensued, then Bad Dried Meat suddenly spun and sprinted off again, making for the house of a rancher named John Craig. Craig disarmed him and Giveen brought him to Fort Macleod.[89] It was only then that Giveen realized that the man he arrested was not Deerfoot. Although Herchmer admitted the mistake, he asserted that Giveen had no choice other than to do what he did or "he would have been liable to punishment."[90] Dewdney thought Giveen's actions were unwarranted and reckless; he demanded Giveen's suspension, which was granted temporarily.[91]

The shooting led to a boiling over of the anger that had existed for some time among the Kainai and Piikani. Several weeks after the incident, the *Macleod Gazette* reported that a large number of Kainai had "invaded" the town "whooping and hollering." The paper explained, "The Indians throughout Treaty 7 are much agitated and disturbed over the several Indians who have been shot by white men during the past year." The Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika intended to have a united council to discuss the matter.[92] Shortly after, Red Crow and eighty young men came to the fort wanting to speak with Neale. The chief told the Superintendent that more Kainai were on the way, as were the leaders from the Piikani reserve.[93] The Kainai were upset about the seeming injustice of the Trembling Man/Thompson case, police inaction in the issue of the six murdered Kainai by the Belknap tribes, and NWMP failure to find two missing community members. In the last matter, the previous October, the Kainai reported that Bull Shoe and his wife had disappeared. They felt the police had done little to find them. Expressing frustration, Red Crow said, "The Government said they would be good to us. We took what the Government offered

[89] "Robert Giveen's Statement," "Proceedings of an Investigation into the Arrest of a Blackfoot Indian named Bad Dried Meat", Fort Macleod January 14, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132); Statement of Harry Alexander Scaife [Regarding Bad Dried Meat Arrest], January 21, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132); Statement of John R. Craig [Regarding Bad Dried Meat Arrest], January 22, 1888, Leavings Detachment (LAC RG18-V1100-F132); "Notes on an Interview Between the Chiefs of the Bloods and North Peigans," Fort Macleod February 2, 1888 (LAC RG18-V19-F249-1888); Examination of "Running Backwards and Forwards" Alias "Bad Dried Meat," February 2, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132); NWMP Comptroller Fred White to L.W. Herchmer, Esquire, February 21, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).

[90] L.W. Herchmer to NWMP Comptroller, February 1, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132).

[91] Telegram, NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to Superintendent Neale, January 31, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132); Telegram, Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to Fred White, N.W.M.P, January 31, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132).

[92] "An Indian Invasion," *Macleod Gazette*, February 1, 1888.

[93] Telegram, Superintendent P.R. Neale to the NWMP Commissioner, January 31, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132).

us…If a white man is shot by an Indian by accident the Indian gets in trouble…We have not done wrong but now the whites are trying to do us wrong."[94] White Calf – the second most influential chief on the reserve – expressed similar sentiments, declaring, "Now we have a small reserve and the whites treat us badly. Some Indians have been killed and we can't find out who killed them, and another is laying at the fort shot. We want to know what the white men were trying to do." The Piikani's Head Chief, North Axe, was angrier still. He bluntly asked Neale if he had given the police orders to shoot his people. When Neale replied emphatically in the negative, North Axe went on a scolding diatribe:

"It would be better if you caught the Indian in your hands instead of shooting him. You are going to raise trouble in this country. I blame you because you have orders to shoot. It shows bad. You have hurt the whole three tribes by shooting 'Bad Dried Meat.' North Peigans, Bloods, Sarcees, and Blackfeet say it looks bad about his being shot…Why did the man who shot 'Bad Dried Meat' not have Police clothes on? It would have looked better and the Indian would have thought so too… It looks as if the Indians were to be murdered."[95]

The three chiefs used the venue to bring up other complaints illustrating that the Canadian government was not living up to Treaty 7: the poor quality and quantity of rations, the encroachment of white settlers on reserve lands, being denied the right of free movement through their own country, and not being able to access the resources (in this case timber) of their forefathers. They resented the very process of cross-examination in courtroom trials, which they interpreted as an accusation of lying. Other members of the Kainai and Piikani communities spoke similarly; when it was done, nearly four hours had passed.[96] Neale explained that the shooting of Bad Dried Meat had been an accident and he reiterated that a search for Bull Shoe would commence come spring (he would later be found murdered). The murder of the six Kainai went unaddressed. When the superintendent asked North Axe whether he was satisfied with the police explanation, the chief sharply retorted, "Yes, and we only want to see him paid [compensated]. I should like you though to warn the white people to let the Indians alone."[97] After receiving gifts of tea and tobacco, the Kainai and Piikani quietly returned to their reserves.

[94] "Notes on an Interview between the Chiefs of the Bloods and North Peigans" Fort Macleod, February 2, 1888 (LAC RG18-V19-F249-1888).
[95] Superintendent P.R. Neale to NWMP Commissioner, February 4, 1888 (LAC RG18-V19-F249-1888).
[96] Superintendent P.R. Neale to NWMP Commissioner, February 4, 1888 (LAC RG18-V19-F249-1888).
[97] "Notes on an Interview between the Chiefs of the Bloods and North Peigans" Fort Macleod, February 2, 1888 (LAC RG18-V19-F249-1888).

Chapter Three revealed that the Indian Department and the NWMP were concerned about renewed conflict during the winter of 1885-86. Because of reaction to the shooting of Bad Dried Meat – along with residual anger over similar incidents like the death of Trembling Man – government fears once again turned to newfound outbreaks not only among the Niitsitapi but throughout the entirety of the North-West Territories. It might be more accurate to say that these developments intensified these fears. Throughout the autumn of 1887, the police felt nebulous unease about the Nehiyaw in the Battleford and Fort Saskatchewan districts. In response, they conducted more frequent patrols to gauge the attitudes existing on the reserves. In late December, rumblings on the Saddle Lake reserve and the surrounding area hinted at a more tangible threat in the spring. Euro-Canadian parties reported that Chief Paqaw of Whitefish Lake complained that he was tired of the government's treatment and intended to rectify things. After uniting the Nehiyaw – including the "rebel Indians" of Onion Lake – he allegedly intended to slaughter the cattle on the reserves and then proceed to Blackfoot Crossing to link up with the Niitsitapi.[98] In the wake of this report, Superintendent John Cotton spoke of the disquiet he sensed on Battleford reserves and among the Métis of the Bresaylor settlement; both were impoverished and "in very poor circumstances." He warned of possible conflict, writing, "From what I can gather from various sources I am inclined to the belief that the Northern Indians do not regard the late rebellion as having brought home to them any very severe lesson beyond it stopping their annuities."[99] He predicted that any trouble among the Niitsitapi would encourage the same in his district, though he doubted that the Nehiyaw and Nakoda would represent a formidable enemy. NWMP Comptroller Fred White did not perceive the Niitsitapi in the same light. In his letter to the Department of Indian Affairs addressing the Bad Dried Meat shooting, he wrote, "There can be no doubt that danger of serious trouble and possible bloodshed exists and will continue so long as the Indians remain in possession of rifles." He warned that further conflict with Indigenous peoples could arise at any moment.[100] Instead of counselling a redress of Niitsitapi demands for a more equitable justice system, sufficient rations, an end to harassment when off the reserve, and the cession of incursions by white settlers, White suggested forcefully disarming them, which was sure only to provoke more hostility and resistance. Anonymous notes

[98] N.R. Brereton, J.A. McLachlan, George F. Tapper, and W.L. Gillis, Victoria, to Major Griesbach, December 26 (LAC RG18-V1100-F135).
[99] Superintendent John Cotton to NWMP Commissioner, January 11, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F134).
[100] Comptroller Fred White to Department of Indian Affairs, February 18, 1888 (LAC RG10-V3787-F42389).

on White's letter suggested threatening the Kainai with the termination of their rations unless they gave full cooperation to the police.[101] Fortunately, neither of these measures were implemented, although the Indian Department encouraged the Niitsitapi to trade their potent Winchesters for shotguns. Fear of an 1888 Niitsitapi spring uprising lingered until early May when Fort Belknap raiders made off with Kainai ponies. Young men left the reserve to engage in retaliatory raids, which ended all police chatter about possible armed conflict.[102]

The residual fear of an outbreak, renewed raiding against Fort Belknap, and manhunts for Deerfoot, The Dog, and Big Rib led to an even greater concentration of NWMP manpower in Blackfoot Country (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). In the summer of 1888, 340 policemen served in the Macleod, Calgary, and the newly founded Lethbridge district. If not for fear of Indigenous uprising in the Kootenay region, the 89 men stationed there under Superintendent Steele would have been monitoring the Niitsitapi too. The men in these districts represented a third of the entire NWMP (1065 men and officers), confined to a relatively small region compared to the other police districts.[103] Although the manpower of the Regina District seems comparable, it contained the training depot and administrative centre for the force. Many of the men at the Regina barracks were either trainees, trainers, or part of the permanent general staff.[104] Many of the men allocated to the district were not meant to or competent enough to perform regular police duties. Surveillance networks also saw a greater expansion, especially in the Macleod District around the Kainai (Blood) reserve (Figure 4.4 and 4.5). The NWMP founded most new detachments to combat horse raiding and cattle-killing. Illustrating the importance of community cooperation, the NWMP established the Pot Hole detachment (Figure 4.6) after sympathetic Kainai individuals pointed out to Inspector Sanders that the area was a favourite stopping place for horse raiders coming back to the reserve.[105] Other posts watching cattle country popped up in the western Macleod district. A new tactic also emerged: the formation of "flying patrols," which

[101] Comptroller Fred White to Department of Indian Affairs, February 18, 1888 (LAC RG10-V3787-F42389).
[102] *Fear of outbreak*: Inspector J.D. Moodie, Medicine Hat, to Superintendent W.A. Antrobus, April 11, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1101-F137) and Superintendent Commanding 'C' Division to the N.W. Mounted Police, April 16, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F133). *Renewed raiding*: William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 8, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1556), A.B. Upshaw to Edwin C. Fields, May 24, 1888 (NARAD 8NS-075-96-435, Box 4), and William Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, June 10, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1557).
[103] Christopher Marsh, "North-West Mounted Police Stats by Post," Tab 1888AC (spreadsheet in author's possession).
[104] Dale Sheehan and Redd Ossten, *Behind the Badge: History of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police "Depot" Division* (Regina: Solutions/Centax Books, 2006), 11-14.
[105] Journal of Gilbert E. Sanders, July 26, 1887 (Glenbow M1093-40).

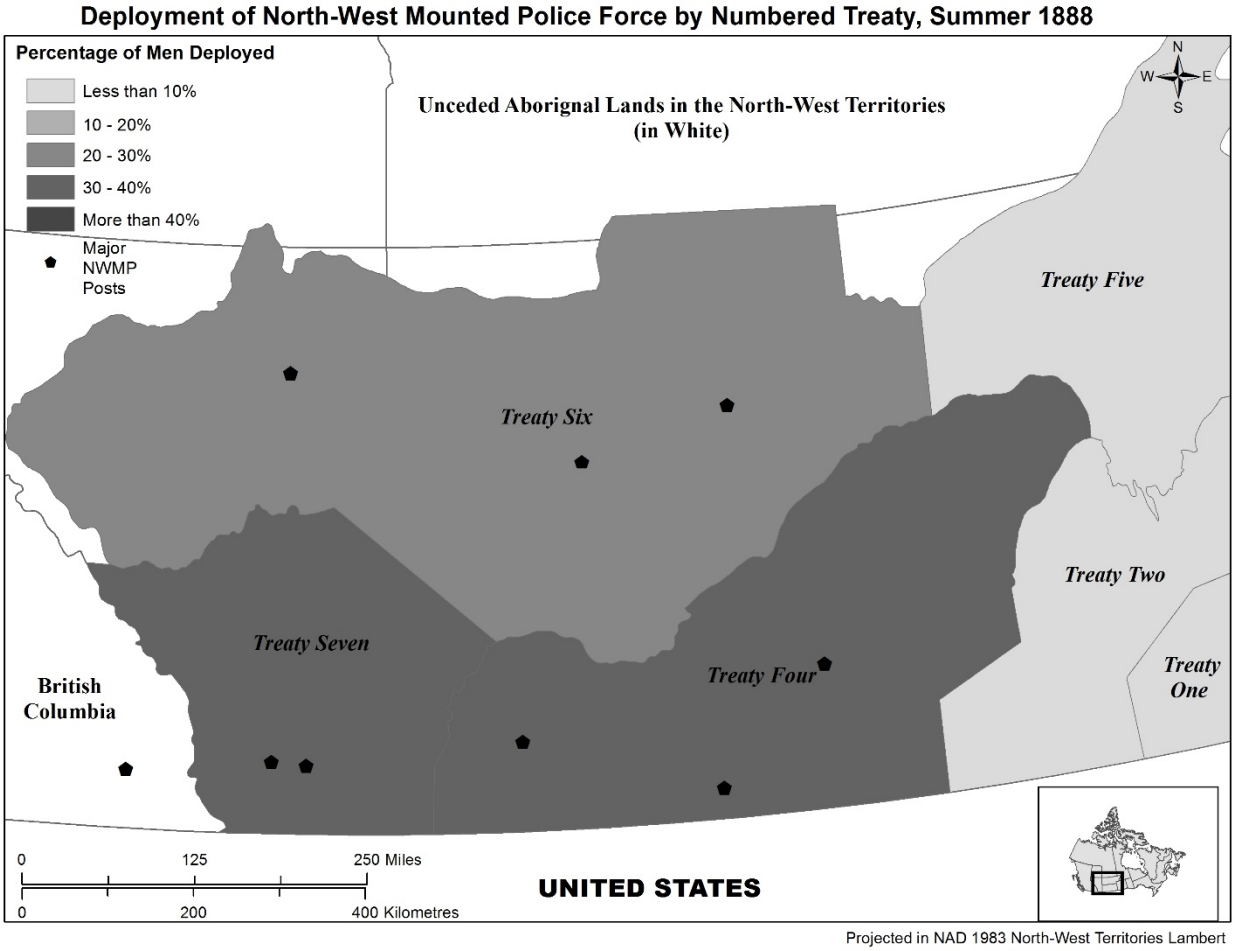

Figure 4.2: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Numbered Treaty, Summer 1888. After 1886, police manpower resources in Treaty 6 were redirected to Treaty 7. Note the difference in size between the two treaty areas.

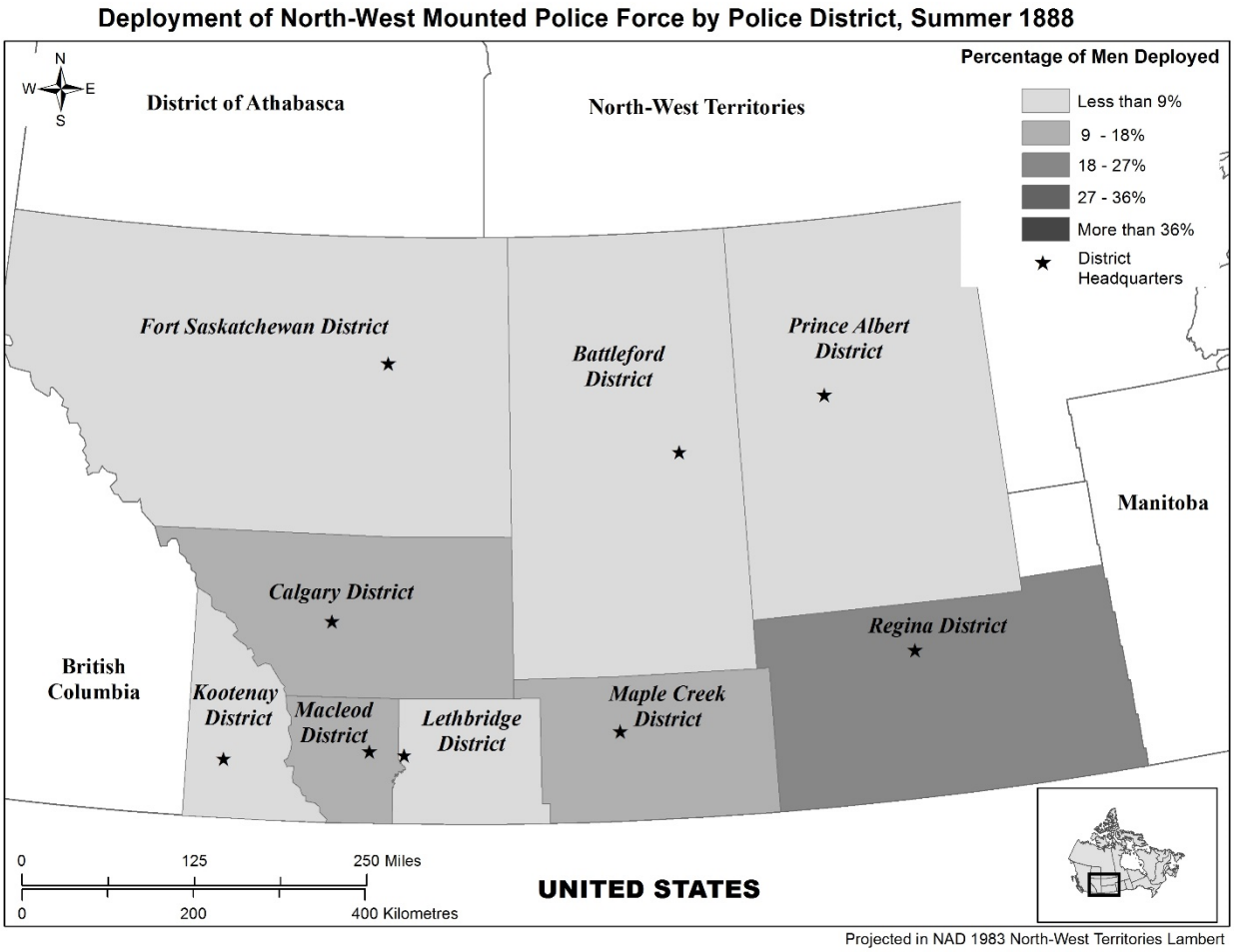

Figure 4.3: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Police District, Summer 1888. Much of the police manpower in Treaty 7 was concentrated in the Macleod and Calgary districts, which contained Niitsitapi reserves. Men stationed in the Kootenay District would have usually monitored the Macleod District, a tiny geographical space compared to other police districts.

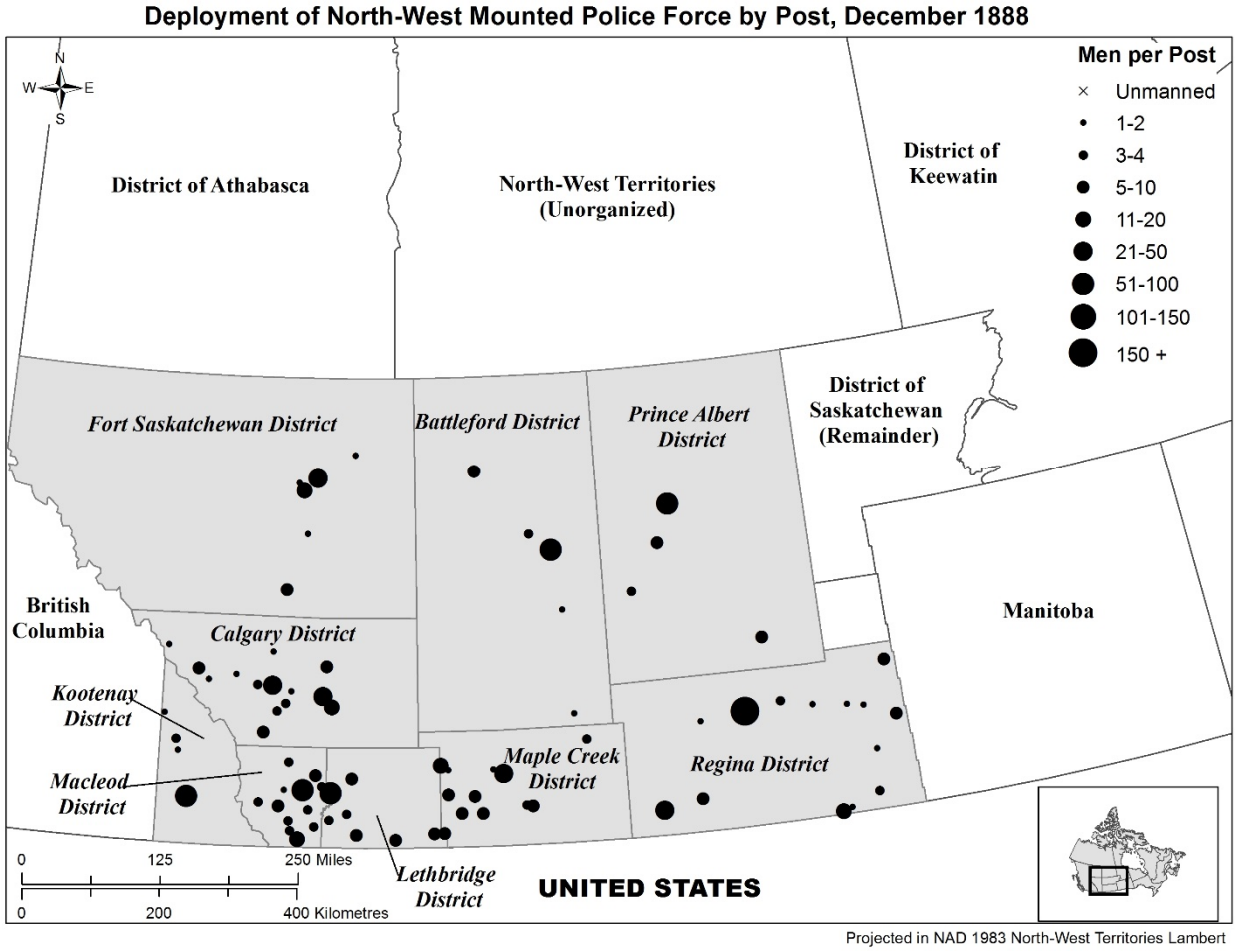

Figure 4.4: Deployment of North-West Mounted Police Force by Post, Summer 1888. The number of detachments in the Macleod, Calgary, and Lethbridge districts continued to increase, while fewer detachments were in the northern districts.

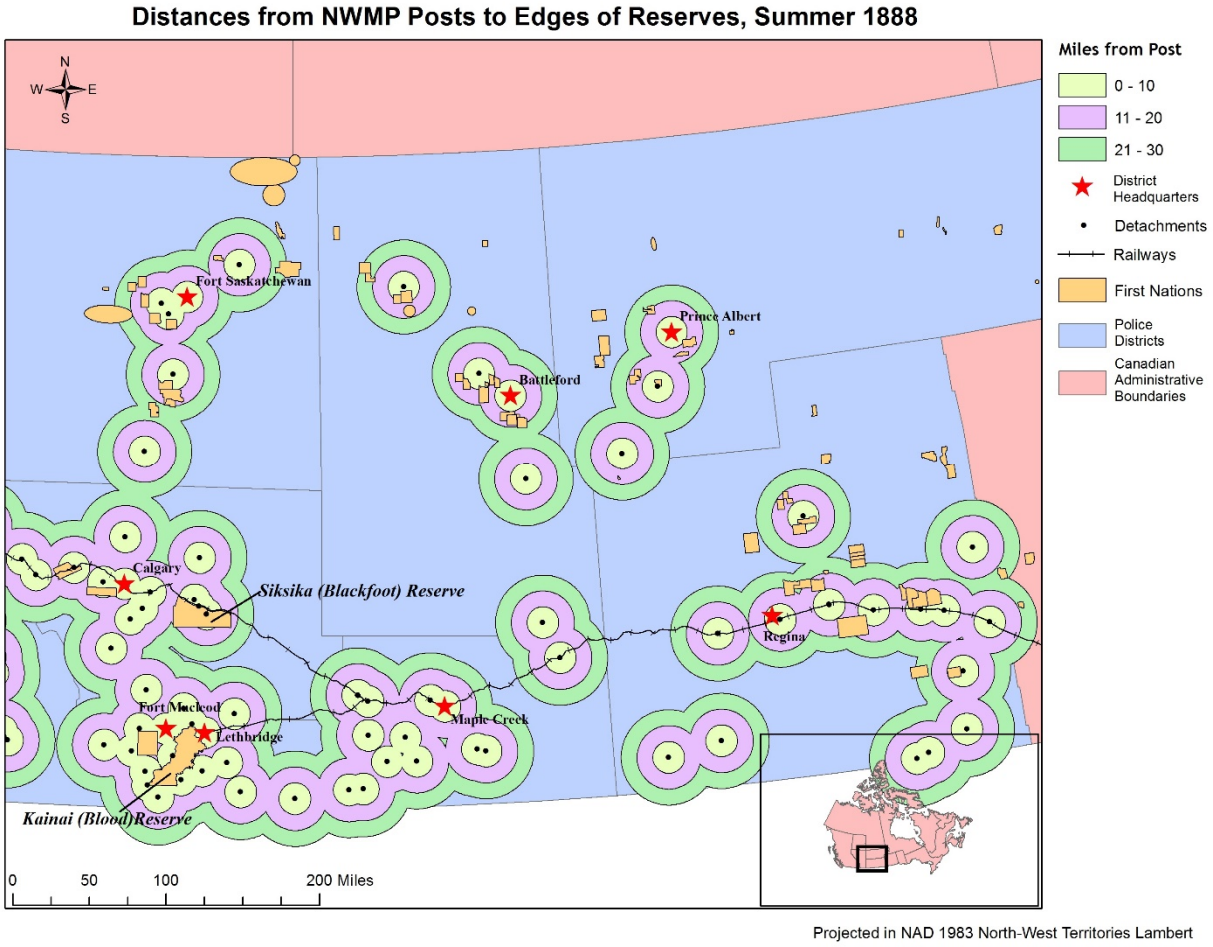

Figure 4.5: Distances from North-West Mounted Police Posts to Edges of Reserves, Summer 1888. The Kainai (Blood) reserve was the most heavily surveilled reserve in the North-West Territories. The network of detachments surrounding it was even above that of 1886.

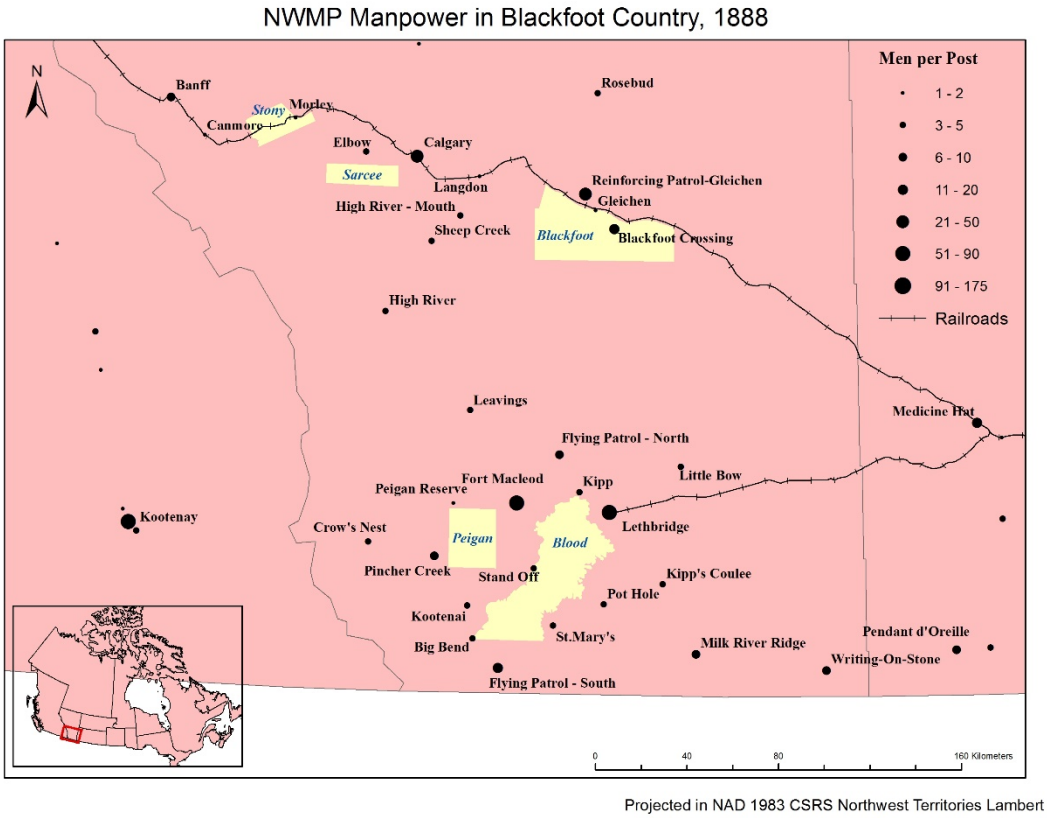

Figure 4.6: North-West Mounted Police Manpower by Post in Blackfoot Country, 1888. The detachment of Pot Hole (east of the Blood (Kainai) reserve was established on the advice of sympathetic Kainai individuals, illustrating the importance of community cooperation with law enforcement efforts.

were always on the move, travelling to places beyond the beaten path to combat horse raiding and cattle rustling. The utilization of large patrolling parties was to show the Niitsitapi the strength and mobility of the force, a means to combat "cheekiness" and resistance.[106] The combined effect of building new detachments and using flying patrols was to further intensify the surveillance of the Kainai reserve. During the summer of 1888, there were two district headquarters and six detachments surrounding it; a flying patrol monitored the region south of the reserve to the international boundary. No other reserve in the Canadian Prairie West exhibited such a pattern of surveillance. Many reserves were within thirty miles of at least one

[106] W.M. Herchmer to NWMP Commissioner, October 28, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1087-F609-1887).

police headquarters or detachment, several were monitored by two, but no other reserve was within ten miles of eight of them. The Siksika saw an increase in surveillance as well; the police reinstituted the detachment at Blackfoot Crossing, established one at the railroad town of Gleichen (which became a permanent fixture), and sent a large patrol of 25 men to reinforce both. The latter was there to search for Deerfoot but also to discourage the Siksika from killing cattle. The NWMP continued to monitor Indigenous peoples in Blackfoot Country to a greater extent than other areas of the Canadian Prairie West.

In 1887 and 1888, the NWMP continued their policy of trying to "overawe" over the Niitsitapi: concentrating manpower, extending networks of surveillance, and trying to overwhelm the latter's resolve to resist. But Niitsitapi communities resisted police efforts en masse because the sentiment still prevailed that the law was not being equally applied to Indigenous peoples and Euro-Canadians alike. Police officials believed that the way to improve law enforcement outcomes – that is, successfully arresting suspects and recovering stolen property – was to incorporate Indigenous peoples into the NWMP as scouts. Such individuals would be better able to detect crime and conduct investigations in their communities; they could also defuse the racial element of hostility around the apprehension of suspects. In the spring of 1887, Commissioner Herchmer and Superintendent Neale tested these assumptions by employing four Kainai men. The results were so encouraging that the NWMP decided to implement the Indian Scout System across the North-West Territories. However, the force had trouble recruiting Kainai men the next year, due to community frustration over the Trembling Man killing, the Bad Dried Meat shooting, and the disappearance of Bull Shoe and his wife. The Niitsitapi asserted that the NWMP and the legal system favoured Euro-Canadians, which contravened police statements when they first came to Blackfoot Country. There was still consternation over the Canadian government's handling of Treaty 7, most notably ration policy and the development of reserve economies. The NWMP wanted Indian Scouts in its ranks – especially in the Macleod District – but before this could happen, the force had to mend its relationship with the Niitsitapi. This process began in the early 1890s, but not before the relationship reached a nadir when the Kainai – as their oral history contends – "went to war with the Red Coats."

CHAPTER FIVE
After "The War with the Red Coats": The Rehabilitation of the Niitsitapi-Police Relationship, 1889-1901

The peace between the Kainai (Blood) and the tribes at Fort Belknap lasted for eight months. In late-April 1889, a Kainai raiding party hit a Nakoda (Assiniboine) camp on the northern Montana reservation and made off with nine horses.[1] The peace treaty negotiated by Red Crow (Mékaisto) fell apart for the same reason that other such agreements did during the buffalo days: young men wanted to acquire horses to accumulate wealth and war honours.[2] The American tribes – in comparison to Canadian ones – were better targets for the Kainai, given that they were closer; many of the Nehiyaw (Cree) – their traditional enemies – were hundreds of miles to the north. The Kainai could stop pursuit from American authorities by simply crossing the border. Many young Kainai men still harboured a distaste for the Belknap tribes because of the murder of six of their compatriots in 1886. In early May, the raid drew retaliation, sparking a new round of hostilities that implicated Red Crow's close relatives, including his son Black Face Chief.[3] The Belknaps were so furious over the renewed raiding that when Siksika chief Crowfoot (Isapo-Muxika) – severely ill with tuberculosis and less than a year away from death – tried to make a new peace treaty with them in October, an intoxicated individual pushed him to the ground while others angrily heaped insults on him.[4]

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[1] E.C. Fields to American Indian Commissioner's Office, May 9, 1888 (National Archives and Record Administration – Denver (NARAD) RG75-8NS-075-96-436-1).

[2] John C. Ewers*, Ethnological Report on the Blackfeet and Gros Ventre Tribe of Indians* (New York: Garland, 1974), 40-42, 174-175; John C. Ewers, *The Blackfeet: Raiders on the Northwest Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1958) 142-143, 232-233, and Christopher Marsh, "The Last of the Horse Wars: Intertribal, Cross-Border Warfare in Southern Alberta and Northern Montana Territory, 1878-1893" (Master's Thesis: University of Calgary, 2012), 24-58.

[3] E.C. Fields to American Indian Commissioner's Office, May 9, 1888 (NARAD RG75-8NS-075-96-436-1); William Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, May 8, 1888 (Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Record Group10-Volume1556); NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to The Comptroller NWMP, May 16, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1124-File429-88); "Blood Boodlers," *Macleod Gazette*, May 30, 1888; William Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, June 10, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1557); William Pocklington to Indian Commissioner, June 10, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1557); "The Horse Thieves," *Macleod Gazette*, June 20, 1888.

[4] A.E. Forget to E.C. Fields, June 11, 1888 (NARAD RG75-8NS-075-96-438); E.C. Fields to C.S. Otis, September 20, 1888 (NARAD RG75-8NS-075-96-440-1); Edwin C. Fields to Indian Commissioner's Office, July 21, 1888 (NARAD

Continuing Kainai horse raiding set the stage for the most significant rupture between them and NWMP during the 1880s. According to Kainai oral history, 1889 was the year of "The Last Real War Party," which precipitated a clash dubbed "The Time We Had a War with the Red Coats." In late-April, four Kainai men – Young Pine, Prairie Chicken Old Man, Calf Robe, and Crazy Crow – plus a South Piikani (American Peigan) man named Last Gun – left to steal horses in Apsáalooke (Crow) territory near the Little Big Horn River in southern Montana.[5] As they made their way south, they butchered cattle, broke into houses looking for supplies, and stole a few horses from Euro-American settlers. In early May, they found an enormous Apsáalooke village and made off with its large horse herd.[6] Concurrently, another Kainai party left the reserve and set off for Fort Belknap. Two days after the Young Pine's party hit the Apsáalooke, the second party stole twenty horses from around Fort Belknap and headed for home.[7] The Belknaps followed the trail of the raiders until a storm forced them to give up the chase. The inclement weather compelled Young Pine's party to seek shelter until the worst was over. A few days passed, then an A'aninin or Nakoda party stumbled upon the Kainai camp and attacked. After an unsuccessful parley, the Kainai fled – leaving many of the horses behind – but their pursuers were tenacious and would not give up. A series of gun battles ensued, which left one of the pursuers dead. The Kainai took the time to take his scalp and weapons before continuing towards the international boundary. Reaching the reserve on May 12, Young Pine party's drove the horses they managed to hold on to triumphantly into one of the Kainai camps.[8] The second party – evidently travelling at a more leisurely pace – arrived the next day after a NWMP "flying

RG75-8NS-075-96-436-2); C.S. Otis to Edwin C. Fields, September 24, 1888 (NARAD RG75-8NS-075-96-447-1); "Gone to Make Peace," *Macleod Gazette*, October 18, 1888; Philip H. Godsell, ed., *The Robert Nathaniel Wilson Papers*, Edited and Annotated by Philip H. Godsell, (Calgary: Glenbow Foundation, 1958), 373 (Glenbow Museum and Archives (Glenbow) M4421).

[5] Adolf Hungry Wolf*, The Blood People, A Division of the Blackfoot Confederacy: An Illustrated Interpretation of the Old Ways* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1977), 289.

[6] S.B. Steele to NWMP L.W. Herchmer, May 21, 1889 (LAC RG10-V3818-F57798); Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 289-293.

[7] Edwin C. Fields to M.D. Baldwin, Blackfeet Agency, May 8, 1889 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-440, Box 1); Colonel C.S. Otis to Edwin C. Fields, May 9, 1889 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-438); C.S. Otis to Colonel L.W. Herchmer, May 9. 1889 (RG10-V3818-F57798).

[8] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 17, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557); Colonel C.S. Otis to Edwin C. Fields, May 13, 1889 (NARAD RG75 8NS-075-96-438); and Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 297-299.

patrol" chased them onto the reserve after the latter had spotted the Kainai driving a herd of horses through the open prairie.[9]

The NWMP arrested two members of the latter party – The Bee and Low Chief – shortly after. Indian Agent William Pocklington nor the police knew of Young Pine's exploits party until the Kainai held a victory dance. The party's return was an especially joyous occasion since they had been gone so long, and the community took them for dead.[10] Pocklington arrived on the scene, broke it up, and demanded that Young Pine explain himself. The young man dutifully did so, though he did not understand why the Indian Agent – and later the police – were so concerned about something that had happened in American territory. Expressing annoyance over the police's inaction in the case of the six murdered Kainai, he said, "The Gros Ventres killed six Bloods who had a pass, nothing was done to them. I thought you would be glad that we had killed them. They stole reserve horses and [we] gave you lots of chances to get them back… We killed them across the Line. The Americans paid no attention to our Indians who were killed."[11] Pocklington told him the best course of action was to surrender to the police, which Young Pine, Last Gun, and a man named The Scout – who was part of the Belknap raiding party – did.[12] Others did not. Prairie Chicken Old Man constantly boasted that the police could not catch him – and he would not surrender. When the police tried to arrest Calf Robe in June, he threatened them with a rifle, forcing them to retreat. He turned himself later, but none of the policemen present knew that he had previously stood off their compatriots, which led to problems later. In the end, none of the raiders who surrendered faced charges anyway because none of their victims appeared in Canada to file a formal complaint. But when Superintendent Sam Steele realized that Calf Robe was the individual who had threatened the police, he issued a verbal standing order to his subordinates to arrest the fugitive.[13] Sergeant Christopher Hilliard had the opportunity to do so when he saw Prairie Chicken Old Man and Calf Robe at the *Ookaan* (Sun Dance) in early

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[9] Canada. North-West Mounted Police. *Sessional Paper No. 13 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1889* (Ottawa, 1890), 42.
[10] Superintendent S.B. Steele to NWMP Commissioner, May 21, 1889 (LAC RG10-V3818-F57798).
[11] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 17, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557).
[12] Pocklington maintained that The Scout was part of Young Pine's party. However, Adolph Hungry Wolf's account – passed down through Last Gun's family – makes no mention of The Scout at all. See William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 17, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557) and Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 287-300.
[13] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner NWMP, July 9, 1889 (LAC RG18-F173-1889); "Town Notes," *Macleod Gazette*, June 20, 1889.

July, the high point of the Kainai religious and social calendar.[14] Rationalizing that he would likely not have another chance, Hilliard decided to seize Prairie Chicken Old Man outside the sacred Medicine Lodge – where the Kainai community had gathered to ritually partake of berry soup. Pots and pans were sent flying as the police and fugitive scuffled. A crowd of Kainai men surrounded the police, yelling and brandishing rifles before a physical altercation erupted. When Calf Shirt – still an Indian Scout – tried to intervene on the police's behalf, someone put a gun to his face and told him to leave. Calf Shirt temporarily retreated, reappearing to return a revolver someone had stolen from Hilliard during the melee.[15] According to Kainai oral history, "the Mounties got beat up pretty bad."[16] Prairie Chicken Old Man and Calf Robe escaped during the confusion. Some time later, the police arrested several Kainai men – including Young Pine – for obstruction.

The Kainai's "War with the Redcoats" elicited outrage throughout the ranks of the NWMP, from the ordinary constable to the commissioner. Police officials perceived the incident as a particularly egregious instance of resistance and obstruction, a consequence of failing to punish the Kainai sufficiently in the past. Superintendent Sam Steele declared that if the courts did not hold them to account this time, the NWMP may as well give up trying to enforce the law amongst them. It was a stunning admission of defeat coming from a man the modern Canadian public often imagines as the apotheosis of calm determination in the pursuit of Canadian frontier justice.[17] When the Kainai accused of obstruction appeared in court, Judge Macleod summarily dismissed the case, then lambasted the police for their reckless action. In doing so, Macleod undermined the police policy that prescribed quick and decisive action in addressing Niitsitapi

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[14] Though the *Ookaan* (or Sun Dance) was often misunderstood by Euro-Canadians (for example, "making braves" with the pole dance), to the Kainai and other Niitsitapi peoples it was – the words of Karl Schlesier – a "world renewal event" meant to "restore life and harmony"; see Karl Schlesier, "Rethinking the Midewiwin and the Plains Ceremonial Called the Sun Dance*," The Plains Anthropologis*t 35, no. 127 (1990): 18-19. In his observation of the *Ookaan*, R.N. Wilson characterized it as manifestation of community thanksgiving for the past year and the hope for good fortune in the year ahead; see Robert Nathaniel Wilson, "Ethnological Notes on the Blackfoot" (1897), 1 (Glenbow M4422). See also Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 20, 34 for the importance of the *Ookaan* for the Niitsitapi.

[15] Statement of Sergeant C. Hilliard to S.B. Steele and Z.T. Wood, J.P.s, July 8, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889); Statement of Constable J. Richardson to S.B. Steele and Z.T. Wood, J.P.s, July 8, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889): Statement of Indian Constable Calf Shirt to S.B. Steele and Z.T. Wood, J.P.s, July 8, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889).

[16] Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 300.

[17] For example, see "Sam Steele: The Legendary Mountie Evicts an American Gambler from the Yukon during the Klondike Gold Rush," *Heritage Minutes: #Part of Our Heritage*, Historica Canada. Last Assessed August 12, 2020, https://www.historicacanada.ca/content/heritage-minutes/sam-steele.

transgressions of colonial law. By stating that the police received no more than the thumping they deserved, Macleod told Steele and every other officer in Blackfoot Country that he would not brook any such heavy-handed action. Commissioner L.W. Herchmer vehemently disagreed with Macleod's comments and verdict but later took the judge's criticism to heart. In the 1890s, there was a reorientation of police policy. While levels of surveillance remained high – especially in the first half of the decade – with a high concentration of manpower resources and numerous outposts, the NWMP regularly engaged the Niitsitapi with positive, nonenforcement contact. Rather than seeing the police only when crime was afoot and arrests needed to be made, Niitsitapi individuals encountered policemen in economic and casual contexts. Increasingly, the Niitsitapi saw the police working on their behalf to help build reserve economies, which had been stagnant since the eradication of the bison. In January 1889, Herchmer had written a memorandum to the Indian Department outlining a plan for increasing economic activities on the reserves through agriculture, resource extraction, and wage labour. Herchmer pledged that the police would do their part in making the initiative successful. For many years, the police were instrumental in injecting cash into Niitsitapi communities through contracts and employee wages. They occasionally helped Niitsitapi communities challenge oppressive Indian Department policies, especially when they threatened to cause disorder and criminality or ran counter to Canadian law. Throughout the 1890s, the Kainai came to see the police as more than a law enforcement apparatus; they were economic partners, political arbiters, even friends. This chapter examines the adjustment of police policy in Blackfoot Country and the rehabilitation of the police-Niitsitapi relationship, which led to the stabilization and expansion of the Indian Scout System.

After the Kainai "War with the Red Coats," Steele complained of past Niitsitapi obstruction of the police, emphasizing the need to now punish the Kainai severely. Steele defended Hilliard's decision to make the arrest, given that it had been difficult to track down the fugitives. The real problem was not what the police had done but that the Kainai had not been, in Steele's words, "taught to respect the police in the performance of the duties." Further, they felt emboldened to "knock policemen about" whenever they liked. The courts had engendered this attitude by never holding them accountable for their actions.[18] Hilliard made a similar point, asserting that in his six years in the Macleod District, about a quarter of all attempted arrests on

[18] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner NWMP, July 9, 1889 (LAC RG18-F173-1889).

the reserve had been resisted in some way. The Kainai consistently pulled arms on policemen or took prisoners from them. On one spectacular occasion, they had even stripped a constable of his clothes at gunpoint. Hilliard concluded, "The result of this treatment of the Indians has been to cause them to think they can do what they like and get off scot free. At the present time they feel confident that they will get out of this scrape."[19] As to present charges, Steele warned, "If these Indians are not punished this time, it will be almost as well to give up trying to enforce the law in regard to them."[20] Commissioner Herchmer agreed with his subordinate's perspective. When Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed requested that the proceedings against the Kainai be dropped – believing the police had tried to arrest Calf Robe twice for the same offence, unnecessarily provoking the incident – Herchmer refused, saying, "The resistance to arrest on the part of Indians, and interference with the police in the performance of their duty, have been too frequent in the past, and I can see no reason for dropping the present proceedings."[21]

When Calf Robe, Young Pine, and the obstructers appeared in court in early August, Judge Macleod ultimately sided with them. The Crown prosecutor argued that even if the police did not have warrants – as the defence counsel claimed – the accused still had no right to assault them. However, Macleod disagreed, declaring that the police should have had a warrant, and even if they did, the *Ookaan* was a religious festival that was no place for such action.[22] Doing so – in Macleod's words – "was as bad as attempting to make an arrest in a Church, and that had they attempted to arrest a white man at some religious festival they would have probably have been handled still rougher."[23] What was most galling to Steele was that Macleod declared in open court – in front of numerous Kainai witnesses – that the police were wrong for attempting the arrests and got no more than they deserved. Steele complained Macleod was labouring under "dark age" conceptions of church sanctuary and that the decision would have a bad effect in spurring Kainai insolence.[24] He objected to the supposed illegality of the arrest given warrants had seldom been issued for the arrest of Niitsitapi suspects. The officers commanding the districts had always conveyed the authority to arrest Indigenous peoples verbally on the premise

[19] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner NWMP, July 9, 1889 (LAC RG18-F173-1889).
[20] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner NWMP, July 9, 1889 (LAC RG18-F173-1889).
[21] Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed to the NWMP Commissioner, July 13, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889); NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to Indian Commissioner, July 16, 1889, Regina (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889).
[22] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the N.W.M.P Commissioner, August 6, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889).
[23] "Extract from a Report of Superintendent Steele," August 12, 1889 (LAC RG18-V26-F43-1889).
[24] "Extract from a Report of Superintendent Steele," August 12, 1889 (LAC RG18-V26-F43-1889).

that "the possession of warrant would not make the slightest difference to an Indian, as they do not understand it."[25] Steele maintained Macleod was a hypocrite given that as commissioner of the force during the 1870s, he had routinely ordered Niitsitapi arrests without them. The Indian Department was guilty as well; Reed had routinely ordered the arrest of Nehiyaw (Cree) individuals in the northern police districts, without the benefit of a warrant. Steele disagreed with the very idea of Macleod bringing up warrants in open court because he believed it undermined the authority of the police. [26] Steele's refusal to issue arrest warrants for Niitsitapi individuals – as with the issue of bail described previously – invalidates the assertion of Canadian police historians that Indigenous peoples and Euro-Canadians had always been treated equally before the law. The problem existed in all police districts, often at the behest of the Department of Indian Affairs. Whatever Macleod's motivation was in this instance, it was commendable of him not to let the police get away with blatant illegality that would have never been allowed to stand in the case of a Euro-Canadian citizen.

