

# **THE CCF AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF METIS COLONIES IN SOUTHERN SASKATCHEWAN DURING THE PREMIERSHIP OF T.C. DOUGLAS, 1944-1961 <sup>1</sup>**

F. Laurie Barron,  
Department of Native Studies,  
University of Saskatchewan,  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan,  
Canada, S7N 0W0.

## **ABSTRACT/RESUME**

When the first socialist government in North America came to power in Saskatchewan in 1944, new policies were developed to combat the poverty of Métis citizens. Métis colonies were established, a form of separation intended to facilitate training and development. The principles which guided the development were, however, inherently conservative in nature. Self-determination was never a real option for the Métis.

Quand le premier gouvernement socialiste en Amérique du Nord accéda au pouvoir en Saskatchewan en 1944, on développa une nouvelle politique pour combattre l'indigence des Métis. On a établi des colonies métisses, une sorte de separation ayant pour but de faciliter la formation et le développement. Les principes sur lesquels fut basé le développement étaient, néanmoins, conservateurs en soi. L'autodétermination n'était jamais une option réelle pour les Métis.

Although the story of the CCF in Saskatchewan has been the subject of numerous books and articles, surprisingly little has been written about the relationship between the government of T.C. Douglas and the province's Native community. Most writers have been content to judge North America's first and only "socialist" government on the basis of its policies concerning business, labour and the farm movement which had brought it to power. There has been almost no attempt to assess the performance of the CCF—the would-be champion of the oppressed—in terms of the government's reform agenda for Native people. When Douglas came to power in 1944, he and others were appalled by the poverty and social pathology that racked Native society, and in response, the government introduced a number of initiatives meant to ameliorate those conditions. Although the reforms represented a new departure in public policy, they have been virtually ignored in most of the existing literature.<sup>2</sup> Writers seem to have assumed that, because Natives themselves were peripheral to mainstream society, the policies addressed to their plight had little bearing on what the Douglas government represented. The result has been a very incomplete assessment of the CCF record in office.

Among the most important but least known Native policy initiatives of the Douglas government was the establishment of Métis colonies or settlements.<sup>3</sup> These colonies were set up in a number of rural municipalities in the southern portion of the province and were seen by the government as an important step in addressing the so-called "Métis problem," defined largely in terms of the destitution and marginality of southern Métis. An enhanced and regularized social assistance program was part of the CCF's reforms, but it was the colonization scheme, through which the Métis were to be rehabilitated, that promised a final solution to the problem.

As it turned out, the number of colonies actually set up was not large, and in many ways, the development of the colonies never progressed beyond the experimental stage. Nevertheless, Métis colonies did represent an important policy initiative which, in theory at least, had the potential to solve a very serious social and political problem. The southern Métis were among the most disadvantaged group in the province, but more than that, their poverty was highly visible because, unlike in the north, development and the bulk of the general population were concentrated in the south. Moreover, unlike Indians who could be dismissed as wards of the federal government, the Métis fell clearly within provincial jurisdiction. For a government whose official slogan was "humanity first," the CCF could not ignore a people whose poverty was blatant. The conditions under which they lived were completely anathema to the principles of Social Gospel that underpinned much of the humanist doctrine publically espoused by

Douglas and others; and they represented an embarrassment to a party whose political principles and rhetoric cast the CCF as the champion of the underclass. As the government's main response to the problem, colonization is important not only because of the insight it lends into a generally neglected era in Native history, but also because it has a direct bearing on what the CCF represented.

## 2

The genesis of CCF policy can be traced to the closing years of the Great Depression. It was in the thirties that Métis destitution first became a public issue and it was largely in response to that fact that colonization as government policy was born. At the time, the Liberal Party led by Premier Patterson was in power in Regina.

The catalyst behind the issue of Native poverty was the self-interest of municipal councils which, under severe financial constraints, became disconcerted over the congregation of Métis people in their districts. Of special concern was the ever-increasing number of people described by officials as a shiftless and disease-ridden group of paupers, often found squatting on road allowances in makeshift shacks.<sup>4</sup> Because of their poverty the Métis did not contribute to the tax base of the local government, but also because of their poverty they had the potential to overburden the social assistance programs administered by the municipality.<sup>5</sup> The Métis had one of the highest incidents of disease in the entire province, and at the same time they figured prominently in burgeoning demands for welfare assistance. They were also vastly over-represented in provincial crime statistics, especially in the category of crimes against property, including theft and break-and-enter.