In the wake of the trial, police officials worried that Macleod's decision would make it even more difficult to do their job in Blackfoot Country. Herchmer told NWMP Comptroller Fred White there was likely to be "very serious difficulties" with the Kainai because they now saw themselves as "privileged" in comparison to the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe (Plains Ojibway or Salteaux). While the police maintained firm control over these groups – pursuing and bringing back any who left their reserves without permission – the Kainai were "allowed to go and come without restraint." They were constantly off their reserve without passes and went "marauding" about in the United States.[27] He maintained that their demeanour had only grown worse since Macleod's verdict. Herchmer's initial prescription for remedying the problem was to seize every horse on reserve not branded and recorded at the Indian Agent's office and severely punish any individual bringing stolen horses into Canada or resisting the police.[28] In essence, Herchmer was calling for more of the same ineffective policy. The commissioner was exasperated, writing to the Comptroller:

[25] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the NWMP Commissioner, July 27, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889).
[26] "Extract from a Report of the Commissioner of the Mounted Police," August 20, 1889 (LAC RG18-V26-F43-1889).
[27] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the N.W.M.P Comptroller, August 12, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889).
[28] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the NWMP Comptroller, August 12, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889).

"With the force at my command at present I am prepared at all times to maintain the Peace of the Territories with proper support from the Judges and Indian Agents, but under the present administration of justice at Macleod coupled with the injudicious remarks of the Judges as shown in these papers. I feel it my duty to warn my Department that trouble over which I can have no possible control will arise with these Bloods at an early date."[29]

At the very least, Herchmer wanted Indian Agent Pocklington – who Steele accused of spreading a story around Macleod that the police had been drunk when they tried making arrests at the *Ookaan* – terminated from his position with the Indian Department and a more cooperative man installed.[30] Overall, police officials felt demoralized because of Macleod's decision and the tenacity in which the Indian Department had defended the Kainai.

Despite Steele and Herchmer's premonitions of disorder and violence in Blackfoot Country, this did not come to pass. While the relationship between the NWMP and Niitsitapi communities was not completely free of tensions during the 1890s, by the end of that decade, there was certainly more optimism in the direction it was going compared to the previous one. At the end of 1889, Herchmer bluntly informed Parliament, "All the Indians in the Territories have behaved remarkably well this year, except the Bloods who give a good deal of annoyance. These Indians are still well armed and are frequently off their reserve, which…is not calculated to improve the condition of things."[31] After Belknap raiders made off with Red Crow's horses just one day after the obstructers' trial, a Kainai party left the reserve in pursuit without waiting for the police response. Pocklington feared an explosion of violence if they caught up, despite Red Crow being with them.[32] That fall, Kainai horse raiders took horses near Fort Belknap and from the Nehiyaw (Cree) at Medicine Hat, though in more encouraging news Red Crow forced the five men involved in the first instance to surrender to the police.[33] Pocklington, Steele, and Herchmer all commented about the large quantity of alcohol that flowed on the Kainai reserve, which led to a "drunken brawl" at the Upper Agency in the middle of November. Two men prominent in the clash at the *Ookaan* – Young Pine and Prairie Chicken Old Man – were also

[29] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to NWMP Comptroller, August 20, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889).
[30] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to NWMP Comptroller, August 20, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1139-F173-1889); Superintendent S.B. Steele to NWMP Commissioner, August 23, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1163-89); Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to NWMP Comptroller, August 30, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1163-89).
[31] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1889*, 3.
[32] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, August 8, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557); William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, August 22, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557).
[33] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, November 6, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557); William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, December 23, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557); Canada, *Report of the NWMP 1889*, 42-43.

involved in the recent disturbance; they were arrested and fined eighteen dollars.[34] Most concerning was that The Dog, Big Rib, and Deerfoot still evaded capture. The former two men had recently stood off Blackfeet tribal police in Montana who had tried to capture them again and were currently – along with five other fugitives – camped across the border killing cattle. A Kainai man named Old Moccasin told Pocklington that they had told him to tell the Indian Agent that if the police wanted to arrest them, "they were ready for them."[35] At the dawn of a new decade, it certainly did not look like the relationship between the force and the Kainai was going to improve. However, by the late-1890s, Herchmer spoke little about the conduct of the Kainai in annual reports. In 1898, Superintendent Richard Burton Deane – the long-time commander of the Lethbridge district who succeeded Steele when he was reassigned to the Yukon – characterized the Kainai and Piikani as "docile" and being "remarkably well-behaved."[36] In that same report, Herchmer stated that the force had no trouble with Indigenous peoples whatsoever because they were focused on making money through freighting, haymaking, and the sale of agricultural produce. He maintained that the biggest issues with Indigenous peoples were their dalliances with alcohol and the slaughter of range cattle. Even then, Herchmer pointed out that it was mostly Euro-Canadians – particularly eastern European immigrants – who illegally killed livestock.[37] The Dangerous Blackfoot discourse had virtually disappeared; the Kainai were no longer considered a threat to law and order in the Macleod District, a stunning about-face from a mere eight years earlier.

An important indicator of the improvement in Kainai-police relations was the expansion, then entrenchment, of the Indian Scout System in the Macleod district. The initial experiment with Indian scouts had been successful, but the Kainai were not interested in further participation because of the widespread belief that the force was not a good-faith actor advocating for their interests – or fairly enforcing the law. This feeling persisted in the wake of the "War with the Red Coats." Soon after, Reed wrote to Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, explaining that the police still wanted two to three more good men. He had personally approached Young Pine,

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[34] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, November 13, 1889 (RG10-V1557); William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, November 20, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557); William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, December 3, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557); Canada, *Report of the NWMP 1889*, 3, 63-65.
[35] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, January 31, 1890 (LAC RG10-V1558).
[36] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1898* (Ottawa, 1999), 26.
[37] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1898*, 3-4, 13-14.

asking him to accept a scout position, believing that the popular young man could influence the more disruptive elements on the reserve to better behaviour. Reed told Macdonald that Young Pine was a "capital man" and "a fine manly Indian" who struck him as truthful and honest.[38] It is unclear whether Young Pine accepted the position but his actions during the *Ookaan* shortly after surely disqualified him. After the brawl, the police appeared even more desperate to procure Kanai scouts. In mid-July, Pocklington wrote Reed regarding a request from Herchmer to recommend a couple of likely candidates. The Indian Agent told Reed that the Kainai were simply not interested. They were annoyed with the police's recent conduct and that several influential men in the community still faced trial for obstruction. Pocklington thought that the police would have better success after the affair was settled.[39]

The police wanted Kainai cooperation with law enforcement initiatives, but they needed to build rapport with the community first. It needed to demonstrate to the Kainai that police were not just an oppressive force that appeared to arrest friends and family, but an institution contributing to Kainai well-being and working to solve community problems. Since mid-1888, the NWMP had worked to address the thorny issue of Kainai horses seldom being returned by American authorities, while the force aggressively took Kainai spoils taken in the United States. When the Belknaps raided the Kainai reserve in May 1888, the police – with the cooperation of the American army at Fort Assiniboine – quickly arranged for their return before the end of the month.[40] The NWMP also stopped taking horses away from the Kainai unless an individual appeared in person to make a complaint. This law was passed in 1888, even though the police believed that it only encouraged Kainai raiding. They lobbied for its repeal, but Lieutenant-Governor Edgar Dewdney refused, and Herchmer reluctantly ordered police to enforce it.[41] The next year, Kainai horses taken by Nakoda raiders were again hastily returned to their owners.[42] The NWMP had tried to address Kainai criticisms concerning stolen horses, but the incident at the *Ookaan* sabotaged overall efforts at reconciliation.

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[38] Hayter Reed to Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, July 3, 1889 (LAC RG10-V3818-F57798).
[39] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, July 10, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557).
[40] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, May 8, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1556): Superintendent W.D. Antrobus to Commissioner NWMP, May 18, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1123-F413-88).
[41] Superintendent P.R. Neale to Commissioner NWMP, May 15, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1124-F429-88); NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to The Comptroller NWMP, May 16, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1124-F429-88);NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Lieutenant-Governor, N.W.T, May 16, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1124-F429-88); Clerk of the Council A.E. Forget to Commissioner NWMP, May 23, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1124-F429-88).
[42] William Pocklington to the Indian Commissioner, August 22, 1889 (LAC RG10-V1557).

The Kainai – and other Niitsitapi communities – faced a bigger problem: the deplorable state of the reserve economy and the ensuing poverty it brought. In the mid-1880s, the Department of Indian Affairs began to accumulate data on the amount of income Indigenous peoples in the North-Territories generated through agriculture, stock raising, and wage labour, which can be used to partly gauge the state of reserve economies. In 1889, the annual report allowed for a comparison of seventeen Indian Agencies. The Kainai ranked poorly, generating only $705.98 in total income, a little more than half of the yearly average of $1321.31 for all agencies that year. It was the least amount of revenue generated by the Niitsitapi reserves and eleventh overall. In terms of per capita income, matters were even worse; the community only generated $0.33 for each person, almost six times lower than the average of $1.79. It was the worst showing of any agency in 1889.[43] Compiling earnings data from the Blood Agency Letter-books indicates that 1889 was in line with data from previous years. 1886 saw $385.41 in individual earnings, with $753.39 in 1888.[44] Herchmer was aware of the state Niitsitapi reserve economies, believing it was a lack of economic opportunity that made the management of the Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika so difficult. In January 1889 – six months before the brawl at the *Ookaan* – Herchmer sent Reed several recommendations to spur economic development in Treaty 7. First, he suggested the Niitsitapi be provided with cattle by the Indian Department to begin ranching operations.[45] While Canadian officials had long acknowledged Blackfoot Territory was more conducive to cattle raising than agriculture – and the terms of Treaty 7 mandated that a certain amount of cattle be distributed to Niitsitapi families – few cattle had been given to them.[46] Second, the Indian Department needed to provide large stallions to the Niitsitapi to breed their sizable stock of mares. The offspring could be profitably sold to area

[43] Data compiled from "Statement of Earnings of Indians for Fiscal Year Ended 30th June, 1889" in Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Sessional Paper No. 12 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December 1889* (Ottawa, 1890), 240-241 and "Number of Indians in the North-West Territories and their Whereabouts in 1889" in Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs*, *1889*, 234-239. Income per capita was calculated by dividing total income of the agency by its population.

[44] Data compiled from the monthly "Earnings of Individual Indians" report found in the Blood Agency Letterbooks (LAC RG10-V1553-1557).

[45] NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 3, 1889 (LAC RG18-V26-F28-1889).

[46] Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* (Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, & Co., Publishers, 1880; reprint Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1979), 268-269 and Canada, *Copy of Treaty and Supplementary Treaty No. 7 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Blackfeet and Other Indian Tribes, at the Blackfoot Crossing of Bow River and Fort Macleod*, September 22, 1877, (Ottawa, 1877); last accessed August 23, 2020, https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100028793/1581292336658.

settlers. Herchmer opined that even the colts produced from the very first attempt would net good profit. Third, he pointed out that the Niitsitapi reserves had bountiful hay stocks that could be cultivated for profit. The Indian Department had already encouraged the Nehiyaw and Nakoda bands in the north to do so and they had done well. Herchmer promised that if the Indian Department supplied mowers and rakes to the Niitsitapi, he would "be extremely pleased" to direct the many police posts situated around the Niitsitapi reserves to purchase their hay. Speaking to his experience as an Indian Agent before joining the force, the commissioner concluded, "I have generally found that Indians will work when properly encouraged, and when they can see the pecuniary advantage."[47] Herchmer believed his recommendations would translate into sound policy, reiterating his final point to Comptroller White in 1894: "I think that the whole solution to the Indian Problem [the Niitsitapi]…is to keep them constantly at some congenial work which will employ them, and will, with their rations, keep them well clothed and fed."[48] Herchmer was willing to do what he could to ameliorate socio-economic conditions on the reserves in the interest of maintaining peace and order in Blackfoot Country.

Herchmer put this policy into effect during the summer of 1890. In June, Superintendent Deane of the Lethbridge District queried Agent Pocklington, asking permission for a police haying team to cut hay on the Blood Reserve.[49] Pocklington replied that he did not have the authority to approve the request and suggested Deane write to the Indian Commissioner instead.[50] When the matter reached Herchmer's desk in early-July, he contacted Amédée E. Forget – the Assistant Indian Commissioner – and offered the entire Lethbridge hay contract to the Kainai, which stipulated the delivery of 250 tons at fifteen dollars per ton to the district headquarters. Had the contract been executed, the reserve stood to receive a cash injection of $3750, an amount that surpassed the total income earned for 1886, 1887, 1888, and 1889 combined. Forget told Herchmer that since hay was scarce due to dry conditions, filling such a large contract would be impossible. Compounding difficulties was that there was only one man on the reserve who even owned a haying machine. There was also a shortage of wagons to collect and transport the commodity too. With such a paucity of equipment, Pocklington

[47] NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 3, 1889 (LAC RG18-V26-F28-1889).
[48] NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to Comptroller Fred White, April 30, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[49] Superintendent R. Burton Deane to W. Pocklington Esq., June 18, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F154-1890).
[50] William Pocklington to Superintendent Deane N.W.M. Police Lethbridge, June 21, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F154-1890).

predicted it would have taken the Kainai an entire year to complete the contract! Under the circumstances, Forget suggested the police give the Kainai some of the smaller contracts for the detachments, Stand Off or Big Bend.[51] Herchmer agreed and the Stand Off detachment awarded its sixty-ton hay contract to Red Crow's eldest son, Chief Old Moon, who owned the haying machine and helped coordinate the labour for the project. Chief Old Moon's team finished the work in October, which Pocklington considered a commendable job for their "first attempt at this industry."[52] The only issue that arose was that the police were slow in paying for the hay. Forget warned Herchmer in mid-November that unless there was a speedy settlement soon, there might be difficulty in convincing the Kainai to take more contracts.[53] In early December, Chief Old Moon was finally paid his $468.46, an amount greater than the total income generated by the Kainai the previous year.[54] Herchmer also contracted with the Tsuu T'ina of the Sarcee Reserve to deliver 25 tons of hay to police headquarters in Calgary, done explicitly at the request of Forget to bolster the reserve economy since it was over and above the 275 tons of hay the police needed at the post.[55] That year, Superintendent Steele had a verbal agreement with the Piikani to pay them for every ton of hay they brought into the Fort Macleod, up to 15 tons. Due to heat and aridity, they were not able to bring in much though.[56]

The NWMP pursued this policy throughout the decade and the Niitsitapi – especially the Kainai – regularly provided labour and essential commodities for the smooth functioning of the police posts. In 1891, Steele contracted with the Piikani to cut ten tons of hay for the Macleod

[51] W. Pocklington, Indian Agent to the Indian Commissioner Regina, July 10, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F154-1890); Assistant Commissioner A.E. Forget to the Commissioner of the N.W. Mounted Police, July 10, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F154-1890).
[52] "North West Mounted Police: Schedule of Contracts Entered into for the Supply of Hay for the Fiscal Year 1890-91" (LAC RG18-V47-F53-1891); Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Sessional Paper No. 14 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31st December 1891* (Ottawa, 1892), 81.
[53] Assistant Commissioner A.E. Forget to the Commissioner of the N.W. Mounted Police, November 20, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F153-1890).
[54] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner of N.W.M. Police, December 1, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F153-1890).
[55] Assistant Commissioner A.E Forget to the Commissioner of the N.W. Mounted Police, July 21, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F150-1890); L.W. Herchmer to O.C. Calgary, July 22, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F150-1890); Comptroller Fred White to the Commissioner, N.W. Mounted Police, September 9, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F150-1890); Commissioner (NWMP) to the Comptroller, September 27, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F150-1890).
[56] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W. Mounted Police, December 9, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1173-F153-1890).

district, which the police freighted themselves.[57] There is no evidence that the Kainai tendered any contract that year, likely because of a severe lack of haying equipment. Pocklington reported to the department that Chief Old Moon "had the misfortune to badly smash his old machine" just before the haying season started. He and some other prominent older men worked with hand tools to fill some small contracts for Euro-Canadian settlers and the reserve beef contractor, then purchased new haying outfits for the next year.[58] For the 1892 season, Herchmer specifically ordered Steele to offer the Kainai and Piikani hay contracts for the Stand Off and Kipp detachments, along with 100 tons of hay for the Macleod headquarters' contact.[59] He gave similar orders to Superintendent Deane for the Lethbridge District. The new Indian Agent for the Kainai – former NWMP Commissioner A.G. Irvine – declined the offer, pleading that a scarcity of the hay on the reserve that summer made it difficult to acquire a sufficient amount for the Kainai's own needs and none could be spared for outsiders.[60] Herchmer also awarded the Tsuu T'ina 50 tons of the Calgary headquarters hay contact and at the same time suspended the requirement they submit a security bond that usually applied to other tenderers, meant to make sure the contracts awarded were fulfilled.[61] Although the Kainai had an uneven start with police contracts, from 1893 onwards – except for the year 1896 – they secured and completed at least one per year until 1903. They were usually for the small detachments on the border of the reserve: Stand Off, Kootenai, and Kipp, which were close enough to Kainai hay fields to successfully compete with settlers. Police policy still dictated that only the lowest tendered offer be accepted. Occasionally – such as in 1901 and 1902 – the Kainai secured larger contracts for the headquarters at Lethbridge.[62] Herchmer's policy of encouraging the Kainai to bid for contracts stimulated the reserve economy through the development of a haying industry. Thirteen

[57] Comptroller Fred White to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, September 12, 1891 (LAC RG18-V1204-F153-1891); Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W. Mounted Police, September 25, 1891 LAC (RG18-V1204-F153-1891).
[58] "Comparative Statement for Hay Received: Macleod District," July 22, 1891 (LAC RG18-V1204-F153-1891); Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs, 1891*, 183.
[59] L.W. Herchmer to Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Macleod, July 17, 1892 (LAC RG18-V1236-F152-1892).
[60] S. Swinford to Officer Commanding N.W.M.P Lethbridge, July 20, 1892 (LAC RG18-V1236-F153-1892); Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M.P, July 27, 1892 (LAC RG18-V1236-F152-1892).
[61] "Tenders for Hay" (LAC RG18-V1236-F149-1892); L.W. Herchmer to Inspector Cuthbert, July 31, 1892 (LAC RG18-V1236-F149-1892); Assistant Commissioner A.E. Forget to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, August 12, 1892 (LAC RG18-V1236-F149-1892).
[62] Superintendent R. Burton Deane to Mr. James Wilson, July 22, 1901 (Glenbow M1788-19); Inspector H.S. Casey to James Wilson, July 9, 1902 (Glenbow M1788-18).

years after Chief Old Moon filled the Kainai's first-ever hay contract, a single season of work brought in $7189 from sixteen contractors, which included the Cochrane Ranche Company, the Brown Ranche Company, the Alberta Rail and Coal Company, the Department of Indian Affairs, the NWMP, local settlers, and merchants in Macleod and Lethbridge.[63] Herchmer's policy allowed the inexperienced Niitsitapi to learn a new skill and earn money in the agricultural economy. It also facilitated contact that permitted the two sides to interact in a new way where both sides benefitted, fostering friendlier relations.

Herchmer's contract policy helped promote the development of freighting as a prominent economic activity, which fostered more commercial and personal relations between the NWMP and the Kainai community. Indigenous peoples occasionally freighted materials like coal, hay, flour, and other supplies for Indian Department use on many reserves. NWMP-awarded freighting contracts provided a steady source of employment during the late autumn and winter. It is not clear whether Herchmer initially approached Blood Indian Agent James Wilson or vice versa, but in late 1893, the Kainai delivered one hundred tons of coal to the detachments of Stand Off and Kipp "in a very satisfactory way." Although a Kainai man named Black Horses operated a small mine on the reserve, the Galt Company of Lethbridge provided the police coal. Kainai freighters first travelled to the city to pick it up before carrying it to the detachments. That same year the Siksika freighted coal to the police detachment at Gleichen; coal produced from a mine on the reserve filled the contract.[64] While the Siksika only sporadically contracted with the police in subsequent years, the Kainai hauled coal for the detachments every year until 1906. Wilson was diligent about tendering offers for most years. If he did not, the police reminded him to do so. They also cautioned him when his tender was too high and recommended he reduce it to be competitive, which indicates that some officers explicitly wanted to give the contracts to the Kainai.[65] In the first few years, the Kainai filled only a couple of contracts, usually at Stand Off and one other detachment. By 1899, they were delivering coal to nearly every detachment on the

[63] "Re: Hay Contracts 1903" (Glenbow M1788-17).

[64] Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Sessional Paper No. 14 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30th June 1894* (Ottawa, 1895), 87, 89.

[65] Superintendent R. Burton Deane to James Wilson Esq., October 4, 1899 (Glenbow M1788-20); J.A. McGibbon to James Wilson Esq., August 25, 1902 (Glenbow M1788-18); Quartermaster Sergeant N.C. Bryan to James Wilson Esq., September 12, 1902 (Glenbow M1788-18); Quartermaster Sergeant N.C. Bryan to James Wilson Esq., September 23, 1902 (Glenbow M1788-18); Superintendent J.W. Begin to James Wilson Esq., July 11, 1903 (Glenbow M1788-18).

border of the reserve: Stand Off, Big Bend, St. Mary's, Kootenai, Cardston, and Kipp, which added up to 130 tons for the season.[66] They succeeded in getting the same contracts for the next seven years, making the freighting of coal steady work for Kainai men. As with haying, the Kainai used the skills they had learned from working for the police to offer similar services to local settlers. This development happened quickly, with the Kainai freighters who delivered coal to police detachments in 1893 obtaining employment from a man named Houk, who operated a small mine on the banks of the St. Mary's River. That winter, they carried fifty tons of coal from the western edge of the reserve to the town of Macleod, where they received "good wages" for their effort.[67] By the early 1900s, Wilson spent a fair bit of time arranging coal freighting contracts with local farmers, ranchers, and merchants, collecting payments, and dealing with complaints when they arose.[68] The Kainai did all the outdoor work. However, they were proactive about acquiring work on their own too. In July 1902, John Stocks – an engineer with the Department of Public Works – arranged a contract with Wilson for the Kainai to freight piling from Macleod to Stand Off and other prospective bridge sites. Stocks initially contacted the Indian Agent because Kainai men had approached Stocks' foreman looking for work.[69]

The police tried to give the Kainai other types of freighting contracts as well. In October 1899, Superintendent Deane wrote Wilson, suggesting that he make an offer for the contract freighting oats from Macleod to the detachments of Stand Off, St. Mary's, Kootenai, Cardston, and Big Bend every month. Deane recognized that this would provide the Kainai with more steady employment.[70] Wilson submitted a tender later that month, but it was rejected by Commissioner Herchmer, who considered the quote to be too high.[71] Still, the fact that Deane personally reached out to Wilson illustrates that police policy at the turn of the century was to

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[66] "North West Mounted Police: Contracts 1899-1900, Macleod and Outposts" (LAC RG18-V215-F543-01).
[67] Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs, 1894*, 87.
[68] For example see Chris Nathe, Macleod to "Agent of Blood Indians," November 21, 1903 (Glenbow M1788-21); Chris Nathe to Mr. Wilson, Indian Agent Bloods, December 12, 1903 (Glenbow M1788-17); C.H. Collinson to R.N. Wilson Esq., February 4, 1904 (Glenbow M1788-17); D. Vincent Scully to R. Wilson Esq., May 4, 1904 (Glenbow M1788-17); G.F. Beere to The Agent Blood Reserve, September 19, 1904 (Glenbow M1788-17); P. Jebb Browne to Robert Wilson Esq., March 29, 1905 (Glenbow M1788-16); C.H. Collinson to Agent Blood Reserve, June 20, 1905 (Glenbow M1788-16); R.P. MacDonnell to Mr. Wilson, December 14, 1905 (Glenbow M1788-16); R.N. Wilson to R. Jebb. Brown, April 20, 1906 (Glenbow M1788-16); R.N. Wilson to C.M. O'Brien, April 20, 1906 (Glenbow M1788-16); R.N. Wilson to Reverend G.E. Gale, June 5, 1906 (Glenbow M1788-16).
[69] Assistant Chief Engineer John Stocks to James Wilson Esq., July 2, 1902 (Glenbow M1788-23).
[70] Superintendent R. Burton Deane to James Wilson Esq., October 20, 1899 (Glenbow M1788-20).
[71] Superintendent R. Burton Deane to James Wilson Esq., November 9, 1899 (Glenbow M1788-20).

stimulate economic development on the reserve through supply contracts. Overall, the policy was successful. In 1888, the Kainai had the lowest per capita income of any Indian agency in the Canadian Prairie West: $0.33 for every person on the reserve. By 1896, it had increased to $7.78, which ranked 13th among twenty-one agencies. This increase was overwhelmingly driven by the income derived from wage labour (much of it coming from employment as Indian Scouts) and freight-handling. The Kainai ranked number one in this category with $8817.28, more than twice the amount of the number two ranked Birtle Agency of Manitoba.[72] The second-largest contributor to reserve income was the sale of wood and hay totalling $770.52, which ranked third among all agencies.[73] Both sectors of the reserve economy got their start and were partly maintained because of the policy Herchmer formulated in 1890. The Piikani and Siksika reserves also experienced an increase in per capita income - $4.22 and $3.25 respectively – due to the development of the hay, freighting, and wage labour sectors.[74] One factor in their slower rate of economic growth, compared to the Kainai, was fewer police detachments around these reserves. Police detachments presented a ready market because of the police's logistical requirements, but they attracted civilian populations with similar needs as well. More detachments surrounded the Kainai reserve than the Piikani, Siksika, and Tsuu T'ina. The Siksika were also disadvantaged by their distance from police headquarters at Calgary (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Economic growth continued into the first decade of the twentieth century, with the Kainai earning $22.93 per person in 1901, and in total the reserve earned $29321.75, ranking seventh among twenty-one agencies.[75] Haying, freighting, and employment with the NWMP remained major drivers of the economy, fostering positive contact between the police and the community.

In the 1890s, the NWMP also improved its relationship with the Kainai community by intervening on their behalf against grating Indian Department policy. During the 1880s, the

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[72] Data compiled from "Earnings of Indians, 1895-96" in Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Sessional Paper No. 14 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30th June 1896* (Ottawa, 1897), 444 and "Census Returns of Resident and Nomadic Indians; Denominations to Which They Belong, &c," in Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs*, 1896, 437-439. Income per capita was calculated by dividing total income of the agency by its population.

[73] "Earnings of Indians, 1895-96" in Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs, 1896*, 444.

[74] "Earnings of Indians, 1895-96" in Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs, 1896*, 444.

[75] Data compiled from "Agricultural and Industrial Statistics: Sources and Value of Income" in Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Sessional Paper No. 27 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30th June 1901* (Ottawa, 1902) Part II, 228 and "Census Returns of Resident and Nomadic Indians; Denominations to Which They Belong, &c" in Canada, *Annual Report Indian Affairs*, *1901*, Part II, 170-177. Income per capita was calculated by dividing total income of the agency by its population.

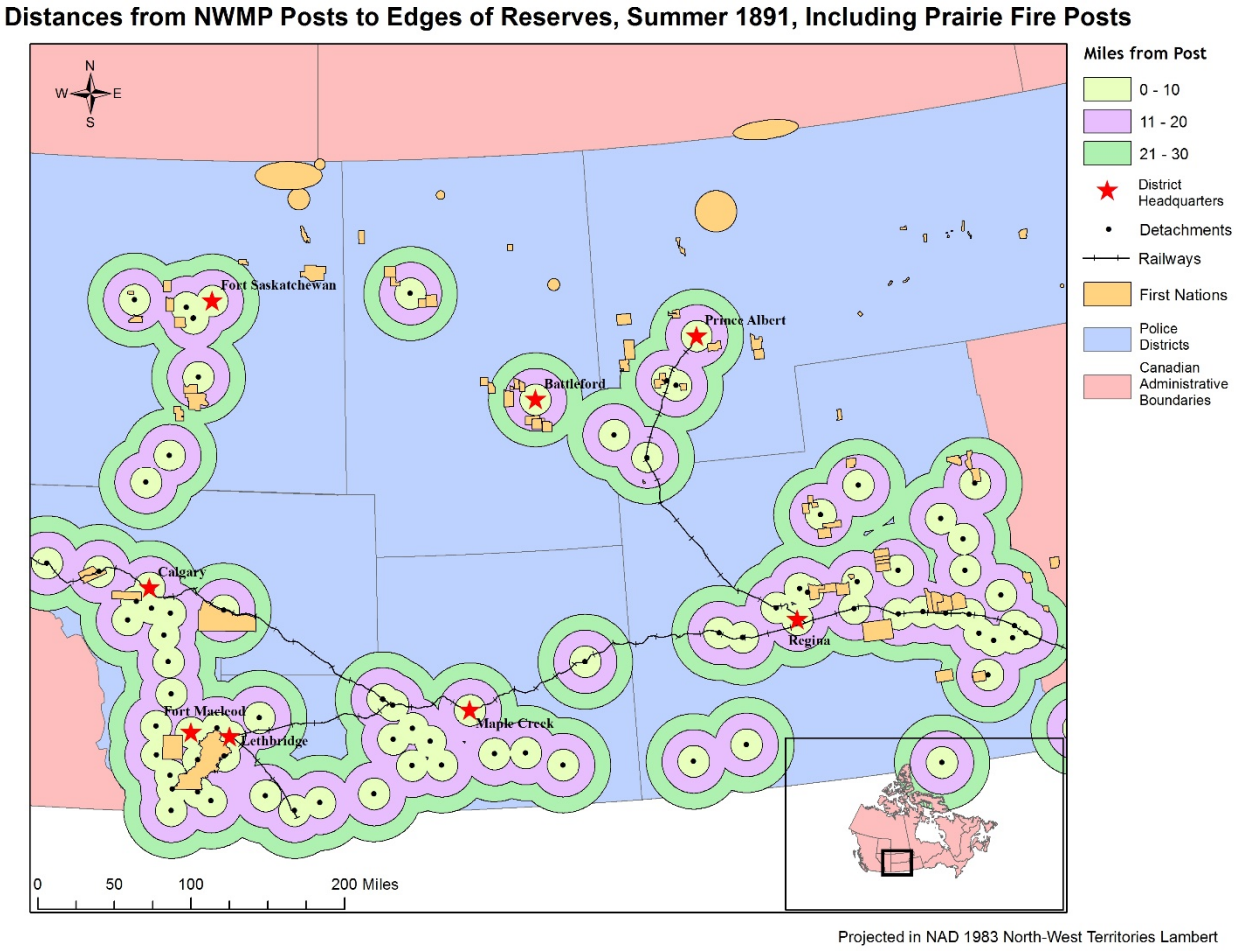

Figure 5.1: Distances from North-West Mounted Police Posts to the Edges of Reserves, Summer 1891. During the 1890s, Kainai economic output increased partly because of hay and freighting contracts for NWMP headquarters and detachments surrounding their reserve. Siksika output did not increase as much because of its distance from Calgary and because fewer detachments were in the vicinity of the reserve.

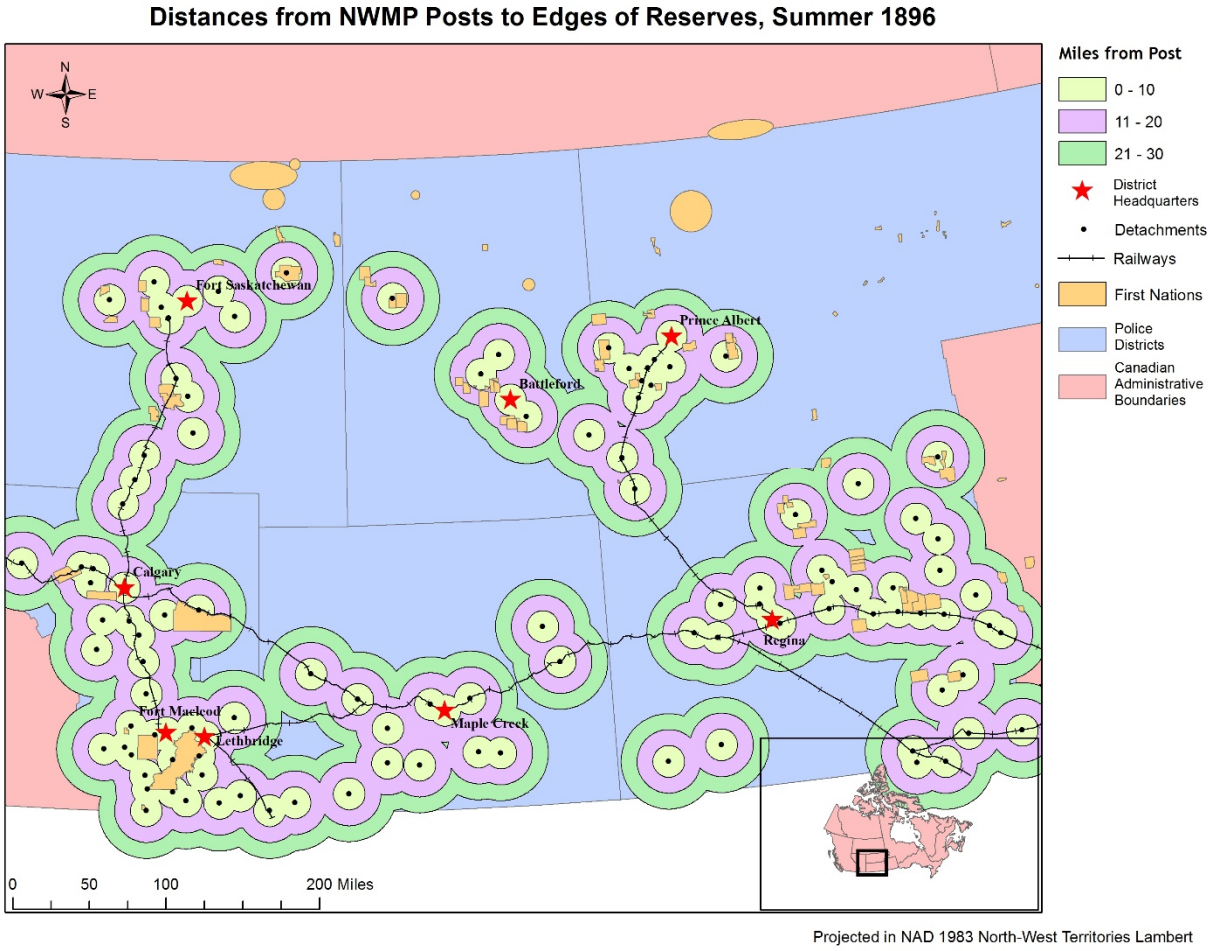

Figure 5.2: Distances from North-West Mounted Police Posts to the Edges of Reserves, Summer 1896. Surveillance of the Kainai reserve continued to be heavy in the 1890s, which contributed to economic development on the reserve, more so than the Siksika.

Kainai expressed frustration with the insufficiency of the rations issued to them, as they were seen as a key promise made by the government during Treaty 7 negotiations. Such complaints were muted at the beginning of the 1890s but emerged once again in 1893. Early that year, several Kainai community members told Reverend Frank Swainson – an Anglican missionary to the Blood Agency – that then-new Indian Agent James Wilson and his employees were only giving them small amounts of poor-quality beef. As a result, many of them were starving. Swainson wrote a letter to an eastern Canadian newspaper, which drew national attention to the

allegations.[76] Shortly after, Roman Catholic missionary Father Émile-Joseph Legal wrote to the Indian Commissioner's office, stating that Wilson had drastically reduced Kainai rations. They were suffering terribly from hunger and Legal suggested that the reductions be reversed. Wilson replied that Swainson had misinformed Legal, that neither had first-hand evidence of reduced rations. He maintained that what the Kainai received was adequate and that the Kainai were always pursuing ration increases. Red Crow had recruited Swainson to the cause by promising the missionary he would help recruit Kainai girls for the Anglican boarding school in exchange for the latter speaking out.[77] Wilson's assurances to the head office quieted the matter until early the next year when the NWMP began hearing complaints from Macleod-area settlers about cattle-killing. After initial reluctance, over three months, Kainai informants told police that rations were too scant to cover every day of the week. Beef and flour were only being issued two days a week. Oftentimes, they lasted barely one and a half days, leaving them hungry until the next ration day. To compensate, Kainai men killed range cattle at night – usually on the same day rations were issued to deflect suspicion and conceal the crime –to feed their families. Steele estimated that the Kainai killed between twenty-five and thirty head per month.[78]

The police investigated the Kainai's claim in a public manner that was discernable to the community. In one instance, Minor Chief Eagle Rib went into the reserve ration house with his wife, received his meat from the issuer, and then brought it straight to the Stand Off detachment where Sergeant Hilliard weighed it. He concluded that the meat issued – which Eagle Rib characterized as barely enough for a one-person meal – did not measure up to the prescribed amount of beef per day (a little over one pound).[79] Comptroller Fred White ignored the allegations of insufficient rations and suggested to Herchmer that the police focus solely on arresting the guilty parties.[80] This message was relayed to Steele, who passed it on to his subordinates. They responded that because of the perceived insufficiency of rations, it would be challenging to obtain any convictions if they caught the perpetrators. The cattle killers, Inspector

[76] "Excerpt from the Report of Inspector Alexander McGibbon," April 24, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[77] James Wilson to F.H. Paget Esq., for the Indian Commissioner, May 10, 1893 (LAC RG10-V1559).
[78] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner, NWMP, June 9, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95); "Memo: Re Cattle Killing by the Blood Indians," NWMP Comptroller Fred White, September 29, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[79] "Report of a Meeting Between Superintendent S.B Steele and Red Crow (head Chief), White Calf, Day Chief, Eagle Ribs, Heavy Shield, Running Wolf, and Wolf Bull (Minor Chiefs of the Bloods) at Fort Macleod," August 17, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[80] NWMP Comptroller Fred White to the Commissioner NWMP, June 16, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).

W.D. Jarvis explained, had "the complete sympathy of all the respectable Indians in camp, not to mention the lawless element." The police could not count on the community's assistance. The only solution was to increase rations.[81]

Steele began to advocate more forcefully for the Kainai, though he was initially reluctant to do so. He did not particularly want a quarrel with the Indian Department, but then Red Crow and other Kainai leaders arrived in Macleod and called on Steele at the police garrison. Suspecting that they were to complain, the superintendent told them that they should take their concerns to their Indian Agent, and failing that, to the higher authorities of the Indian Department. He did not have the authority to intervene on their behalf. Day Chief forcefully replied that Steele needed to hear what they had to say because it had been custom for years for them to go to the police when they were in trouble. Further, Wilson was ignoring them. Day Chief declared that the Kainai were starving, so many people were sick. Wilson had also reneged on a promise to give them beef tongues for their upcoming *Ookaan*. At this point, Steele turned the conversation to "the evils of the Sun Dance" and tried to convince them to abandon the practice, which carried the conversation late into the day. The chiefs promised to return and respond to the *Ookaan* question. However, when the two sides met again, Red Crow immediately reiterated Day Chief's message: that the Kainai had fallen into poverty since Wilson had arrived and they were starving. He pointed out that his people were thinner and cadaverous-looking; children were sick for want of food. Because of this, cattle-killing had increased. He promised that if fed adequately as before, these crimes would stop. Steele privately agreed that the Kainai did look thinner and so he promised Red Crow that he would talk to Wilson. The superintendent feared that if the situation was not rectified, the consequences "may result in depredations worse than cattle-killing." [82] Steele's message went up the chain of command and then to the Indian Department.[83] Hayter Reed promised to instruct Wilson to relieve those Kainai in need and send an Indian Department officer to investigate.[84] Inspector of Indian Agencies T.P. Wadsworth reached Macleod on July 11, informing Steele that he was there to adjudicate the

[81] Inspector W.D. Jarvis to the Officer Commanding Macleod District, June 25, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[82] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner NWMP, July 6, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[83] NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller NWMP, July 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95); Telegram from the Commissioner to the Comptroller of the N.W.M. Police, July 8, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[84] Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Hayter Reed to NWMP Comptroller Frederick White, July 9, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95); Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Hayter Reed to NWMP Comptroller Frederick White, July 13, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).

"rations question." The superintendent sent word to Red Crow to meet him at the Stand Off detachment the next afternoon for a meeting. The Kainai appeared at the appointed time in a "considerable number," with Steele telling them "that Mr. Wadsworth had come in consequence of their having come to me and complained that their rations were not sufficient."[85] Steele made it clear to the community that the high-level Indian Department official was there because of his advocacy.

Wadsworth remained on the Kainai reserve for nearly two weeks, attending every ration distribution. He found on those occasions that the Kainai were receiving everything they were supposed to. Still, Wadsworth ordered an increase to the flour ration, so that the solid food issue was increased to 1 ¼ lb. per day, as to ameliorate the possibility of more cattle-killing. Wadsworth declared, "now if they kill cattle it will be out of pure devilishness, and young Indians who wish to gain a reputation of being brave among their fellows."[86] The inspector knew that increasing the amount of flour rather than beef would cause grumbling – but Indian Department policy was to wean the voracious meat-eaters onto a more carbohydrate-heavy diet, to render them less aggressive. In a letter to Herchmer, the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs T. Mayne Daly wrote, "the Department is well aware that…they do not care for flour, but for the sake of their own health…and as a means tending to decrease the natural ferocity resulting from purely carnivorous diet, it is regarded as advisable to gradually introduce the use of flour."[87]

Less than a month after Wadsworth's departure, Red Crow and other Kainai leaders went to Steele again. They stated that while the inspector was on the reserve, rations had been larger but now that he was gone, the agent was "going back to his old ways." The chiefs bought extra flour and beef out of their own resources to help feed their hungry followers. Red Crow pointed out that the young men who worked hard were hungry; they "didn't kill cattle for meanness, they

[85] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner, NWMP, July 17, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[86] T.P. Wadsworth to A.E. Forget, July 22, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[87] Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs T. Mayne Daly to Lt. Col. Herchmer, Commissioner NWMP, November 2, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95). For more on Indian Department ration policy and its effect on Indigenous peoples' health in Prairie Canada, see Maureen Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 20-70 and James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics and Starvation, and the Loss of Individual Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 99-159.

kill for food." It would continue until Wilson issued sufficient rations.[88] Steele dutifully reported the most recent meeting to Herchmer, who wrote a letter of complaint to the Lieutenant-Governor to the North-Territories, Charles Herbert Mackintosh. The Commissioner stated that unless the Indian Department issued rations sufficient enough to sustain life, cattle-killing would continue.[89] Meanwhile, police officers at the Stand Off detachment worked to verify the Kainai story by weighing beef and flour issued on ration days. On one occasion, Inspector W.D. Jarvis found that Running Wolf – a minor chief – received only 11 lbs. of beef (with a quarter of it being bone) and 8 lbs. of flour for his family of three, meant to last four days.[90] The meat portion was short of the standard.

While the Indian Department initially responded to Steele and Herchmer cordially, correspondence from the former became more acrimonious as the NWMP pressed the issue, stubbornly insisting that the Kainai had no foundation for their complaints. In a September letter to Reed, Wilson insisted that Running Wolf had been issued 13 lbs. of beef, accusing him of taking out the missing portion before reaching Stand Off. Furthermore, he challenged the veracity of Steele's first complaint, calling it a "false report" based on unsubstantiated claims. Wilson wrote, "Major Steele and his Subaltern must see the facts are all against them, but…have not the manliness to admit it, nor yet the sense to let the matter drop."[91] Reed and Forget demanded in separate letters that the police in the Macleod District stop interfering in Indian Department Affairs, claiming it undermined its authority over the Kainai, making them unmanageable.[92] Herchmer tersely responded that although he regretted having to "meddle" in Indian affairs, it was the NWMP that was "entrusted with the peace and safety of the Territories." To avoid trouble with the Kainai, rations issued by the Indian Department needed to

[88] "Report of a Meeting Between Sup't S.B. Steele and Red Crow, (Head Chief), White Calf, Day Chief, Eagle Ribs, Heavy Shield, Running Wolf, and Wolf Bull (Minor Chiefs of the Bloods) at Fort Macleod," August 17, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[89] NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor [Charles Herbert Mackintosh], August 27, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[90] Statement of Christopher Hilliard to Inspector A.M. Jarvis, August 30, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[91] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, Regina, September 17, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F39-95).
[92] Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Hayter Reed to NWMP Comptroller Fred White, September 21, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95); Assistant Indian Commissioner A.E. Forget to the NWMP Commissioner, September 25, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).

be sufficient until they were able to support themselves.[93] Steele asserted that the Kainai had cause to make their complaint and that if the Indian Department was so sure Kainai leaders had made false or groundless complaints, they should be stripped of their titles and authority, which did not happen.[94] While the Kainai never saw the months-long, behind-the-scenes wrangling between the NWMP and the Indian Department in meetings and letters, on the ground it was evident that the police were advocating for their interests, listening to their concerns, and conducting investigations. Because of the initial success, the Kainai continued to call on the police on the rations question in 1897, 1905, and 1907.[95]

During the 1890s, the NWMP helped mend their relationship with the Kainai by interjecting on the latter's behalf on the issue of religious freedom. In the mid-1890s, the Indian Department was engaged in a full-blown struggle to suppress Indigenous religious ceremonies like the Potlatch on the Pacific coast and the *Ookaan* on the prairies. Officials believed that they were fundamentally barbaric and immoral, had the potential to unite Indigenous communities in common cause against Euro-Canadian colonists, encouraged idleness, and were a general impediment to the assimilationist program advanced by the department. The Canadian government recognized there was a direct connection between the Indigenous worldview and ceremonial life, and the social, political, and economic structures of Indigenous communities. These cultural systems – anchored by Indigenous religion and spirituality – needed to be dismantled for the assimilative program to be effective.[96] When Agent Wilson arrived on the Kainai reserve in 1893, he was determined to stamp out the *Ookaan*.[97] By 1898, the Kainai had not held one for several years, which prompted Wilson to write the Indian Department and offer advice on how to break resistance on other reserves. The agent believed that it was because of the practice of cutting up ration house cow tongues, as only whole ones were suitable for ceremonial purposes.[98] In reality, the Kainai were more motivated to abstain because of

[93] NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to NWMP Comptroller Fred White, September 30, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95); NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Hon. Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, September 30, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[94] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, October 3, 1894 (RG18-V101-F38-95).
[95] See LAC RG18-V124-F333-97, LAC RG18-V302-F670-05, and LAC RG18-V339-F350-07.
[96] Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), 3-4, 214.
[97] A detailed account of effort can be found in Hugh *Dempsey's Red Crow: Warrior Chief, 2nd Edition* (Saskatoon; Fifth House Publishing, 1995), 238-253.
[98] "Extract from Letter Dated Blood Agency 18th March 1898 [Indian Agent James Wilson,], March 18, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111).

Wilson's continuous threats to arrest and imprison those caught organizing or participating in the *Ookaan*.[99] The agent also offered to hold summer sports days – with cash prizes for the winners and a community-wide feast – if the Kainai promised not to have it, a common tactic utilized by the Indian Department to suppress Indigenous ceremonies.[100] While the Kainai were annoyed that Wilson had interfered with their *Ookaan*, they capitulated because they believed he had the law behind him (outlined in Section 114 of the *Indian Act*). When Wilson tried to suppress other dances and ceremonies – claiming that they too had the offensive "give-away" element, promoted idleness, and tended to undo the education Kainai children had received at religious schools – Red Crow and other leaders complained to the NWMP.

In early April 1898, Wilson ordered the arrest of three Kainai individuals who had participated in a "Medicine Pipe Dance," which he claimed took place every spring. Such dances lasted for four days and involved the giving away of horses, blankets, clothing, and other property.[101] When the accused appeared in court, the presiding Justice of the Peace dismissed the charges but warned them not to break the law again. The apparent leniency prompted many of the older men to petition Wilson to allow the ceremonies to continue. Red Crow had a long meeting with the agent, expressing the opinion that the law should be repealed. Wilson replied there was little he could do but enforce the law.[102] Matters simmered for several months until the end of June when the Kainai gathered in a large camp for what Wilson perceived as a "Sun Dance." The agent cancelled all their ration tickets, declaring that when they moved back to their villages, he would feed them as usual.[103] Instead of acquiescing, a "large deputation" of Kainai marched to Macleod and demanded to speak with Superintendent Deane, who had taken command of the district after Steele left for the Yukon in January 1898. Deane pleaded that he was too busy that day to meet – having just returned to the post – but allowed them to give a

[99] "Extract from Report of Superintendent Deane Dated at Macleod 30th June 1898," June 30, 1898 (LAC RG18-V154-F443-98).
[100] James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, August 6, 1898 (LAC RG10-V1561); "Notes of a Meeting with Chief Red Crow, Minor Chiefs Morning Chief, Day Chief, Bull Shield, Running Wolf, Eagle Ribs, Wolf Skull, Heavy Shield, Calf Shirt, One Spot, and Indians," June 7, 1900, (Glenbow M1788-15). See also Pettipas, *Severing the Ties*, 218.
[101] Wilson was likely observing what his successor – R.N. Wilson – observed in the early 1890s and dubbed "The Moon Dance," which he described as a religious ceremony involving dancing, feasting, smoking, and praying, taking place after the new moon in winter and spring; see Philip H. Godsell, ed., *The Robert Nathaniel Wilson Papers*, (Calgary: Glenbow Foundation, 1958), Volume II, 238-251 (Glenbow Museum M4421).
[102] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, April 29, 1898 (LAC RG10-V1563).
[103] Indian Agent James Wilson to A.E. Forget, June 28, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111).

dance performance at the police barracks and fed them "as a matter of course."[104] Although Deane had promised Wilson to "lay down the law to them" on the Sun Dance matter, when the two sides met the next day Red Crow told him that the purpose of the gathering was the transfer of Medicine Pipe.[105] During the previous winter, the wife of a prominent Kainai leader had been seriously ill and prayed for relief, declaring that if she recovered, she would purchase a Medicine Pipe Bundle from a man named Many Mules. Since she was now better, she was obligated to fulfill her vow (it being considered tremendously bad luck not to) and the large camp had formed to facilitate the transfer. Red Crow also wanted to use the occasion to have the Kainai's powerful "secret society" say prayers for his wife.[106] Kainai leaders promised that if Deane granted them eleven days and nights to conduct the ceremony, they would not give away any goods aside from the horses that needed to be exchanged for the bundle. Red Crow pointed out that when Treaty 7 was proposed in 1877, there had been no talk whatsoever about them giving up any of their religious traditions. Deane told them that he would write to Wilson on their behalf, as he saw the transfer as a ceremony of thanksgiving that did not fall under Section 114. He doubted any court would have convicted the participants under the circumstances. Finally, Deane observed that the Kainai were insistent on the matter and he did not see the point of needlessly antagonizing them. After the meeting, Deane wrote to Wilson, telling him that under the circumstances it would be "folly" to interfere with the ceremony and would undermine efforts to suppress the *Ookaan* in

[104] "Excerpt from Report of Superintendent Deane Dated at Macleod, June 29th, 1898," June 29, 1898 (LAC RG18-V154-F443-98).

[105] Medicine Pipes – and their associated Bundles – were items of immense spiritual value among the Niitsitapi. The bundles were composed of decorated pipe stems, rattles, whistles, sacred paints, shells, beads, skins of birds of animals, and a shawl covering. They were associated with specific songs, dances, prayers, and ceremonies. In describing their importance Adolf Hungry Horse wrote, "Our sacred Pipe Bundles mean to us what the sacred tablets, Koran, Bible, or rosary, mean to others. They are sacred objects we pray with in our tipi-temples and in our Church of the Great Outdoors. We do not pray to the objects in the Bundles, we pray to the Holy Spirits they represent"; Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 123. Indian Agent R.N. Wilson made similar observations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; see Godsell*, The Wilson Papers*, Vol. I, 4-15 (Glenbow M4421). For more commentary on Medicine Pipe Bundles see Betty Bastien, *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing: The Worldview of the Siksikaitsitapi*, Jürgen W. Kremer, ed. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 140-146, 210-211 and Clark Wissler, *Ceremonial Bundles of the Blackfoot Indians*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Volume VII (New York: American Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees, 1912).

[106] Deane was likely referring to the Motokiks (Ma'toki) or the Old Women's Society, which was the companion to the Horns Society. Both made up the social and spiritual elite of Kainai community. For more information see Godsell, *The Wilson Papers*, Vol. II, 253-262 (Glenbow M4421); Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 111-119, 203-212; and Clark Wissler, *Societies and Dance Associations of the Blackfoot Indians*, Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, Volume XI (New York: American Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees, 1913), 410-418, 430-435.

the long run. He ordered Staff Sergeant Hilliard of Stand Off not to execute any arrest under Section 114 without a writ from a "competent magistrate."[107] As Steele did with the rations issue, Deane advocated for the Kainai to be able to conduct traditional transfer ceremonies for sacred items and indulge in traditional prayer.

Kainai success in marshalling police aid encouraged them to press for greater religious freedom: the right to hold the *Ookaan*, which Wilson had denied them for years. The first instance happened right after Deane promised to write to the agent on about the transfer ceremony. Big Rib – an old nemesis of the police – had been ill the previous winter and his mother vowed that she would sponsor the *Ookaan* if her son recovered. When he did, she began to gather cow tongues for it even though she knew the ceremony had been outlawed. Big Rib pressed Deane to talk to Wilson on this matter too, but the superintendent warned him that doing so would weaken Red Crow's request. At that point, the Kainai engaged in an "animated conversation" for a while, then Big Rib stated that he did not wish to interfere with Red Crow's "business." He pledged that he would lobby the agent on his own.[108] Deane's decision on the transfer ceremony prompted Wilson to complain to the Indian Commissioner's office, stating he could not understand how the police officer had any authority whatsoever to permit eleven days of dancing. He claimed that all farm and hay work on the reserve had stopped and the spectacle had a harmful effect on the school children. The agent was undoubtedly frustrated, writing, "The Reserve at present is in a more demoralized state than I have ever seen it…My firm conviction is they must be forced or else they will relapse into a worse state than their former one. If they are to be fed and pampered and allowed to do just as they please, then there seems little use in giving them waggons [sic], cattle, &c., or trying other measures to civilize them."[109] Wilson's worst fear was that Deane's actions would undo all his work of the past four years to suppress Kainai religiosity. He claimed that the superintendent – who was supposed to represent obedience to the law – encouraged open revolt against his authority; that many of the Kainai were now openly

[107] "Extract from Report of Superintendent Deane, Dated at Macleod 30th, June 1898," June 30, 1898 (LAC RG18-V154-F443-98).
[108] "Extract from Report of Superintendent Deane, Dated at Macleod 30th, June 1898," June 30, 1898 (LAC RG18-V154-F443-98).
[109] "Extract from Indian Agent's Report on the Blood Reserve for the Month of June 1898" [Indian Agent James Wilson] (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111).

defiant, believing that Wilson had purposely lied to them about the law. He predicted that since the police had sanctioned Kainai dances, they would increase year by year.[110]

Wilson's warning turned out to be accurate. The Kainai continued to gather in a large camp during the summer months and in June 1900, they sought another audience with Deane. Many of their community leaders told him that they were very dissatisfied that Wilson continued to threaten them with jail time and that they had never promised to give up any of their ceremonies. Eagle Rib pointedly told Deane, "there are churches all over the country. It is lawful for everyone to pray except the Indians." Bull Shield added that their prayers were "as good as the Bible."[111] They further told Deane that they intended to gather tongues themselves and hold the ceremony. Once again, Deane told them if there were no general giveaways, he would allow the Kainai to hold their ceremonies. Hugh Dempsey argues that the support of the police encouraged the Kainai to hold the biggest dance in decades. Subsequently, they held the *Ookaan* nearly every year.[112]

The 1890s was a period of reconciliation between the NWMP and the Kainai, the result of a revamped police policy that recognized the impact of depressed economic conditions on Niitsitapi reserves and several episodes of police advocacy for community interests. In 1890, Kainai anger towards the police had already begun to wane because of the retrieval of Kainai ponies from American Indian raiders and a favourable judicial outcome stemming from their "War with the Red Coats." Cross-border horse raiding into Montana virtually ceased after 1889, reducing the likelihood of friction since the police did not have to enter the reserve to recover stolen stock or arrest perpetrators. [113] For the remainder of the decade, the NWMP demonstrated that they were more than cold enforcers of the law; they were economic partners and intermediaries who sheltered the Kainai from the worst impulses of the Indian Department. The police performed this latter function when they believed Indian policy would lead to disorder and criminality or when it ran counter to established laws. These contacts allowed the Kainai community to see the NWMP in friendlier terms, fostering better interpersonal relationships that had grown deep by the end of World War I. In 1918 Lethbridge superintendent P.W. Pennefather

[110] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, July 9, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111).
[111] "Notes of a Meeting with Chief Red Crow, Minor Chiefs Morning Chief, Day Chief, Bull Shield, Running Wolf, Eagle Ribs, Wolf Skull, Heavy Shield, Calf Shirt, One Spot, and Indians," June 7, 1900 (Glenbow M1788-15).
[112] Dempsey, *Red Crow*, 250-252.
[113] Marsh, "Last of the Horse Wars," 114-146.

characterized his relationship with the Kainai, writing, "I may state that the Indians always come to me when in the City and short of grub, or their horses are put in pound and other little troubles, and they have no money, and I always give them grub and money to pay their debts. The latter, I may say, is always returned to me. I have a great admiration for the old Indians, and would go a long way out of my way to help them."[114] Pennefather had bonds of friendship with the Kainai who entered Lethbridge, which paid dividends for law enforcement outcomes in the district. One of these benefits was that the Kainai were more willing to work as scouts – which the NWMP desperately wanted them to do – as will be seen.

[114] P.W. Pennefather to The Commissioner, R.N.W.M.P, Regina, August 12, 1918 (LAC RG18-V1917-73).

CHAPTER SIX
"Determined Rascals": The Utility of the Niitsitapi Scout System, 1887-1919

As the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) relationship with the Niitsitapi improved, the latter were more willing to serve as Indian Scouts. In January 1891, five Kainai men had filled these positions at the detachment at Stand Off. By the end of the year, another permanent scout position had been added to the Fort Macleod District headquarters, a total of six for the entire district. Another was stationed in the Lethbridge District, in the city of the same name. Throughout the year, a total of fourteen Kainai men served with the force.[1] In the north part of Blackfoot Country, four scouts served in the Calgary District, two each for the Siksika (Blackfoot proper) and Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) (Figure 6.1).[2] In 1896, the number of permanent positions in the Macleod District rose to ten, and in total twenty-three Kainai individuals served in the force that year.[3] The scouts fanned out from Stand Off and Lethbridge to detachments of Big Bend (at the southwest corner of the reserve) and Pincher Creek (Figure 6.2) to prevent cattle-killing. They also worked at a livestock quarantine camp southeast of the reserve and close to the border, meant to keep potentially diseased American cattle and horses separate from Canadian livestock. This work began in 1893 and lasted throughout most of the decade.[4] The number of permanent scout positions remained constant in 1901, although where they were stationed varied slightly (Figure 6.3). The scout at Pincher Creek was reassigned to the Piikani (Peigan) reserve, while those at Big Bend were sent to Fort Kipp at the northeastern boundary of the reserve. Another change was the presence of a scout at the Mormon settlement of Cardston – on the southeastern border of the Kainai reserve – whose merchants attracted Kainai traffic. Some individuals were consumers at local stores, while others were there to obtain illicit alcohol. Euro-Canadian officers needed a scout who could speak both Blackfoot and English so the police

[1] Christopher Marsh, "Police Scout Database," Tab 1891 (Spreadsheet in the author's possession).
[2] Journal of Sergeant Chris Hilliard (Month of January 1891) (Glenbow Museum and Archives M524).
[3] Marsh, "Police Scout Database," Tab 1896.
[4] "Quarantine Matters," Superintendent R. Burton Deane to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, Regina, May 31, 1893 (Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Record Group18-Volume80-File274-93); Assistant Commissioner J.H. McIllree to the Commissioner N.W. Mounted Police, Regina, June 8, 1893 (LAC RG18-V80-F274-93).

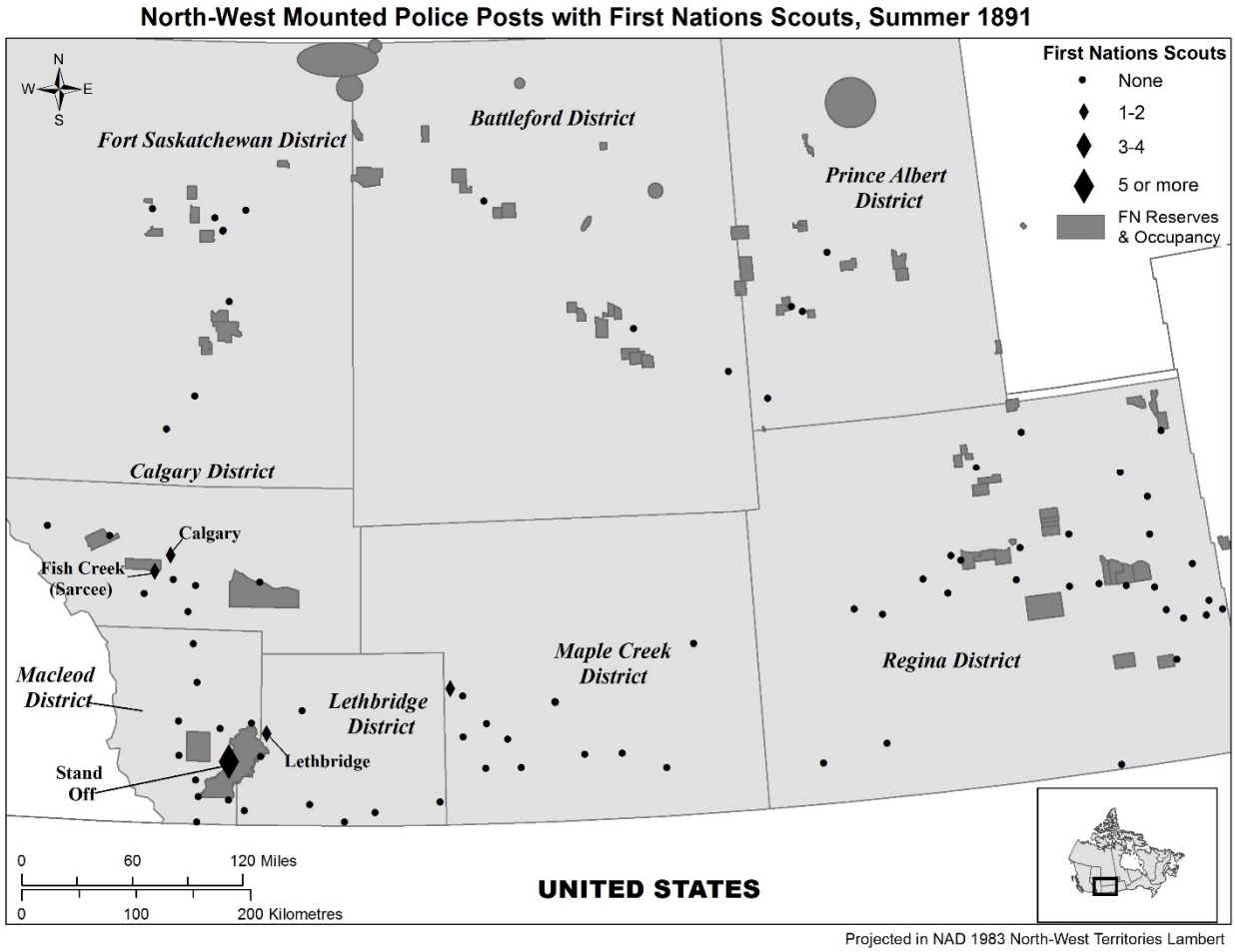

Figure 6.1: Distribution of "Indian Scouts" in the North-West Territories, 1891. In 1891, Kainai men were willing to serve as "Indian Scouts." Niitsitapi scouts also served in the Calgary District.

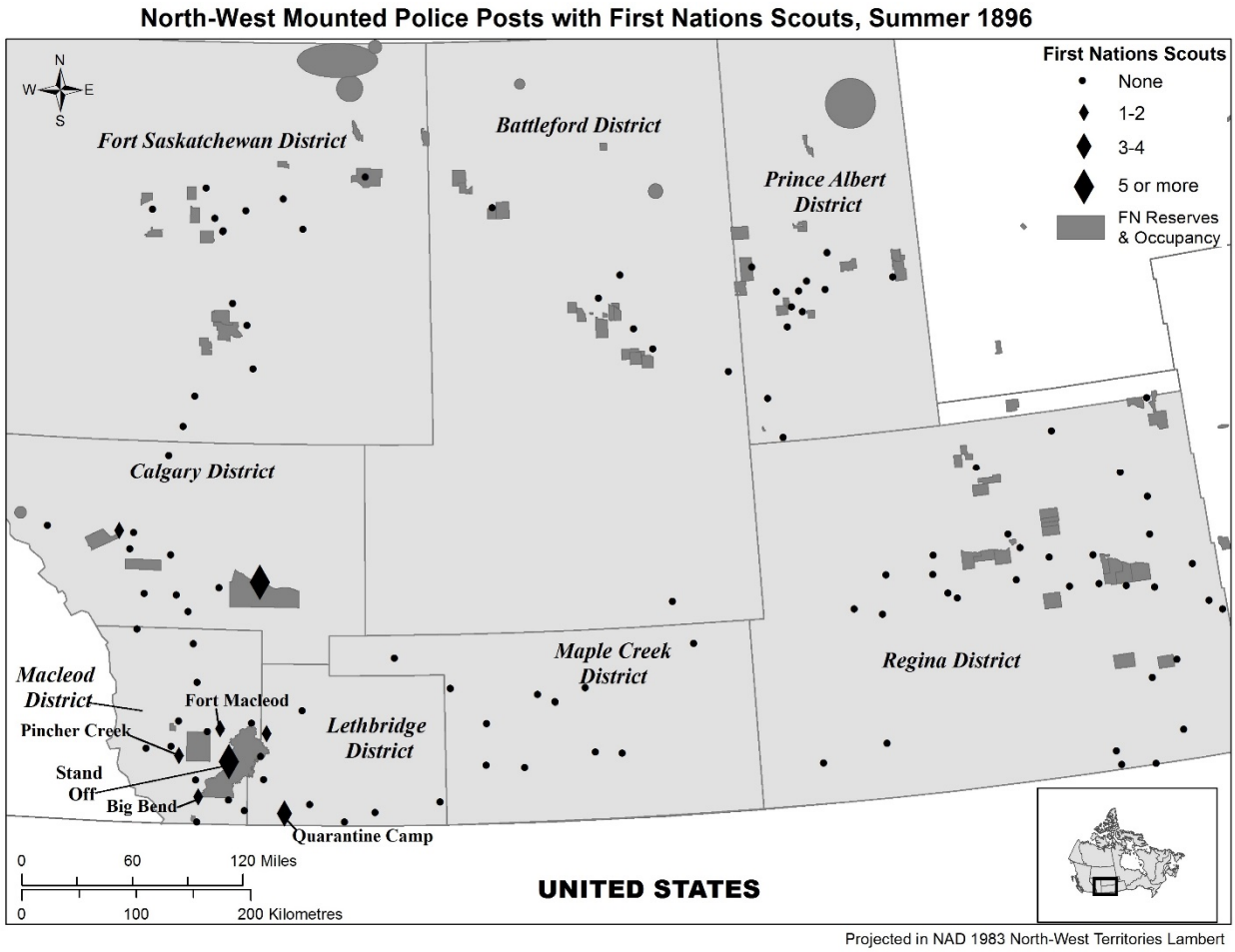

Figure 6.2: Distribution of "Indian Scouts" in the North-West Territories, 1896. After 1896, the Indian Scout System was unique to Blackfoot Country; it also expanded in southern Alberta.

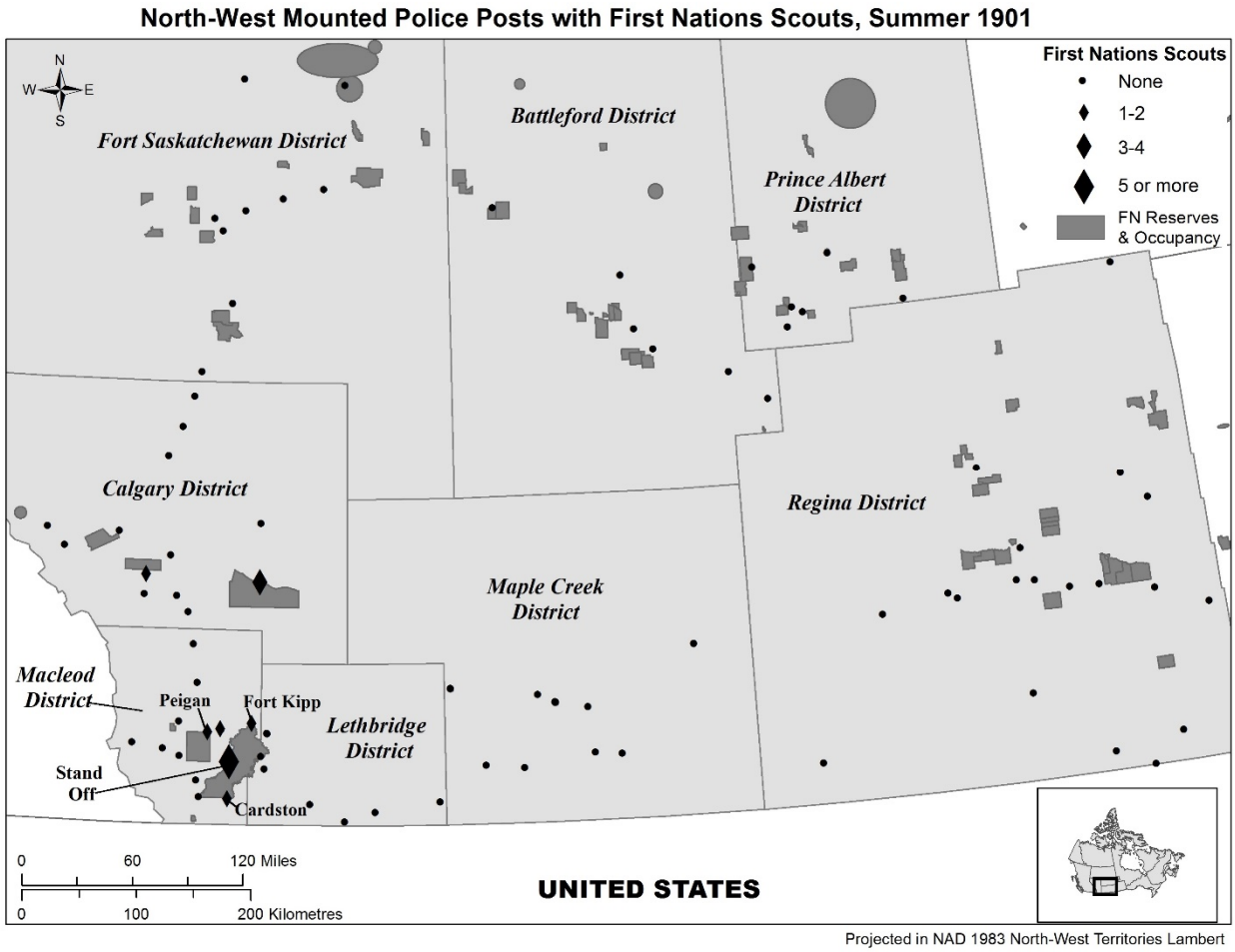

Figure 6.3: Distribution of "Indian Scouts" in the North-West Territories, 1901. The Indian Scout System was stable in 1901, though there had been some adjustments as to where they were stationed.

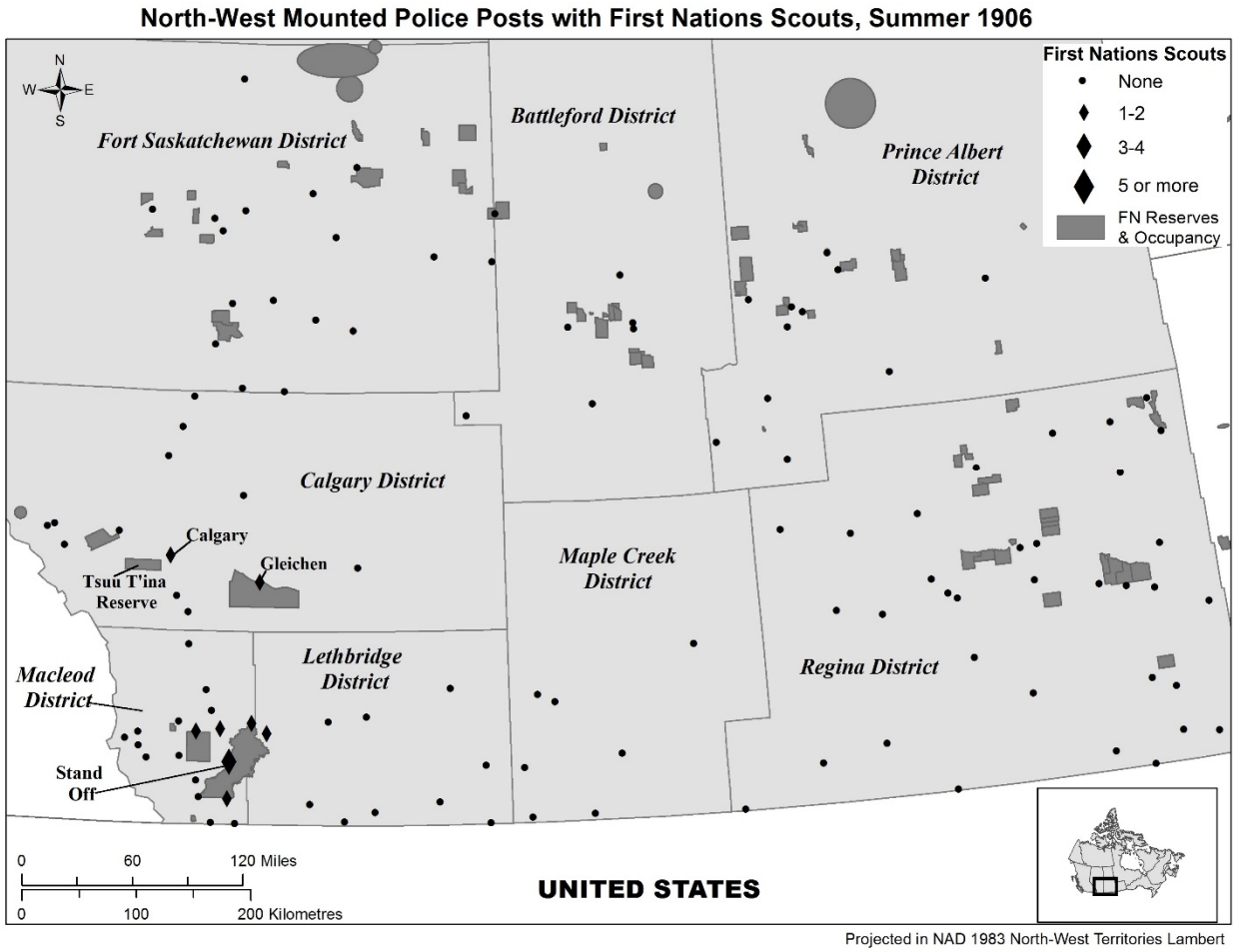

Figure 6.4: Distribution of "Indian Scouts" in the North-West Territories, 1906. Where scouts were stationed remained relatively stable.

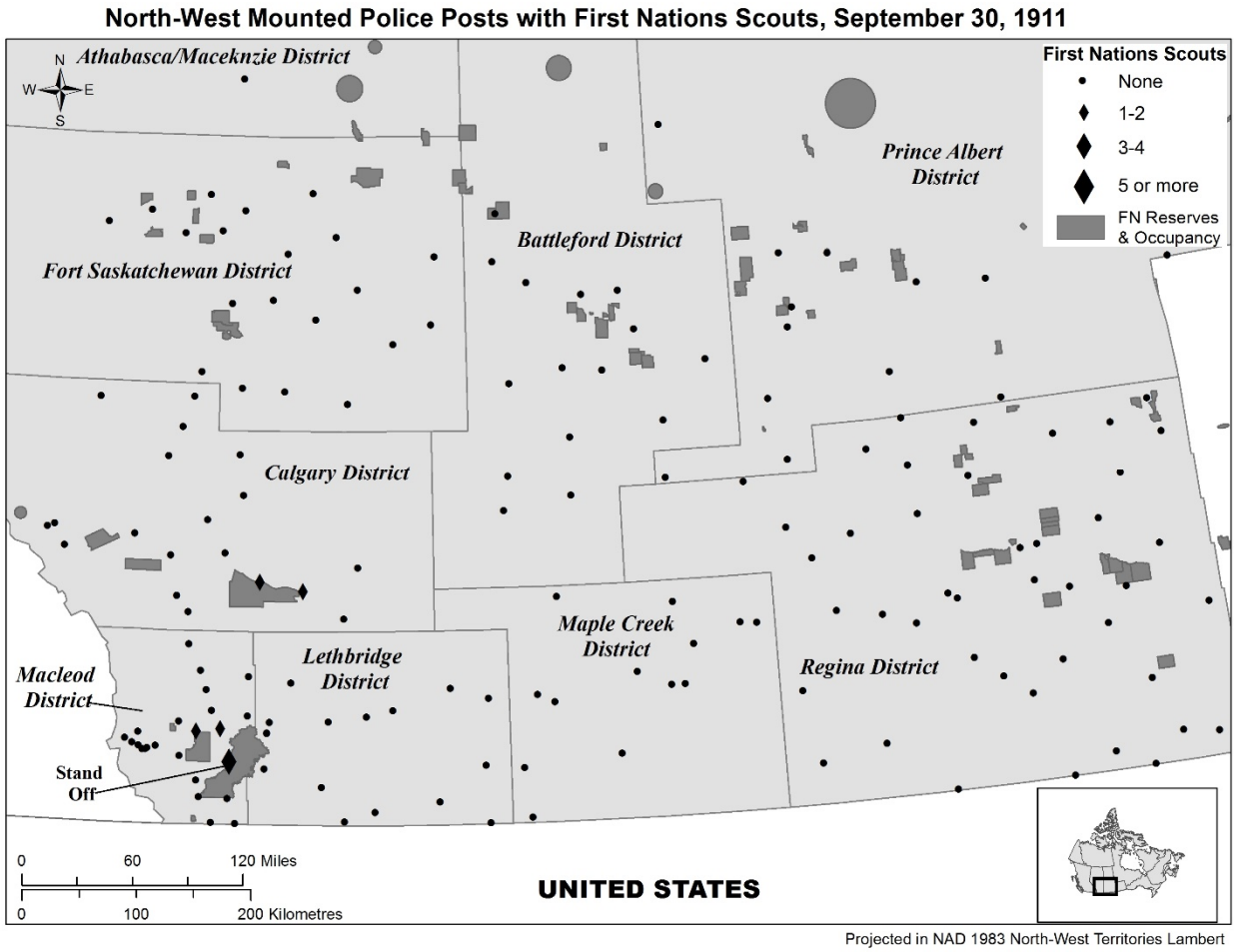

Figure 6.5: Distribution of "Indian Scouts" in the North-West Territories, 1911. The Indian Scout System contracted as it became more difficult to recruit Niitsitapi men, who could now find better economic opportunities elsewhere.

could effectively communicate and investigate crime when the Niitsitapi were either perpetrators or victims.[1] In 1906, the number of detachments remained stable near the Kainai reserve; in the north, the Gleichen detachment was a mainstay for employing Siksika scouts (Figure 6.4). A scout continued to monitor the Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) as well, attached to the Calgary headquarters

[1] Police Scout "Eddie" to Inspector J.D. Moodie, October 10, 1899 (LAC RG18-V1441-F133-99); Constable F.H. Rubbra to Mr. James Wilson, May 27, 1901 (Glenbow M1788-19); James Wilson to Constable Rubbra, June 1, 1901 (RG10-V1720); Inspector N.H. Irwin to Officer Commanding NWMP Macleod, August 25, 1902 (LAC RG18-V1504-F133-1902).

but spending much of his time on the reserve south of the city. Between 1891 and 1906, the NWMP had little trouble attracting recruits for these positions; whenever a Niitsitapi gave their thirty-day notice of intent to leave, a new man was found for the next month. After 1906, scouts were harder to come by, though, so the network of detachments employing scouts contracted (Figure 6.5).

Between 1891 and 1919, 205 Niitsitapi men worked in an institution that was unique to Blackfoot Country. In 1888, the NWMP intended to utilize Indian Scouts all over the North-West Territories and wanted to recruit twelve Nehiyaw (Cree) and/or Nakoda (Assiniboine) individuals in Treaties 4 and 6.[2] However, recruiting them proved difficult. The Indian Department added layers of bureaucracy to the hiring process, insisting that local Indian Agents – and then Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney – approve of the potential recruits, to verify that they were "competent and reliable men."[3] It slowed matters considerably because NWMP officers first had to write to Indian Agents for approval, who in turn had to contact higher-ups for theirs. It added months to the process, driving away qualified men who were already in short supply. In the Maple Creek district, Superintendent W.D. Antrobus asked for permission to engage two prospects in late April.[4] Nearly two weeks later, he inquired into the state of his request, explaining that the men in question were anxious for news as they wanted to join their band on a fishing trip.[5] When Antrobus finally received the authority to hire them at the end of May, the prospects declined the offer, and the superintendent had to begin the process anew.[6] In the Prince Albert District, Superintendent A.B. Perry struggled to find recruits because few men had enough horses for the job. Nonetheless, he finally found four men he deemed suitable and sent their names in for approval.[7] Dewdney's reply to Commissioner L.W. Herchmer was that

[2] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to Comptroller Fred White, March 31, 1888 (LAC RG18-V22-F385-88); Comptroller Fred White to L. Vankoughnet, Deputy Supt. General of Indian Affairs, April 3, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).
[3] Deputy of the Supt. General of Indian Affairs L. Vankoughnet to NWMP Comptroller Fred White, April 10, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888); NWMP Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 22, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).
[4] Superintendent W.D. Antrobus to the Commissioner NWMP, April 24, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).
[5] Superintendent W.D. Antrobus to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, May 6, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).
[6] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to Superintendent Antrobus, N.W.M. Police Maple Creek, May 28, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F31—1888); Superintendent W.D. Antrobus to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, June 7, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).
[7] Superintendent A. Bowen Perry to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, May 29, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).

only one – a Sioux named John Littlecrow – was worthy of consideration.[8] A lack of horses stymied efforts in the Battleford district too.[9] In 1888, the NWMP only found three of the twelve Nehiyaw/Nakoda recruits they wanted. The two Battleford scouts barely lasted a month on the job. Inspector Joseph Howe reported that they were "quite different from the Blood or Blackfoot Scouts employed in the South," declaring the Nehiyaw unreliable. They had given Howe little information of note, had ignored criminal activity on the Sweet Grass reserve, were unwilling to make arrests, and were "utterly useless" as interpreters.[10] The NWMP did not try to employ an Indian Scout in the Battleford district again. To the east, Littlecrow worked in the Prince Albert district for several years before quitting in April 1891, after Superintendent John Cotton refused to grant him a six-week leave of absence to visit relatives in the United States.[11] Cotton replaced him with a "half-breed" named John Gabriel, who had previously done odd jobs around the Battleford headquarters' barracks for rations and occasionally served as a guide.[12] Thereafter, the NWMP rarely mentioned Indian Scouts outside of Blackfoot Country, infrequently temporarily to help curb alcohol consumption among First Nations peoples during special occasions like annuity payments or attendance at local fairs.[13] For example, in June 1919 Superintendent A. Ross Cuthbert of the Fort Saskatchewan District hired several Nehiyaw "specials" to make sure their fellows did not indulge in the illicit liquor trade while treaty payments were dispersed, an assignment that lasted only "a few days."[14] In contrast, Niitsitapi men served in permanent positions all year round in the Macleod, Lethbridge, and Calgary districts for more than twenty-five years.

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[8] Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, June 8, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).
[9] Superintendent Joseph Howe to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, May 5, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).
[10] "Extract from Inspector Howe's Report for June '88" (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888).
[11] Corporal A.E.G. Montgomery to Superintendent A.B. Perry, July 10, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888); Superintendent A.B. Perry to Commissioner N.W.M. Police, July 17, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888); Superintendent John Cotton to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, April 19, 1891 (LAC RG18-V1219-F229-1891).
[12] Superintendent Joseph Howe to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, August 24, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1116-F311-1888); Superintendent John Cotton to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, April 19, 1891 (LAC RG18-V1219-F229-1891).
[13] Indian Agent W. Grant to Superintendent Griesbach, January 1, 1898 (LAC RG18-V1418-F133-98); "Memo to O/C/ Regina District," A.B. Perry, April 31, 1903 (LAC RG18-F473-03); Indian Commissioner David Laird to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, March 2, 1904 (LAC RR18-1542-F107-1904); T.A. Wroughton to [NWMP] Commissioner Regina, October 19, 1910 (LAC RG18-V1639-F68); Constable R.G.A. Wilson to the Officer Commanding "F" Division Prince Albert, July 20, 1912 (LAC RG18-V1678-F110).
[14] A. Ross Cuthbert to the Commissioner R.N.W.M. Police, June 21, 1909 (LAC RG18-V1625-F107); "Memorandum to the Officer Commanding R.N.W.M. Police, Fort Saskatchewan," June 23, 1909 (LAC RG18-V1625-F107).

Niitsitapi scouts joined the force not only because they were on friendlier terms with the police but because they could make decent wages – $15 to $25 per month depending on the specific duties required and experience – in a region where economic opportunities were slim, especially in the 1890s. The NWMP's ration kit was more generous and nutritious than what the Indian Department offered as well. Daily rations on Niitsitapi reserves consisted of 1 ¼ lbs. of solid food per day in beef and flour. The standard daily issue at the Stand Off detachment was nearly two lbs. of meat, 2 lbs. of bread, and 1 lb. of vegetables (potatoes, beans, peas, carrots, etc.), as well as an allotment of butter, tea, coffee, sugar, salt, and pepper. The scout and his wife received these rations.[15] Until at least 1905, the scout's wife and children could receive rations from the Indian Department simultaneously, which the NWMP considered a "premium" to encourage scouts to stay with the force.[16] Given the frequency in which the Niitsitapi complained about the insufficiency of food given to them by the government during this period, receiving additional sustenance from the NWMP was attractive. Employment with the NWMP also gave Niitsitapi men and their families access to complementary medical treatment at the force's facilities. For example, when Percy Single Rider's child became ill with pneumonia in May 1909, a Cardston doctor associated with the force provided treatment amounting to $12.50. While force policy allowed "members of families of scouts…be treated by a surgeon or acting assistant surgeon free" – and private practitioners with proper approval – in this instance, Superintendent P.C.H. Primrose initially did not want to cover the bill because Single Rider had not gone through the proper bureaucratic channels, summoning the doctor on his own accord.[17] While the Indian Department was responsible for the health care of treaty Indigenous peoples, historian Maureen Lux demonstrates that in many instances, medical services were slowly delivered or inadequate because of the department's desire to save money.[18] As such, the Niitsitapi occasionally sought treatment from doctors in Macleod, Lethbridge, Cardston, and

[15] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner NWMP, August 22, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).
[16] Superintendent P.C.H. Primrose to R.N. Wilson, July 29, 1905 (Glenbow Museum and Archives (Glenbow) M1788-197); R.N. Wilson to Superintendent Primrose, August 4, 1905 (LAC RG10-V1548).
[17] "R.N.W.M. P An Account with H.B. Stacpoole, M.D., M.C.P. & S.," June 26, 1909 (LAC RG18-V378-F493-09); Superintendent P.C.H. Primrose to Commissioner RNWMP, July 21, 1909 (LAC RG18-V378-F493-09); Commissioner A.B. Perry to Officer Commanding R.N.W.M. Police Macleod, Alta., July 23, 1909 (LAC RG18-V378-F493-09).
[18] Maureen K. Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 138-188, 227-229.

other towns, which put them in debt.[19] For example, Kainai man Stephen Fox received a bill for $15 after summoning a surgeon from Cardston to the Kainai reserve to treat his brother's broken arm. Concerned that Fox had no means to pay his debt, the surgeon wrote Indian Agent James Wilson asking him to help collect.[20] While a seemingly small amount, Fox's bill was almost a full month's income for many Niitsitapi, so medical treatment expenses could represent a significant financial burden. Besides the economic benefits, working for the NWMP offered a freer existence for those who had been accustomed to chasing the bison or horse raiding before settlement on reserves. Men could roam the country on horseback and visit their neighbours rather than engage in less familiar agricultural pursuits or more intense forms of wage labour. But as time went on NWMP officers found it increasingly difficult to find men – especially qualified ones – to fill Indian Scout positions. By the 1910s, the Niitsitapi could find better economic opportunities elsewhere, so Macleod and Calgary superintendents recommended that wages be dramatically increased to attract – and keep – good men, indicating that the police believed that scouts performed valuable functions in the successful policing of Niitsitapi communities. Men employed in this capacity were diligent, effective, and dependable as law enforcement officials.

This chapter identifies and describes the many duties Niitsitapi scouts performed to illustrate why NWMP officers in Blackfoot Country so valued their labour. This research contrasts with the claims of previous historians of the NWMP, who have tended to ignore, disparage, or misunderstand the contributions these scouts made to law enforcement in the Canadian Prairie West. These early writers suggested scouts were lazy and did little that impressed their superiors.[21] More recent scholars have acknowledged the force could not have functioned without special constables like the scouts but characterized the institution and their duties inaccurately. For example, Rod Macleod stated that scouts were not allowed to be armed, did not have the power of arrest, and only rarely carried out patrols.[22] Photographs featuring

[19] H.W. Breault, M.D. to James Wilson, August 31, 1899 (Glenbow M1788-15); "Accounts Owing to the Galt Hospital, Lethbridge by the Blood Indians," September 17, 1914 (Glenbow M-1788-94).
[20] P.M. Campbell to James Wilson, October 28, 1901 (Glenbow M1788-19).
[21] For example, see A.L. Haydon, *The Riders of the Plains: Record of the Royal North-West Mounted Police of Canada, 1873-1910* (London: Melrose, 1910), 160 and John Peter Turner, *The North-West Mounted Police, 1873-1893*, (Ottawa: Edward Cloutier, 1950), Vol. I, 433, 506.
[22] R.C. Macleod*, The North-West Mounted Police and Law Enforcement, 1873-1905* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 148-150.