Although local officials were not without sympathy for the Métis themselves, their more immediate concern was their financial inability to deal with the problem. It was an arguable point that, given Métis poverty and transience—and hence their questionable municipal residence—the plight of Natives represented a special set of circumstances, the improvement of which was the direct responsibility of the provincial government. And this was precisely the message communicated to the province.

The problem was compounded by widespread racism. Throughout the province, racial bigotry had been a constant companion to social and economic development and it was not confined to Euro-Canadian society nor targeted exclusively at Native people. Visible minorities of every description, but especially those who seemed least likely to conform to WASP stereotypes, bore the brunt of such prejudice. Natives figured prominently

in that category, but Ukrainians, Mennonites and other minorities were also singled out. Even within the Native community itself, racial and class intolerance was often expressed as deep-seated social cleavages. A 1941 school report on the community of St. Vital, for example, pointed out that, "Apart from the division between the Roman Catholic and Protestant in the town, there is among the Catholic element a division between whites and the breeds and a further division between the high caste and low caste breeds."<sup>7</sup> Likewise in 1943, a school superintendent's report on the Qu'apelle Valley concluded with the remark that the Métis people in the district "...seem to be looked down upon by both the white people and the Indians."<sup>8</sup> What this suggests is that, while Native people generally were the object of racial bigotry, there was a descending order of discrimination, with the most depressed and neglected segment being the most victimized. As such, it was the Métis in particular who bore the collective weight of intolerance.

At the most fundamental level, racism operated as a structural barrier to the integration of Native people into mainstream society. Nowhere was this more evident than in the systematic debarment of Métis children from local schools. Superintendents' reports were replete with references to the fact that Métis people were not welcome and that Native parents had been discouraged from sending their children to schools. The excuse commonly cited was that Native children represented a health hazard, a fact underscored in a 1943 school report:

These children are not wanted in Tipperary School, Kenlis School and Pheasant Plains School. Some parents even threaten to take their children out of school if more of the Métis attend. On the surface this seems to be a very narrow and bigoted attitude, but i[f] we examine the matter more closely from the point of view of health and cleanliness, they may be, at least partly, justified.<sup>9</sup>

In reality, the health issue was little more than a smoke-screen for racial and class prejudice. Confirming this was a 1941 Superintendent's report on Pebble Lake School District. The report mentioned a meeting with Mr. Dennis Buckle, the Chairman of the district council. Buckle was quoted to the effect that Métis children were infected with trachoma, itch or scabies, lice and fleas, and that if the Department of Education allowed them to remain in school the other children would walk out.<sup>10</sup> The report then went on to explain how local officials manipulated Métis parents by shamelessly using medical regulations as a gimmick to exclude their children:

Mr. Burke [the school teacher] stated that the children were not actually excluded from school but in reality the children were excluded. Mr. Burke stated that should a half-breed child attempt to come to his school it would

at once be necessary to apply the health laws and regulations and exclude the child from school until a medical certificate was produced and that on account of the home conditions such a certificate would be of little value anyway.<sup>11</sup>

The implication, of course, was that local officials knew that Métis parents lacked the where-with-all to secure the certificate and that, even if parents were able to do so, family conditions could still be used as an excuse to exclude their offspring. As a matter of school policy, Métis children were denied admission precisely because they were Native, not because as individuals they were proven health risks. Indeed even when their health status was medically certified, they were still excluded on the grounds of class-based presumptions about their unacceptable living standards.