Figure 6.6: Siksika Scout Winnipeg Jack (or Dog Child) with Wife in the 1890s. Note the handgun and "Samurai Sword" in his Hand, illustrating that "Indian Scouts" were often armed. Glenbow Museum and Archives NA-3730-1

Figure 6.7: Kainai Scout and Interpreter Joe Healy (or Flying Chief) and Family at Stand Off Detachment (ca 1900), Note the handgun in the holster. Glenbow Museum and Archives NA-190-2

Siksika scout Winnipeg Jack (Figure 6.6) and Kainai scout and interpreter Joe Healey (Figure 6.7) clearly illustrate that such men maintained arms for duty. While some high-level officials worried about liability issues around Indigenous peoples using NWMP-issued weapons, Niitsitapi scouts demanded the right to be armed to give "weight to their authority."[23] Commissioner Herchmer finally decided that the force would not distribute arms or ammunition directly to the scouts (except in the case of ammunition used at the practice range) but did not forbid them from carrying weapons.[24] Previous historians may have undervalued Indian Scout contributions because official statements about what they did – given in yearly budget proposals

[23] NWMP Comptroller Fred White to L.W. Herchmer, November 11, 1890 (LAC RG18-V45-F832-90).
[24] L.W. Herchmer to Mr. [Fred] White, November 15, 1890 (LAC RG18-V45-F832-1890).

for the force called "estimates" – suggested that they were more akin to covert informers or guides. The same boilerplate text describing scouts in this way was used year after year.[25] Only through the examination of police reports, correspondence, district local orders, Indian Department records, and newspapers can the full range of scout duties be ascertained. Between 1887 and 1919, scout duties fell into six categories: general police work, enforcement of Indian Department policy, logistical support, court duties, quarantine work, and community-directed duties. More than half of all scout duties mentioned in primary documents related to general police work, the most common tasks being patrolling, making arrests, and conducting investigations. Far from being mere guides or informants, Niitsitapi scouts were, in fact, North-West Mounted Policemen in everything but title. They did everything expected of Euro-Canadian constables but specialized in effectively policing reserve communities. They were important intermediaries between the police and their people, mostly because the force never managed to learn the Niitsitapi language widely. Scouts underpinned law enforcement efforts in Blackfoot Country and were essential to establishing peace and order on the southwestern Canadian prairies. However, it would be a mistake to characterize them as mere agents of the Canadian State, employed only to facilitate colonial objectives. They acted at the behest of their communities too, monitoring how Treaty 7 was being implemented by the Indian Department and bringing their concerns to their superior officers. Niitsitapi scouts also acted as agents of social control for community leadership, facilitating traditional patterns of life that had existed before life on reserves, such as the annual summer gathering and the *Ookaan* (Sun Dance).

The "scout" moniker is deceptive and does not accurately represent the contribution Niitsitapi men made to law enforcement in Blackfoot Country. In memoranda to Parliament year after year, NWMP administrators suggested Indian scouts were only employed to guide policemen along unfamiliar trails or to covertly monitor a criminal element "who would become suspicious were they to see Policemen in their vicinity."[26] In mid-1894, driving American cattle back across the border was added to the list of common duties in the estimates, which only lasted for several years.[27] Correspondence sent to Canadian politicians suggested that the employment of scouts

[25] "North West Mounted Police: Estimates 1896-7" (LAC RG18-V123-F473-96). See also the estimates for: 1891-92 (LAC RG18-V50-F259-91); 1892-93 (LAC RG18-V58-F165-92); 1901-02 (LAC RG18-V215-F540-01); and 1907-08 (LAC RG18-V339-F327-07).

[26] "North-West Mounted Police Estimates 1891-1892" (LAC RG18-V50-F254-91).

[27] "North-West Mounted Police Elementary Estimates 1894-95" (LAC RG18-V110-F490-94).

was transitory and they were only playing a supporting role. The real responsibility for everyday law enforcement – patrolling, crime prevention, investigations, and making arrests – was left to Euro-Canadian constables and non-commissioned officers. While this might have been true in northern Alberta, Saskatchewan, and a sliver of Manitoba, it was not the case in Blackfoot Country.[28] In thousands of police documents, there are 718 clear mentions of when Niitsitapi scouts performed a specific duty or when a commanding officer recommended that they perform one. There are hundreds of more mentions of scouts in weekly and monthly reports, and the pages of Local Order books, noting when they arrived and left posts, though the specific duties they performed are impossible to ascertain. Figure 6.8 illustrates that Niitsitapi scout duties fell into one of six categories: (1) general police work, (2) Indian policy work, (3) court duties, (4) quarantine duties, (5) logistical support, and (6) community-directed duties.

General police work were duties regularly performed to enforce law and combat crime. They include patrolling, other surveillance activities, detecting crime, conducting investigations, making arrests, and providing education on relevant laws. It also includes efforts to locate and recover missing property or persons (alive and dead). Indian policy work revolved around the enforcement of the *Indian Act*, which made prohibitions against Status Indians possessing or consuming alcohol, selling animals or produce without a permit, participating in "give-away" dances or those having a self-mutilation aspect, and being party to a bigamous or polygamous marriage. Niitsitapi scouts found and returned truant students to schools for Indigenous children and enforced the pass system, an Indian Department policy that had no actual basis in law.[29] They also maintained reserve security by removing those who did not belong there – either Euro-North Americans or Indigenous peoples from the United States – and monitored the distribution of rations. Court duties included transferring prisoners to court or the local prison, performing guard duty, issuing summons to witnesses, and giving testimony in court for the prosecution. Quarantine duties consisted of keeping ill or potentially ill people and animals from mixing with healthy populations. Logistical support duties ensured that the NWMP could perform other functions on a day-to-day basis: caring for horses, bringing fresh horses to the detachments,

[28] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1895* (Ottawa, 1896), 6.
[29] F. Laurie Barron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935" *Prairie Forum* 13 no. 1 (1988), 25.

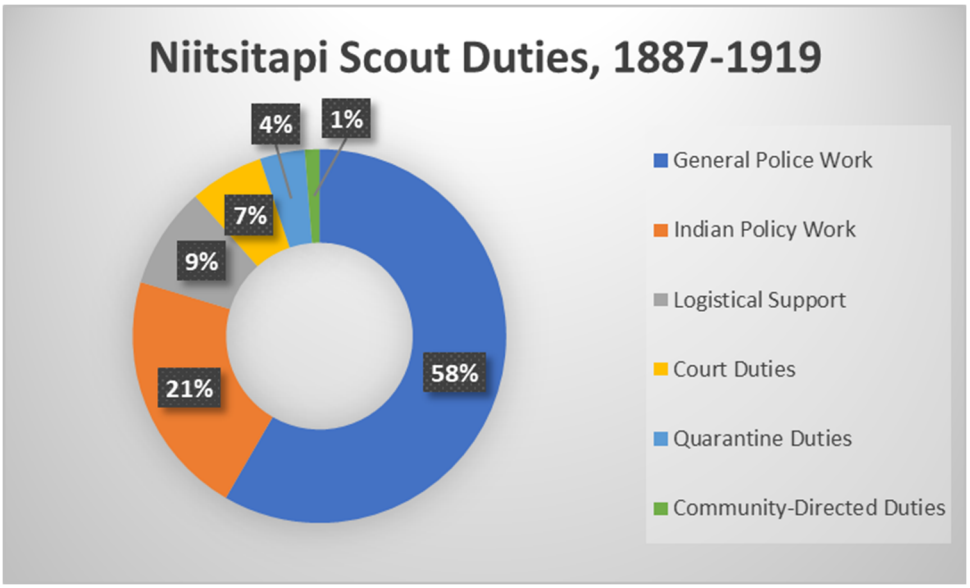

Figure 6.8: Niitsitapi Scout Duties, 1887-1919, based on 718 mentions of Niitsitapi Scouts in NWMP primary documents. Source: Chris Marsh, "Scout Duties Database," Tab "General Summary"

delivering mail or messages, freighting supplies, and maintaining NWMP buildings (carpentry, masonry, blacksmithing, etc.). Community-directed duties occurred at the behest of the Niitsitapi leadership or the community. They included ensuring individuals gathered for the annual "big camp" in the early summer and monitoring how the Indian Department dispensed rations or treated children in schools.

Between 1887 and 1919, Niitsitapi police scouts in the Macleod, Lethbridge, and Calgary districts dedicated most of their time and effort – as did most Euro-Canadian policemen – to general police work; 58 percent of all documented duties fall into this category (Figure 6.8). The most common duties were patrolling, performing general surveillance, making arrests, conducting investigations, and interpreting (Figure 6.9). *Patrolling* refers to keeping watch over an area by regularly travelling around or through it, while *general surveillance* was a more stationary activity that monitored certain kinds of behaviour in a target population. For example, a scout might be ordered to attend a dance to curb the consumption of alcohol or to maintain peace and order. In the late-1880s, the focus of patrols was to prevent horse raiding; in the early- and mid-1890s cattle-killing; and thereafter the trafficking and consumption of alcohol. However, all three activities occurred to some extent during the entire study period. Scouts patrolled reserves, cattle ranges, and Euro-Canadian settlements like Lethbridge, Macleod, Pincher Creek, and Cardston. It was the single-most common duty they performed, around 16

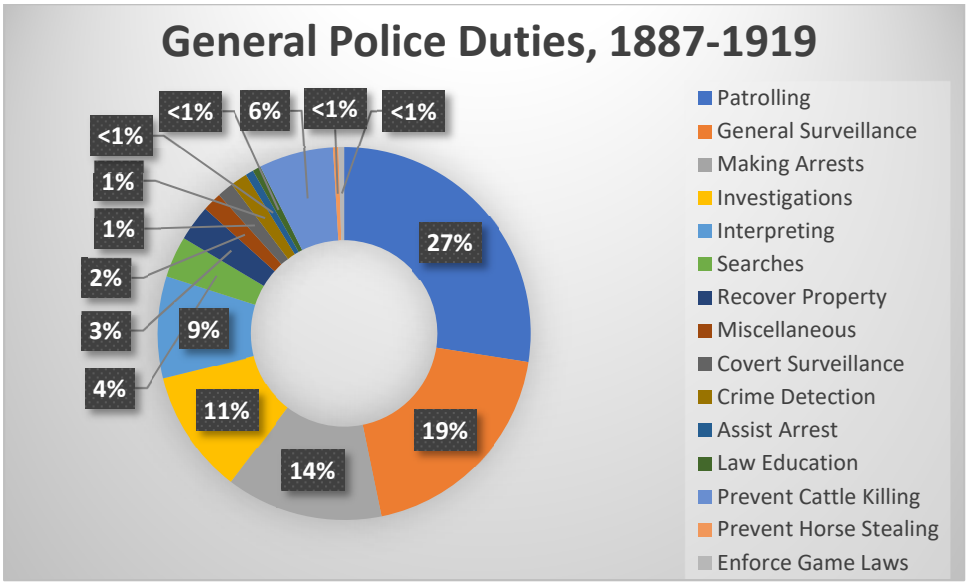

Figure 6.9: Types of General Police Duties, 1887-1919 (419 of 718 mentions). Source: Chris Marsh, "Scout Duties Database," Tab "Summary"

percent of all mentions.[30] Commissioner Herchmer believed that patrolling was one of the most important duties that scouts could do. When he discovered in October 1892 that they were being used at the Gleichen detachment to clean buildings and stables, he sent a terse letter scolding the commanding officers, stating this was unacceptable. He wrote that the scouts "should *be kept out all the time* reporting frequently to the outposts to which they are attached."[31] In June 1901, Herchmer demanded an explanation as to why scouts at Gleichen were not conducting regular patrols after the *Calgary Herald* asserted that the detachment had neglected this duty – as well as oversight of the Siksika reserve in general – in preference for football.[32] Staff Sergeant Arthur Brooke replied that the reserve was patrolled Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday so that a Euro-Canadian policemen along with one or two Siksika scouts could attend the distribution of rations. Brooke's submission of his journal – showing that the patrols had been performed –

[30] Christopher Marsh, "Scout Duties Database," Tab "Summary" (Spreadsheet in the author's possession).
[31] Commissioner [L.W. Herchmer] to Officer Commanding Calgary, October 13, 1892 (LAC RG18-V1250-F238-1892); The italics are mine.
[32] Extract from the *Calgary Herald*, June 14, 1901 (LAC RG18-V216-F651-01); Commissioner [L.W. Herchmer] to the Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Calgary, Alta., June 18, 1901 (LAC RG18-V216-F651-01).

ended the discussion.[33] It is evident that the commissioner expected Niitsitapi scouts to patrol the country and it was not a rare occurrence for them to do so.

Police historians have credited Herchmer for devising and implementing an extensive system of patrols and outposts – which eradicated crime in much of the territory – but have not mentioned Indian Scouts played an important role in how it functioned in southern Alberta.[34] Consisting of dozens of detachments and trails stretching for hundreds of miles from Manitoba to the Rocky Mountains, the NWMP kept a watchful eye out for cattle rustlers, horse thieves, liquor pedlars, and wayward livestock. They visited homesteaders, ranchers, cowboy crews, labour camps, surveyors, and any other visitors to the district, ensuring they were safe, content, and had no complaints.[35] Niitsitapi scouts played an important role in the patrol system from Stand Off, the largest detachment (manpower-wise) in the Macleod District, standing on the western border of the Kainai reserve at the confluence of the Belly and the Kootenai (or Waterton) Rivers (Figure 6.10). According to the journal of Staff Sergeant Christopher Hilliard – in charge of the detachment throughout the 1890s – ten common patrol routes emanated from Stand Off: (1) To Big Bend detachment, which followed the Belly River south (2) To Slide Out, which followed it north (3) To Fort Kipp detachment, which followed it further north to the where it met the St. Mary's River (4) To Kootenai detachment, which followed the Kootenai River south (5) To St. Mary's ("D" Division), which crossed the central portion of the Kainai Reserve (6) To Lee's Creek (the Mormon settlement of Cardston), which cut through the Kainai Reserve going south (7) To St. Mary's ("K" Division), which went through the Kainai Reserve in a southeasterly direction (8) To Macleod, which followed the Old Macleod Trail northwards (9) the southern portion of the reserve and (10) the northern portion of it. Patrols were sent out to the cattle ranges regularly, most notably those leased to the Cochrane Ranche Company, which controlled

[33] Staff Sergeant A.F.M Brooks to the Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Calgary, June 21, 1901 (LAC RG18-V216-F651-01); Superintendent G.E. Sanders to the Commissioner N.W.M.P., June 22, 1901 (LAC RG18-V216-F651-01).
[34] For praise of the patrol system, see R.G. Macbeth, *Policing the Plains: Being the Real-Life Record of the Famous Royal North-West Mounted Police* (London: Hodder and Stroughton, Ltd., 1922), 136-137; John Peter Turner, *The North-West Mounted Police, 1873-1893*, (Ottawa: Edward Cloutier, 1950), Vol. I, 283, 304-305, 340, 370-371, 431; Ronald Atkin, *Maintain the Right: The Early History of the North West Mounted Police, 1873-1900* (London, U.K.: Macmillan London Ltd., 1973), 285-286; Macleod, *NWMP and Law Enforcement*, 45-48; Ian Getty, "The Role of Mounted Police Outposts in Southern Alberta" in *Men in Scarlet*, Hugh Dempsey, ed. (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1974), 189, 196; Brian Hubner, "Horse Stealing and the Borderline: The NWMP and the Control of Indian Movement, 1874-1900" in *The Mounted Police and Prairie society*, 1873-1919, William Baker, ed. (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998), 70.
[35] Turner, *Mounted Police*, 283; Getty, "Police Outposts," 196.

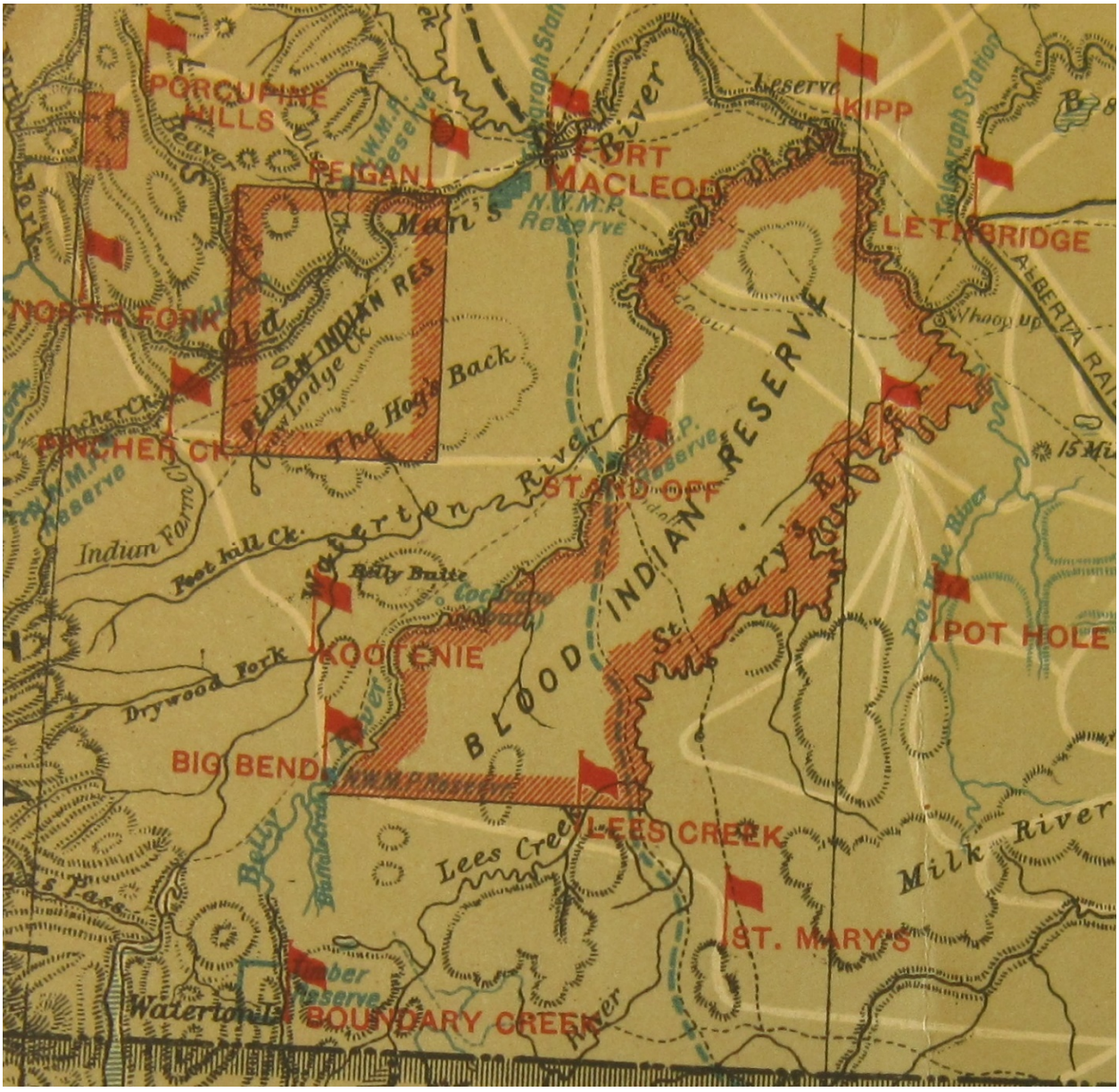

Figure 6.10: North-West Mounted Police detachments and other major geographical features in the Macleod District in the early 1890s. The unmarked post of the St. Mary's River (east border of the Kainai Reserve) is St. Mary's ("D" Division) Detachment. The marked St. Mary's is a "K" Division detachment. Source: LAC RG18-V83-F446-93

170,000 acres of grazing land between the Kainai and Piikani reserves, then the Belly and Kootenai Rivers to the bottom of the Kainai reserve's southernmost extremity.[36]

Between January 1 and October 30, 1891, the men at Stand Off conducted 306 patrols, with nearly 20 percent (60) involving Niitsitapi scouts.[37] At first glance, this number might seem small, but Niitsitapi scouts spent much of their time on "Flying Patrols," which went out for several days at a time, constantly on the move in the northern and southern reaches of the district looking for signs of cattle-killing, horse stealing, and lost livestock.[38] These were in addition to patrols that regularly departed from Stand Off. Many of these patrols saw a Euro-Canadian policeman paired up with a Niitsitapi scout, fifty out of sixty times, occurring on average once every six days.[39] Constables did not have one permanent partner but worked with a variety of scouts. For example, over five months Constable William Alexander went out on patrol with Black Eagle, Christer, Red Beads, Owl Child, and Mike, mostly traversing the Belly River valley and the cattle ranges. Over a similar timeframe, Constable Edward Zinkham travelled the same patrol routes with Black Eagle, Christer, Soldier, and Mike.[40] Undoubtedly, Hilliard wanted his men to benefit from the knowledge of as many Niitsitapi men as possible, not only to prevent cattle-killing but to catch the perpetrators. The NWMP sought to assure ranchers their property would be protected. At the same time Hilliard worried about an outbreak of violence if cowboys caught the Niitsitapi butchering range cattle. The sergeant warned Indigenous peoples to leave already dead cattle alone to prevent fatal misunderstandings stemming from quick rushes to judgement.[41]

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[36] Diary of Chris Hilliard (Glenbow M524); Christopher Marsh, "Hilliard Journal Spreadsheet" (Spreadsheet in author's possession); William Naftel, "The Cochrane Ranch" in Occasional *Papers in Archaeology and History 16* (Ottawa: National Historic Sites and Parks Canada, 1977), 126.

[37] Marsh, Hilliard Journal Spreadsheet," 1891-All tab. In Hilliard's journal, the sergeant explicitly refers to 78 of the excursions made by Stand Off's men as patrols, with 26 of them (33%) involving Niitsitapi scouts. 228 other excursions are categorized as patrols as well, with 34 of them (15%) involving Niitsitapi scouts. For some entries, Hilliard uses "patrol" or "patrolling" to refer to one excursion, then lists of several others, seemingly a form of shorthand. Hilliard often identifies specific activities when noting an excursion, such as constables escorting prisoners, participating in a search for lost horses or fugitive, conveying messages from on post to another, going on leave, etc.

[38] Canada, North-West Mounted Police*, Sessional Paper No. 19 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1890* (Ottawa, 1891), 63; Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1893* (Ottawa, 1892), 17, 21.

[39] Marsh, Hilliard Journal Spreadsheet," 1891-Ind. Tab.

[40] Marsh, Hilliard Journal Spreadsheet," 1891-Ind. Tab.

[41] C. Hilliard to the Officer Commanding Macleod District, March 20, 1891 (LAC RG18-V50-F249-91).

During the 1880s, the NWMP had capitalized on Kainai informants to help them in their fight against cross-border horse raiding – setting up detachments at Pot Hole and Writing-On-Stone after learning warriors often passed by these sites on their way south – and it was only a Niitsitapi scout who ever successfully detected a Kainai raiding party before it left Canadian territory (the "Last Real War Party" in 1889).[42] Indeed, Last Gun states that the party was very careful leaving the reserve because "many Indian police" were on the lookout for hose raiders.[43] Nonetheless, they were still contacted by a Niitsitapi scout – probably Star Child – when camped at Writing-On-Stone. Steele and Hilliard believed that the scouts at Stand Off would provide a similar advantage for detecting cattle-killing in the early-1890s. However, Hilliard was cautious not to depend on any single one in case they were working in secret with cattle killers on the reserve. Though isolated occurrences, some scouts did use their positions to facilitate criminal activity. For example, in February 1894, Steele fired Takes Good Gun for not reporting two Kainai men who had killed cattle. This did not discourage the NWMP from employing scouts though; they merely looked for ones who they hoped were more trustworthy.[44]

Niitsitapi scouts became increasingly responsible for regular patrols from Stand Off as fewer Euro-Canadian policemen were assigned to the detachment. In June 1891, there was one staff sergeant, six constables, two Euro-Canadian scouts, and six Niitsitapi scouts at the post.[45] There were fifty-nine patrols that month, twelve of which involved Niitsitapi scouts (20 percent), who were always paired with a Euro-Canadian partner. Four patrols traversed the Belly River; two went to St. Mary's ("D" Division), one to the Kootenai detachment, and one to Lee's Creek. There were four patrols with no specified destination.[46] A year later, the number of Euro-Canadian constables had been reduced by two to four, which increased the workload for the Niitsitapi.[47] There were fifty-five patrols from Stand Off in June 1892, 36 percent (20) involving Kainai men. As with the previous year, twelve of the patrols consisted of a Euro-Canadian

[42] Journal of Gilbert E. Sanders, July 26, 1887 (Glenbow M1093-40); "Milk River Ridge," ca1900s LAC RG18-V11-F326-76); Hugh A. Dempsey, "Writing-On-Stone and the Boundary Patrol" in *Men in Scarlet*, 139-142; Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 13 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1889* (Ottawa, 1890), 42; Adolf Hungry Wolf*, The Blood People, A Division of the Blackfoot Confederacy: An Illustrated Interpretation of the Old Ways* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1977), 290.
[43] Hungry Wolf, *My People the Bloods*, 289.
[44] S.B. Steele to the Commissioner North-West Mounted Police, February 2, 1894 (LAC RG18-V1311-F145-1899).
[45] Chris Marsh, "North-West Mounted Police Distribution by Posts Spreadsheet," Tab 1891BC (Spreadsheet in author's possession).
[46] Marsh, "Hilliard Journal Spreadsheet," June 1891 Tab.
[47] Marsh, "NWMP Distribution by Posts," Tab 1892BC.

policeman and a scout. They visited the same locales as the previous year, as well as the district's cattle ranges. However, Niitsitapi scouts also conducted solitary patrols, mostly along the Old Macleod Trail heading north towards the district's headquarters, a route they only covered twice in the entirety of 1891.[48] The Niitsitapi at Stand Off had to work harder compared to the previous year because the number of scout positions had been reduced to four, with two scouts had being reassigned to other detachments.[49]

While the number of Euro-Canadians constables increased in the mid-1890s, by the turn of the century the typical manpower distribution at Stand Off was 1 staff sergeant, 2 constables, and five Niitsitapi scouts.[50] This was a period where the NWMP struggled to fulfill its manpower requirements. In 1896 and 1897, the federal government redirected nearly a hundred men from the prairies to the Yukon to assert its claim over the far northern region to prevent it from falling into American hands.[51] The force had been already downsizing as a cost-cutting measure at the insistence of the Liberal Party, who had for years relentlessly attacked the need for a large body of policemen in the west, complaining it was a tremendous burden on Canadian taxpayers.[52] In June 1899, NWMP administrators warned that these developments had affected the quality of the rank-and-file men. Three years earlier, 90 percent of non-commissioned officers and constables had more than two years experience – the threshold where men became experienced enough to carry out police duties – and a "large percentage" had five years of service or more. In 1899, by contrast, less than half of the men had two years experience and many detachments were operating below "efficient strength."[53] These problems intensified when Canada – pushed by English-Canadians wanting to prove their loyalty to the mother country – agreed to send a

[48] Marsh, "Hilliard Journal Spreadsheet," June 1892 Tab.
[49] Marsh, "NWMP Distribution by Posts," Tab 1892BC.
[50] Marsh, "NWMP Distribution by Posts," Tabs, 1899BC, 1900BC, 1901BC, and 1902BC.
[51] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1897* (Ottawa, 1898), 17-18.
[52] For example see Canada, *Debates of the House of Commons*, 16 May 1892 (James McMullen), 2668-2673; Canada, *Debates of the House of Commons,* 19 June 1894 (James McMullen; William Bullock Ives), 4629-4641; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 20 June 1894 (James McMullen; Frederick Charles Denison; William Bullock Ives; Richard Cartwright), 4652-4658; Canada, *Debates of the Senate*, 4 July 1894 (Auguste-Réal Angers; Lawrence Geoffrey Power; Alexander Walker Ogilvie), 647; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 2 July 1895 (Richard Cartwright; George Eulas Foster; William Mulock; James McMullen; Thomas Mayne Daly), 3675-3681; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 14 June 1897 (Nicholas Flood Davin; Thomas Simpson Sproule; Frank Oliver), 4078-4081.
[53] "Copy of Memo," June 10, 1899 (LAC RG18-V1447-F198-1899); Commissioner [L.W. Herchmer] to Comptroller Fred White, June 12, 1899 (LAC RG18-F198-1899).

volunteer force to South Africa to aid Britain in its fight against the Boers in October 1899.[54] The men of the NWMP were not immune to war fever and 178 of them, including 18 officers, volunteered for the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles and the Strathcona Horse.[55]

While the Euro-Canadian constables who remained at Stand Off were likely inexperienced, the Niitsitapi scouts had a corps of men that were familiar with detachment routines and patrol routes. Big Rib, Tail Feathers, and Green Grass had been on the force between three and four years when the South African War broke out. Green Grass left about a year later, but was replaced by Calf Tail, a Kainai man who had more than two years of experience from a bout of service in the early-1890s. Scouts with more than two years of experience were also employed at the Peigan, Cardston, and Pincher Creek detachments.[56] Niitsitapi scouts not only had precious knowledge that could help turn raw NWMP recruits into passable constables, they were also attractive to commanding officers during this period because "every three Indians count[ed] as two" men in calculating the manpower of the district. Since the stipulated manpower for the Macleod and Lethbridge districts combined was 150 men, more Niitsitapi scouts could be employed – and at lower wages.[57] In 1900, the Macleod District employed thirteen to fifteen Niitsitapi men at all times throughout the year, about 14% of the division's total manpower.[58] Without their contribution, it is difficult to see how the NWMP could have maintained the patrol system in Blackfoot Country, asserted Canadian sovereignty in the Yukon, and participated in an imperial war a continent away, all at the same time.

Commanding officers expected Niitsitapi scouts to make arrests when necessary. While Comptroller Fred White did have apprehensions about giving them this power in 1887, Commissioner Herchmer eventually decided that scouts would have "all the powers of

[54] For a discussion of nationalism, imperialism, and the South African War see Norman Penlington*, Canada and Imperialism, 1896-1899* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); Robert Page, *The Boer War and Canadian Imperialism* (Ottawa: Canada Historical Association, 1987); and Carman Miller, *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Montreal & Kingston: Canadian War Museum, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992).
[55] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 28 Report of the North-West Mounted Police, Parts 1 and 2. 1900* (Ottawa, 1901), 2.
[56] Marsh, "Police Scout Database," Tabs 1891-1902.
[57] "Memo," March 7, 1899 (LAC RG18-V1447-F198-1899); Assistant Commissioner [J.H. McIllree] to the Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Macleod, March 27, 1889 (LAC RG18-V1447-F198-1899).
[58] Marsh, "NWMP Distribution by Posts," Tab 1900BC; Marsh, "Police Scout Database," Tab 1900.

Constables where Indians are concerned."[59] Herchmer assured White that Indigenous peoples would not be allowed to exercise these powers against Euro-Canadians unless accompanied by a regular policeman. This directive was reinforced by the Indian Department when the call for Indian Scouts went out to Indian Agents in the spring of 1888.[60] In 1911, White wrote to Cora S. Hughes – a woman living in Los Angeles, California who was curious about the "Indians" and "half-breed" men employed by the NWMP – assuring her that they had no "authority or supervision over the white population."[61] Despite White's assertions, he was not entirely correct. On occasion, commanding officers dispatched Niitsitapi scouts – bereft of supervision from Euro-Canadian policemen – to capture escaped prisoners or those suspected of committing serious crimes such as murder.[62] For example, in 1892, Dog Child and Eagle Arrow – two Lethbridge District scouts – pursued an American thief named Sheppard, who had escaped from the guardhouse (a local jail). When they caught up to him, Sheppard resisted, pushing at and swatting the scouts with his hat until Eagle Arrow drew his revolver on him. Dog Child then got hold of the thief, who was then thrown over one of the scout's horses and lashed to it. That done, the scouts drove their prisoner back to the Lethbridge barracks. They were given a commendation for their excellent work.[63]

Niitsitapi scouts mostly arrested members of their community though. Overall, making arrests was the fourth most common duty scouts performed consistently year after year.[64] For fifteen years straight, scouts arrested their fellows or their commanding officers reiterated that it was a duty scouts should perform (Figure 6.11). These duties were difficult and even dangerous, especially in the early years. In late-March 1891, Kainai scout Owl Child tried to arrest Medicine White Horse for cattle-killing. The latter resisted and the two men began to fight. Then a man named Good Young Man pounced on the scout while the former's wife also joined the fray, which allowed Medicine White Horse to escape. Good Young Man was arrested and convicted

[59] Comptroller Fred White to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, September 17, 1887 (LAC RG18-V1084-F513-1887); Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller N.W.M.P, March 31, 1888 (LAC RG18-V22-F385-88).
[60] Assistant Commissioner Hayter Reeds to the Indian Agent Sarcee Reserve, April 16, 1888 (LAC RG10-V1630).
[61] Mrs. Cora D. Hughes to Mr. Frederick White, Esq., February 21, 1911 (LAC RG18-V408-F180-11); Comptroller [Fred White] to Mrs. Cora Hughes, March 2, 1911 (LAC RG18-V408-F180-11).
[62] See for example "Extract from *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 22, 1892: 'A Break for Liberty – A Convict Attempts to Escape from the Lethbridge Barracks but is Recaptured by an Indian Scout,'" November 24, 1892 (LAC RG18-V72-F838-92) and Inspector James Wilson to the Indian Agent Sarcee Reserve, November 5, 1899 (LAC RG10-V1627).
[63] Dog Child's Statement to Corporal W.B. Higinbotham, November 1892 (LAC RG18-V72-F838-92).
[64] Marsh, "Scout Duties Database," Tab "Summary.

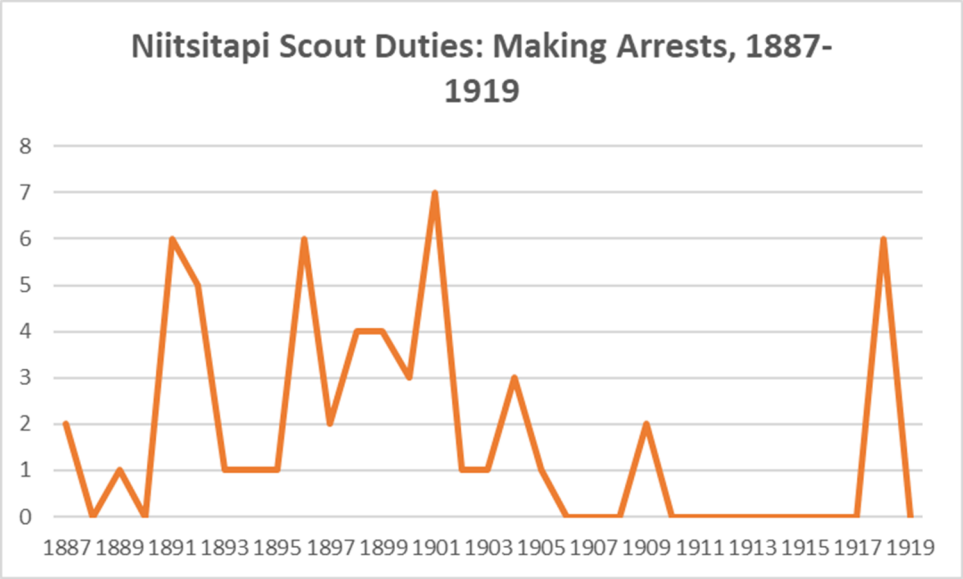

Figure 6.11: Niitsitapi Scout Duties: Making Arrests, 1887-1919 (number of times mentioned in primary documents by year). This duty was commonly and consistently performed yearly. Source: Marsh, "Scout Duties Database," Tab "Arrests"

of obstructing Owl Child; his wife was released because the magistrates were convinced "the squaw was acting under her husband's orders." Shortly after Superintendent Steele met with Kainai leaders, telling them that the scouts had the right to make arrests and they should not be interfered.[65] In Calgary, Deerfoot – of late-1880s fame – continued to have troubles with the law. The Siksika had gone there to attend a Dominion Day sports days competition in late-June 1896, accompanied by a scout named Red Old Man. One evening, Deerfoot became intoxicated, then caused a disturbance in the Siksika camp. When Red Old Man confronted him, Deerfoot assaulted the scout. Witnesses intervened, which allowed Red Old Man to take control of the situation. He bound Deerfoot hand and foot, then took him to the Calgary barracks. Deerfoot swore revenge, threatening to "kill the Police and those that help them, meaning the Indian Scouts."[66] Three months later, "one of the Indian Scouts" on the Siksika reserve had to stop The Man Who Carries the Meat from assaulting – with an axe – a detested rations house issuer named Lauder. After the scout made the arrest, he returned to his post and was accosted by another man named The Louse, who shoved him before the two men started grappling. Another

[65] "Extract from the Report of the Officer Commanding in the Fort Macleod District for the month of March 1891," (LAC RG18-V51-F313-91); Statement of Calf Shirt, April 7, 1891 (LAC RG18-V51-F313-91).
[66] Inspector Z.T. Wood to the Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Calgary, July 7, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1354-F76-96); Indian Agent Magnus Begg to Indian Commissioner, July 3, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1149).

scout broke up the fight, then arrested the aggressor.[67] However, the above incidents were not the norm; most attempts at arrest went smoothly. But the potential of violent resistance motivated the NWMP to seek out Niitsitapi men who could intimidate others. In 1889, Superintendent R. Burton Deane had high praise for his scout – Star Child, who he referred to as a "determined rascal" – attributing his effectiveness to "the Indians" being "generally afraid of him."[68] In 1904, Calf Tail was rehired as scout at a higher wage because he carried "weight with his own people."[69] Part of this was due to his gruff disposition; at least two members of the Kainai community characterized him as being "mean," someone who deserved a wide berth.[70] Big Rib and The Dog – the renegade duo who had led horse raiding parties and stood off the police in the late-1880s – were both hired as scouts, likely because of the standing they had within their community. Both were proven men of daring and bravery. They were also, to some extent, rough men. The Dog was a bit too rough, given that he stabbed his commanding officer at the St. Mary's detachment in the head with a knife. The Dog had not appreciated that harsh tone in which his superior had ordered him out of the detachment's kitchen; it is possible that previous antagonisms were at play.[71]

While most arrests were conducted successfully, without overt resistance, they did generate resentment. In January 1901, Jim Pamburn threatened Calf Tail, stating he would hit him "across the face like a dog." Pamburn was angry because Calf Tail had arrested him for distributing liquor. But Pamburn also resented what he viewed as general persecution of Indigenous peoples. He angrily told Calf Tail, "It is not right to go after the Indians all the time because we are all Indians. Let us do as the Whites do, hold together."[72] Pamburn saw the scouts as an institution that served Euro-Canadian interests, oppressing Niitsitapi communities. For Calf Tail's part, he told Pamburn that he intended to keep "catch[ing] anybody who does not behave, no matter whether you hit me or not." Still, Calf Tail was worried about what Pamburn might do

[67] Indian Agent Magnus Begg to the Indian Commissioner Regina, September 26, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1149). Begg details the tensions between Lauder and the Siksika in Indian Agent Magnus Begg to the Indian Commissioner Regina, June 1, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1149).
[68] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1889*, 41-42.
[69] Supt. Com'dg Macleod District [P.C.H. Primrose] to the Commissioner, N.W.M. Police, January 20, 1904 (LAC RG18-V7201-F "Joe Mountain Horse").
[70] Statement of Charlie Good Rider," N.D. (LAC RG18-V7199-F"Calf Tail").
[71] Superintendent Sam Steele to Commissioner L. Herchmer, August 18, 1893 (LAC RG18-V1276-F2380-1893).
[72] James Wilson to Commanding Officer Macleod, January 1, 1901 (LAC RG10-V1720).

and reported the incident to his commanding officer.[73] Peigan Frank also earned the ire of members of the Kainai community, and in April 1901, an unknown individual vandalized his wagon.[74] The scout often told his commanding officer at the Kipp detachment that "the Indians in the vicinity here hate him" because "I arrest them when they do wrong." He further confided that a man named Mountain Horse had threatened him, warning Frank not to come near his house or he would "fix him." Frank worried that Mountain Horse intended to ambush and murder him.[75] While Frank's fears never materialized, being perceived as an outsider had a deleterious effect on his work. Once recognized as an astute investigator, in June 1902, Superintendent Joseph Howe declared that Frank's "usefulness" was gone, and he planned to replace him.[76] In the face of community hostility, it was likely difficult for Frank to secure cooperation from the community, which was needed to detect crime and conduct investigations. There were perils in being too zealous: one being ineffectiveness, the other possible retribution.

North on the Tsuu T'ina reserve, those disgruntled with Bull Collar's efforts to suppress the alcohol traffic used a different tactic to stymie his efforts. Instead of threats of violence, the friends and relatives of those he had recently arrested for alcohol possession or intoxication turned around and laid the same charge against Bull Collar. He was then forced to defend himself in court to clear his name. This happened to Bull Collar twice, once in October 1900 and again in December 1901. Both times, his superior officers suspected that the accusations were done out of "spite" to get the scout "punished and dismissed from the service of the N.W.M. Police Force."[77] Community members using threats of violence and casting about false accusations against Niitsitapi scouts demonstrate that employment in the NWMP could be an alienating experience, one that erected social barriers. After Tail Feathers' suicide in October 1907, his Euro-Canadian colleagues noted that the scout had been in low spirits for several days.

[73] James Wilson to Commanding Officer Macleod, January 1, 1901 (LAC RG10-V1720).
[74] An open, four-wheeled, horse-drawn carriage with seating.
[75] Const. J. Gillespie to Officer Commanding Macleod, April 27, 1901 (LAC RG18-V1481-F133-01).
[76] Canada, *Report of the NWMP*, *1900*, Part 1, 18; Joseph Howe to Mr. [James] Wilson, June 23, 1902 (Glenbow M1788-23).
[77] Inspector J.O. Wilson, Commanding "E" Division to the Indian Agent Sarcee Reserve, October 31, 1900 (LAC RG10-V1629); Monthly Report for the Calgary District-December 1901, Superintendent Gilbert E. Sanders, January 4, 1902 (LAC RG18-V1481-F124-90).

Days earlier, he had told Inspector Cortlandt Starnes that "all the Bloods were against him, because he was doing his duty." Several individuals had openly jeered Tail Feathers publicly.[78]

Niitsitapi scouts and Euro-Canadian policemen performed many of the same daily duties, but one task that the latter could not perform was effectively communicating with Indigenous people. It was difficult for Euro-Canadian personnel to conduct in-depth investigations into criminal activity or educate the Niitsitapi on Canadian law because so few Euro-Canadians could speak the Niitsitapi language. The force had tried to rectify this deficiency. In 1886, Comptroller White declared that it was "discreditable" that the NWMP still had to depend on interpreters to communicate with Indigenous peoples. At the time, the force employed men who had worked in the fur trade – Hudson's Bay Company or Fort Benton men – or were the offspring of traders and Niitsitapi women, the most famous being Jerry Potts (or Bear Child), who had been continuously employed in the Macleod District since the police arrived in Blackfoot Country.[79] White wanted to prioritize promotions for those who could speak an "Indian" language.[80] He proposed obtaining dictionaries and grammar books from the Indian Department to teach the men at Regina, Macleod, and Calgary either the Nehiyaw or Niitsitapi language. In this way, the force could develop a pool of Euro-Canadian men who could act as interpreters.[81] While the Indian Department provided the force with these resources and the police offered language classes, by 1891, there were still few men who could speak the Niitsitapi tongue well.[82] The NWMP needed specialized scouts called interpreters – who were paid a ten to twenty dollar premium over their basic wage – to help them carry out law enforcement activities. For example, in August 1900, Superintendent Deane requested a large raise for Kainai scout Joe Healy – as well as renovations

[78] Statement of Constable James Fullerton, "Tail Feathers Inquest," October 4, 1907 (Alberta Provincial Archives (APP) GR1966.0166/802); Inspector Cortlandt Starnes to the Officer Commanding "D" Division, Macleod, October 3, 1907 (LAC RG18-V343-F615-07).
[79] For Jerry Potts' service with the N.W.M.P. and his contributions to law enforcement, see Hugh A. Dempsey, *Jerry Potts, Plainsman* (Calgary: Glenbow Foundation, 1966); B.D. Fardy, *Jerry Potts, Paladin of the Plains* (Langley, B.C.: Sunfire Publications, 1984); Rodger Touchie, *Bear Child: The Life and Times of Jerry Potts* (Victoria, B.C.: Heritage House, 2005).
[80] Comptroller Fred White to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, October 10, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1050-F172-1886).
[81] Comptroller Fred White to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, November 4, 1886 (LAC RG18-V1050-F172-1886).
[82] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W. Mounted Police, October 17, 1891 (LAC RG18-V1204-F158-1891).

to the scout quarters at Fort Macleod to make it as comfortable as his home on the reserve – stating "he is a first-rate interpreter and I cannot replace him."[83]

Without Niitsitapi men willing to perform this valuable service, the NWMP – in the words of Deane – were "very much inconvenienced." This was an understatement considering Deane claimed in February 1899 that he could not even communicate with his own scouts![84] Without interpreters, the NWMP could not investigate complex crimes involving the Niitsitapi. For example, when George Strangling Wolf was found intoxicated in Lethbridge possessing two bottles of whiskey, Deane was certain that the booze had come from one of the wholesale stores in town. Under interrogation, Strangling Wolf indicated that there had been several actors involved in the transaction. Deane claimed that "without a first-rate interpreter" it was "hard to unravel the somewhat involved story." [85] They were also needed to communicate with Niitsitapi men and women who travelled to nearby towns and cities to work, purchase goods and services, and access the assistance of the police. In August 1902, Inspector H.S. Casey told Indian Agent James Wilson that Iron Pipe and Wears Old Clothes – two Kainai men who were trying to recover property they claimed had been stolen by Euro-Canadians – would have to bring an interpreter with them to lay a complaint in Lethbridge. At the time, Casey had no interpreter at the district headquarters.[86] Without scouts, the Niitsitapi were effectively barred from accessing the justice system for their benefit, rendering the NWMP an entirely punitive institution, one whose agents only appeared when they did wrong. Interpreters were necessary to facilitate this mandate too, as they ensured accurate testimony given by Niitsitapi witnesses was presented during court proceedings. In July 1903, Superintendent Primrose warned that a large salary needed to be paid to secure competent interpreters because "we have many important cases…a want of proper knowledge of the English language may defeat the ends of justice."[87] In 1909, Kainai scout Joe Mountain Horse was "continually required" to translate for court cases,

[83] Superintendent R. Burton Deane to the Assistant Commissioner NWMP, August 10, 1900 (LAC RG18-V460-F133-90).
[84] Superintendent R. Burton Deane to the Commissioner of the N.W.M. Police, February 10, 1899 (LAC RG18-V7201-F"James Pamburn").
[85] "Extract from WEEKLY Report of Supt. Deane's Dated at Lethbridge, 25-8-1900," August 25, 1900 (LAC RG18-V460-F119-60). See also Sergeant J. Allan to the O.C. Macleod, July 17, 1906 (Glenbow M1788-43).
[86] Inspector H.S. Casey to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, August 18, 1902 (LAC RG18-V1504-F133-1902). See also J.D. Moodie to O.C. Macleod, October 17, 1899 (LAC RG18-V1441-F133-99) and Sgt. P. Bertles to the Officer Commanding N.W.M.P. Macleod, April 7, 1902 (LAC RG18-V1504-F133-1902).
[87] Supt. [P.C.H. Primrose] Com'dg Macleod District to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, July 21, 1903 (LAC RG18-V7200-F"John English").

travelling to Lethbridge some days, Fort Macleod on others.[88] On occasion, a lack of interpreters delayed legal proceedings, inconveniencing witnesses coming in from the reserves and keeping defendants in custody longer than necessary.[89] The employment of Niitsitapi scouts was foundational to the smooth functioning of law enforcement in the Macleod, Lethbridge, and Calgary districts. After the death of Jerry Potts in 1896, officers in the Macleod District frequently complained about their inability to find or keep Niitsitapi scouts capable of speaking English; nearly every mention of interpreting duties in police-related documents from 1898 onwards was either an appeal for good Niitsitapi men who could speak English or why interpreters were so important (Figure 6.12). This characteristic became as important as men who could command respect or fear. When interpreters were required, it was common for the NWMP to contact Indian Agents and the principals of nearby schools for help in finding suitable candidates, as they were desperately needed.[90]

Over the years, Niitsitapi scouts spent much time and effort dealing with criminal matters – property theft, burglaries, threats of violence, assaults, shootings, suspicious deaths, and murders– but a great deal more was spent enforcing the *Indian Act* or facilitating Indian Department policy (Figure 6.13).[91] Canadian Indian policy emphasized "protection, civilization,

[88] Superintendent [P.C.H. Primrose] Commanding "D" Division to the Officer Commanding R.N.W.M. Police, August 18, 1909 (LAC RG18-V7201-F"Joe Mountain Horse").

[89] Inspector F.J.A. Demers to the Officer Commanding "D" Division R.N.W.M. Police, October 10, 1909 (LAC RG18-V7200- "Peigan Frank"); Inspector H.S. Casey to the Commissioner N.WM. Police, August 18, 1902 (LAC RG18-V1504-F133-1902).

[90] James Wilson to Superintendent R. Burton Deane, February 9, 1899 (LAC RG18-V7201-F"James Pamburn"); Indian Agent James Wilson to Corporal Robertson, December 27, 1902 (LAC RG18-V7200-F"John English"); Inspector N.H. Irwin to the Officer Commanding Macleod, July 16, 1903 (LAC RG18-V7202-F"George Vielle"); Superintendent James Wilson to Robt. Wilson, Blood Agency, July 6, 1906 (Glenbow M1788-71); Superintendent James Wilson to R.N. Wilson, Indian Agent, August 4, 1906 (Glenbow M1788-71); Supt. [J.O. Wilson to R.N. Wilson, March 10, 1909 (Glenbow M1788-59); Inspector Cortlandt Starnes to R.N. Wilson, Indian Agent, July 9, 1909 (Glenbow M1788-59); Superintendent P.C.H. Primrose to R.N. Wilson, August 16, 1909 (Glenbow M1788-59); Indian Agent [R.N. Wilson] to Superintendent Primrose, August 22, 1909 (Glenbow M1788-59).

[91] For *stolen property cases* see Superintendent R. Burton Deane to the Assistant Commissioner, N.W.M.P., July 14, 1900 (LAC RG18-V460-F119-60); Constable F.H. Rubbra to James Wilson, May 27, 1901 (Glenbow M1788-19); Constable J. Gillespie to the Indian Agent, Blood Reserve, June 8, 1901 (Glenbow M1788-15; Corporal J. Gillespie to the Indian Agent, Blood Reserve, December 17, 1902 (Glenbow M1788-22); N. Horns, Scout/Interpreter to the Indian Agent, Blood Reserve, March 9, 1906 (Glenbow M1788-44); J. Wilson to the Indian Agent Blood Reserve, February 1, 1908 (Glenbow M1788-42); R.J. Prestwick to C.A. Macgrath, November 11, 1911 (LAC RG18-V401-F72-11); A.J. Maly to Indian Agent W.J. Hyde, March 11, 1912 (Glenbow M1788-100). *Burglary*: Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, May 31, 1893 (LAC RG10-V1559); Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, June 5, 1893 (LAC RG18-V68-F521-92. *Threats of violence*: G.H. Wheatley to the Indian Commissioner, January 13, 1898 (LAC RG10-V1672); "Confidential: Re Sale of Part of Peigan Indian Reserve," December 1, 1909 (LAC RG10-V4034-F3022340-1). *Assaults*: Indian Agent Magnus Begg to the Indian

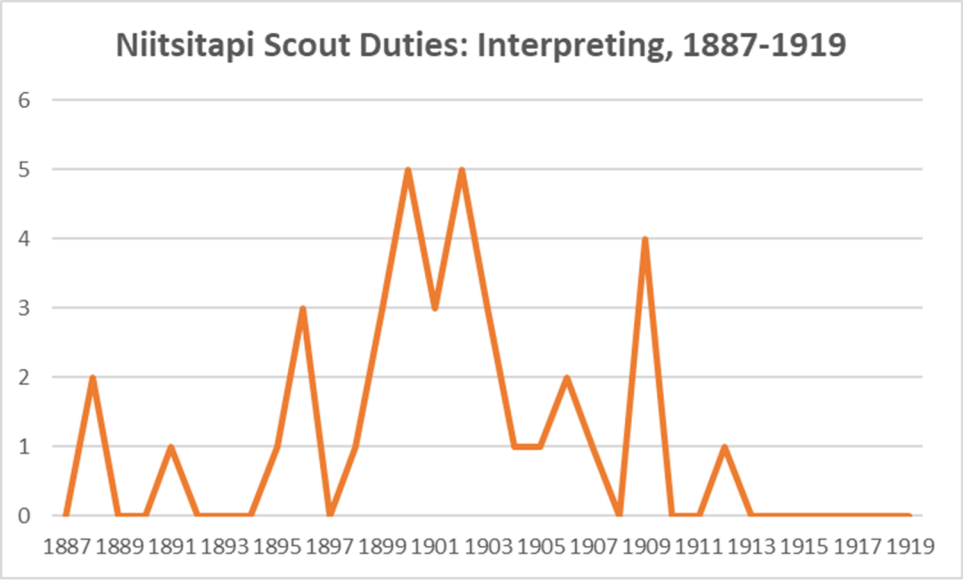

Figure 6.12: Niitsitapi Scout Duties: Interpreting, 1887-1919 (number of mentions in primary documents by year). Before the late-1890s, NWMP personnel seldom needed Niitsitapi scouts to interpret. However, as the traditional pool of interpreters – Euro-Canadian men who had worked in the fur or buffalo robe trade – dissipated, NWMP officers often spoke about the need for Niitsitapi scouts to perform this vital duty. Source: Marsh, "Scout Duties Database," Interpreting Tab

Commissioner, September 26, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1149); "Crime Report Attempt at Murder by Red Crane," July 23, 1902 (LAC RG18-V238-F622-02). *Shootings*: H.H. Nash to Major Steele, May 14, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1341-F129-1895*). Suspicious deaths and murders*: "Re Suicide of Peigan Treaty Indian Maynan or New Robe," October 25, 1907; "Crime Report Re Murder of Three Persons at 15 Mile Lake About 6 Miles North of Raymond, Alta," October 31, 1907 (LAC RG18-V343-F667-03); Corporal W. Armer to R.N. Wilson, August 10, 1909 (Glenbow M1788-59); "Crime Report: Re Emil Bullshields (Blood Indian) Assault on Little Shields," October 24, 1909; "Crime Report: Re Emile Bullshields Causing the Death of Blood Indian Littleshields," October 27, 1909(LAC RG18-V339-F565-09).

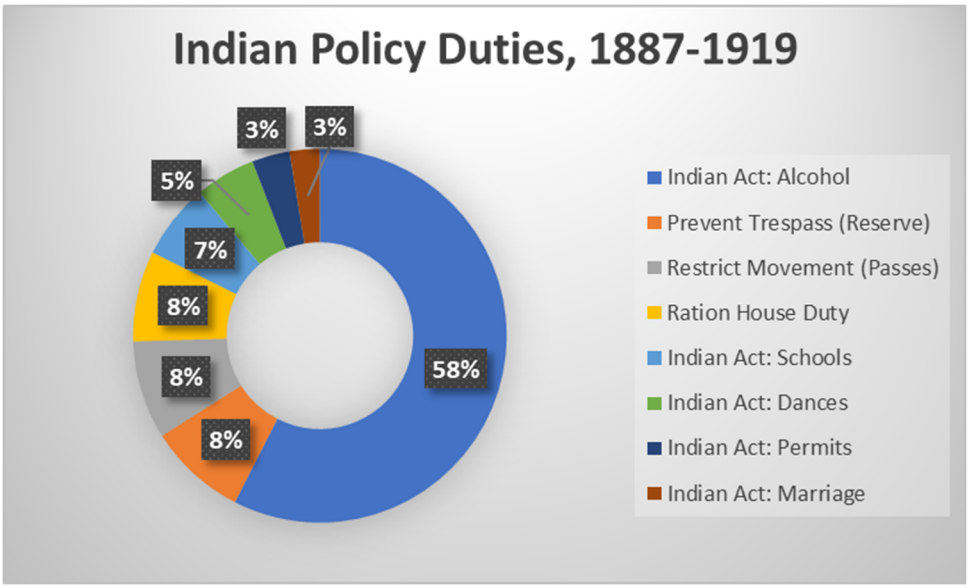

Figure 6.13: Types of Indian Policy Duties Performed by Scouts 1887-1919 (153 of 718 mentions). Source: Chris Marsh, "Scout Duties Database," Tab "Summary"

assimilation," operating under the assumption that Indigenous peoples would invariably be exploited by persons of European-descent. They needed to be protected by the government until enough progress had been made acquiring European values (agrarianism, individualism, and Christian religiosity) to integrate into mainstream society. The *Indian Act*, passed in 1876, formalized Indian policy by consolidating previous colonial and post-confederation legislation pertaining to Indigenous people. The act designated them as minors or special wards of the Crown and regulated many aspects of their lives.[92] It touched on almost every one of them as time went on, becoming more onerous as the years passed. Between 1879 and 1919, Parliament modified the *Indian Act* eighteen times, making Euro-Canadian-type schooling compulsory, reducing the ability to reside on other reserves, restricting commerce in commodities, prohibiting the sale of ammunition, forbidding certain religious ceremonies, and discouraging traditional modes of marriage, such as easily-obtainable divorce and the taking of multiple spouses. When

[92] John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy" in *The Prairie West, Historical Readings, Second Edition*, R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, eds (Edmonton: Pica Press, 1992), 207-212 and J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 223-223, 232-236.

the *Indian Act* first passed, it contained some ninety-nine sections; by 1906, it had ballooned to almost double that.[93]

Niitsitapi scouts played a role in enforcing its many provisions, a common duty being to prevent trespass on the reserve. By 1912, Kainai scouts had standing orders to investigate any stranger riding on the reserve and to bring them to Agency if they did not have a permit to be there. This directive was to prevent the rustling of Kainai stock.[94] The main purpose of hiring Tsuu T'ina scouts in 1890 was to protect reserve resources, notably timber, from Euro-Canadian settlers.[95] In January 1891, a newly hired scout caught a group of men gathering wood on the reserve. After ascertaining they did not have permission to be there, the scout ordered they unload their sleigh and move on. When one of the "white men" tried to bribe him, he took his revolver from his holster, presented it to the intruders, and then re-holstered it. They hastily unloaded and drove for home.[96] Several years later, another Tsuu T'ina scout caught another pair of settlers cutting hay on the reserve. Instead of confronting them – no doubt because the Indian Department did not appreciate the optics of Indian Scouts pulling firearms on Euro-Canadian immigrants – the scout reported the incident to his commanding officer and the Indian Agent, who wrote a letter to the offenders threatening legal action if it happened again.[97] While trespassing laws protected reserve resources, in other instances ,they were used to expel Indigenous peoples from other Canadian reserves or the United States, who were often friends or relatives. Indian Agents periodically claimed that they were "bad characters" engaged in vice trafficking.[98]

Conversely, scouts occasionally assisted in keeping the Niitsitapi confined to their home reserve. It happened more in the Calgary District, though, with officers ordering scouts to escort

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[93] Canada, *The Indian Act, 1876*, S.C. 1876, c.18 in Gail Hinge*, Consolidation of Indian Legislation, Volume II: Indian Acts and Amendments, 1868-1975* (Ottawa: Office of Native Claims, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1985), 25-52 and Canada, *Indian Act*, R.S.C. 1906, c.81 and *Amending Acts 1910-1927* in Hinge, *Consolidation*, Vol. II, 174-244.

[94] Indian Agent (W.J. Hyde] to Sid Russell, September 14, 1912 (Glenbow M1788-40).

[95] S. Swinford to the Indian Commissioner, November 29, 1890 (LAC RG10-V1639); S. Swinford to the Indian Comm., December 31, 1890 (LAC RG18-V1639).

[96] S. Swinford to the Indian Comm., February 3, 1891 (LAC RG10-V1639).

[97] Indian Agent A.J. McNeill to Mr. A. Marshall, September 10, 1899 (LAC RG10-V1645).

[98] Indian Agent [S.B. Lucas] to Inspector Ross Cuthbert, August 18, 1892 (LAC RG10-V1640); James Wilson to Officer In Command N.W,M.P. Stand Off, October 29, 1897 (LAC RG10-V1563); Indian Agent A.J. McNeill to James O. Wilson, O.C. N.W.M.P., November 27, 1900 (LAC RG10-V1645); James Wilson to Inspector Irvine, N.W.M. Police, Cardston, November 6, 1902 (LAC RG10-V1721); Corporal W. Armer to R.N. Wilson, December 7, 1908 (Glenbow M1788-60).

groups of Siksika or Tsuu T'ina back to their respective reserves.[99] Other times scouts made inquiries around their communities then compiled lists of missing individuals, which were passed on to their superiors.[100] Kainai and Piikani scouts did not perform these kinds of duties until September 1902, when Inspector Casey agreed with Indian Agent James Wilson that the "old pass system" should be reinstituted. He ordered the scout employed in Lethbridge "to send all Indians home to the reserve who have not passes."[101] Superintendent Deane – Casey's predecessor – had only cautiously enforced the pass system because Niitsitapi leaders knew that Treaty 7 did not bar them from leaving their reserves. Deane feared they would mount a successful legal challenge against the pass system that would diminish NWMP authority and stature.[102] The tenacity in which certain Indian policies were enforced – and thus the duties Niitsitapi scouts performed – had much to do with the legal opinions and personal convictions of particular officers, which impacted their willingness to cooperate with local Indian Agents.

Niitsitapi scouts performed other duties connected to the *Indian Act* and Indian Department policy. In 1894, Parliament amended the *Indian Act* to make school attendance compulsory, allowing for the arrest of truant students and parents who refused to allow their children to attend school. It further mandated that Indigenous children could be compelled to remain at an industrial or boarding school until the age of eighteen.[103] Kainai, Siksika, and Tsuu T'ina scouts were sometimes called upon to search for and arrest truant students who ran away from the Calgary and High River (or Dunbow) Industrial schools or failed to return following a leave of absence. Wayward youngsters were then escorted back to their school.[104] On at least one occasion, the issue of returning truant students caused anger in the Tsuu T'ina community. In

[99] "Duplicate," to Indian Commissioner, April 5, 1893 (LAC RG10-V1671); Indian Agent Magnus Begg to the Indian Commissioner, June 1, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1149); W.M. Baker to the Indian Commissioner, February 18, 1897 (LAC RG10-V1149); Inspector James Wilson to Indian Agent A.J. McNeill, May 2, 1900 (LAC RG10-1629 Part C).
[100] Sergeant J. Marshall to the Officer Commanding Calgary, March 24, 1897 (LAC RG18-V1382-F76-1897); Indian Agent A.J. McNeill to Superintendent Sanders, June 6, 1904 (LAC RG10-V1629 Part C).
[101] Inspector H.S. Casey to Indian Agent James Wilson, September 6, 1902 (Glenbow M1788-14).
[102] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 17 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1888* (Ottawa, 1889), 68; Superintendent R. Burton Deane to the Commissioner N.W.M.P., February 12, 1891 (LAC RG18-V1204-F169-1891).
[103] Canada, *Indian Act*, R.S.C. 1886, c.81 and *Amending Acts 1887-1906* in Hinge, *Consolidation*, Vol. II, 164.
[104] Indian Agent G.H. Wheatley to Rev. G.H. Hogbin, July 22, 1898 (LAC RG10-V1143); Indian Agent G.H. Wheatley to the Indian Agent, July 25, 1898 (LAC RG10-1143); Indian Agent James Wilson to S. Sergeant Hilliard, October 14, 1898 (LAC RG10-V1564); Indian Agent James Wilson to S. Sergeant Hilliard, July 31, 1899 (LAC RG10-V1564); George H. Hogbin to Mr. McNeill, March 2, 1905, (Glenbow M1837-3); George H. Hogbin, Principal, to Mr. McNeill, March 2, 1905 (Glenbow M1837-3).

October 1899, John One Spot's friends and relatives blocked a police attempt to apprehend the young man truant from the Calgary Industrial School. At a subsequent meeting, chiefs and councilors expressed disapproval that One Spot was being compelled to return against the wishes of his parents, who insisted he was too old, having already been at the school for seven years. Indian Agent A.J. McNeill stated that he had no power over the boy's fate – it was in the hands of the school principal and the Indian Commissioner – and pleaded for the Tsuu T'ina to allow One Spot to leave with the scout to avoid further trouble. The implicit threat was if they did not, more police manpower would be mobilized to force them to comply. McNeill happily reported that in the end, the Tsuu T'ina took his "advice" and permitted One Spot to return to Calgary with scout Bull Collar.[105]

Regarding permits regulating the sale of produce and other commodities, starting in 1894, Kainai scouts had orders "to keep a sharp lookout" for their fellows selling hay, oats, and potatoes without written permission from the Indian Agent. They were also to seize the produce of those trying to do so.[106] Checking for appropriate permits remained a regular scout duty. In 1902, Sergeant Peter Bertles of Pincher Creek stated that he needed a "good man" who spoke Blackfoot and English to help catch Niitsitapi individuals selling produce without a permit.[107] In 1919, scouts from Stand Off participated in day and night patrols – "with good effect" – to prevent Kainai individuals from selling hay and cattle without the Indian Agent's permission.[108]

Niitsitapi scouts played a role in enforcing Canadian marriage and divorce law among their people. While the *Indian Act* did not explicitly forbid traditional aspects of Indigenous matrimonial culture like polygamous marriage and easily-obtained divorces – Canadian criminal and civil law regulated that – it did contain provisions that gave the Indian Department wide latitude to discourage such practices, such as depriving women with "immoral character" (a catch-all term describing those who had left their husbands to live with another man or participated in a polygamous union) of annuities and claims to reserve property. Certain provisions could be used to interfere with the inheritance of property, directing it to blood

[105] Indian Agent A.J. McNeill to the Rev. Principal, Industrial School Calgary, October 24, 1899 (LAC RG10-V1645).
[106] Indian Agent James Wilson to R. Burton Deane, September 28, 1894 (LAC RG10-V1560).
[107] Sgt. P. Bertles to the Officer Commanding N.W.M.P. Macleod, April 7, 1902 (LAC RG18-V1504-F133-1902).
[108] W.M. Graham to [R.N.W.M.P.] Commissioner A. Bowen Perry, August 19, 1919 (LAC RG18-V2172-F24); Annual Report for the Lethbridge District for the Year Ending September 30, 1919, Superintendent P.W. Pennefather (LAC RG18-V1941-F72).

relatives instead of "illegitimate" wives and children.[109] In 1899, a Kainai man named Bear's Shin Bone was convicted on a polygamy charge and given a suspended sentence with the understanding that he would "give up" his second wife.[110] After the decision, Sergeant Hilliard sent two "good scouts" around the reserve to inform the Kainai of the judge's decision. They specifically warned several men to "put away" their second wives or face prosecution.[111] In subsequent years, scouts reported instances of suspected polygamy to their commanding officers, who passed the intelligence on to the Indian Agent.[112] Sometimes scouts played an active role in preventing marital breakdowns. For example, in 1904, a South Piikani man visiting the Kainai reserve named Rides-A-Black-Horse-Too-Hard complained that his wife's Kainai father and grandfather were "keeping his wife away from him against his wishes." A scout investigated the story and brought the woman to Stand Off, who also complained about her relatives. She insisted she wanted to be with her husband, and they were preventing her from doing so. All the parties sat down with Corporal William Armer and the scout to talk about the situation; after a time, "whatever troubles there was between them" were "amicably settled."[113] The union between Rides-A-Black-Horse-Too-Hard and his wife had been saved.

But the most common duties Niitsitapi scouts performed related to the *Indian Act* involved the prohibition of alcohol on reserves and its use among Indigenous peoples. Keeping intoxicants out of Niitsitapi hands occupied the scouts more than all other aspects of Indian policy combined (Figure 6.13). Fifty-eight percent of all mentions related to scout duties focused on the fight against liquor traffic in Blackfoot Country. Nearly every year between 1887 and 1913, they were involved in it in some way (Figure 6.14). The *Indian Act* of 1876 forbade

[109] See Sections 20 and 70 in Canada, *Indian Act*, R.S.C. 1886, c.81 and *Amending Acts 1887-1906* in Hinge, *Consolidation*, Vol. II, 114-116, 140. Sarah Carter argues in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries Canadian politicians, bureaucrats, missionaries, journalists, and other social elites all worked to make monogamous marriage the "common-sense" world view in western Canada. They considered it the best and most "civilized" form of marital union because it purportedly protected the dignity of all women. Additionally, the nuclear family was the economic and social building block of the nation, the best way to safeguard the social fabric and thus law, order and good government in the Canadian West. Indian Department officials believed that changing Indigenous conceptions of marriage was essential for the process of "civilizing" them. Thus, there was a concerted effort to suppress polygamous marriage and easily-obtained divorces on reserves through a variety of coercive strategies. See Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008), 3-8, 147-278.

[110] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, March 13, 1899 (LAC RG10-V3559-F74 Part 19).

[111] Indian Agent James Wilson to S. Sergeant Hilliard, March 22, 1899 (LAC RG10-V1564); Indian Agent James Wilson to S. Sergeant Hilliard, July 21, 1899 (LAC RG10-V1564).

[112] S. Sergeant C. Hilliard to J. Wilson, January 2, 1901 (Glenbow M1788-15).

[113] Corporal W. Armer to Indian Agent R.N. Wilson, July 13, 1904 (Glenbow M1788-13).

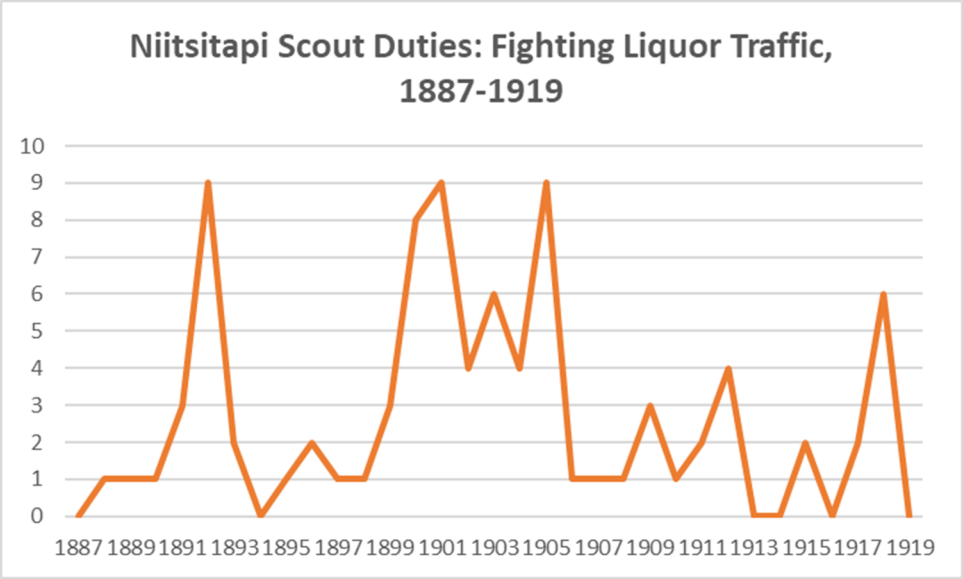

Figure 6.14: Niitsitapi Scout Duties: Fighting Liquor Traffic, 1887-1919 (number of mentions in primary documents by year). *The Indian Act* strictly forbade the manufacture, traffic, possession, and use of alcohol among Indigenous peoples. Niitsitapi scouts helped enforce the act's provisions year after year as part of their duties. Source: Marsh, "Scout Duties Database," IALiquor Tab

"Indians" – any male person of Indian blood reputedly belonging to a particular band, his child, or his lawful wife – from manufacturing, trading in, possessing, or using any intoxicant, which was defined as any spirit, "strong water," spirituous beverage (wine or beer), or any other "intoxicating" drug or mixture.[114] It allowed constables to arrest and confine to the local jail any Indian found in an intoxicated state until they became sober. They then faced an immediate trial before a judge, magistrate, or justice of the peace, who could opt to sentence them to up to a month in jail.[115] Similar penalties existed for those merely possessing intoxicants. In 1882, the *Indian Act* was amended so a fine of three to fifteen dollars (between seventy-four and three hundred seventy dollars today) could be imposed instead of incarceration.[116] However, the architects of the legislation were more concerned with eliminating the traffic by more severely punishing those who sold or gave away intoxicants. Those convicted of such offences faced fines

[114] Canada, *The Indian Act, 1876*, S.C. 1876, c.18 in Gail Hinge, *Consolidation, Volume II*, 24-26.
[115] Section 83 in Canada, *The Indian Act, 1876*, S.C. 1876, c.18 in Hinge, *Consolidation, Volume II*, 47.
[116] Section 5 in Canada, *An Act to Further Amend the Indian Act, 1880*, S.C. 1882, c. 30 (45 Vict.) in Hinge, Consolidation, Vol. II, 91. Calculations of relative values made with reference to "Seven Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a U.S. Dollar Amount, 1790 to present," MeasuringWorth 2020, Samuel H. Williamson, accessed June 28, 2020. https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/uscompare/.

between fifty and three hundred dollars (between twelve hundred and seven thousand four hundred dollars today) – or between one and six months in jail – the seizure of any water-going vessel carrying the intoxicant, and the forfeiture of any article or monies received from the transaction.[117] Indigenous individuals found in an intoxicated state faced an additional fourteen days in jail for refusing to identify the person or establishment supplying the intoxicant.[118] Government officials, missionaries, and purveyors of the fur trade had all advocated for the suppression of the liquor trade among Indigenous peoples because of the conviction that there were inherent biological differences between them and Europeans. This difference led Indigenous peoples to uncontrollably drink when alcohol was present, which sometimes produced violent results – assaults, murder, or attempted murder. Euro-Canadians believed that Indigenous peoples were simply incapable of responsible drinking in the European "manner," where one or two drinks could be imbibed without arousing a thirst for more.[119] Indigenous peoples had to be protected from unscrupulous traders who cared about nothing but profit and thus stymied "civilization" efforts.[120]

While these ideas were paternalistic and denied Indigenous peoples' individuality, there were many Niitsitapi – including influential leaders like Crowfoot (Isapo-Muxika) and Red Crow (Mékaisto) – who believed that the suppression of the liquor traffic was necessary because of the experience of the whiskey trade era.[121] In the mid-1870s, Crowfoot told Methodist missionary John McDougall that many of his people were powerless when it came to liquor. Some traded all they had for it, causing fights that sometimes ended in murder.[122] During the negotiations around Treaty 7, Crowfoot told the large audience gathered, "If the Police had not come to the country,

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[117] Sections 79, 80, 81, and 82 in Canada*, The Indian Act, 1876*, S.C. 1876, c.18 in Hinge*, Consolidation, Volume II*, 44-46.

[118] Section 83 in Canada*, The Indian Act, 1876*, S.C. 1876, c.18 in Hinge*, Consolidation, Volume II*, 47.

[119] These ideas had long-lasting influence on medical professionals and researchers into the twenty-first century because of the uncritical acceptance of ideas and concepts postulated by nineteenth and early twentieth century figures; see James B. Waldram, *Revenge of the Windigo: The Construction of the Mind and Mental Health of North American Aboriginal Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 134-166.

[120] Carolyn Strange and Tina Loo, *Making Good: Law and Moral Regulation in Canada, 1867-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 75.

[121] Hugh Dempsey argues that although the era was of brief duration, it had a devastating impact on the Niitsitapi. The constant presence of alcohol encouraged many of them to drink to excess, which caused social dissension and violence, impoverished families, an inability to defend their hunting territories, and community leaders to be unable to control the young men; see Hugh A. Dempsey, *Firewater: The Impact of the Whisky Trade on the Blackfoot Nation* (Calgary: Fifth House Ltd., 2002), 220.

[122] Hugh A. Dempsey, *The Great Blackfoot Treaties* (Victoria: Heritage House Publishing Company, 2015), 67.

where would we all be now? Bad men and whiskey were killing us so fast that very few, indeed, of us would have been left today. The Police have protected us as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter."[123] Another Kainai chief, Medicine Calf, concurred, stating that during the whiskey trade era "every sound frightened me; my sleep was broken."[124]

These chaotic days had a profound impact on the collective memory of the Niitsitapi. In the 1990s, elders still passed on stories about the whiskey traders they had heard from previous generations. A popular tale concerned *Minik* (wild) Calf Shirt, a spiritually powerful man who became extraordinarily violent under alcohol's influence. A group of whiskey traders murdered an intoxicated Calf Shirt one winter night and threw his body into a nearby river to quell his tumultuous demands for more drink.[125] Of Calf Shirt, Emil Wings said, "When he was drunk he was obnoxious. A small child of his was the only one who could control him; his wives couldn't do anything…He was a horrible man when he was drunk."[126] Elder opinion about the destructiveness of the whiskey trade echoed that of Crowfoot and Medicine Calf. Pete Standing Alone, a Kainai elder, declared, "The Bloods suffered from the whiskey…all they did was drink. Some lost everything and got broke over it. If they had horses they were gone. They'd get drinks from peddling their wives and daughters too."[127] Others highlighted the violence of the era; for example, Kainai elder Helen Cochrane said, "When the police came they [whiskey traders] were chased out because so many of the people were killing each other, when they drank they just killed each other. That's what happened."[128] Commenting on the situation in Siksika territory, Matthew Melting Tallow explained there was "not just fighting but they [the Siksika] pretty near killed each other – stabbings, y'know."[129]

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[123] Interview with Many Guns, August 31, 1938, by Lucien and Jane Hanks (Glenbow M8458-5).

[124] Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba* (. Toronto: Belfords, Clarke, & Co., Publishers, 1880; reprint, Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1979), 270.

[125] For the detailed story, see *Hugh A. Dempsey, The Amazing Death of Calf Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories: Three Hundred Years of Blackfoot History* (Norman: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 47-58.

[126] Interview with Emil Wings, Blood Indian, at His Home at Moses Lake, September 8, 1994, by Pauline Dempsey (Glenbow M9528).

[127] Interview with Pete Standing Alone, Blood Indian, at Standoff, September 9, 1994, by Pauline Dempsey (Glenbow M9528).

[128] Interview with Helen Cochrane, at Her Home on the Blood Reserve, Cardston, Alberta, October 28, 1994, by Pauline Dempsey (Glenbow M9528).

[129] Interview with Matthew Melting Tallow, Siksika Indian, at the Calgary Indian Friendship Centre, August 14, 1994, by Pauline Dempsey (Glenbow M9528).

Thus, in the late nineteenth century, the Niitsitapi had a trepidation around alcohol consumption and an appetite to continue the fight against the liquor trade. In August 1888, Red Crow went to Fort Macleod to request Superintendent Neale "take steps to prevent the sale of Hop Beer" at that summer's *Ookaan*.[130] The previous year – when it had been so difficult to obtain any Kainai cooperation in catching raiders or retrieving stolen horses – the police were able to peacefully arrest "Rattlesnake" Calf Shirt for possessing whiskey after Kainai informants tipped them off. Police were also able to secure five witnesses willing to testify in court, indicating that the community saw alcohol as a powerful disrupting force that had to be expunged, even where popular leaders were concerned.[131] Suppressing the trafficking of intoxicants in Blackfoot Country had community sanction and Niitsitapi scouts were heavily involved in it throughout their existence. From the beginning, NWMP officers insisted that "the best means of getting at the source" was to employ an Indian Scout.[132] They reiterated similar sentiments in subsequent years.[133] Scouts patrolled the reserves looking for signs of intoxication and alcohol trafficking. They made arrests when these activities were detected, seized contraband, conducted investigations to discover where the liquor was obtained, gathered witnesses to the offence, and gave courtroom testimony.

Scouts were preoccupied with these kinds of offences partly because other types – murder, manslaughter, sex crimes, assault, livestock theft, and other property crimes – were so rare in comparison. In their study of defendants in the criminal courts of the North-West Territories between 1878 and 1885, R.C. Macleod and Heather Rollason concluded that "the crime rate among the native population was strikingly low" in comparison to white settlers in all categories except livestock theft.[134] Indeed, they "were quite unprepared for the size of the

[130] Superintendent P.R. Neale to "Sir" [Commissioner L.W. Herchmer], August 7, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1100-F132).
[131] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, Sessional Paper No. 28 *Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1887* (Ottawa, 1888), 49.
[132] Superintendent R. Burton Deane to Commissioner N.W.M. Police, December 27, 1888 (LAC RG18-V1123-F427-88).
[133] Inspector G.E. Sanders to Assistant Commissioner Regina, March 3, 1899 (LAC RG18-V1441-F133-99); Sergeant P. Bertles to the Officer Commanding N.W.M.P. Macleod, April 7, 1902 (LAC RG18-V1504-F133-1902); Indian Agent T.J. Fleetham to Superintendent Deane, March 14, 1912 (LAC RG18-V1678-F110); Superintendent R. Burton Deane to the Commissioner, R.N.W.M. Police, May 9, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F275-12); Supt. Commanding "E" Division R.N.W.M. Police to the Commissioner R.N.W.M. Police, February 3, 1915 (LAC RG18-V1817-F110).
[134] R.C. Macleod and Heather Rollason, "'Restrain the Lawless Savages': Native Defendants in the Criminal Courts of the North West Territories, 1878-1885," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 10 no. 2 (1997), 157.

disparity"; of 1,335 criminal defendants, only 242 (just over eighteen percent) were native.[135] Annual police reports from the Macleod and Calgary districts in the 1890s illustrate that these trends held and that the most common crime on Niitsitapi reserves was simple intoxication. In 1893, out of 190 cases tried at Macleod, 132 defendants were white and 58 were Indigenous. The most common charge for Indigenous individuals (with 27 tallies) was "drunk." Rounding out the top five charges were larceny (7), letting out prairie fire (6), skinning dead cattle (5), and horse stealing/cattle-killing (each one 4). For Whites, the top five charges were causing a disturbance while drunk (29), selling intoxicants to Indians (19), vagrancy (12), fighting in the streets (10), and larceny (8).[136] The next year, there were 241 cases tried at Macleod: 163 Euro-Canadian defendants and 78 Indigenous ones. The top five charges for Indigenous people were drunk (22), cattle-killing (21), intoxicants in possession and larceny (both 7), skinning dead cattle (5), and assault, larceny, and supplying intoxicants to Indians (tied with 3 each). For Whites, the tallies were drunk (43), intoxicants to Indians (17), larceny and vagrancy (13 each), assault (11), and fighting in the streets (6).[137] These trends continued in 1895; out of 149 cases, 109 defendants were Euro-Canadian. The top three charges for the 40 Indigenous people charged were drunk (17), gambling (14), and cattle-killing (5). For Euro-Canadians, they were drunk (23), assault (17), and larceny (14). No Indigenous peoples were charged with assault or larceny that year.[138] In 1897, Indigenous peoples committed 52 of the 334 total crimes in the Macleod District, but 33 were for being drunk and 7 were for other offences against the *Indian Act* (likely possession of intoxicants).[139] An analysis of NWMP crime returns (tables kept by the force on every case tried that year by district) reveals that between December 1, 1900, and November 30, 1901, there were 138 cases involving Indigenous peoples (mostly Niitsitapi) in the Macleod, Calgary, and Lethbridge districts combined. 113 (or eighty-two percent) were offences under the liquor sections of the *Indian Act*, including 90 intoxication cases, 11 possession of alcohol, 10 giving liquor to Indians, 1 attempt to obtain liquor, and 1 refusal to state where liquor was obtained.[140]

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[135] Macleod and Rollason, "Restrain the Lawless Savages," 164.
[136] "Schedule of Cases Tried at Macleod, 1893" in Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1893*, 20.
[137] "Schedule of Cases Tried at Macleod During 1894" in Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1894* (Ottawa, 1895), 27.
[138] Schedule of Cases Tried at Macleod During 1895" in Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1895*, 41.
[139] "Schedule of Cases Tried at Macleod from 1st December, 1896 to 30th November, 1897" in Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1897*, 39.
[140] "Return of Criminal and Other Cases Tried in the North West Territories from 1st December 1900 to 30th November 1901," Macleod, Lethbridge, and Calgary Districts (LAC RG18-V213-F107-02).

Results for the first nine months of 1911 reveal a similar pattern of offences; out of 150 cases total, 104 were for intoxication and 9 more were related to possession or trafficking in alcohol – seventy-six percent of all cases that year.[141] Matters remained the same for 1916: 76 cases out of 110 were for intoxication; 9 more were for possessions and trafficking.[142] Crime rates on Niitsitapi reserves were low and certainly did not warrant the level of police surveillance that existed in the 1890s and beyond. If not for the prevailing community desire to limit alcohol consumption on reserves, the liquor sections of the *Indian Act* might have merely provided a pretense for the intense network of surveillance that had surrounded the Niitsitapi.

Niitsitapi scouts dutifully carried out the battle against alcohol. In 1889, Lethbridge Superintendent Deane had high praise for Kainai scout Star Child because of his superlative efforts against whiskey peddlers. In April, he seized a ten-gallon keg from two men he found skulking along the Oldman River bottom within the Lethbridge city limits. The peddlers tried to bribe Star Child for the whiskey's return, then resorted to threats when he refused. Unphased, the scout took the keg to the police barracks, where it was destroyed.[143] Most scout activities to remove intoxicants from circulation were not as dramatic. Scouts participated in "sting" operations where they tried to buy liquor from individuals reputed to sell intoxicants to Indigenous peoples. In November 1901, Superintendent Joseph Howe gave Green Grass two dollars and directed him to buy whiskey in Macleod. The scout "immediately returned with a bottle which a man named Henderson had sold him." Howe delayed hearing the case until Green Grass had caught some more offenders, not wanting to expose the scout's identity prematurely.[144] A month earlier, Peigan Frank conducted a similar operation, leading to the arrest of a "half-breed" from Duck Lake named Tannis Fallon.[145] In 1905 – a period identified by the NWMP and the Indian Agent R.N. Wilson as one of increasing alcohol consumption among the Kainai and Piikani – there was a shift to hiring individuals for short periods, two weeks to a month. This was likely because most Euro-Canadians apt to sell intoxicants to Indigenous

[141] Return of Criminal and Other Cases Tried Between January 1, 1911 and September 30, 1911, Macleod, Lethbridge, and Calgary Districts (LAC RG18-V406 & 407-F142).
[142] Return of Criminal and Other Cases Tried Between January 1, 1916 and December 31, 1916, Macleod, Lethbridge, and Calgary Districts (APA GR1966.0166/92 Box 117 F928c).
[143] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1889*, 40-42.
[144] Superintendent Joseph Howe to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, November 4, 1901 (LAC RG18-V219-F879-01).
[145] Inspector H.S. Casey to the Officer Commanding "K" Division N.W.M. Police (LAC RG18-V1481-F127-90).

peoples knew who the scouts were. In May, the NWMP hired "Buckskin" Tom and his wife to root out whiskey sellers in Fort Macleod and Cardston. The pair was successful; the police charged and obtained five convictions for individuals selling intoxicants to Indians.[146] Staff Sergeant J.S. Piper of Stand Off was pleased with Tom's performance but doubted he would be as effective again since "all the Indians were on to them."[147] The police attempted another sting in July, which Tom participated in briefly. As Piper predicted, it did not go as well, and he had to recruit two other Kainai men to take over for Tom.[148] Scouts accompanied large Niitsitapi parties when they travelled to towns and cities for fairs – such as the Calgary Stampede – and after receiving their treaty annuities. According to Indian Department officials, these measures ensured that the Niitsitapi "behaved," mostly meaning that they did not drink. The NWMP would often hire temporary scouts for a week or two for this kind of work.[149]

While most scouts did their liquor suppression duties stoically, a few individuals balked, which led to their termination. In July 1892, a Tsuu T'ina scout named Mike drew his commanding officer's ire when he "neglected to do his duty" by refusing to investigate a reported instance of individuals drinking liquor. Mike then refused to point out the individuals to NWMP constables when the Tsuu T'ina attended horse races at Fish Creek Crossing.[150] Alcohol-related duties caused at least one Kainai scout – Bull Shoe – to quit after he had to testify against his mother during an intoxication case.[151] Liquor suppression duties were the thorniest responsibilities Niitsitapi scouts performed; the resentment that Calf Tail, Peigan Frank, and Bull Collar experienced from their fellows for making arrests all stemmed from their attempts to control alcohol use in their communities.

After some initial grumbling in the early 1890s, NWMP officers consistently praised Niitsitapi scouts for the way they performed their duties. In 1890 Commissioner Herchmer

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[146] Indian Agent [R.N. Wilson] to the Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, June 7, 1905 (LAC RG10-V1548).
[147] Staff Sergeant J.S. Piper to R.N. Wilson, May 19, 1905 (Glenbow Museum M1788-13).
[148] Indian Agent [R.N. Wilson to Staff Sergeant Piper, July 3, 1905 (LAC RG10-V1548); Indian Agent [R.N. Wilson to Staff Sergeant J.S. Piper, July 2, 1905 (LAC RG10-V1548).
[149] Superintendent James Wilson to R.N. Wilson, August 4, 1906 (Glenbow M1788-21); Statement of Reg. No. 4481 Constable Blake, July 18, 1909 (LAC RG18-V390-F535-04); Superintendent James Wilson to the Commissioner R.N.W.M. Police, August 25, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F465-10); Hyde and Saunders: The Lethbridge Produce House to W.J. Hyde, Agent Blood Reserve, October 21, 1911 (LAC RG10-V1547).
[150] Sergeant C.H. Dee to the Officer Commanding "E" Division NWMP Calgary, July 14, 1892 (LAC RG18-V1250-F238-1892).
[151] Superintendent Joseph Howe to Indian Agent James Wilson, August 3, 1901 (Glenbow M1788-24); Superintendent James Howe to Indian Agent James Wilson, August 26, 1901 (LAC RG18-V1481-F133-01).

complained it was difficult to keep scouts in their positions very long because the Niitsitapi were "unaccustomed to steady employment."[152] Three years later, he declared the entire scout experiment was unsatisfactory because too many had left the force because of a "constant desire" to visit family.[153] Herchmer's major problem with the scouts was not that they did their work poorly but quit too readily. After 1893, officer appraisals in NWMP annual reports concerning the scouts were overwhelmingly positive. Even in the 1893 report, their immediate superior – Superintendent Steele – stated that the Niitsitapi had performed their duties satisfactorily throughout the year. In 1895, Herchmer himself praised the scouts for investigating the sale of liquor on the reserves, being able to coax the identities of sellers out of those arrested. He also noted scouts were useful in reducing tensions between Niitsitapi communities and the police since wanted suspects were more willing to surrender to "one of their own people."[154] At the end of 1897, Steele wrote that the scouts in the Macleod District had been useful during the year, but he did worry that they might not "be thoroughly depended on in the event of trouble with the Indians."[155] That same year, Superintendent A.B. Perry asserted that Siksika scouts in his employ had had a "beneficial effect" in the Calgary district.[156] The following year, Superintendent Deane echoed Steele's commendation of the Kainai and Piikani, declaring the scouts had performed their duties "uncomplainingly and well."[157] In the 1901 annual report, Deane's successor in the Macleod District – Superintendent Joseph Howe – praised the Kainai and Piikani scouts in an even more complimentary tone. Concerning the performance of the four men in his employ, Howe declared, "I cannot speak too highly of the way in which they did their work."[158] The next year, now Commissioner Perry reported that the NWMP employed a number of scouts – not mentioning they were all located in Blackfoot Country – and that "they render[ed] valuable

[152] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1890*, 4.
[153] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1893*, 2.
[154] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1895* (Ottawa, 1896), 6-7.
[155] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1897,* 45.
[156] Canada, *Report of the NWMP*, *1897*, 53.
[157] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1898* (Ottawa, 1899), 26; Helene Dobrowolsky, *Law of the Yukon: A History of the Mounted Police in the Yukon, Revised Edition* (Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing Co., 2013), 15-23.
[158] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 28 Report of the North-West Mounted Police, 1901* (Ottawa, 1902), 35.

service."[159] In 1904, Superintendent Primrose maintained that by employing just one extra Niitsitapi scout that year, the police had been better able to combat liquor traffic on the reserves. Compared to previous years, more charges had been laid against offenders for alcohol-related crimes.[160] That same year in the Calgary district, Superintendent G.E. Sanders reported that the two Siksika scouts at the Gleichen detachment kept a close watch on everything that happened on the reserve. He suggested that it might be a good idea to hire a scout to watch the Stoney of Morley too, to catch hunters who were killing game out of season.[161] Despite a rough start, Niitsitapi scouts became proficient in their duties by the mid-1890s and were thereafter routinely praised.