Had these problems remained merely a matter of local concern, the whole issue would have been swept under the carpet, as it has been for decades. But the steady growth of the Métis population, combined with the financial constraints imposed on the municipalities by the Depression, made Native poverty an irrepressible provincial concern. Equally important was the fact that the issue was picked up by the press and carried into the political arena. In 1939, for example, George Dulmage, Reeve of the Rural Municipality of Orkney (near Yorkton), took up the issue of the Native plight: he circulated petitions and presented them to the provincial government.<sup>12</sup> Three years later, he was back in the new when, in an address to the annual meeting of the Yorkton and District Board of Trade, he lambasted the abuse of "Indian Half-Breeds."<sup>13</sup> Referring to a congregation of 150 Natives just south of Yorkton, Dulmage described the Métis as a homeless, disease-infested, group living in mud huts, and he called upon the Board to do something. Among other things, his address kindled a response in Mayor Peaker and the Council of Yorkton who interviewed three provincial cabinet ministers on the matter.<sup>14</sup>

Even more explosive was an account carried in the Yorkton Enterprise in 1942. It concerned the trial of a thirteen-year old Métis child who had been arrested for theft and break-and-enter, but the real story had to do with the abusive social conditions afflicting the entire Métis community in the Crescent Lake area. What made the trial especially noteworthy was the censure expressed by the police magistrate hearing the case. Justice Potter of Melville was reportedly "...shocked to learn that such conditions could and did exist in this day and age and especially in a civilized country."<sup>15</sup> He was particularly incensed over the lack of health care, and during the proceedings, he took it upon himself to examine personally a six-year old child suffering from trachoma. He described the health situation of the Métis as an appalling disgrace, but more than that, he condemned the entire

public administration for allowing such conditions to persist. In the end, the Judge called for a sweeping investigation into all aspects of the Métis situation, and this in itself, guaranteed that the story would be picked up by the main wire services and carried in most of the provincial presses.<sup>16</sup>

Pressured by public opinion, the Patterson government responded to the issue with little enthusiasm or resolve. As early as 1936, the Premier himself had admitted privately that his government had been unable to evolve a satisfactory policy,<sup>17</sup> and basically that remained true of the Liberal administration to the very end. Individual ministries and departments were left to their own devices in initiating stop-gap measures, designed primarily to soften criticism of the government. Not untypical was the fact that, in 1938, the Minister of Municipal Affairs appointed a one-man commission as a "First step aimed at a permanent solution of Saskatchewan's half-breed problem."<sup>18</sup> The man chosen was W.E. Read, whose only qualification for the position was that, for some 58 years, he had owned a general store in Fort Qu'Appelle, through which he had come to know hundreds of Métis personally.<sup>19</sup> The Minister insisted that the Commission would be invaluable in providing the information necessary to get the Métis off welfare rolls and into a through-going rehabilitation program. But in substance, the appointment was little more than a public relations exercise, aimed primarily at quelling the dissatisfaction of the municipalities. It was certainly no accident that the initiative came from the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The Patterson government, however, did introduce one measure which had long-term implications for government policy. That was the decision to establish a Métis rehabilitation colony at Green Lake, located in the Ile a la Crosse district in what at the time was described as the "extreme north."<sup>20</sup> The idea for the scheme seems to have grown out of a meeting in 1939 between the Minister of Education and the Director of the Northern Areas Branch and it was developed as a joint venture by both agencies.<sup>21</sup> It was predicated on the understanding that, as in the case of Indian reserves or Métis colonies in Alberta, Natives could be grouped into a settlement and, through a process of social engineering, moulded into productive members of society.<sup>22</sup> The project involved some 125 Métis families living in the immediate area of Green Lake. Traditionally, they had eked out a meagre existence in hunting, trapping and gardening, but their livelihood had been destroyed by the inroads of Euro-Canadian settlement. Newcomers not only preempted control over the better lands and most of the hay leases in the district, but also impinged on wildlife resources crucial to local subsistence activities.<sup>23</sup>

As a rehabilitation experiment, the Green Lake project had five essential elements. First, in order to reestablish the Métis landbase, the govern-

ment moved White settlers out of the area by exchanging their holdings for comparable land in more settled areas. In turn, Métis families were moved on to the vacated lands, each being allocated a 40 acre plot held on a ninety-nine year lease from the provincial government.<sup>24</sup> Families received some assistance in putting up farm buildings and breaking the land for gardening, as well as odd pieces of farm machinery and some livestock, granted on a credit basis according to the amount of work each family contributed to the community.<sup>25</sup> For those who were more interested in wage labour than in farming, there was the option of receiving a small plot of land in the hamlet of Green Lake itself, but clearly the main thrust of the scheme was to get the residents into mixed farming, or at very least, gardening.