After 1905, NWMP officers repeatedly commented on the difficulty of recruiting and retaining Niitsitapi scouts. During the 1890s, under pressure from the opposition Liberals, Parliament sought to reduce the costs of maintaining the NWMP.[162] Force administrators targeted the wages of Niitsitapi scouts. Between the summer of 1887 and April 1892, the force paid scouts twenty-five dollars per month plus rations. In May 1892, they were slashed to twenty dollars.[163] A year later, the NWMP cut wages again, offering a base of only fifteen dollars.[164] In 1896, the force tried to push wages even lower. After a tumultuous year on the Siksika reserve – which included the murder of a harsh and dictatorial Indian Department employee by a Siksika man named Scraping High and the expulsion of prominent Anglican missionary John William Tims in 1895, Superintendent Howe decided that a greater police presence was required on the reserve to keep the peace. [165] Howe wanted a scout placed in each of the major villages and he initially believed that they would accept ten dollars a month plus rations. But getting the Siksika to work for such a wage turned out to be impossible; not only did they insist on fifteen dollars,

[159] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 28 Report of the North-West Mounted Police, 1902* (Ottawa, 1903), 5.
[160] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 28 Report of the North-West Mounted Police, 1904* (Ottawa, 1905), 58.
[161] Canada, *Report of the NWMP*, 1904, 42.
[162] For example, see "Memo: On Notice of Motion of Mr. McMullin 'That in the Opinion of the this house the Corps Known as the N.W. Mounted Police Should Be Annually Reduced in Numbers," Comptroller Fred White, ca.1892 (LAC RG18-V72-F864-92).
[163] Earning of Individual Indians, Bloods, May 31, 1893 (LAC RG10-V1559).
[164] Superintendent S.B. Steele to the Commissioner North-West Mounted Police, July 23, 1894 (LAC RG18-V1131-F145-1894).
[165] For the whole story, see Dempsey, *Amazing Death of Calf Shirt*, 186-209.

they demanded that they be given three pounds of fodder per day for their horses.[166] Thus, fifteen dollars per month remained the standard wage for many years, though men with long-time experience or superior talents (like possessing a trade like carpentry or metalsmithing, or being proficient in English) could demand better wages.

By 1905, the average wage was not good enough to attract or retain Niitsitapi scouts. Men could find more lucrative opportunities elsewhere with the development of haying, mining, and freighting activities on the reserves. From the mid-1890s, the Indian Department also distributed cattle to those they considered sufficiently "advanced" to take care of them. When these animals matured, they were often slaughtered to provide rations for the Niitsitapi community, with the Indian Department paying cash to the owners. In 1905, Indian Agent R.N. Wilson reported that Kainai individuals owned 6,138 cattle and had earned $26,533 from the sale of beef and hay between June 30, 1904, and June 30, 1905. Another $4,690 had been earned from wages, which included their employment with the NWMP.[167] From an analysis of Wilson's statistics, the Kainai earned far more money from the sale of beef and hay and they were less interested in doing wage labour for others. In the previous year, they had earned $23,569 and $6082, respectively. In 1905 the Kainai earned nearly three thousand dollars more over 1904 and received about fourteen hundred dollars less in wages. They also earned around ten thousand dollars each year freighting supplies, coal, and hay, and selling ponies.[168] The Kainai could earn money without selling their labour to others, but if they were inclined to do so, they could do far better working for area farmers and ranchers. Superintendent Primrose asserted that even young men straight out of the industrial schools could make at least twenty-five dollars per month doing so.[169] In 1910, the average income for a Kainai family of five with one male breadwinner was $245, not including annuity money or the proceeds of leasing reserve lands to Euro-Canadian ranchers (which amounted to about fifty dollars per family per year).[170] This amount translates to

[166] Supt. Joseph Howe, Cmmdg. "E" Division to Insp. Macpherson, Calgary, May 6, 1896 (LAC RG18- V1354-F76-96); J. Howe to Commissioner [N.W.M.P.] Regina, May 9, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1341-F129-1895); Inspt. D.H. Macpherson to the Officer Commanding Calgary, May 13, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1354-F76-96); Supt. Joseph Howe to the Commissioner [N.W.M.P.] Regina, May 13, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1354-F76-96); Supt. Joseph Howe to the Commissioner [N.W.M.P] Regina, May 15, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1341-F129-1895).
[167] "Statistics: Blood Indian Reserve," June 30, 1905 (LAC RG10-V1536).
[168] "Statistics: Blood Indian Reserve," June 30, 1905 (LAC RG10-V1536).
[169] Supt. [P.C.H. Primrose], Commanding Macleod District to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, January 26, 1904 (LAC RG18-V7201-F" Joe Mountain Horse").
[170] Assistant Deputy and Secretary John D. McLean to R.N. Wilson, Esq., October 27, 1910 (Glenbow M1788-77).

a little over twenty dollars per month, better than the average scout wage. Working as a police scout meant accepting lower wages – and as seen above – could socially isolating. It is not difficult to comprehend why the NWMP had more trouble attracting and retaining scouts as time went on. Between 1898 and 1903, the average length of service for a Niitsitapi scout was fourteen months, but between 1904 and 1909, it had decreased to ten months.[171] A comparison of the two periods illustrates that as time went on, the scout corps as a whole possessed less experience as individuals left the service more often (Figures 6.15 and 6.16).

After nearly seven years of trying to recruit and retain effective scouts, Primrose wrote Commissioner Perry and told him that the force needed to revamp the scout pay structure to attract good Niitsitapi men. In August 1911, Primrose complained that he only had two scouts in the district, one at the Stand Off detachment, the other on the Piikani reserve. Another scout – who was acting as interpreter at Macleod headquarters – had just told the superintendent he intended to quit after being on the job for only a month. Primrose explained that in the past such positions had been easily filled because of a lack of economic opportunity in the district. But now conditions had "absolutely changed" and "the Indian who wants to work" could easily find a job that paid three or four times more than the police could. Only the most "useless" individuals would work for such low wages and even they would not stay because of the tremendous strain the job put on their ponies. It was imperative to obtain the service of "the very best men" to put down the scourge of cattle-killing plaguing the district. Primrose wanted authorization to pay Niitsitapi scouts not less than seventy-five dollars per month. He also recommended securing the services of a "head scout" at ninety dollars per month.[172] It was a staggering recommendation considering NWMP constables earned sixty cents to a dollar a day, amounting to between eighteen and thirty dollars a month. Sergeants earned double the amount of the highest-paid constable but still would have been paid fifteen dollars less a month compared to a Niitsitapi scout under Primrose's new pay scheme. The "head scout" would have earned nearly eleven hundred dollars per year, a hundred dollars more than the lowest-paid inspector in the force![173] Perry rebuffed Primrose, stating that his recommendations were

[171] Christopher Marsh, "Scout Master List," MC1898-1903 and MC1904-1909 Tabs (Spreadsheet in author's possession).
[172] Supt. P.C.H. Primrose to the Commissioner R.N.W.M. Police, August 21, 1911 (LAC RG18-V1662-F110).
[173] Canada, Auditor General, *Sessional Paper No. 1 Report of the Auditor General for the Year Ended March 31, 1911* (Ottawa, 1912), Volume II R-4.

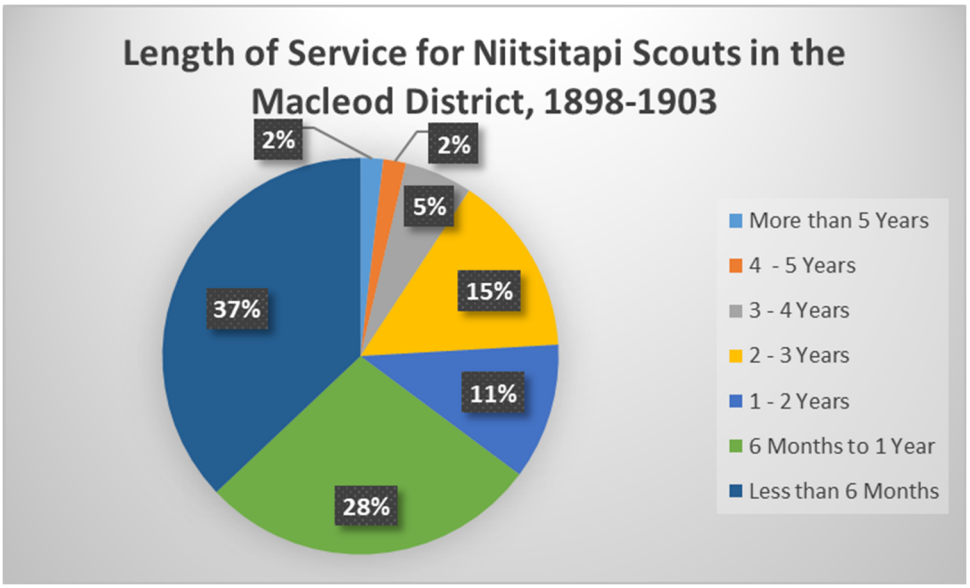

Figure 6.15: Length of Service for Niitsitapi Scouts in the Macleod District, 1898-1903. During this period, a higher proportion of scouts had spent more than two years on the force than the period 1904-1909. There were also several scouts with more than four years of experience. Source: Chris Marsh, "Scout Master List," Graph 8-3 Tab

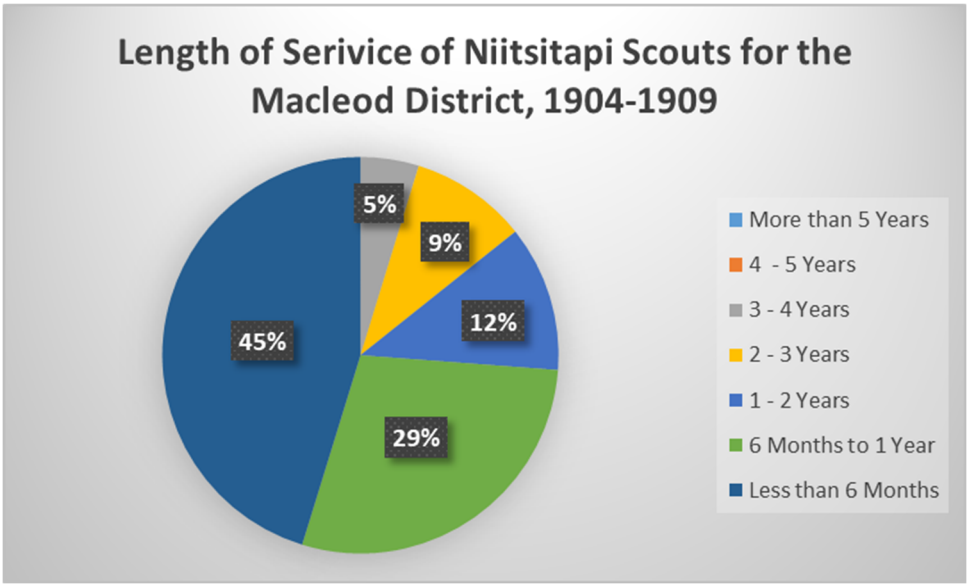

Figure 6.16: Length of Service for Niitsitapi Scouts in the Macleod District, 1904-1909. During this period, there was a higher proportion of scouts who spent less than six months on the force compared to the period 1898-1903. There were no scouts with more than four years of experience. Both points illustrate how the NWMP had problems retaining scouts during this period. Source: Chris Marsh, "Scout Master List," Graph 4-9 Tab

"entirely out of proportion with salaries throughout the force."[174] The commissioner agreed that some modification of the pay scale was necessary, giving Primrose permission to pay the scouts in his employ between twenty and thirty dollars a month, depending on their talents.[175] The exchange between Primrose and Perry illustrates that in the purview of the former – who had commanded the Macleod District for some ten years – the Niitsitapi scouts were necessary for law enforcement activities. Perry, on the other hand, having spent comparatively little time in Blackfoot Country throughout his entire career before becoming commissioner, could not fathom how instrumental the Niitsitapi were. The next year, Superintendent Deane noted the same kind of difficulty recruiting and retaining scouts in the Calgary District. He accused the Indian Department of contributing to the problem by recently luring the Gleichen's detachment best scout from NWMP service by offering him a higher wage to become the Blackfoot Agency's interpreter.[176]

While Niitsitapi scouts spent most of their time following the directives of their commanding officers, they also responded to their communities' concerns. Scouts were not merely the foils of the police – and by extension, the Canadian state – nor did they exclusively serve its interests. This was evident on the Kainai reserve during James Wilson's tenure as Indian Agent (1893-1903), as he insisted on reducing ration issues, eliminating religious dances, and forcing Kainai children into schools. During the clash between the NWMP and the Indian Department over the quantity of Kainai rations in the early 1890s, scouts were active participants in the investigation. Community members leaving the ration house gave scouts their portion of beef and flour for weighing at Stand Off.[177] Scouts also scrutinized the issuing of rations. On one occasion, Wilson expressed annoyance in having seen three different scouts hanging around the agency buildings on rations days.[178] Calf Tail was particularly aggressive on the issue. When he

[174] Commissioner [A.B. Perry] to the Officer Commanding R.N.W.M. Police, August 25, 1911 (LAC RG18-V1662-F110).
[175] "Special Constable James Gladstone, Interpreter at Macleod" and Other Notes on Wages, ca. August 1911 (LAC RG18-V1662-F110).
[176] Constable T.H. Irvine to the Officer Commanding "E" Division R.N.W.M. Police Calgary, May 9, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F275-12);.Superintendent R. Burton Deane to the Commissioner R.N.W.M. Police, May 9, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F275-12); Commissioner A. Bowen Perry to Comptroller Fred White, May 9, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F275-12). Constable T.H. Irvine to the Officer Commanding "E" Division R.N.W.M. Police Calgary, May 9, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F275-12).
[177] Statement of Red Crane to Inspector A.M. Jarvis, August 30, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95); Statement of Christopher Hilliard to Inspector A.M. Jarvis, August 30, 1894 (RG18-V101-F38-95).
[178] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, Regina, September 18, 1894 (LAC RG18-V101-F38-95).

entered the ration house to observe, Wilson threatened to have him arrested. In turn, Calf Tail threatened to arrest Wilson for interfering with his duties. Matters became physical between them, and Wilson brought charges against him for assault.[179] The court found the scout guilty and gave him a suspended sentence, but the throngs of Kainai who witnessed the incident could not help but notice the scouts strongly advocating for them on the rations issue. Scouts were prominent in Red Crow's battle with Wilson over religious ceremonies too. Wilson complained that four Indian Scouts – under the direction of Kainai leaders – had roused villages all over the reserve and told them to gather in one large camp during the summer of 1898.[180] They also informed Deane that they did not want to enforce *Indian Act* prohibitions against dances and threatened to resign en masse if that was the superintendent's expectation.[181] This refusal no doubt played a role in Deane's promise to let the ceremonies go ahead. While Indian Agents consistently tried to put down dances on Nehiyaw and Nakoda reserves – sometimes using the police to do so – the Indian Department let the Niitsitapi *Ookaan* alone, usually on the mere promise that there would be no giving away of property or self-torture elements. But Indian Department officials made it clear that they would do nothing to facilitate them, such as providing beef tongues from department-slaughtered cattle (in fact, department employees often cut them up so they could not be used).[182] Scouts attended various dances and ceremonies, but mostly to prevent alcohol consumption and prohibit outside visitors.[183]

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[179] James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, October 9, 1894 (LAC RG10-V1560); James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, October 11, 1894 (RG10-V1560).

[180] Indian Agent James Wilson to Indian Commissioner A.E. Forget, June 28, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111).

[181] "Extract from Report of Superintendent Deane, Dated at Macleod 30th, June, 1898," June 30, 1898, (LAC RG18-V154-F443-98); Indian Agent James Wilson to Indian Commissioner A.E. Forget, June 28, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111).

[182] For examples of the heavy-handed attempts to put down religious dances on Nehiyaw and Nakoda reserves see LAC RG10-V3825-F605111, F605112, F605113, and F605114 Part 1. For statements of Niitsitapi dance policy and examples of it in action see J.D. McLean to A.E. Forget, April 15, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111); A.E. Forget to the Indian Agent Blackfoot Agency, June 3, 1897 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111); A.E. Forget to the Indian Agent Blackfoot Agency, February 28, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111); A.E. Forget to the Secretary Department of Indian Affairs, April 5, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111); J.D. McLean to A.E. Forget, August 24, 1898 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111); J.D. Maclean to Rev. H.W. Gibbon Stocken, April 2, 1900 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111); Telegram, D. Laird to J.D. McLean, July 11, 1902 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111); Comptroller Fred White to James A. Smart, July 12, 1902 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605111; Emile J. Legal to Frank Oliver, October 20, 1905 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605112); Indian Agent R.N. Wilson to the Secretary Department of Indian Affairs, May 3, 1908 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605112); Indian W.J. Dilworth to the Assistant Deputy and Secretary Department of Indian Affairs, March 10, 1914 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605113); Indian W.J. Dilworth to the Assistant Deputy and Secretary Department of Indian Affairs, March 10, 1914 (LAC RG10-V3825-F605113).

[183] "Extract from Weekly Report of Corpl. Robertson, in Charge of Stand Off Detachment," July 13, 1902 (LAC RG18-V1496-F76-1902); Indian Agent [R.N. Wilson] to Corporal Miles, May 30, 1908, M1788-60); Macleod Local Orders,

Kainai scouts highlighted community complaints about reserve schools too, propelling action on them when necessary. For example, in March 1903, several parents came to the Stand Off detachment and complained that St. Paul's school's principal had forced several of the children to eat soap. There was no action on the issue until Tail Feathers – whose own children attended the school – made the same complaint. The NWMP investigated and helped facilitate a meeting between the principal and Kainai leadership. The principal explained that some of the children had broken into the storeroom and had eaten many of the biscuits and raisins stored there. He made them chew a small piece of soap as punishment. After the principal did the same – to illustrate that it was not overly harsh – the Kainai leaders withdrew their complaints.[184] Niitsitapi scouts used their authority and influence to advance community interests, taking complaints directly to the police and forcing action on particular issues, which often precipitated conflict between the NWMP and the Indian Department.

This chapter demonstrates that the description of the Niitsitapi men employed by the NWMP as "scouts" was a misnomer. They were not merely guides or helpmates hired temporarily, but North-West Mounted Policemen in role and function. Niitsitapi scouts performed many of the regular duties that Euro-Canadian constables did: going out on patrol, detecting crime, conducting investigations, and making arrests. They also delivered mail and messages, took care of horses, escorted prisoners from one post to another, and gave courtroom testimony. But scouts specialized in policing reserve communities due to their knowledge of the land, their social ties with their communities, and their ability to communicate effectively with their people. Scouts were essential for the NWMP to enforce Canadian law in Blackfoot Country. NWMP officers had high praise for the scouts; their primary complaint was the difficulty of recruiting qualified ones who would stay with the force a long time. It became a significant problem by 1911 because the NWMP offered wages that were too low, which interfered with the execution of law enforcement in southern Alberta. Superintendent Primrose illustrated how important it was to employ scouts in the Macleod District by recommending the force pay them more than Euro-Canadian constables and non-commissioned officers to secure their services. However, it would be wrong to suggest that Niitsitapi scouts were merely drones

June 24, 1908 (LAC RG18-V2878); "Crime Report Re Simon Big Snake, Blackfoot Indian-Intoxicated," January 25, 1918 (LAC RG18-V1917-F73).

[184] James Wilson to "Dear Sir," April 1, 1903 (LAC RG18-V1523-F69-1903); Superintendent P.C.H. Primrose to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, April 2, 1903 (LAC RG18-V1523-F69-1903).

advancing the Canadian State's colonial interests and agendas. While the prohibitionary liquor sections of the *Indian Act* were based on stereotypical ideas of Indigenous peoples that were patently paternalistic, there was a desire within Niitsitapi communities to suppress alcohol consumption. The confluence of state and community objectives led to the scouts spending a great deal of time and effort combatting the liquor trade. Additionally, scouts took direction from their communities on matters of importance – rations, religiosity, and their children's treatment in Indian Department-ran schools. Scouts were important for bringing attention to Niitsitapi complaints, which sometimes allowed rectification in their favour. As will be seen, the employment of scouts also allowed the Niitsitapi to avoid flagrant instances of police brutality that was spectacularly visited on some Nehiyaw communities during the 1890s and the early twentieth century.

CHAPTER SEVEN
Cannons and a Noose: A Comparison of NWMP Violence Against Indigenous Peoples in the Macleod and Prince Albert Districts, 1895-1912

The mid-1890s was a tumultuous period for the relationship between the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) and Indigenous peoples. Between October 1895 and June 1897, four policemen and three Indigenous men died in exchanges of gunfire. Two more policemen were seriously wounded. Since the Kainai's (Blood) "War with the Redcoats" in 1889, annual police reports noted the improving behaviour and peaceful inclinations of Indigenous peoples all over the North-West Territories. Commissioner L.W. Herchmer praised them for making steady progress in farming and raising livestock, and for the low crime rates on reserves. The biggest issues remaining were with occasional drunkenness and cattle-killing. However, in late-1895, the commissioner feared the possibility of an "Indian War," one more destructive and expensive than the 1885 Resistance. Herchmer issued a grim warning to Parliament: "The loss of life, trouble and expense occasioned in putting down the last rebellion is comparatively slight, compared with that the Southern Indians could cause if they really went out."[1] He urged funding for the force to be maintained and suggested that the Indian Department establish tribal police forces on reserves to surveil the reserves. In the Prince Albert District, Superintendent George B. Moffatt worried over Indigenous peoples' newfound propensity to offer violent resistance to the police, which had been rare since 1885.[2] In 1897, Herchmer declared that " the time has not yet arrived when the peace and safety of the country can be preserved by ordinary provincial police."[3] Even one "bad Indian" could spark enough trouble to cause panic among the Euro-Canadian settler population and impede agricultural pursuits, jeopardizing the entire nation-building enterprise that had been set in motion by Confederation in 1867.[4]

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[1] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1892* (Ottawa, 1893), 6.
[2] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1895* (Ottawa, 1896), 116.
[3] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1897* (Ottawa, 1898), 3.
[4] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1895*, 2.

The "bad Indians" Herchmer referred to were Almighty Voice and Charcoal. Almighty Voice (or Kitchi-manito-waya; or Jean-Baptiste) was an Anishinaabe (Salteaux) man who first drew police attention for a minor, nonviolent crime.[5] In October 1895, he and two friends allegedly killed a cow belonging to a man named Parenteau. On October 22 police from the Batoche detachment arrested Almighty Voice on the One Arrow reserve.[6] They took him to Duck Lake for trial, but the detachment building was not a proper detention facility. Almighty Voice escaped during the night when there was a changing of the guard, which Assistant Commissioner John H. McIllree attributed to the "direct disobedience of orders and gross carelessness" of the constables.[7] A week later, Sergeant Colin C. Colebrook and his Métis guide Francois Dumont tracked Almighty Voice and his young wife to a point near Kinistino, north-east of Batoche. Set upon suddenly, Almighty Voice drew a double-barreled muzzle-loader from behind his back and warned Colebrook to leave or be shot. When Colebrook did not heed a second warning and drew his revolver, Almighty Voice fired a bullet that shattered the sergeant's collarbone and pierced his right subclavian artery.[8] Colebrook died almost instantly. Almighty Voice fled, and despite a massive investment of time and effort, no member of the NWMP saw him again until May 26, 1897. That day, David and Napoleon Venne were rounding up cattle in the Jungle Lake Hills about ten miles south-east of Batoche and spotted the long-time fugitive and his two companions: brother-in-law Dublin and cousin Little Salteaux. The Vennes did not know who they were at the time, but the trio's evasiveness piqued their suspicion. The brothers reported their encounter to the NWMP, and the next day Napoleon Venne led a small party to what he believed was the fugitive's camp. While the police looked around, one of the three outlaws shot at Venne; one bullet went through his right arm, the other through the top of his hat. Venne survived, but once again, Almighty Voice escaped. More police came in from Prince Albert to aid in the search.[9] Inspector John B. Allan led twelve other policemen and a civilian

[5] For a recent account of the Almighty Voice saga, see Bill Waiser, *In Search of Almighty Voice: Resistance and Reconciliation* (Markham, ON: Fifth House, 2020).
[6] Supt. Geo. B. Moffatt to the Commissioner, N.W.M. Police, March 13, 1896 (Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Record Group18-Volume1337-File226-1895).
[7] Assistant Commissioner [John H. McIllree] to the Comptroller and Commissioner, October 31,1895 (LAC RG18-V10039-F24611 "Colin Campbell Colebrook").
[8] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1895*, 116; Supt. Geo. B. Moffatt to Assistant Commissioner J.H. McIllree, October 30,1895 (LAC RG18-V10039-F24611 "Colin Campbell Colebrook").
[9] Undated Letter Postmarked Batoche, N.W.T to the Honourable the Minister of Justice Ottawa (LAC RG18-V138-F395-97); Letter to T.O. Davis, Esq., M.P., June 11, 1897 (LAC RG18-V138-F395-97).

guide into the Minichinas Hills in pursuit. The trio of fugitives ambushed them from a patch from high ground, shooting Allan through the arm and wounding Sergeant Percy J. Raven in the thigh.[10] Learning of the ambush, Prince Albert Superintendent Severe Gagnon ordered additional police and deputized civilian volunteers to surround the bluff to ensure Almighty Voice did get away again. But just before Gagnon's arrival, Corporal Charles H.S. Hockin – fearing the fugitives would escape under cover of darkness – ordered a charge up the bluff and through thick brush. It was a foolhardy maneuver, leading to "very disastrous results": the deaths of Hockin, Constable John R. Kerr, and a civilian named Ernest Grundy, the postmaster at Duck Lake.[11] Gagnon's men reinforced the perimeter and waited for the arrival of Assistant Commissioner J.H. McIllree from Regina, accompanied by twenty-four policemen and a nine-pounder field gun. McIllree arrived late in the evening of October 30; during the night, the two sides exchanged small arms fire and the police lobbed "a few" shells from a seven-pounder gun – brought in from Prince Albert – into Almighty Voice's camp. The following morning both artillery pieces bombarded it "for some time," and the gunfire from Almighty Voice and his compatriots fell silent. The police stormed the bluff again and found the bodies of all three Indigenous men. Almighty Voice and Little Saulteaux had been killed by shrapnel from the shells that had exploded over the bluff, while Dublin had been shot through the forehead "by a stray bullet."[12]

The story of Charcoal (or Si'k-okskitsis; translated literally as Black Wood Ashes) or Bad Young Man is analogous to that of Almighty Voice in that it sparked a massive police response and subsequent manhunt. However, it has key differences: Charcoal's initial crime was serious, the NWMP apprehended him relatively quickly, and he was taken alive. Charcoal's saga began in early October 1896, when he shot a fellow Kainai, Medicine Pipe Stem, through the eye and left him dying in a cowshed.[13] The younger man, a so-called Lothario, had been having an affair with one of Charcoal's wives – Pretty Wolverine Woman – who was also a distant relation, which rendered the matter more distasteful to her husband. Charcoal warned him to desist, but when Charcoal caught the lovers during an act of sexual congress, it was too much for him to

[10] Inspector John B, Allan to Supt. S. Gagnon, Commanding F Division N.W.M. Police, July 27, 1897 (LAC RG18-V124-F373-97).
[11] Canada, *Report of the NWMP*, *1897*, 123; "Charles Horne Stirling Hockin," N.D. (LAC RG18-V10045-F36020 "Charles Horne Stirling Hockin).
[12] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1897*, 2, 101, 123-124.
[13] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to Mr. [Fred] White, October 29, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96).

bear.[14] The police recovered Medicine Pipe Stem's body on October 13 and on that same night somebody shot and severely wounded Edward McNeil – one of the reserve farm instructors – as he sat in a chair in his home. Charcoal admitted to Little Pine – of The Last Real War Party fame – that he had committed both crimes and intended to kill both Indian Agent James Wilson and Head Chief Red Crow (Mékaisto).[15] Charcoal's actions are attributable to the custom of *ishohtoi-im'ohk'si-ow* or "throwing his life away." Hugh Dempsey explains that during the pre-reserve days, when Niitsitapi men knew that they were going to die (or did not see much point in living), rather than passively accept their fate they went off to war and openly attacked some enemy's camp in the hopes that he would take them with him, thus enhancing his prestige in the afterlife.[16] The NWMP had always told the Kainai that the penalty for murder was death, so Charcoal believed his life was forfeit, having no legal understanding of extenuating circumstances under Canadian law.[17] Not intending to die until he killed someone with high status, Charcoal fled the reserve with his family in tow. Little Pine informed Indian Agent James Wilson of Charcoal's crimes, who told Superintendent Sam Steele. Steele at once sent every available man to hunt down the fugitive. Within days, Inspector W.D. Jarvis and his party of twenty-two men found Charcoal's tipi deep in the brush near the head of the Belly River. When they attempted to surround it, Charcoal burst out and started firing, grazing Jarvis and allowing Charcoal to escape.[18] Afterward, Charcoal seemed to be everywhere at once: breaking into settler's houses, stealing horses, and allegedly inflicting a flesh wound on Corporal William Armer of the Lee's Creek detachment (Kainai oral history maintains that it was Charcoal's brother "Knife" who actually shot Armer).[19] On November 10, witnesses saw Charcoal near the

[14] "The Indian Version of the Charcoal Murder Case," Joseph Beebe (or Red Tail Feathers) (Glenbow Museum and Archives (Glenbow) M6061); Mike Mountain Horse, *My People the Bloods*, Hugh A. Dempsey, ed. (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1979), 123-123; Adolf Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People: A Division of the Blackfoot Confederacy* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1977), 279.

[15] "Memo:" Comptroller Fred White, November 27, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2); Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, November 3, 1896(LAC RG18-V125-F591-1896, Pt. 1 & 2); "Running Amuck: Murder and Attempted Murder on the Blood Reserve; The Murderer Still at Large," *Macleod Gazette*, October 16, 1896.

[16] Hugh A. Dempsey, *The Amazing Death of Calf-Shirt and Other Blackfoot Stories* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1994), 191-192.

[17] Hugh A. Dempsey, *Charcoal's World* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 1-2, 13-14; Mountain Horse, *My People*, 199.

[18] Telegram, G.E. Sanders to Commissioner, Regina, October 16, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96); G.E. Sanders to the Commissioner, Regina , October 18, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96); "Memo:" Comptroller Fred White, November 27, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2).

[19] "The Indian Version of the Charcoal Murder Case," Joseph Beebe (or Red Tail Feathers) (Glenbow M6061).

Piikani (Peigan) reserve. Sergeant William B. Wilde and party immediately set out to apprehend him. Wilde caught up to Charcoal later that day – well in advance of the rest of his men – and tried to force him to surrender. Charcoal shot him off his horse, wheeled around, shot Wilde again, and then took the sergeant's fresher mount before escaping.[20] A couple of days later, police captured Charcoal at the home of his brother Left Hand, whose entire family had been arrested for allegedly aiding the fugitive. Wilson and Steele had promised Left Hand that if he worked with the police to capture his brother, his wife and son would be freed.[21] Taken alive, Charcoal was tried on charges of killing Medicine Pipe Stem and Sergeant Wilde. Convicted of Wilde's murder on January 20, 1897, the court sentenced him to hang on March 16. On the day of the execution, Charcoal – severely ill with tuberculosis – could not walk to the scaffold and had to be seated on a chair, noose around his neck, while he awaited the dropping of the trap door.[22]

Before the 1970s, authors wrote about Charcoal and Almighty Voice in terms of interesting historical vignettes meant to illustrate the eccentricity and sometimes "savagery" of the Indigenous condition or to illustrate the diligence, bravery, and heroism of the NWMP. More scholarly writers see a greater historical significance in these events, such as protest and resistance against increasingly draconian Indian Department policies or cross-cultural misunderstandings that did not have to happen the way that they did.[23] This chapter argues these incidents helped cultivate particular police cultures in Treaty 6 versus Treaty 7 territories. In turn, these cultures either heightened or lowered the probability of future deadly encounters between Indigenous peoples and the NWMP. In the wake of the Charcoal incident, police officials in the Macleod and Lethbridge districts became more convinced that the Indian Scout System was useful and needed to be maintained. The NWMP came away from it secure in the knowledge that Niitsitapi scouts were valuable partners and that the Niitsitapi community would support police endeavours to apprehend fugitives, even when they were Indigenous individuals

[20] Insp. A. Ross Cuthbert to the Officer Commanding Macleod District, November 11, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F591-1896, Pt. 1 & 2).
[21] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, November 4, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562).
[22] G.E. Sanders (for Supt. S.B. Steele) to the Commissioner N.W. Mounted Police, March 16, 1897 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96).
[23] See William Beahen and Sam Horrall, *Red Coats on the Prairies: The North-West Mounted Police, 1886-1900* (Regina: Centax Books, 1998), 70-74, 84-85; Dempsey, *Amazing Death of Calf Shirt*, 186, 200-204, 208; and Dempsey, *Charcoal's World*, viii.

who had committed even the most serious crimes. In contrast, police officials in Treaty 6 districts had the opposite impression, aside from a handful of First Nations or Métis men of questionable talent looking for financial remuneration, the police could expect little assistance from Nehiyaw (Cree), Nakoda (Assiniboine), and Anishinaabe communities. They were more likely to provide material aid to fugitives and conceal them. The distrust had a disastrous effect on police-community relations and put Indigenous individuals in a dangerous predicament when confronted by armed policemen. To be clear, the NWMP did not have a widespread brutality problem when policing Indigenous communities; police shootings were rare. Most arrests were routine, and most suspected lawbreakers accepted arrest stoically. However, when suspects did flee from the police or escaped custody, the chance of serious injury or death increased substantially. In the years following the Almighty Voice affair, two Indigenous men who had also initially committed minor, nonviolent offences – Black Hand and Queeweezance – were shot in the back by police after escaping custody. Both took place in the Prince Albert District, where the Almighty Voice incident had occurred. Police officials justified the shootings in terms of preventing "another Almighty Voice" scenario. In the same period, Niitsitapi individuals were taken into custody peacefully on a routine basis, including Mike Running Wolf, a Siksika man who killed a NWMP constable in 1912. When Running Wolf informed his friends and relatives that he had committed the murder and intended to flee, they seized him and took him to the Gleichen detachment. The swift action reinforced the police conviction that the Niitsitapi could be relied on to apprehend wrong-doers who committed even the most serious crimes. Whether Indigenous communities were willing to cooperate with the NWMP during highly stressful times – like the Charcoal and Almighty Voice manhunts – spawned disparate police cultures in Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 territories; these cultures had profound impacts – ones of life and death – on Indigenous individuals.

The hunt for Almighty Voice began in earnest after he fled towards Fort a la Corne, a task that the Prince Albert District was woefully underprepared for. Unlike the Macleod and Lethbridge districts, there was a lack of police infrastructure in terms of permanent posts capable of maintaining overlapping surveillance over reserves. It also had a smaller pool of police manpower. In late-October 1895, Prince Albert had four permanent posts: Prince Albert (the headquarters), Batoche, Duck Lake, and Saskatoon, and five temporary fire posts at Flett's Springs, Kinistino, McKenzie's Crossing, Snake Plains (near the Mistawasis Reserve), and

Willoughby (see Figure 7.1). The purpose of fire posts – usually monitored by one constable – was to look out for prairie fires and marshal neighbourhood settlers to fight them. The police constantly monitored only two reserves – both intimately related to the events of the 1885 Resistance – Beardy and One Arrow. Almighty Voice had been raised on the latter. Three other reserves were within twenty miles of one permanent post, two more were within thirty miles away, and five were more than thirty miles away. The reserves at Fort a la Corne – lying to the east of Prince Albert headquarters – fell into this latter category. Much of the hunt took place in the unsurveyed and unsettled region between Buffers Lake in the west and Nut Lake to the east, and between Basin Lake in the north and the Quill Lakes to the south (Figure 7.2). The area was a winter hunting ground for local Indigenous peoples and police believed Almighty Voice had family at Nut Lake and the Quill Lakes.[24] Until 1895, the reserves at Fort a la Corne and Nut Lake had little regular contact with the NWMP and did not have the same economic and intermediary ties that the Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika had with the force. Policemen were conspicuously out of place and regarded with at least some suspicion since the NWMP only appeared to arrest suspected criminals or to investigate the complaints of Indian Department officials. Prince Albert had a tinier pool of men to call upon compared to Macleod and Lethbridge since both districts traced their historical development from the desire to keep close surveillance over the Kainai. The strength of the Prince Albert District hovered around sixty men during the manhunt.[25] About a third was on permanent detachment duty, leaving forty men at district headquarters. Considering activities like prisoner detail, guard duty, routine patrols, holding men in reserve for emergencies, and administrative work, fewer men were available to hunt Almighty Voice. In contrast, the Macleod and Lethbridge districts had a total combined manpower of 208 enlisted men and officers, possessing a reserve of 105 policemen.[26] The NWMP in the Macleod District heavily surveilled the Kainai reserve and western cattle ranges (Figure 7.3). The police in Prince Albert direly needed community assistance to compensate for the district's deficiencies, but they had not cultivated the relationship necessary to attain it. They were remote from the many of the district's reserves and had lost the services of their only Indian

[24] Canada, *Report of the NWMP*, 1895, 116.
[25] Christopher Marsh, "North-West Mounted Police Distribution Statistics by Post," Tabs 1895AC & 1896AC (Spreadsheet in author's possession).
[26] Marsh, "NWMP Statistics by Posts," Tabs 1895AC & 1896AC.

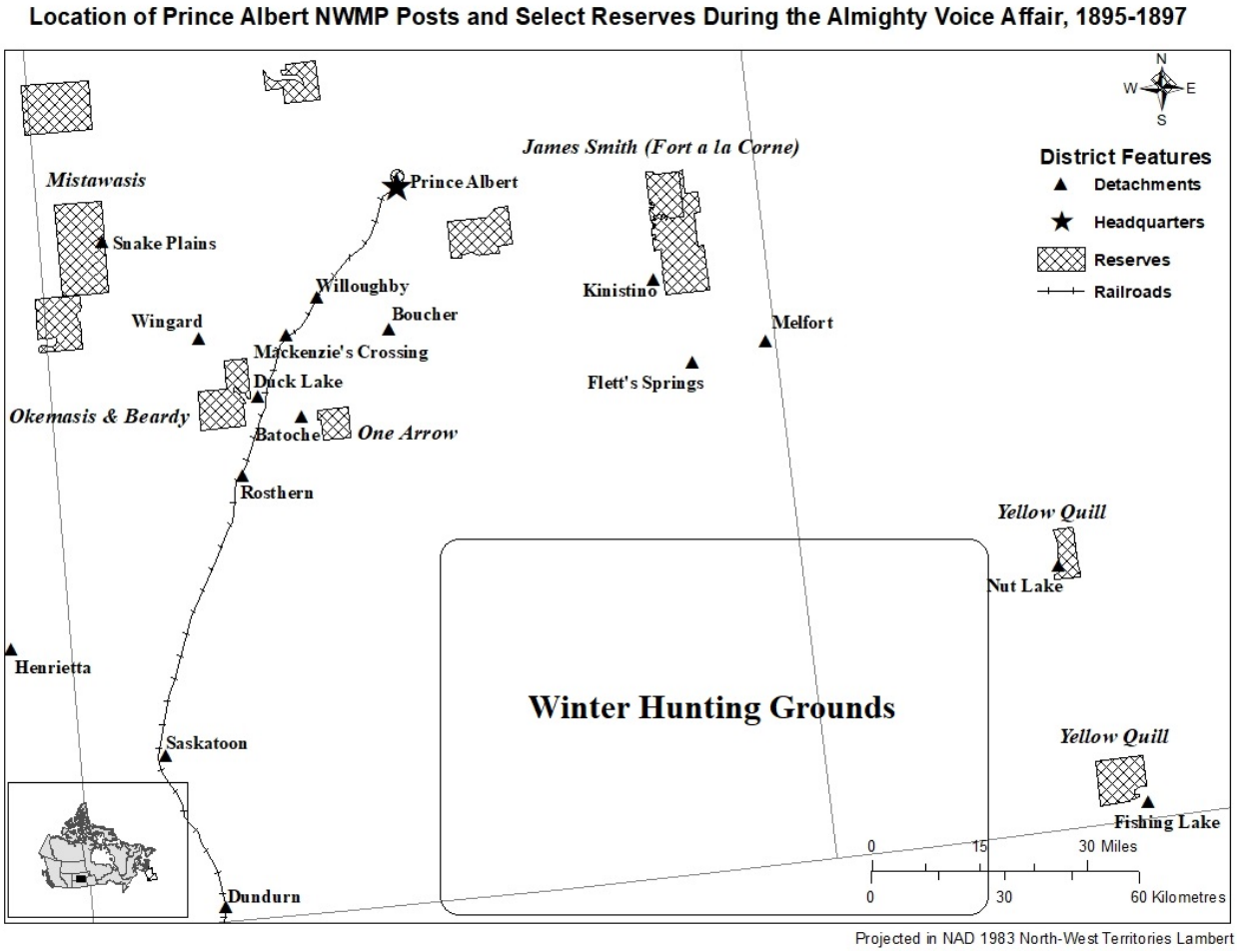

Figure 7.1: Important North-West Mounted Police Posts and First Nations Reserves During the Hunt for Almighty Voice.

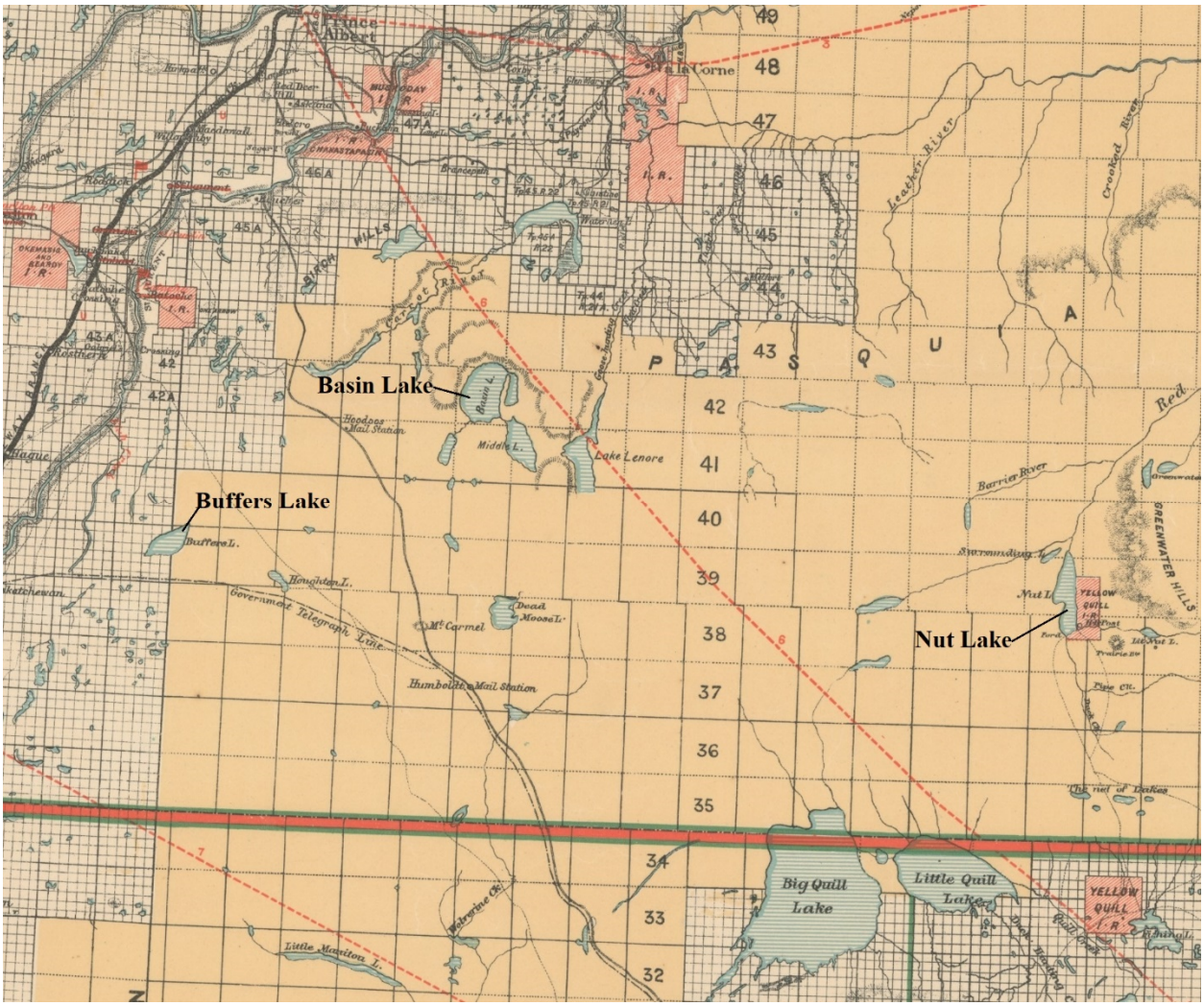

Figure 7.2: Important Geographical Features During the Almighty Voice Hunt. Source: Excerpt of *General Map of the North-West Territories and the Province of Manitoba, Revised and Corrected to August 31, 1894*, Part 2 (Peel County Archive, Map 464)

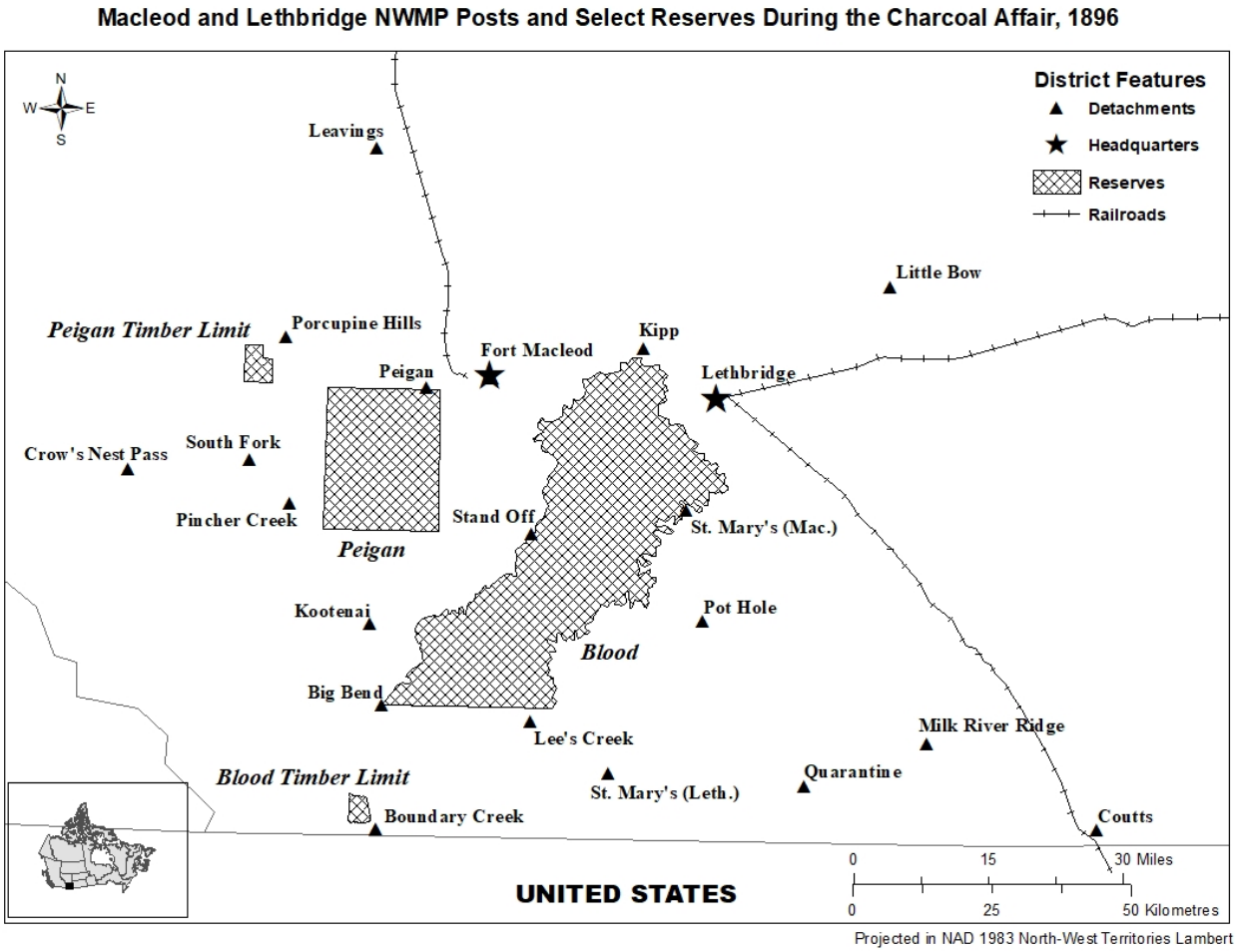

Figure 7.3: North-West Mounted Police Posts in the Macleod and Lethbridge Districts for Comparison Purposes. The NWMP had a more developed network of surveillance over the Kainai compared to Indigenous peoples in the Prince Albert District.

Scout – John Little Crow – in April 1891, when he was terminated for wanting to visit his sister in the United States after being continuously employed for more than three years.[27]

Inspector John Allan tracked Almighty Voice to Fort a la Corne, arriving in early November 1895. He could find no trace of the fugitive, which he blamed on the local Nehiyaw and Anishinaabe. Allan alleged that "some" of the hunting parties away from the reserve were

[27] Superintendent John Cotton to the Commissioner, April 19, 1891 (LAC RG18-V1219-F229-1891); Christopher Marsh, "North-West Mounted Police and Indian Department Scouts" (Database in author's possession).

aiding Almighty Voice but gave no corroborating details on how. He noted the ruggedness of the surrounding country and declared that unless the sympathizers were reined in, "he [Almighty Voice] could hide for all time in the face of 100 men in pursuit."[28] Allan tried to remedy this untenable situation by forcing the hunting parties to return to the agency until the fugitive was captured. Local farming instructor John H. Gordon told Allan that he did not have to authority to make them return or feed them once they did. Undaunted, Allan "decided to act with firmness and caution," sending out two small police parties to round up the hunters. Once gathered around Conrad's house, Allan warned them not to leave during the night or in any way aid Almighty Voice.[29] Impinging on the hunters' mobility and their ability to provide food for their families likely did little to inspire goodwill or a desire to cooperate with police efforts.

Allan perceived the Indigenous community at the One Arrow reserve in the same light as the hunters at Fort a la Corne. He believed that aside from his guide Francois Dumont – who had returned to the vicinity of the reserve to be with his family – and one unidentified informant, the rest of the community would conspire to assist Almighty Voice. Allan had a palpable distaste for them, writing, "One Arrow's reserve is made up of a d—n (sic) bad lot of Indians." He pointed out that two brothers of Wandering Spirit (or Kapapamahchakwew) – a Nehiyaw war leader implicated as the architect of the Frog Lake murders who was subsequently executed in Battleford in November 1885 – lived on the reserve. Allan considered Wandering Spirit "one of the worst Indians in the Territories" and, to him, his brothers were irrevocably stained by their kin ties.[30] While Superintendent Moffatt did not echo Allan's blatantly bigoted opinion of the One Arrow community, he did share his officer's view that assistance apprehending Almighty Voice was not likely to be forthcoming. Moffat wrote Assistant Commissioner McIllree saying, "I am not at all sanguine of catching the Indian, the difficulties both on account of his having sympathizers, and from the nature of the country, being so great."[31] Moffatt maintained the fugitive would return to the reserve at some point, and when he did, his friends would help him.

[28] John B. Allan to Supt. George. B Moffatt, November 4, 1895 (LAC RG18-V10039-F24611 "Colin Campbell Colebrook").
[29] John B. Allan to Supt. George. B Moffatt, November 4, 1895 (LAC RG18-V10039-F24611 "Colin Campbell Colebrook").
[30] John B. Allan to Supt. George. B Moffatt, November 4, 1895 (LAC RG18-V10039-F24611 "Colin Campbell Colebrook").
[31] Supt. Geo. B. Moffatt to Assistant Commissioner [J.H. McIllree], November 10, 1895 (LAC RG18-V10039-F24611 "Colin Campbell Colebrook").

Moffatt promised to keep on watch over the reserve, but there were few pairs of eyes he could rely on.

One pair belonged to Louis Marion, the reserve farm instructor. When Almighty Voice's mother left the reserve on a hunting trip in early November, Marion reported it to the local NWMP detachment. Consequently, a corporal, a constable, and a recently hired Métis guide named Ambrose Champagne went into the Minichinas Hills to see if she was rendezvousing with her son.[32] Throughout the year-and-a-half-long hunt, monitoring Almighty Voice's family – and more generally, One Arrow residents who left the reserve – was the Prince Albert NWMP's main strategy to apprehend him. Officers in the district were not confident that they could get direct community assistance, so they had to wait for the local Nehiyaw and Anishinaabe to lead them to the fugitive inadvertently.

Commissioner Herchmer believed it was essential for the police to maintain a presence in the extensive hunting grounds that sprawled across the southeastern portion of the district to have a chance of capturing Almighty Voice. He disagreed with Moffatt that it was pointless to "invade the hunting grounds of the Indians" since the Nehiyaw and Anishinaabe would be on the alert for interlopers.[33] To Herchmer, it would have been negligent that the NWMP did not actively try to discover Almighty Voice's whereabouts. At the very least, the police needed to be in the region to hear news from Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and independent fur traders. Any information that found its way to Prince Albert would have been too old to act on, essentially worthless. Herchmer wanted new police infrastructure erected in the form of two new detachments: one near Melfort and another at Nut Lake.[34] Melfort was sixty miles to the southeast of Prince Albert and on the northern precipice of the hunting grounds. Nut Lake – the site of an HBC trading post – was sixty-five miles to the southeast of Melfort. The Prince Albert District was so strained in terms of manpower, Herchmer assigned responsibility for the Nut Lake detachment to the Regina District. Herchmer ordered Moffatt to assign a police party to Melfort; equip it with tents, stove, and snowshoes; patrol the hunting grounds; and communicate with the Nut Lake detachment.[35] While Herchmer did what he thought was most effective to apprehend Almighty Voice, it did not

[32] Sgt. N. Jeffrey to the Officer Commanding 'F' Division Prince Albert, November 8, 1895 (LAC RG18-V10039-F24611 "Colin Campbell Colebrook").
[33] Supt. Geo. B. Moffatt to the Commissioner N.W.M.P Regina, December 4, 1895 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[34] "Memo to Supt. Moffatt," Commissioner L.W. Herchmer, December 9, 1895 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[35] "Memo to Supt. Moffatt," Commissioner L.W. Herchmer, December 9, 1895 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895); Supt. Geo. B. Moffatt to the Commissioner N.W.M.P., December 29, 1895 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

require any cultivation of community ties with Indigenous communities. The police relied mostly on their own organizational resources and HBC communication networks, which in the end, proved ineffective.

During the manhunt, the NWMP reacted to numerous rumours concerning Almighty Voice's whereabouts, causing them to race from one section of the district to another in vain attempts to capture him. For example, when Mr. Traill – an ex-HBC employee – returned from a hunting trip on December 11, 1895, he reported to Superintendent Moffatt that he had heard that the wanted man was in the vicinity of the Birch Hills near Waterhen Lake. Even though Moffatt knew that Traill did not have first-hand information, he considered that information "too important to allow to pass."[36] Moffatt dispatched Inspector Allan, a constable, and the post interpreter to investigate, but they found no trace of the suspect. Less than a week later, with arrangements for the detachment at Melfort complete, Allan left the Prince Albert barracks on the morning of December 20. Deciding he needed to secure a guide and interpreter – and to hear news from an HBC trader named Ballendine who had recently returned from the hunting grounds to the south – Allan made for Fort a la Corne first. When he arrived, Farm Instructor Gordon told him about rumours claiming Almighty Voice was with a band led by La Paussier (or Dusty) at "Big Lake" twenty-five miles to the west. Allan wanted to send out a party immediately to surprise the camp but could not find a guide to take him. La Paussier arrived at Fort a la Corne on Christmas Day and expressed annoyance when asked about Almighty Voice, stating that he had already been warned about assisting him.[37] Had Allan found a guide right away, he would have led his party on a pointless jaunt across some very rough country in freezing weather.

That winter, the police parties at Melfort and Nut Lake tramped through the snow, anxiously straining for any news of Almighty Voice. At Nut Lake, the NWMP tried to keep up the façade that they were fur traders and accompanied the HBC men on their trading rounds. Corporal G.E. Pulham remained at the HBC post, listening to incoming news. He learned that the suspect's grandfather, brother, and nephew were purportedly hunting near the post. The nephew – The Cloud that Follows – seemed to be watching the strange men at the fort intently and Pulham believed he was passing information on to his relatives. At Pulham's bequest, two men

[36] Supt. Geo. B Moffatt to the [NWMP] Commissioner, December 13, 1895 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[37] Supt. Geo. B. Moffatt to the Commissioner N.W.M.P., December 22, 1895 (LAC RG18-V1337-F266-1895); Inspector John B. Allan to Supt. G.B. Moffatt, December 22, 1895 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

connected to the HBC, Mr. M. Fisher and Mr. D. Isbister, worked at getting information about Almighty Voice. Pulham considered bribing The Cloud that Follows to turn on his relative, noting that "he is very hard up at present and his children are nearly starving."[38]

In mid-January 1896, police from Prince Albert, Duck Lake, and Batoche did a house-to-house search of the One Arrow reserve after receiving information from Farm Instructor Marion that Almighty Voice was there for a dance. Allan – momentarily recalled to the district headquarters to deal with logistical issues– set out with two policemen and the interpreter in anticipation of meeting the two detachments' men near the reserve on the evening of January 11. After speaking with Marion, the police headed towards One Arrow in sleighs driven by teamsters. The policemen were huddled at the bottom of the sleighs to avoid arousing suspicion. After arriving at Marion's quarters, Allan decided that to wait until the dance ended and search the houses just before daybreak. There were many Métis guests on the reserve and the police feared their approach would be noticed while the dance was still in "full swing." Allan reasoned that "as the dance had been kept up for two nights the Indians would not be so keen or alert, and the dogs would be less troublesome."[39] After the dance ended at 1:30 AM, the police divided into two parties and began their search of every dwelling, which was likely not appreciated by the exhausted dancers. But no sign of Almighty Voice was found. Worse, the inspector noted that sympathy for Almighty Voice seemed to be rising – even among the Métis. Rumours now swirled that he had been originally arrested on a false report and shooting Colebrook was an act of self-defence.[40]

Allan's men continued their surveillance from Melfort and another police party from Prince Albert went to scour the northwestern part of the hunting grounds near Basin Lake and Lake Lenore in early February. Describing the region as a "range of heavily timbered hills where 'Almighty Voice' could be hidden without fear of approach from any white man, and known to but very few half breeds," Allan knew that he needed to find an experienced guide. He succeeded

[38] Corp'l G.E. Pulham to Superintendent Perry, January 6, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895); Corpl. Geo. E. Pulham to Supt. Perry, Commanding Depot Division, March 30, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[39] Insp. John B, Allan to Superintendent Moffatt, Commanding "F" Division N.W.M. Police, January 14, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[40] Insp. John B, Allan to Superintendent Moffatt, Commanding "F" Division N.W.M. Police, January 14, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

in finding William Bruce, who was a "scotch half breed."[41] Working the guide hard, Allan sent Bruce out for days at a time in snowshoes to find any trace of a hunting camp, in the hopes he would find some spoor of the fugitive. The party stayed out for more than two weeks in what was sometimes bitterly cold weather but found no trace of their quarry.

At Nut Lake, Corporal Pulham decided that waiting around for news while his men tramped through the snow was insufficient for capturing Almighty Voice. The police needed active cooperation from the Nehiyaw and Anishinaabe communities. Pulham told Superintendent A.B. Perry, "If I could get hold of an Indian, and offer him a bribe for any information leading to the arrest of the murderer, or any assistance at all, that it would be a great deal better than running all over the country."[42] In his first attempt, Pulham asked Isbister to recruit an "Indian boy" to live among Almighty Voice's relatives who were hunting near the post. Isbister did not reveal to his young charge why he had to go; he just instructed him to stay six weeks and listen. In mid-February, Isbister recalled him and "got everything out of him." The boy revealed that the Almighty's Voice's grandfather and uncle rarely spoke about him and only speculated "once or twice" that he must have gone into the Rocky Mountains northwest of Edmonton.[43] At the same time, Pulham worked to get himself an "inside man," someone who could move freely among the hunting camps and gather intelligence. The corporal thought he found one in Choggerners, who was a "brother to Wolverine Cap" and a fellow he knew "fairly well." Pulham offered Choggerners a reward to give the police material assistance that led to the arrest of Almighty Voice. Choggerners accepted, claiming that in the opening days of the manhunt the fugitive had spent some time at Wading Eagle Lake, directly east of Lake Lenore and southeast of Melfort. There Almighty Voice stayed "a few days" in the lodge of Yellow Snake Bird. Choggerners asserted that he was in the camp at the same time and although he had not actually seen the fugitive, his sister had. From Wading Eagle Lake, the suspect went south to find the camp of Pawness, an Anishinaabe hunter from the Nut Lake reserve, who Pulham described as the "worst

[41] Insp. John B. Allan to Supt. G.B. Moffatt, Commanding "F" Division, Prince Albert, February 17, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[42] Corpl. Geo. E. Pulham to Supt. Perry, Commanding Depot Division, March 30, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[43] Corpl. Geo. E. Pulham to Supt. Perry, Commanding Depot Division, March 30, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

Indian in the whole of the Band" and a self-assumed "big man."[44] Hoping that Almighty Voice might still be with him, Pulham asked Choggerners to find Pawness' camp on the southern hunting grounds. Choggerners promised to do so, but when the two met again on February 26, he had not. The informant pleaded that his wife and children had been ill, so he could not make the trip. He pledged that he would go in several days, but this fell through when his child and sister died. Speaking with Pulham again, he declared that before her death, his sister had stated Yellow Snake Bird had given Almighty Voice blankets, shoes, twine, an axe, shot, gunpowder, and a revolver. Allegedly, Almighty Voice had told the camp that he "would kill the first men that tried to kill him, Indian or White Man."[45]

Pulham tried to get Choggerners to search for Pawness again, but the informant demurred, claiming that Almighty Voice's relatives were watching him and would kill him if they discovered he was talking to the police. Still, Pulham thought Choggerners would prove useful, despite the fact he had not given him any useful information to find Almighty Voice. Pulham took the claim that Pawness had helped Almighty Voice seriously, sending his men to find the camp. In mid-March, Choggerners appeared at the Nut Lake HBC post again. Even though he had not gone out for Pawness, he reasoned that the man was "looking after the murderer" in the hills north of Humboldt. He assured the corporal that Almighty Voice would not leave the country because Pawness was providing for him. Pulham and Choggerners arranged to meet in early April to exchange intelligence after the latter met with Pawness near Nut Lake. Pulham suggested to his superior officer that Choggerners be kept on the police pay payroll, indicating Pulham's desperation to maintain inroads with the local Indigenous community. The corporal felt he had no choice, writing "this is a case of Indian catch Indian, and otherwise it will be hard to work to catch this man, unless some job like this is put up on him, and unless we can get hold of him while he is asleep or off his guard it will be a case of who shoots first."[46] Only with the aid of Indigenous peoples could Almighty Voice be taken alive and without violence.

[44] Corpl. Geo. E. Pulham to Supt. Perry, Commanding Depot Division, March 30, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[45] Corpl. Geo. E. Pulham to Supt. Perry, Commanding Depot Division, March 30, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[46] Corpl. Geo. E. Pulham to Supt. Perry, Commanding Depot Division, March 30, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

By February 1896, the public was increasingly growing frustrated with the inability of the police to capture Almighty Voice. The most pointed attack came from the *Prince Albert Advocate*, one of the town's weekly newspapers that started publishing in 1894.[47] It accused the government of making "no effort" to apprehend Sergeant Colebrook's killer. Because of the restrictions placed upon them – such as having to wear uniforms – the police were "helpless" to catch him. Wearing a bright scarlet coat "was equal to sending an advance guard to warn the culprit of their approach." The newspaper urged authorities "to shake off their lethargy and make a strenuous effort to capture the culprit," asserting that if the fugitive was not caught and made an example of, there would soon be more bloodshed. [48] It maintained that the local Indigenous community was in an "ugly mood" and certain individuals were openly boasting that "an Indian can shoot a white man and nothing is done or said by the government to bring him to justice."[49] The paper further asserted that government inaction had emboldened the worst characters who were only waiting for the advent of spring "to sally forth and avenge supposed wrongs on a few white settlers who live nearest them."[50] The *Advocate* insisted that the government offer a large reward, which would incentivize private detectives to take up the hunt. Once the government did so, the editors predicted, "inside a week or two he [Almighty Voice] will be landed behind bars, waiting his just rewards, the noose."[51] While Superintendent Moffatt agreed with the *Advocate* that offering a reward was a good idea, he gave no credence to its other assertions and insisted that everything that could be done was being done.[52] Shortly after, a bounty of $500 (approximately $15,000 today) was put out on the fugitive and wanted posters advertising that fact were sent to every police district and several American frontier towns.[53]

By mid-March 1896, the NWMP narrowed the scope of their search to the western part of the Prince Albert District. Operations from Melfort ceased when they constructed a "small shanty" in the timbered hills around Lake Lenore. Two constables and Guide Bruce used it as a

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[47] The *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, which is still published today, traces its roots to the *Prince Albert Advocate*; see "About Us," Prince Albert Daily Herald, Unknown Author, accessed November 19, 2019, https://paherald.sk.ca/about-us/.
[48] "The Indian Murderer," *Prince Albert Advocate*, February 25, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[49] "The Indian Murderer," Prince Albert Advocate, February 25, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[50] "The Indian Murderer," Prince Albert Advocate, February 25, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[51] "The Indian Murderer," *Prince Albert Advocate*, February 25, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[52] Supt. Geo. B. Moffatt to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police Regina, February 26, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[53] Comptroller Fred White to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, May 5, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895); [NWMP] Assistant Commissioner to "Officer Commanding", May 26, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

staging point, storing supplies and forage there as they scoured the hills towards Goose Hunting Creek. The country was rough, with the heavy underbrush taking a heavy toll on the men's clothes and footwear. Snowshoes were unusable. Bruce managed to locate Pawness and some other hunting bands; the former did not seem happy about the presence of the police, but Inspector Allan was hopeful that the latter groups would report the presence of Almighty Voice if he appeared.[54] In the south, the detachment at Nut Lake shut down as Corporal Pulham and his men returned to the Regina District in late March. Inspector Edward Glipin-Brown – Pulham's immediate superior – explained in his annual report that further efforts to capture Almighty Voice would only continue once the NWMP obtained some definite lead as to his whereabouts.[55] The season for tracking the fugitive was almost over; once the snow melted it would be impossible.[56] Just before this window closed though, police received information from Philip Gardipuis that he and his son had found a horse believed to be the one Almighty Voice was riding when he murdered Sergeant Colebrook. The pair had been hunting in the hills about twenty-five southeast of the One Arrow reserve and they came across the animal there, sore-backed and exhibiting other signs someone had ridden it recently. When police showed it around the reserve, witnesses verified that it was the fugitive's horse and his mother claimed it from the police. Superintendent Moffatt ordered the above men to shift their efforts to the vicinity of where the horse found.[57] They discovered no trace of the fugitive, who evaded the police for many more months.

During the spring and summer, the police could only wait for definite news of the fugitive's whereabouts and try to move quickly enough to catch him when it came. There were multiple Almighty Voice sightings, many of them contradictory. For example, while at Fort Benton in mid-May to give evidence in a cattle rustling case, Corporal T.A. Dickson heard rumours that the suspect was in Montana. Upon further investigation, Dickson learned at Great Falls that Almighty Voice was residing near the "Horse Plains" close to Kalispell – more than

[54] Inpst. John Allan to Supt. G.B. Moffatt, March 15, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[55] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 15 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1896* (Ottawa, 1897), 86.
[56] Supt. G.B. Moffatt to the Commissioner Regina, March 29, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895); Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 122.
[57] Farmer Louis Marion to R.S. McKenzie, Esq. March 23, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1597); Inspector John Allan to Supt. G.B. Moffatt, March 25, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895); Supt. G.B. Moffatt to the Commissioner Regina, March 29, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

200 miles over the mountains to the west – and had been since the previous fall. Dickson urged the sheriff of Flathead County to take measures to apprehend him.[58] At the same time, Indian Agent A. Macdonald reported that Almighty Voice was among relatives in Manitoba. A man named Charles McDougall of Qu'Appelle Station told Macdonald he heard from some Anishinaabe that Almighty Voice had arrived in early spring in a destitute condition, broke into an HBC store, and was now looking to steal a horse so he could flee to the United States.[59] Still another report said that Almighty Voice had been living with Pawness near Lake Lenore in mid-May, then the pair decided to head north to seek refuge among the Swampy Cree.[60] Further investigation yielded nothing and reports of the phantasmal figure occasionally reached the ears of the police. In late-August, for instance, Farm Instructor Marion thought he had spotted Almighty Voice on the One Arrow reserve. It turned out to be his uncle, his face painted in a manner favoured by the fugitive.[61] Believing that Almighty Voice was harboured by his father John Sounding Sky, in mid-October Inspector James Wilson searched the One Arrow reserve again and found nothing.[62] After a rumour surfaced that Almighty Voice was living near Turtle Lake - a heavily forested area north of Fort Battleford – Sergeant Saul Martin, a constable, and a Métis interpreter named Ballendine went to investigate. The local Indigenous community insisted that he was not there and speculated that he was far to the south, hunting in the mountains.[63]

The NWMP clung to the hope that Almighty Voice's relatives, friends, and acquaintances might unwittingly lead them to the fugitive's sanctuary. Corporal William J. Bowdridge said as much to Superintendent Moffatt: "Of one thing I am convinced and that is that we have not only to watch Old John but also to look after every Indian leaving the Reserve."[64] "Old John" was Almighty Voice's father, who was in jail serving a six months sentence for larceny when his son

[58] Supt. R. Burton Deane to the [NWMP} Commissioner, May 16, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895); Cpl. T.A. Dickson to Inpst. W.G. Morris, May 19, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[59] Indian Agent A. Macdonald to the Indian Commissioner Regina, May 14, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[60] Corpl. G.E. Pulham to Officer Commdg. Sub-District Regina, June 21, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895); Corporal G.E. Pulham to Officer Commanding Sub-District Regina, September 3, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[61] Indian Agent R.S. McKenzie to the Indian Commissioner Regina, August 22, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[62] Inspt. James Wilson to the Officer Commdg. N.W.M. Police Prince Albert, October 18, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[63] Sgt. Saul Martin to the Officer Comdg. N.W.M.P. Battleford, November 7, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[64] W.J. Bowdridge to the Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Prince Albert, October 25, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

escaped custody.[65] When John was set free on April 19, 1896, and the police kept a "close watch" on him, confident that he would lead them to his son.[66] In early June Farm Instructor Marion told Inspector Wilson that John was searching for his son and intended on going to the Battleford District to speak the Nehiyaw there who had recently been expelled from the United States, to see if they knew of his whereabouts.[67] When John and his brother left for Battleford later that summer, Indian Agent R.S. McKenzie informed Superintendent Moffatt, who wired police authorities in the neighbouring district to watch the pair carefully.[68] In late-October. a Prince Albert police party swept the country between the One Arrow reserve and Basin Lake. After several days, they encountered Peu Brais, or Painted Nose, Almighty Voice's uncle, who told them that "Old John" was camping in the area as well. Bowdridge ordered part of his party to watch Peu Brais, while others tracked John. Late the next day, their Métis guide Louis "Bruno" Venne found the camp. A day after, Bowdridge kept watch over it until John came in with his wife and three children. She was driving a cart full of roots and he was carrying a digging spade. Bowdridge told Venne to search the tipis while he spoke to John, who "didn't seem much pleased" about the visit. When John asked why Bowdridge was there, the corporal told him he was looking for lost horses. Bowdridge and Venne lingered for about an hour before leaving, giving orders to two constables who had hung back to keep a constant watch, which lasted several days.[69] John was likely displeased because of Bowdridge's harassment, which included forcing his presence on John and his family after a hard day's work, then ordering a subordinate to rummage through their possessions without probable cause. Bowdridge routinely harassed the One Arrow community. For example, a month earlier, the corporal had come upon a group of Indigenous women driving two carts towards the reserve. Bowdridge stopped them and searched the carts "to see what they had in them." Finding nothing but berries, Bowdridge moved on. When one of the women asked why he had stopped them, he told them that he

[65] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1895*, 233.
[66] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 123.
[67] Inspector Jas. O. Wilson to the Officer Commanding Prince Albert, June 3, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1597). After the North-West Resistance of 1885, hundreds of Nehiyaw men, women, and children fled to the United States. In 1896, some four hundred of them were escorted by the American army to the Canadian-American border and handed off to members of the NWMP. The police escorted the majority (a small number managed to escape under the cover of darkness) to their reserves, where they enumerated by the Indian Department; see Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 14.
[68] Indian Agent R.S. McKenzie to the Indian Commissioner Regina, August 22, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895)
[69] W.J. Bowdridge to the Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Prince Albert, October 25, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).

suspected them of starting a prairie fire. Afterward, Bowdridge concluded that the women likely knew nothing about Almighty Voice as "there was too many women together, and some of them were not relations."[70]

In the Regina District, Corporal Pulham continued his search for a reliable Indigenous informant. In October, the corporal arranged with a man named Pawnesswhoquawnep to find Almighty Voice, hunt with him, and then report his findings to a Métis man named La Liberty at Nut Lake.[71] Like Choggerners, Pawnesswhoquawnep failed to give the police any solid lead about Almighty Voice. As winter descended, Superintendent Moffatt sent out winter parties in the hopes the suspect could be tracked with the falling of the snow. To this end, Moffatt hired another Métis guide and stationed two parties in the country east of the One Arrow reserve.[72] As of early December, no sign of Almighty Voice had been found and Moffatt expressed doubt that the police had ever been on his trail during the past year.[73] Inspector James Wilson concurred, reporting at the end of 1896 that the police had "been unable to find the slightest trace of this man."[74] This state of affairs continued until the Venne brothers came upon Almighty Voice and his compatriots in late-May 1897, nineteen months after the manhunt began.

The Almighty Voice incident taught the Prince Albert District NWMP that Indigenous peoples on the run from the police were extremely dangerous – four Euro-Canadians had been killed and several others severely injured. More worryingly, the police could expect little assistance from local Indigenous communities in apprehending such fugitives. Indeed, Commissioner Herchmer told Parliament in late-1896 that "although every effort has been made to get information re: this criminal, since the day he shot Sergeant Colebrook in 1895, nothing has been heard of him, and neither Indians nor half-breeds appear to know anything about him."[75] Moffatt seconded this sentiment, reporting that "It is absolutely impossible to get any information from any of the Indians. Whether this is because they know nothing or because they

[70] Corpl. H.J. Bowdridge to the Officer Commanding N.W.M. Police Duck Lake, September 19, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[71] Corporal G.E. Pulham to Officer Commanding Sub-District Regina, September 3, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895).
[72] Supt. Geo. B. Moffatt to the Commissioner N.W.M.P., October 21, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1337-F226-1895); *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 123 & 135.
[73] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 123.
[74] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 134-135.
[75] Canada, *Report of the NWMP*, 1896, 1.

are too loyal to one of their race to tell, I cannot say."[76] Inspector Wilson reported similarly, writing, "Every effort has been made to obtain any information from the half-breeds and Indians, but they one and all say they know nothing of the Indian… I have tried in every conceivable manner to learn something of him, but so far without success."[77] While Wilson stated he was inclined to believe the community, he was still evidently distrustful given he had ordered the One Arrow reserve to be strictly watched and searched it "at all hours of the day and night."[78] The police were partly the authors of their own misfortune by imposing themselves on the Indigenous community unexpectedly and persistently, interfering with vital economic activities such as hunting and gathering, executing constant searches of homes, and harassing community members when they left the reserve. The Prince Albert NMWP utilized the same ineffectual tactics that the Macleod and Calgary districts pursued in their vain attempts to apprehend Deerfoot, The Dog, Big Rib, and the "Last Real War Party" raiders. These tactics had systematically annoyed and alienated the Kainai and Siksika communities, leading to overt and covert resistance to police efforts.

The last lesson that the police learned was that the failure to capture the escaped fugitives quickly inspired a rebellious spirit among Indigenous peoples, especially among the young men. In the wake of Almighty Voice's death, Superintendent Cotton reported that the fugitive was the topic of many conversations and his prolonged freedom inspired a "spirit of unrest" among the Nehiyaw, Nakoda, and Anishinaabe. Cotton stated it was most evident among the young men, who had "erroneously exaggerated ideas of their own power" and were possessed by a "love of notoriety."[79] Cotton observed that a lack of economic opportunity and Indian Department food aid caused want that contributed to the uneasy tension palpable on the reserves. To prevent a repeat of the 1885 Resistance and the Indian Wars that had plagued the United States, the manpower of the NWMP needed to be maintained.[80] Commissioner Herchmer justified the brutal fashion in which the police concluded the Almighty Voice affair by likening it to suppressing a nascent revolt. In reporting to Parliament, Herchmer wrote, "I knew that if he escaped after killing three men, and wounding three others, he would be joined by all reprobate Indians in the

[76] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 123.
[77] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 135.
[78] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1896*, 135.
[79] Supt. J. Cotton to the Commissioner N.W.M.P., June 14, 1897 (LAC RG18-V138-F399-97).
[80] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1897*, 130.

district, and owing to the formation of the country could do immense damage to settlers before we could again corner him… if we had not had a sufficient force to surround him in the bluff, and he had escaped."[81] Overall, the police firmly believed that future situations had to be concluded decisively to reduce the risk to their men and maintain settler confidence.

In the Macleod and Lethbridge districts, the NWMP had a much different experience when Charcoal turned to flight in early-October 1896. It only took a month to capture him, which is attributable to existing police infrastructure and manpower, as well as the willingness of Niitsitapi communities to cooperate. A network of twenty-three posts existed, many of them ringing the Kainai and Piikani reserves and their timber limits (additional allocations of land made by the government to supply wood needed for building houses and other infrastructure, which compensated for a lack of such resources on the reserves themselves) in the Porcupine Hills and near Boundary Creek (see Figure 7-3). The two districts combined employed at least eight Indian Scouts at the beginning of the manhunt and they hired three more during its course. These scouts were indispensable in carrying out the NWMP's strategy for capturing Charcoal: driving him from point to point until he was exhausted and forced to seek aid from relatives on the reserve.[82] Though the police and Euro-Canadian civilians provided much of the manpower for the chase – though Niitsitapi men assisted here too – it was the scouts who tracked him and discovered his sanctuaries. Green Grass – the forty-something Kainai scout stationed at the Big Bend detachment – was remarkable in this regard. When Charcoal and his family fled the reserve, they headed to the hilly Kainai timber limit to the south, near the head of the Belly River. Heading five miles in, Charcoal set up his lodge in a valley that contained acres of dense pine and thick underbrush that in some places piled up to a six-foot height.[83] Charcoal should have been well-hidden, but the NWMP discovered his camp in mere days. Police records do not reveal how it was found, but Kainai oral history and Indian Department records assert that it was

[81] Canada, *Report of the NWMP, 1897*, 2.

[82] In a letter to Commissioner Herchmer where Steele justifies the length of time it took to capture Charcoal, he states that he would have preferred not to have taken Charcoal by strategy; that is, releasing Left Hand and his family in exchange for betraying Charcoal. Steele wanted all credit to go to the police and wanted to apprehend him through exhausting the fugitive by driving him all over the country. However, because of reductions to NWMP manpower (256 combined men for the Macleod and Lethbridge in 1895 versus 210 men a year later) Steele thought this strategy untenable. See Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police Regina, November 19, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2) and "North-West Mounted Police Distribution Statistics by Posts," Tabs 1895AC & 1896AC.

[83] "Memo:" Comptroller Fred White, November 27, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2).

because of the efforts of the scouts. One morning, "Chief Scout" Green Grass spotted a campfire from a high mountain, allowing for the camp's quick discovery.[84] The force of twenty-two policemen and scouts encircled it in the hopes they could catch Charcoal by surprise. However, during their approach, somebody stepped on a dry branch and the fugitive emerged from the tipi, firing his weapon.[85] Green Grass was one of the first to fire back, believing Charcoal was a desperate man who meant to kill anyone who stood between him and freedom. The police fired several volleys back and then Inspector Jarvis – nearly shot through the head in the initial ambush – ordered the thick brush searched. In doing so, Green Grass discovered one of the women and Charcoal's young son. The police party then formed a skirmishing line and systematically examined the vicinity. The going was so rough that the scouts quickly wore out their moccasins and had to bind their feet with borrowed handkerchiefs.[86] Although Charcoal escaped with his two wives and his eldest son, the police seized his lodge, horses, and provisions, enough to feed him and his family for about sixty days.[87] The Niitsitapi scouts had quickly proven their usefulness to the NWMP, locating Charcoal and depriving him of food and horses. Hundreds of miles away in the Saskatchewan country, the police had not even found a trace of Almighty Voice.

While Jarvis and his men searched the thick brush at the timber limit, Steele requested that Indian Agent James Wilson send thirty Kainai men out to assist them. On October 17, Wilson met the reserve interpreter David Mills – the son of an African-American fur trade employee and a Kainai woman – and the pair canvased Kainai villages for volunteers. [88] Gathering the requisite amount of men around 5 PM that day, Wilson dispatched them to meet the police. They were put to work searching the brush along Lee's Creek up to the timber limit while others patrolled the reserve. Wilson continued to recruit Kainai men with horses, securing thirty-five more volunteers. Late in the evening, Wilson led them to the Big Bend detachment but turned back upon learning Charcoal had broken the cordon and escaped. The agent ordered

[84] "The Indian Version of the Charcoal Murder Case," Joseph Beebe (or Red Tail Feathers) (Glenbow Museum M6061); Mountain Horse, *My People*, 124; Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner Regina, October 27, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562).
[85] Memo:" Comptroller Fred White, November 27, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2).
[86] "Scout Green Grass' Statement" ca. October 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96).
[87] Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, November 3, 1896(LAC RG18-V125-F591-1896, Pt. 1 & 2).
[88] For more of Mills' story, see Hugh A. Dempsey, "Black White Man," *Alberta Historical Review* 6, no. 1 (1958): 7-11.

five of the volunteers to watch Charcoal's relatives' homes in case he showed up.[89] Meanwhile, the police found Charcoal's trail and followed it to the vicinity of the Peigan Reserve. Inspector H.S. Casey recruited at least twenty-five Piikani men – issuing them Winchester rifles and ammunition for their protection – to search the bush for the fugitive.[90] A few days later, Casey hired fifty more Piikani, agreeing to pay them fifty cents a day to search the Porcupine Hills, which had similar terrain to the Kainai timber limit. Commissioner Herchmer acknowledged that hiring the Piikani was expensive but necessary under the circumstances.[91] During one week, the police had been able to secure the services of nearly one hundred volunteers and fifty temporary employees. Those hunting Almighty Voice could have only dreamed of such cooperation from local Indigenous communities.

The Kainai searching for Charcoal in the south were dispatched to the Porcupine Hills, joining the already "large party" of policemen and Piikani there. The fugitive was well hidden, but because he had already been deprived of his provisions, Charcoal had to venture out to kill a steer on October 25. The remains were found on the North Fork of the Kootenai, allowing the police to pick up his trail again. Green Grass led the party tracking him. On Steele's request, Wilson sent four more "good Indians" to lend their assistance. Wilson praised the Kainai's willingness to help, writing to Indian Commissioner Hayter Reed, "All the Indians express a strong wish to see Charcoal arrested and have given the N.W.M. Police all the assistance in their power…Upon all occasions they have turned out either night or day and have spared neither themselves nor their horses to give us advantage."[92] Green Grass did not get lucky a second time as the Porcupine Hills were too sprawling and dense. Charcoal and his son escaped the cordon, though, and headed for the Piikani (Peigan) reserve, where they scavenged for food and supplies. On one occasion, Charcoal told the boy to wait for him while he ventured unto the reserve itself. Instead, the lad went to a nearby house and the occupant – a Piikani man named Woodman – took him to the local police detachment.[93] After an interrogation, Charcoal's son agreed to lead

[89] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner Regina, October 20, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562); Inspector H.S. Casey to the Commissioner, Regina, October 21, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96).
[90]); Inspector H.S. Casey to the Commissioner, Regina, October 21, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96).
[91] Inspector H.S. Casey to the Commissioner, Regina, October 22, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96); L.W. Herchmer to Supt. Steele Macleod, October 22, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96); L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller, October 23, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96); L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller, October 23, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1374-F212-96).
[92] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner Regina, October 27, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562).
[93] Mountain Horse, *My People*, 125-126.

the police to his father's camp, deep in the timber. Charcoal and his wives were not there. The police redoubled their efforts in the Hills, calling for five more Kainai volunteers to search the cattle country adjacent to them in the vicinity of Trout Creek.[94]

Charcoal fled to the Kainai reserve in late-October, which precipitated his eventual capture on November 12, 1896. On October 30, Bull Plume complained to Indian Agent Wilson that someone had stolen his large, cream-coloured racehorse, reputedly the fastest on the reserve. Wilson suspected that Charcoal had the assistance of his brother, Left Hand, and asked Sergeant Christopher Hilliard to arrest him, his brothers, and their families, some twenty-four people in all. Under questioning, Left Hand admitted that Charcoal had come to his home on the evening of October 29. Soon after Left Hand's interrogation, Charcoal's two wives surrendered, having escaped their husband. They claimed that Charcoal was camped close to the reserve – on the Kootenai River bottom – coming in occasionally to steal horses and get food. Wilson sent out a party of eighteen Kainai volunteers to scour the bush.[95] Steele then received word that Charcoal had tried to shoot Corporal Armer, the bullet passing through his sleeve and grazing his body.[96] Wilson had doubts that Charcoal had even been in the area and favoured the Kainai opinion that he was hiding in the brush near the Belly River. They were still searching it on November 4, with Steele issuing some of them rifles for their protection.[97] The next day, Steele released Left Hand, his wife, and his son from the Macleod guardhouse with the understanding that Left Hand "would do his utmost to get his brother." Wilson had assured him that Charcoal would get a fair trial and promised that the rest of his family – many of whom were sick – would be released once police captured the fugitive. [98] Left Hand agreed, setting the conclusion of the drama.

Scout Tail Feathers was instrumental in Charcoal's apprehension. For nearly a week, there had been no sign of the fugitive, but around noon on November 10, some Piikani came to the Pincher Creek detachment reporting that a separate party was following Charcoal's trail. Sergeant Wilde, Interpreter Charles Holloway, Tail Feathers, and a Piikani man named Swords

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[94] Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, November 3, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F591-1896, Pt. 1 & 2).
[95] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, November 4, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562).
[96] Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police, November 3, 1896(LAC RG18-V125-F591-1896, Pt. 1 & 2); "Memo:" Comptroller Fred White, November 27, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2).
[97] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, November 4, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562).
[98] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, November 13, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562); S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police November 15, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 &2); "Story of Charcoal – Clark and Heron," in *Reminiscences of Southern Alberta Pioneers*, Edna Kells (1928), 45 (Glenbow M4026-Part 1); Hungry Wolf, *The Blood People*, 282.

set off in pursuit. Shortly after 5 P.M., the party spotted Charcoal. Wilde spurred his large horse hard to catch up, leaving his comrades behind. When Wilde caught up to Charcoal, the rest trailed by at least half-a-mile. Wilde pulled up alongside the fugitive, who drew his gun and shot the sergeant out of his saddle. Charcoal wheeled around and shot Wilde again as he laid on the ground. Recognizing Wilde's horse was stronger and fresher, Charcoal mounted it and rode on. Tail Feathers chased after him, relentlessly following.[99] Superintendent Steele credited the Niitsitapi scout for forcing Charcoal back to the Kainai reserve:

"'Tail Feathers Around his Neck'…jumped on 'Charcoal's' horse and followed him alone; this resulted in forcing 'Charcoal' from the mountain fastness on the North Fork of the Kootenai, where he had taken refuge, and compelling him to ride another 55 miles in a straight line but considering that he had to go around Lakes, Sloughs, Buttes &c., the distance could not have been less than 70 miles, and seek refuge on the Blood Reserve, where he was captured."[100]

Charcoal was able to evade, then confound Tail Feathers, because of the tired condition of the latter's horse. Charcoal doubled-back several times before driving straight for Stand Off. Upon hearing the news of Wilde's death on November 11, the Kainai resolved to catch Charcoal. Within two hours, fifty mounted men had volunteered to follow his trail.[101] Early the next day – hungry, exhausted, and feeling the effects of tuberculosis – Charcoal appeared at the door of his brother Left Hand, who invited him in and quickly disarmed him.[102] Charcoal had been captured in about a month; Almighty Voice remained at large for seven more.

The NWMP in the Macleod and Lethbridge districts had key advantages allowing them to capture Charcoal relatively quickly: a well-developed infrastructure of surveillance that encapsulated the Kainai and Piikani reserves, established venues of communication for the quick transmissions of news, greater resources of police manpower, and the support of both Niitsitapi

[99] Insp. A. Ross Cuthbert to the Officer Commanding Macleod District, November 11, 1896(LAC RG18-V125-F591-1896, Pt. 1 & 2); Statement of Charles Holloway at an "Inquest on the Body of W.D. Wilde, Held at Pincher Creek," November 11, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1376-F212-96); Statement of "Swords, an Indian" at an "Inquest on the Body of W.D. Wilde, Held at Pincher Creek," November 11, 1896 (LAC RG18-V1376-F212-96); Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, November 11, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562) .

[100] Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police Regina, November 19, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2); "Re Reward For the Capture of 'Charcoal'," Supt. S.B. Steele, ca. November 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2).

[101] Indian Agent James Wilson to the Indian Commissioner, November 13, 1896 (LAC RG10-V1562).

[102] Sergeant W.B. Macleod to the Officer Commanding Macleod District, November 13, 1896(LAC RG18-V125-F591-1896, Pt. 1 & 2).

reserve communities. Charcoal had terrified his compatriots by threatening to kill Red Crow, and this aura of dangerousness was given new life when he fired on the Niitsitapi scouts at the Kainai timber limit. The Niitsitapi saw Charcoal as a desperate man willing to kill anyone, regardless of race, and thus he had to be stopped. Had Charcoal restricted his murderous intentions to the man cavorting with his wife and Indian Department officials, the manhunt might have ended differently. In recounting the whole affair, Superintendent Steele highlighted the hard work put in by the Niitsitapi. The first batches of recruits worked until they were "fatigued from want of sleep, their clothing torn, moccasins worn out, and horses used up."[103] Steele was happy with the help he had received, attributing it to the recent change in police policy – one that emphasized kind and just treatment coupled with firmness – "that has caused success in gaining their confidence to a degree unknown in the past."[104] Because of the Niitsitapi performance, both Steele and Herchmer recommended that the $300 reward offered for Charcoal's capture be given to them. Tail Feathers received $75 for his dogged pursuit of the fugitive, while Left Hand and another man got the same for ultimately capturing him. Four others received $10 for their assistance fetching the police from Stand Off and standing guard waiting for their arrival. The rest of the volunteers shared the remaining $35, distributed as tea and tobacco. Herchmer maintained that the dispersal of the reward would yield future dividends, writing it would "have a good effect on future attempts to arrest Indians and other fugitives from justice."[105]

Until the end of the Great War, the NWMP continued to maintain the confidence of the Niitsitapi and vice versa. The police acted as a safety valve for Niitsitapi frustration with the Indian Department, agreeing to meetings to discuss relevant issues on at least eleven occasions between 1903 and 1914. Most were related to changes in ration policy, but others covered grazing leases, the sale of reserve land, the release of Niitsitapi men from prison, and the behaviour of Indian Agents.[106] The NWMP continued to offer economic opportunities in the

[103] Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police Regina, November 19, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2).
[104] Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M. Police Regina, November 19, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2).
[105] Commissioner L.W. Herchmer to the Comptroller, November 24, 1896 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2); Supt. S.B. Steele to the Commissioner N.W.M.P. Ottawa, January 12, 1897 (LAC RG18-V125-F571-1896 Pt.1 & 2); "Indian Agent" to the Indian Commissioner, January 13, 1897 (LAC RG10-V1562).
[106] See LAC RG18-V1523-F69-1903; LAC RG18-V256-F561-04; LAC RG18-V274-F382-04; LAC RG18-V302-F670-05; LAC RG18-V339-F350-07; LAC RG18-V340-F407-07; LAC RG18-V390-F535-237-10; LAC RG18-V390-F651-09; LAC RG18-F1710-F73; LAC RG18-V458-F79-14; "Deputation of Chiefs," January 19, 1914 (Glenbow M1788-199).

form of commodity contracts and employment. Conversely, the Niitsitapi provided the police with their labour and went peacefully with police when they were accused of crimes, trusting in the legal system to do its work, a stark contrast to the 1880s. The most significant breach of trust between the NWMP and the Niitsitapi came in June 1912 when Mike Running Wolf, or Jim Ham, shot and killed a twenty-three-year-old constable named Francis Walter Davies.

The trouble began when Running Wolf and his two friends – Pretty Young Man and Red Face – drove to Brooks, AB on June 3 for three bottles of whiskey (Figure 7.4). All three started drinking early in the morning before encountering a teamster named Emil Petersen, who gave Running Wolf money for a ride. As they reached Petersen's destination, Running Wolf allegedly asked for more money to bring him the rest of the way. When Petersen refused, Running Wolf asked if he would buy them more whiskey. Being only seventeen, Petersen pleaded that he could not do that either. Running Wolf ordered him out of the wagon and then fired on him with a rifle after the youngster refused to hand over some of his clothes. Petersen telephoned the police at the Bassano detachment, who dispatched Davies to investigate.[107] Late in the afternoon, Davies caught up to Running Wolf near the Siksika reserve and ordered him to return to Brooks. When Running Wolf refused, Davies shot over their heads. Running Wolf wheeled about and shot Davies twice, knocking the constable from his horse and killing him. After Running Wolf stripped the corpse of its schnapps, belt, revolver, and hat, he drove to the nearest Siksika village. He had breakfast with a man named Keg, then summoned everyone to the tent. After they gathered round him, Running Wolf said, " I want to see you now as you will not see me again because I am going away first thing in the morning, because I killed a mounted policeman, and I am not going to let the police arrest me." Shortly after, Vincent Yellow Old Woman sat down beside Running Wolf and took the revolver he was holding. Seizing him, Yellow Old Woman told the other Siksika present to tie Running Wolf with rope. They then drove him and his two accomplices to Bassano, handing them over to the municipal chief of police, which Superintendent R. Burton Deane characterized as "a very creditable piece of work which saved us a great deal of trouble."[108] Yellow Old Woman and his compatriots had moved decisively to de-escalate the situation and prevent further tragedy. Doing so reinforced the trust that had

[107] Canada, Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 28 Report of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, 1912* (Ottawa, 1913), 42.
[108] Canada, *Report of the RNWMP, 1912*, 43-44.

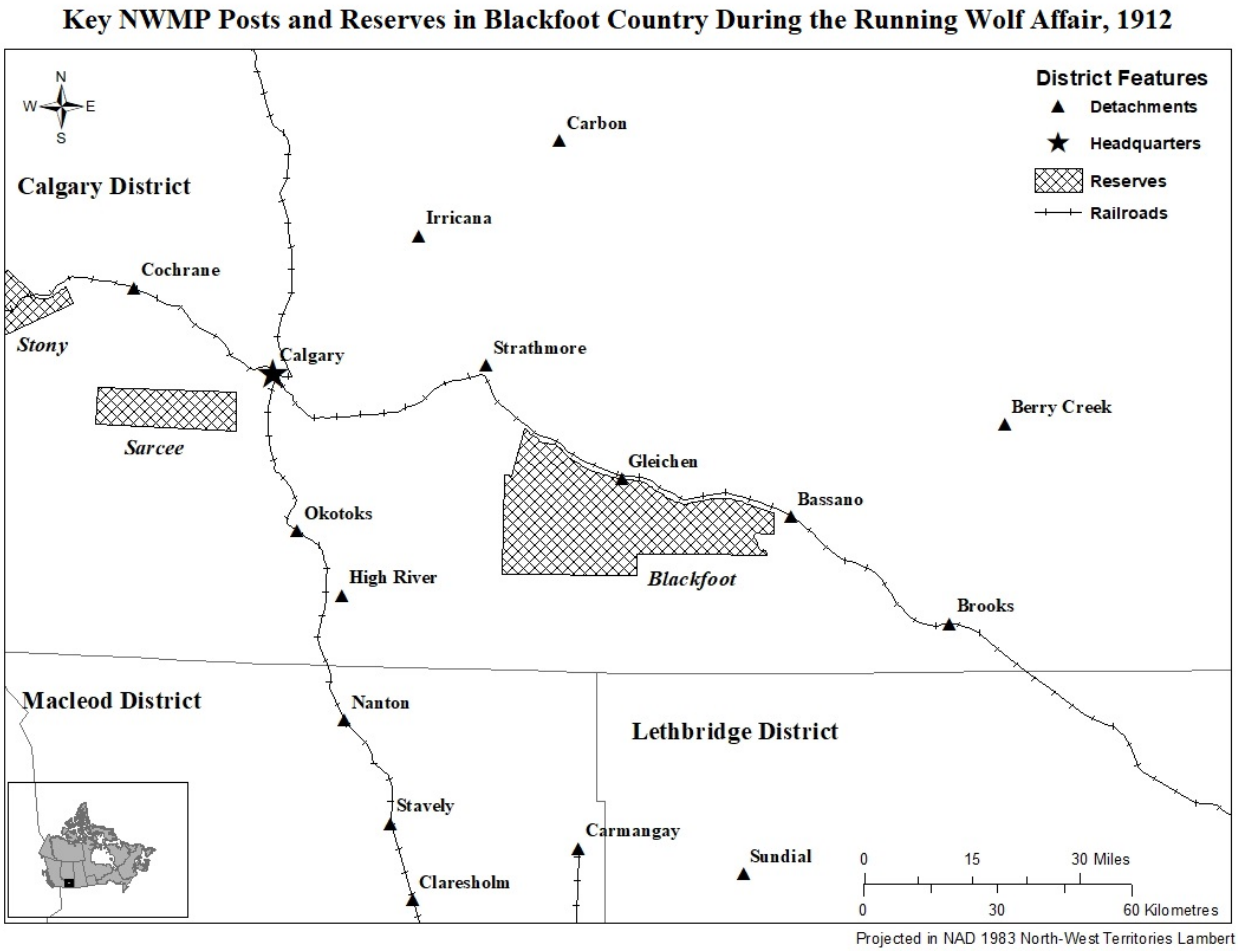

Figure 7.4: North-West Mounted Police Posts and First Nations Reserves Relevant to the Running Wolf Incident, May 1912.

developed between the police and the Niitsitapi over the past twenty years. Like Charcoal, Running Wolf lived to be judged by a jury and was found guilty of manslaughter. His lawyer argued that the effects of liquor made it impossible for him to form premeditative intent; thus Running Wolf faced not the noose but a life sentence.[109]

In the same period, the Prince Albert NWMP was involved in two incidents where Indigenous men were shot after they escaped police custody. Both bore a resemblance to the Almighty Voice incident, given that both men were initially arrested on non-violent offences, escaped from custody, evaded police for a time, and were brought down by a burst of police gunfire. Police officials justified each shooting in terms of preventing another "Almighty Voice" incident. In the

[109] Canada, Royal North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 28 Report of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, 1913* (Ottawa, 1914), 17.

first instance, a Nehiyaw man named Black Hand was arrested and convicted on a theft charge in early August 1910 at the Duck Lake detachment (Figure 7-5). Black Hand had sold a horse, buggy, and harness belonging to another man, who had given it to him for safekeeping. The magistrate sentenced him to a year in the Prince Albert jail.[110] Soon after his trial, Black Hand bolted from a guard escorting him to an outdoor water closet. He quickly bounded over a fence and disappeared into the bush. Police searched for several hours but found no trace of him.[111] In a letter to Commissioner A.B. Perry, Duck Lake Indian Agent James Macarthur primed the police to expect a difficult hunt and ultimately violence from the fugitive. MacArthur warned Perry that Black Hand was "no ordinary Indian" and recapturing him would require "careful handling." He had extensive knowledge of the entire country westward to the Rockies and southward into Montana. The Beardy reserve community was not likely to give him up and informants told Macarthur that Black Hand meant to resort to violence to maintain his freedom. Macarthur concluded, "The case has all the elements of the Almighty Voice tragedy…and I do not wish another of the same kind to occur on this Agency."[112] Black Hand evaded police for more than two weeks and in the interim, Macarthur told Sergeant Frederick W. Reeves that the fugitive had been on the reserve armed with a knife and gun. Black Hand allegedly said, "that he would kill anyone that came after him."[113] Although Macarthur ostensibly wanted to avoid a repeat of the "Almighty Voice tragedy," the information he gave to Perry and Reeves emphasized that Black Hand was of violent character and he meant to do harm, priming the NWMP for a bloody confrontation.

On August 27, Reeves learned that Black Hand planned to attend a dance on the reserve that night. Having made no apparent inroads with the community in the past fifteen years, the police had to sneak on to the reserve hidden in a livery coach. Reeves, Constable Arthur Dorion, and Interpreter Laviolette arrived early in the evening to talk with Macarthur and reconnoitered the reserve to find the location of the dance. At 2:15 AM, they began a house-to-house search,

[110] "Crime Report: Re Indian 'Black Hand' – Theft," Constable A. Dorian, August 8, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10).
[111] "Crime Report: Re Indian 'Black Hand' – Escape from Custody," Constable A. Dorian, August 9, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10).
[112] Indian Agent J. MacArthur to Commissioner N.W.M.P, August 10, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10).
[113] "Statement of Reg. No. 334, Sergt. Reeves F.W., Re Capture of Indian Prisoner, Black Hand, At Duck Lake Reserve," August 30, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10).

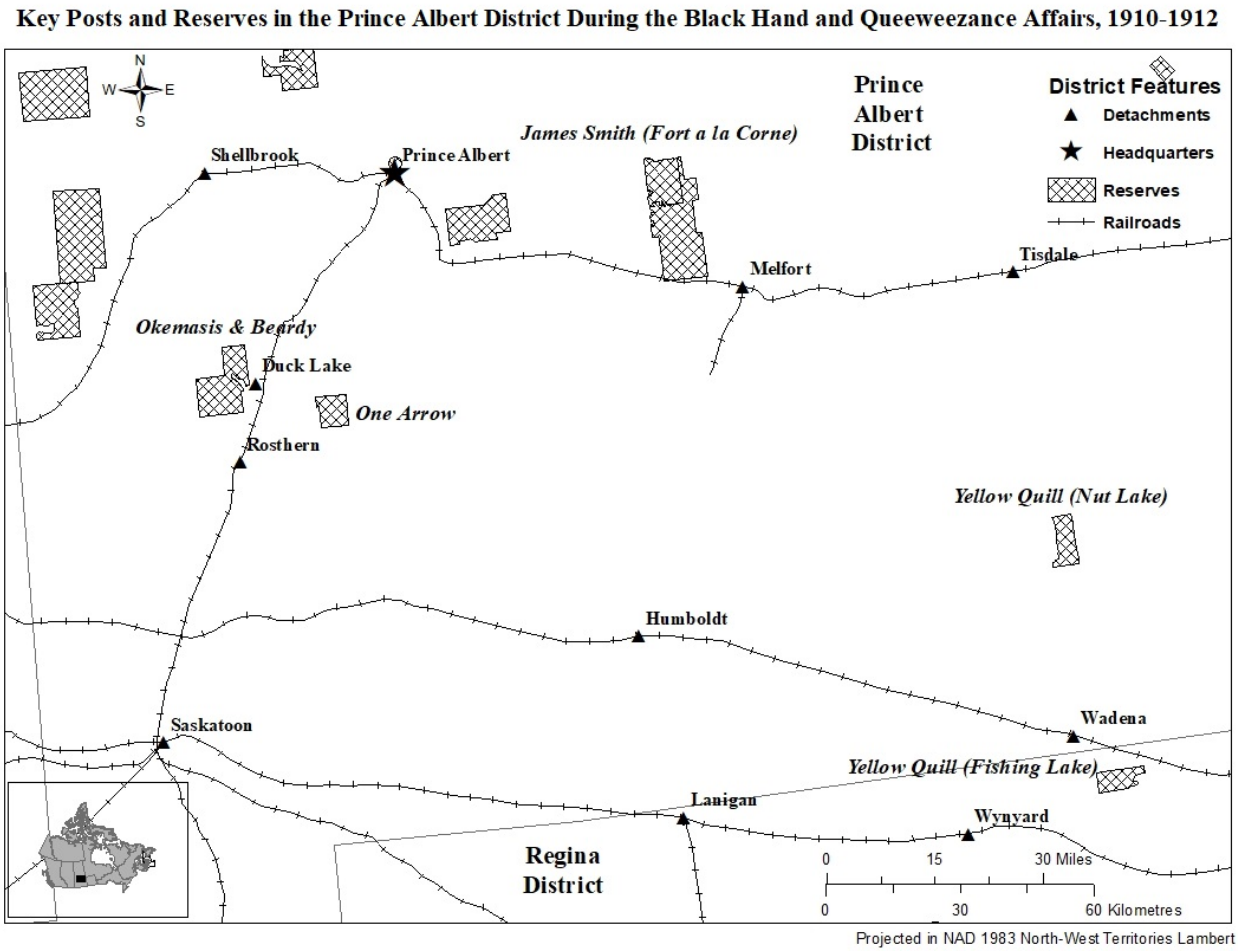

Figure 7-5: Key North-West Mounted Police Posts and Select Reserves Relevant to the Black Hand and Queeweezance Affairs, 1910-1912.

rousing the occupants who were asleep. Three hours of searching yielded nothing.[114] However, one witness revealed that Black Hand's wife lived in a tent close to Macarthur's house. Reeves and his small party rushed back to investigate, discovering it with two occupants inside, one woman and the other an unknown individual covered by a pile of clothes. Reeves did not announce that he was a policeman before entering to rouse the latter, who suddenly rolled out of the tent upon being touched. Standing watch outside, Dorion recognized the rolling figure as Black Hand, who stood up quickly and ran off. Dorion called for him to stop and then fired three shots over his head as a warning. When Black Hand kept running towards a high bluff, Dorion

[114] "Statement of Reg. No. 334, Sergt. Reeves F.W., Re Capture of Indian Prisoner, Black Hand, At Duck Lake Reserve," August 30, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10).

fired again, striking him in the back of the left arm. The fugitive tried to run on but stumbled and fell several times before falling unconscious. Dorion justified the shooting by citing Macarthur's warning that Black Hand had intended to shoot anyone who came after him. Dorion declared, "Black Hand is known to be a very bad Indian and would have carried his threat, and by the way he has been captured much bloodshed has been avoided."[115] Assistant Commissioner McIllree concurred that the shooting was necessary, writing to Comptroller White, "His capture, I consider to be very fortunate. He has the credit of being the worst Indian in that District…Since being in the hospital he has been candid enough to state that it was his intention to shoot any policeman that came near him."[116] In the end, Black Hand was fortunate to survive, though his initial prognosis was not good. After six weeks in the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert, he had recovered enough to be transferred to the local jail to serve his sentence.[117]

An Anishinaabe man from the Nut Lake reserve named Queeweezance was not as lucky in his encounter with the Prince Albert NWMP in May 1912. In 1910, Queeweezance was convicted of horse stealing but escaped police custody in late December. The police scoured the district for the fugitive but could find no trace of him, forcing the police to offer a reward for his capture. [118] Nearly a year later, Constable F.C. Exel searched the Nut Lake reserve – thirty-five miles north of his detachment at Wadena, SK – for Queeweezance, now considered a dangerous fugitive (see Figure 8-5). Exel's superiors cautioned him not to "not take any chances with him as he was considered a dangerous man to any man who was going to arrest him."[119] Police deemed Queeweezance a threat simply because he had escaped lawful custody – as his criminal history included offences against property and his reputation on the Nut Lake reserve alluded to him being a thief, not violent.[120] NWMP officers were extrapolating his character by harkening back to the notorious Almighty Voice incident. Since that fugitive had escaped police clutches and went on to kill several policemen, the NWMP expected others who escaped to do the same.

[115] Statement of Reg. No. 324 Constable Dorion, August 30, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10)
[116] Assistant Commissioner J.H. McIllree to the Comptroller R.N.W.M.P. Ottawa, August 31, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10).
[117] Acting Assistant Surgeon H.A. Lestock Reid to Supt. Begin R.N.W.M. Police, September 9, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10); Supt. J.V. Begin Commanding 'F' Division to the Commissioner R.N.W.M. Police, October 17, 1910 (LAC RG18-V394-F467-10).
[118] Canada, *Report of the RNWMP, 1912*, 123.
[119] Statement of F.C. Exel, N.D. (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12).
[120] Statement of F.C. Exel, N.D. (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12)

Exel found no sign of Queeweezance after several days of searching and returned to Wadena. The police heard nothing about his whereabouts until more than six months later.

In early May, Farm Instructor Sept Field sent word to Inspector Alphonse B. Allard of Saskatoon that Queeweezance was on the Fishing Lake reserve near Wadena. Allard dispatched Corporal Clavell. W. Thomas and Constable John D. Clanchy, ordering them to go in plainclothes. He warned them to take "all precautions" as the "Indian had a bad reputation and might put up a fight."[121] The party took a train to Wadena then made their way to the reserve, where Field pointed out the tent where Queeweezance was purportedly staying with his wife and brother. Field cautioned the two policemen that the fugitive had a revolver. Thomas planned to make the arrest early on May 5, starting out at 2:30 AM to do so. The corporal described the night as "most favourable," with a strong blowing wind and heavy rainstorm that obscured the sound of their approach. When Thomas reached the tent, he threw open the front flap and shone a light inside. He saw Queeweezance sitting up. Not bothering to identify himself as a policeman, Thomas charged in, leaving his gun and lantern at the tent's entrance. The two men furiously wrestled, tearing the tent down around them as they did. At length, Thomas managed to pin the fugitive and called for Clanchy to handcuff him. However, when Clanchy bent down to do so, Thomas instead told him to hold Queeweezance while he retrieved his revolver. Queeweezance suddenly knocked Clanchy down, stood up, and started running. Thomas opened fire with his revolver, hitting the fleeing fugitive and momentarily staggering him. Queeweezance managed to keep going and reached the thick brush of the river bottom. Thomas pursued and the two grappled again, this time in waist-deep water. Losing his strength, Queeweezance finally surrendered. The corporal had hit the fugitive twice, one bullet passing through his intestines, the other through his bladder. Rather than immediately treating his grievous wounds or seeking medical assistance, Thomas and Clanchy handcuffed him, then rooted through the wrecked tent until they found a rifle.[122] The discovery was used by Commissioner Perry – who referred to Queeweezance as a "dangerous criminal" – to justify the shooting.[123] In reality, Queeweezance had reacted to the police raid as anyone in their own home

[121] Statement of Inspector A.B. Allard, May 6, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12); Statement of Constable of J.D. Clanchy, May 6, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12).
[122] "Crime Report: Re Quee Wee Zance...Horse Stealing and Gaolbreaking," C.W. Thomas May 6, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12).
[123] A.B. Perry to the Comptroller R.N.W.M.P., May 5, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12).

being attacked without warning might have. Thomas chose to cast aside his revolver in favour of physically subduing his suspect, a questionable decision if he perceived Queeweezance as dangerous. Queeweezance was shot because he escaped the Prince Albert gaol, which the Prince Albert police could not abide because of Almighty Voice's exploits fifteen years earlier. Saskatoon doctors tried to save Queeweezance's life, but he died from his wounds late the next day.[124]

Community-involved policing and police cultivation of close community ties had positive effects for both the Niitsitapi and the NWMP. The Niitsitapi were more cooperative with law enforcement, making such efforts more effective. The Kainai, Siksika, and Piikani saw greater economic development on their reserves because of NWMP initiatives and found an intermediary to intercede on their behalf with the Indian Department. This close relationship also made the lives of Niitsitapi men more secure in the event of serious crimes, which can be demonstrated by comparing the cases of Almighty Voice and Charcoal. In the latter case, the suspect was quickly captured because of the efforts of the Niitsitapi scouts and other volunteers. They were responsible for depriving Charcoal of his provisions early on and driving him from one end of the district to the other, forcing him into the open to find horses and supplies. Eventually, they forced him to seek refuge on the Kainai reserve where he was captured alive. In contrast, police in the Prince Albert District had great difficulty finding any trace of Almighty Voice for more than eighteen months. Since they had not cultivated a working relationship with local Indigenous communities, the police were perceived as outsiders who only appeared to make arrests or enforce Indian Department policies. As such, they received little assistance from the Anishinaabe, Nakoda, and Nehiyaw communities. The police had to resort to other measures – disguising the fact that they were police, midnight raids on reserves, house-to-house searches, harassing innocent individuals for information – that had alienated the Kainai from the Macleod NWMP during the 1880s. Because the hunt for Almighty Voice went on for so long and drew criticism from the public, the Prince Albert NWMP grew increasingly frustrated. When he was unexpectantly discovered in May 1897, the police were determined not to let him escape again, which led to an explosive and deadly climax. Since the cost in police lives was so high, in the

[124] "Re: Inquiry Respecting Death of Quee Wee Zance," May 6, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12): Statement of J.F. Des Rosiers M.D., May 6, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12); Statement of J.F. Des Rosiers M.D., May 6, 1912 (LAC RG18-V426-F287-12).

Prince Albert district flight from police custody became associated with Indigenous dangerousness. When Black Hand and Queeweezance fled police custody in the early 1910s for non-violent offences, they were perceived by law enforcement authorities as violent criminals who meant to take the lives of the police officials sent to apprehend them. As a result, both men fell to a hail of bullets. Meanwhile, the Mike Running Wolf case was a reiteration of the trust that existed between the NWMP and Niitsitapi communities. In the early twentieth century, community policing efforts helped dispel the spectre of Blackfoot dangerousness, putting that ghost to rest. However, the Almighty Voice tragedy conjured the image of Cree, Salteaux, Assiniboine, and Sioux dangerousness, which made the lives of Indigenous men more precarious when dealing with law enforcement.

CONCLUSION

In February 1920, the Royal North-West Mounted Police merged with the Dominion Police to form the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), a national police force for a country that had been transformed by industrialization, mass immigration, urbanization, and the spectre of radicalism.[1] RCMP officials were preoccupied with suppressing working-class movements – often dubbed "Bolshevism" – which elites believed threatened the very existence of the Canadian State. The eradication of opium use and other vice was also a matter of concern.[2] While the RCMP was responsible for the maintenance of law and order on First Nations reserves, it was not its primary purpose for existence as it had been for the NWMP. As such, the Niitsitapi Scout System survived the reorganization of Canadian policing. Between 1929 and 1931, the RCMP employed at least two Niitsitapi men, one at the Cardston detachment, the other in Lethbridge. Alternately referred to as a "Scout" or "Special Constable," they did much the same work as the previous generation of scouts. They conducted patrols, investigated crime, supervised dances and fairs, returned truant students to school, and gave courtroom testimony for the prosecution. Their biggest focus remained the elimination of liquor traffic among the Niitsitapi, but cattle killing was still an issue that demanded occasional attention.[3] Ten years later, Special Constable Good Rider was carrying out the same duties. Interestingly, he occasionally had to do some interpreting for the force, even using "Indian Sign Language' – which had initially been developed during the fur trade – to investigate a horse-stealing complaint![4] In the late-60s and early-70s, three Kainai men were still working with the RCMP at the Cardston detachment; they were known as "Band Scouts" or "Band Constables." The

[1] Steve Hewitt, *Riding to the Rescue: The Transformation of the RCMP in Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1914-1939* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), xvi.
[2] Hewitt, *Riding to the Rescue*, 9-11, 136-136.
[3] Christopher Marsh, "NWMP Scout Duty Tallies," Tab 1929. 1930, & 1931 (Spreadsheet in author's possession); "Cattle Killing by Indians of the Blood Reserve," Sergeant A. Howard, April 12, 1930 (Glenbow Museum and Archives M1788-152); "Alleged Killing of Cattle by Indians of the Blood Reserve," Sergeant A. Howard, May 21, 1930 (Glenbow M1788-152).
[4] "Re: Compl. of Paul WOGKNITH, Magrath, A:11 Theft of Horses, Sect. 369 C.C.C.," Constable J. Gibbons, July 2, 1939 (Glenbow M1788-158).

community newspaper – the *Kainai News* – noted that they conducted patrols of the reserve by van, supervised dances, suppressed liquor consumption, participated in child bicycle safety programs, provided rides to Indigenous hitchhikers, and occasionally drove their fellows into nearby cities for shopping (which was generally frowned upon).[1] The Niitsitapi Scout System persisted for nearly ninety years in southern Alberta.

During the 1970s, the consensus that allowed for the partnership between Niitsitapi communities and the RCMP broke down. Then, independent tribal police forces emerged in Blackfoot Country. Part of the reason lay in the 1960s zeitgeist where Indigenous peoples across Canada demanded a more flexible relationship with the federal government and redress of long-simmering land claims – buoyed by the *Calder v British Columbia* decision in 1973 – and broken treaty promises.[2] In southern Alberta, Kainai community members regarded the RCMP as a purely oppressive apparatus rather than protectors, economic partners, and friends. In 1972, a writer to the *Kainai News* complained that the RCMP regularly treated Niitsitapi individuals brutally when they visited Pincher Creek. They kicked and beat people who had already been arrested, inflicting bruises and bloody noses. The author quipped, "I could give you so many examples but then I'd have to write a whole book."[3] The newspaper's cartoonists occasionally commented on police brutality, emphasizing its casualness and ferocity (Figures C.1 and C.2). As in the late-1880s, others criticized how the police investigated recent cases of missing persons and suspicious deaths.[4] This perception of the force prompted some community members to

[1] "Special Constable Orton Eagle Speaker Displaying One of the Two New Tribal Police Vans," *Kainai News*, August 15, 1968; "Hunya," *Kainai News*, June 17, 1969; "Drunk Crawls into Right Vehicle," *Kainai News*, January 15, 1970; "Dear Editor" – A Friendly Bystander, *Kainai News*, January 15, 1970; "Constables Ask for Better Equipment," *Kainai News*, February 15, 1970.

[2] For the implications of the *Calder* case on Indigenous land claims and modern treaty making, see Hamar Foster, Heather Raven, and Jeremy Webber, editors, *Let Right Be Done: Aboriginal Title, The Calder Case, and the Future of Indigenous Rights* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007) and Toby Morantz, *The White Man's Gonna Getcha: The Colonial Challenges to the Crees in Quebec* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002). For works focusing on the governmental relationships and treaty obligations, see Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians* (Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig, 1969); Indian Chiefs of Alberta, *Citizens Plus: A Presentation by the Indian Chiefs of Alberta to Right Honourable P.E. Trudeau, Prime Minister and the Government of Canada* (Edmonton: The Indian Association of Alberta, 1970); and Alan C. Cairns, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2000).

[3] "Dear Editor" – A Disenchanted Person, *Kainai News*, September 15, 1972.

[4] "Body Found in Fort Macleod Sewage – Mystery Surrounds Death," *Kainai News*, August 31, 1977; "RCMP Want Twigg Inquest," *Kainai News*, October 31, 1977; C.H. Rolf, *Policing in Relation to the Blood Tribe: Report of a Public Inquiry. Volume 1: Findings and Recommendations* (Edmonton: Commission of Inquiry--Policy in Relation to the Blood Tribe, 1991), 15-99.

Figure C.1*: Kainai News* Cartoon, October 14, 1977. It demonstrates how the Kainai community perceived members of the RCMP as brutal and violent.

Figure C.2: *Kainai News* Cartoon, May 1, 1973. It illustrates the casualness in which the RCMP inflicted violence on Niitsitapi people. It depicts a Mounted Policeman kicking an Indigenous man in celebration of the force's upcoming 100th anniversary.

advocate for an independent law enforcement body to police Niitsitapi reserves, arguing that the main problem was members of the RCMP were mostly from eastern Canada and had no connections to the communities they were supposed to serve.[5] Matters came to a head during the Cardston Blockade, the culmination of a Kainai land dispute with the federal government, who in 1928 expropriated reserve land near Cardston and gave it to the Canadian Pacific Railway for grain elevators. In 1980, young Kainai men and women organized a sacred bundle run from Blackfoot Crossing to Ottawa, hoping to persuade the government to rectify their grievances. When officials failed to respond to their petition, in late July, the Kainai blockaded the disputed land. The RCMP arrested protestors on three occasions, each time using a greater degree of force. In the final encounter, a special tactical unit of the RCMP from Calgary unleashed snarling dogs on the crowd, then beat and choked women and Elders.[6] This incident led to outraged Kainai demands for a public inquiry into policing, later known as the Rolf Inquiry. Conducted between May 1989 and October 1990, the latter part of the inquiry was marred by another Niitsitapi stand-off with the RCMP. This time, the Piikani (Peigan) resisted a dam project on the Oldman River, named for the cultural hero Napi (the Old Man) and a sacred Niitsitapi site. In early August 1990 – with the project nearing completion – the Piikani began to divert the river using heavy equipment to sabotage the project. A short-armed confrontation ensued but ended peacefully.[7] By the early 1990s, the Niitsitapi saw the RCMP as their ancestors had seen the NWMP in the 1880s: oppressors serving settler interests and denying them equal consideration under the law. Summarizing the state of the relationship between the Kainai and the RCMP, Justice C.H. Rolf wrote:

> "Blood Tribe members have directed much of their frustration outward at the authority figures who have traditionally exercised control over many aspects of their lives…Compounding this frustration was the Native's perception and belief that the traditional "protector" role of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had been eroded to that of "enforcer" of the white man's laws."[8]

[5] "Howard Beebe Jr., Takes Law Enforcement Course," *Kainai News*, May 10, 1973; "Mills Says Indian Police a Must," *Kainai News*, March 18, 1977; "Natives Need to Control Own Justice," *Kainai News*, October 14, 1977.
[6] Rolf, *Policing in Relation to the Blood Tribe, Volume 1*, 109-113; "Investigation Into Blockade RCMP Arrests," *Kainai News*, August 1, 1980; "Woman Arrested at Blockade Tells Her Own Story," *Kainai News*, August 1, 1980; Bryan D. Cummins and John L. Steckley, *Aboriginal Policing: A Canadian Perspective* (Toronto: Prentice Hill, 2003), 43-45.
[7] Cummins and Steckley, *Aboriginal Policing*, 46-48.
[8] Rolf, *Policing in Relation to the Blood Tribe, Volume 1*, 105-106.

This belief encouraged the Kainai, Piikani, Siksika (Blackfoot), and Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) to pursue establishing tribal police forces (reserve police forces controlled by band chief and council) in the 1990s. Today, only the Kainai and Tsuu T'ina forces remain, two of only five tribal police forces in the Canadian Prairie West. The long period of close cooperation between the Mounted Police on law enforcement matters had come to an end.

During the 1880s and 1890s, the NWMP formulated and instituted the first community-oriented and community-integrated model of policing in the history of modern law enforcement. It occurred decades before sociological scholars speculated that such approaches could help enhance North American and Western European police departments' legitimacy, leading to better law enforcement outcomes. However, this project did not emerge because of the farsightedness of the NWMP officials, but through failures of policy. In the early 1880s, the NWMP inexplicably abandoned its successful approach relating to the Niitsitapi in enforcing Canadian law, predicated on personal contacts with Niitsitapi leaders, negotiation, and compromise. Instead, officials like Superintendent Leif Crozier and Commissioner Acheson G. Irvine embraced intimidation and the threat of force to compel the Niitsitapi to "respect the law." They wanted the force to be able to enter Niitsitapi communities, locate suspected criminals, and make arrests without having to go through intermediaries. They wanted the Niitsitapi to immediately comply with police directives, to observe hierarchies in the manner that lower-class Europeans and Euro-Canadians did in the east and across the Atlantic. However, the Niitsitapi linked their compliance to Canadian law and cooperation with the NWMP with how well the Canadian government fulfilled treaty promises made in 1877. By the early 1880s, the Niitsitapi perceived the Canadian effort to be sorely lacking: in providing adequate rations, in helping to build new reserve economies, and in treating Euro-Canadian and Niitsitapi individuals equally before the law. It was the reason Niitsitapi communities resisted police efforts to arrest individuals who vented their frustration on Indian Department employees or had stolen horses from Americans – or to recover stolen property. In early incidents involving the Niitsitapi and the police, the former lived up to the Dangerous Blackfoot image – which asserted that the Niitsitapi were more aggressive, more unpredictable, and more violent than other Indigenous peoples – by threatening, mobbing, assaulting, and levelling firearms at policemen. The NWMP response was to try to "overawe" the Niitsitapi by concentrating manpower, moving quickly, and

demonstrating a willingness to use “extreme measures” to ensure suspects were brought to justice.

These kinds of tactics were ineffective at quelling Niitsitapi criminality and resistance. As the 1880s rolled on, the Niitsitapi conflict with the tribes at Fort Belknap intensified, bringing chaos to the Cypress Hills. While the Kainai were the most heavily surveilled group of Indigenous people in the Canadian Prairie West, this did not prevent them from raiding for horses in the United States or menacing the lives and property of Euro-Canadian settlers. Nor did it aid the police in arresting the perpetrators or recovering stolen livestock. Oftentimes, Niitsitapi communities flatly refused to cooperate with police endeavours. NWMP policy only heightened the potential for conflict, increasing the possibility that Niitsitapi individuals or policemen would be injured or killed. Both consequences risked an escalation of violence, one that could erupt into open warfare. The Canadian State was terrified of such a prospect since it risked the entire nation-building project. The North-West Resistance of 1885 demonstrated that such conflicts were destructive and expensive. It fostered an intense fear of further armed conflict, this time led by the Dangerous Blackfoot. Thus, the policy of trying to “overawe” the Niitsitapi made less sense as time went on. While it might have given some NWMP officials a temporary measure of satisfaction in punishing Niitsitapi defiance, overall, the policy was anathema to the NWMP’s primary function: to ensure the peace and order of the North-West Territories. At some point, it was going to spark another violent collision with Indigenous peoples.

Fortunately, in the late-1880s, the new Commissioner L.W. Herchmer decided that different policies were necessary to reduce tensions with Niitsitapi communities and improve law enforcement outcomes. Niitsitapi men had to play a role in policing their communities, and so Herchmer devised the Indian Scout System. After initial success, the new enterprise faltered because of widespread Niitsitapi distrust and frustration with the NWMP. The Niitsitapi still believed that Canada was not fulfilling its treaty promises. And so the old police policy continued for a few more years until Judge James F. Macleod lambasted it in open court as foolish and reckless after the NWMP tried to arrest suspected horse raiders at the 1889 Kainai *Ookaan*. In the wake of this double humiliation, Herchmer resolved to address the problem of socioeconomic conditions on the reserves, which he perceived to be the underlying cause of Niitsitapi restlessness. When Herchmer ordered his subordinates to offer supply contracts to Niitsitapi communities to help spur economic development in the 1890s, he launched a program

of positive, nonenforcement engagement with those communities. Instead of only seeing the police when they did wrong, the Niitsitapi encountered them in other settings like the workplace. The NWMP also listened to Niitsitapi complaints concerning the Indian Department throughout the decade. While the police did not necessarily want to interfere with that institution's functioning because it sparked intergovernmental conflict, there were times when their policies threatened the NWMP's mandate to safeguard the peace of the country. When this happened, police officials pushed back in a way that was discernible to Niitsitapi communities, resulting in concessions relating to rations and religious ceremonies. These positive, nonenforcement contacts allowed Niitsitapi communities to see the NWMP as protectors rather than oppressors, encouraging men to participate in the Indian Scout System.

While the NWMP referred to Niitsitapi men who served in the force as "Indian Scouts," this title was not accurate. Niitsitapi men were not mere guides; they were North-West Mounted Policemen who specialized in policing Indigenous communities. The scouts did everything that the average Euro-Canadian constable did daily: patrolling, investigating crimes, making arrests, giving courtroom testimony, taking care of horses, and delivering mail and messages. However, scouts were better at doing law enforcement functions in a reserve setting because they spoke the dominant language, knew the landscape better, understood Niitsitapi customs and mannerisms, and already had extensive personal contacts within their communities. Previous NWMP historians have ignored, disparaged, and misunderstood their contributions, with some insinuating that Indian Scouts were lazy or ineffective. But aside from initial complaints that Indian Scouts were difficult to recruit and retain. NWMP officials often had high praise for the work that they did. After 1905 – when it became increasingly difficult to find suitable scouts because better economic opportunities existed elsewhere – police superintendents in Blackfoot Country recommended offering higher wages above what many Euro-Canadian policemen were paid.

Niitsitapi scouts were valuable beyond their daily contribution to police functions. Their presence – and the positive, nonenforcement contact that facilitated their employment – made the lives of both Indigenous individuals and policemen safer. During the Charcoal affair, the contributions of not just scouts but the greater Niitsitapi community allowed the fugitive to be taken alive and with only one police casualty in about a month. In contrast, the lack of Indian Scouts and rapport with Indigenous communities in the Prince Albert District resulted in a

lengthier manhunt for Almighty Voice and a bloodier conclusion, both in police and Indigenous lives. The disparate experiences of policemen in the Macleod and Prince Albert districts spawned distinct police cultures. In the Macleod District, NWMP officials were confident that they would get Niitsitapi assistance in apprehending even the worst fugitives. In the Prince Albert District, police feared that the most minor case might escalate into another "Almighty Voice scenario," so they were quicker to shoot Indigenous peoples who ran from the law. Overall, NWMP historians have argued that police policy resulted in a steady degradation of the relationship between the police and Indigenous peoples, especially after the 1885 Resistance. However, by highlighting the Indian Scout System, this dissertation demonstrates that after a nadir in Niitsitapi-NWMP relations in 1889, their relationship steadily improved until the end of the Great War. It was marked not only by mutual respect but productive cooperation. While some historians point to the Charcoal Affair as an example of relational degradation, it is really evidence for an improving relationship. So too was the community apprehension of Mike Running Wolf, when compared to police shootings of Queeweezance and Black Hand.

The story of the Indian Scout System illustrates that Canada incorporated the Niitsitapi into its polity through hegemonic processes. This differs from the interpretation of many historians of western Canadian since the 1980s, who postulate that Indigenous peoples were subjugated by the Canadian State. They were overwhelmed by the combined cooperative efforts of the Department of Indian Affairs, the NWMP, the courts, other governmental institutions, and religious institutions. Canadian efforts to dominate and transform Indigenous peoples intensified during and in the conclusion of the 1885 Resistance, leading to disarmament, confinement on impoverished reserves, suppression of Indigenous religiosity, and land surrenders. But the Niitsitapi did not have the same concerns as the Nehiyaw (Cree), Nakoda (Nakoda), and Anishinaabe (Ojibway or Salteaux). The Niitsitapi already had large reserves in proximity to the international boundary. Although still seen as insufficient, the Niitsitapi always received the lion's share of government famine relief, so the issue of hunger was not as pressing as in Treaty 4 and 6 territories. The Niitsitapi had a more southern looking orientation, more concerned about relations with their Indigenous neighbours across the international boundary and the NWMP recovering their lost stock. They also did not fight during 1885, so there was no government pretext to seize their horses or disarm them. Most importantly, the Canadian State perceived the Niitsitapi as being fundamentally different compared to other Indigenous peoples in the

Canadian Prairie West. The Dangerous Blackfoot image – constructed by nineteenth century travel authors and Anglo-Canadian newspapers like the *Toronto Globe* – asserted that the Niitsitapi were hostile to outsiders, more aggressive, more violent, more unpredictable, and ultimately more dangerous than other "tribes." This reputation – compounded by ferocious acts of resistance throughout the 1880s – allowed the Niitsitapi to negotiate from a stronger position, which conferred upon them certain privileges that other Indigenous peoples in Treaty 4 and 6 did not enjoy. These privileges included more rations with fewer strings attached, greater religious freedom, more freedom of movement, more respectful treatment by the NWMP, an opportunity to police their communities, and relatively fewer demands to surrender reserve land. It is incorrect to say that the Niitsitapi were not negatively affected by Canadian colonial efforts during the 1877 to 1919 period. Far from it. Dissatisfaction with the Canadian government was intense because people were hungry and there was little effort to develop reserve economies in the 1880s because of Indian Department parsimony. Some aspects of religious ceremonies were lost to satisfy Indian Department demands. Niitsitapi communities were alienated from the younger generation because many youths were confined to industrial schools for extended periods. Despite the claims of NWMP historians that Indigenous peoples were treated equally before the law, this dissertation illustrates that the police spent more effort recovering Euro-Canadian property, subjected Indigenous peoples to longer periods of pre-trial incarceration by not explaining the concept of bail until the late 1880s, and arrested Indigenous peoples without official warrants. Overall, neither the Niitsitapi nor the federal government were completely satisfied with the deal that they had brokered, but it cannot be honestly argued that the latter were in any way "subjugated" the former.

The spatial analysis of NWMP surveillance over Indigenous peoples in the Canadian Prairie West illustrates that variation over space matters. That the Niitsitapi – especially the Kainai – were so heavily surveilled compared to other groups of Indigenous peoples reveals the presence of more than one Canadian Indian policy between 1877 and 1919. Without historical maps and GIS software, this phenomenon – buried in distribution tables and NWMP annual reports – would be difficult to detect. But since maps so glaringly reveal the extensive networks of surveillance in Blackfoot Country, it is difficult not to ask why these differences existed. It eventually leads to the Dangerous Blackfoot image, the boisterous spirit of resistance in Niitsitapi communities throughout the 1880s, the Indian Scout System, and the eventual entente

with the NWMP. GIS allows for the revelation of another localized form of Canadian colonialism.

On May 25, 2020, Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on the neck of an African-American man named George Floyd for nearly nine minutes as civilian witness looked on and recorded the event, all the while imploring Chauvin to stop. Floyd died on the street, pinned to the hot concrete. While Chauvin was fired and charged with second-degree murder relatively quickly, the incident touched off mass protests across the United States. It reignited a simmering debate about police brutality, the state of American policing, and police reform. Floyd's death sparked protests in Canada too, fostering a similar debate. Does the examination of the Indian Scout System and the conditions that spawned it hold any lessons for reforming police efforts in ethnic minority communities today? Only in broad terms. Positive, nonenforcement engagement can alter perceptions of police legitimacy by building community trust and goodwill. But it needs to be sustained over a long period of time and address longstanding systemic issues that are of widespread interest to the community. It is important to point out that NWMP originated from the Canadian State's desire to establish peace in the Canadian Prairie West, which meant surveilling and modifying the behaviour of Indigenous peoples without sparking unnecessary conflict. Indeed, Commissioner A.B. Perry once said, "If the North-West Territory had no Indian population, it would need no Mounted Police Force."[9] Although the NWMP made serious missteps in policy during the 1880s, the organization under Commissioner Herchmer ultimately proved itself adaptable and willing to engage in new approaches in policing. The Dangerous Blackfoot image and the fear of further armed conflict in the Canadian Prairie West compelled the NWMP to do so or risk further Indigenous resistance. The willingness to try ultimately resulted in a model of policing that was better for law enforcement outcomes and safer for both police officers and Indigenous peoples.

In contrast, modern American policing originated from a desire to uphold particular racial hierarchies and to safeguard capitalist interests. They were modelled on inherently violent institutions like slave patrols and private security companies like the Pinkertons, which often eschewed negotiation.[10] This characterization – especially the protection of a capitalist system –

[9] Canada, North-West Mounted Police, *Sessional Paper No. 28 Report of the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, 1887* (Ottawa, 1888), 76.
[10] David Ponton III, "A Protracted War for Order: Police Violence in the Twentieth Century United States," *History Compass* (2018), 2-3, https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12453.

applies to a similar extent to the RCMP and other Canadian police departments today. In both countries, police cultures are conservative, even ossified, when it comes to changing organizational practices. Because of the perceived level of personal risk inherent to the profession, police officers are often distrustful of new practices, prioritizing personal experience over scientific method and theory. As such, there is a focus in North American police departments on strict law enforcement and ensuring that the public unquestionably recognizes police authority.[11] The sometimes overzealous suppression of protest rallies – splashed across television and social media sites – in the wake of Floyd's death put these police priorities on full display. They were the same priorities that caused so much trouble for the NWMP in dealing with the Niitsitapi during the 1880s. While there is a deep chasm between the late-nineteenth century context that the NWMP operated under and police departments today, this historical case study demonstrates that relationships with even the most discontent and restive minorities can be reconstituted through community-oriented policing practices.

[11] James F. Hodgson, "Police Violence in Canada and the USA: Analysis and Management," *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* Vol. 24, no. 4 (2001), 522-531; Stephen D. Mastrofski and James J. Willis, "Police Organization Continuity and Change: Into the Twenty-First Century," *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research* Vol. 39 (2010), 97-104.

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Dominion of Canada: Map Showing Mounted Police Stations & Patrols Throughout the North West Territories, 1888 (Peel County Archive, Map 570)

Dominion of Canada: Map Shewing Mounted Police Stations & Patrols Throughout the North West Territories, 1891 (Peel County Archive, Map 569)

General Map of the North-West Territories and the Province of Manitoba, Revised and Corrected to August 31, 1894, Parts 1, 2 & 3 (Peel County Archive, Map 464)

Map to Accompany Report of Supt. S.B. Steele, Commanding the Detachment of Mounted Police in British Columbia [ca.1888] (Library and Archives Canada NMC10223)

Map of Manitoba and Part of the Northwest Territories of the Dominion of Canada, Shewing Land Surveys to June 30, 1891 (Saskatchewan Archives, Map B17_I-S, Sheet 2)

Map of Part of the North West Territory, Including the Province of Manitoba, Exhibiting the Several tracts of Country Ceded by the Indian Treaties 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7 (Glenbow Museum and Archives G3401-E1-1877-C212os)

Newspapers

Kainai News (accessed through University of Lethbridge's Southern Alberta Newspaper Collection https://digitallibrary.uleth.ca/digital/collection/sanews/id/25832/)

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