Second, in the very center of the district, a large central farm with all the necessary machinery for large-scale production was established directly under the control of the provincial government.<sup>26</sup> Essentially, it was an imitation of the abortive "model farms" established on Indian reserves in the Canadian west during the early 1880s. The farm was worked by Métis heads of families under the supervision of a White farmer and work crew, and in theory, it was designed to teach the Métis the latest farming techniques, as well as to produce livestock and animal feed for the settlement.<sup>27</sup>

Third, it was deemed absolutely necessary to rely heavily on the cooperation of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>28</sup> The idea of the colony seemingly stemmed from the work of Father E. Lacombe, OMI,<sup>29</sup> and this, combined with the fact that most Métis were Catholic, made it logical that the Church would be an important agent of social change in the settlement.<sup>30</sup> It was the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary who were commissioned to staff the school and set the moral tone for the settlement, and it was one of their number who also acted as a professional nurse under contract from the government.<sup>31</sup>

Fourth, although the colony was located in the north, social planners hinted that Green Lake might also be a potential solution to Native problems in the south. The suggestion was that it could be a prototype for the development of similar colonies in the south; indeed, it was might even figure into a resettlement scheme whereby destitute Métis in the south could be relocated at Green Lake.<sup>32</sup> Officials expressed some doubt that southern Métis could be persuaded to move, but it was clearly understood that Green Lake had implications for Métis rehabilitation in the south.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, unlike Indian reserves or Métis colonies in Alberta, the Green Lake experiment was not grounded in formal legislation. In 1940, the area was designated a Local Improvement District, directly administered by the LID Branch of the Department of Municipal Affairs (Laliberte, 1985:23), but

there was no attempt to make it a Métis homeland or to define it legislatively. By design, Green Lake was to be an administrative experiment in social engineering through which various provincial services would be delivered to a specific disadvantaged group. There was no intention of making the colony a permanent or even long-term scheme; its existence as a special government project was to be only an interim stage in its eventual evolution to municipal status.

In establishing the Green Lake colony, the Patterson government had taken the first tentative step toward devising a public policy on the Native question. It was one of the earliest and most concrete examples of the fact that, as ill-prepared as the province was to deal with Métis problems, the long-standing indifference to the Native plight was no longer possible. Although in some ways it was modelled on the concept of an Indian reserve, Green Lake in a very real sense represented a new departure in Saskatchewan social development: not only was it aimed specifically at a group who in the past had been virtually ignored, but also it mirrored a growing recognition that only through government intervention and new initiatives could a solution be found.

Thus, by the time the CCF swept to power in 1944 the Native issue in Saskatchewan had assumed a certain public profile, at least within the southern portion of the province. There was little public awareness of what was happening in the north, nor any real appreciation of how southern Indians, as federal wards living within provincial borders, figured into the issue. By and large, the Native question was defined in terms of the problems associated with the Métis in the rural municipalities of the south. Within that context, Métis destitution was neither an all-pervasive provincial concern, nor a dangerous political liability with the potential to unseat governments. But it was a practical problem that increasingly tormented municipal and school officials, and it was a moral issue that had the capacity to insight outrage among those who believed in social justice.

### 3

Soon after coming to power, the Douglas government endorsed the Green Lake experiment and, as a matter of public policy, set itself to the task of developing other colonies in the south. This is partially explained by the legacy which the CCF had inherited. Very early on, Douglas received petitions from residents at Green Lake asking him to continue the project.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the predominant opinion in departmental records passed on from the Patterson regime was that, although only in existence for a few years, Green Lake had considerable promise and warranted

imitation in other areas.<sup>35</sup> Given the lack of alternatives and the inexperience of the new administration, such opinion was bound to be persuasive.

Equally important was the fact that the idea of colonies meshed with the philosophical predilections of the CCF. Even before 1944, the party had abandoned most of its left-wing rhetoric in the interest of being elected, and once in power, it jettisoned the remaining socialist trappings in favour of a liberal reformist, or populist, posture (Lipset, 1950: 187-188). There was no attempt to destroy the class structure, nor any impulse to subvert the normal operation of the market economy. On the contrary, a main goal of populist philosophy was to strengthen that economy by curbing vested interests that prevented the small businessman from being competitive. Most of the farmers who supported the CCF believed that poverty and destitution were the product of an economy distorted by monopolists and financiers and that it was the legitimate role of government to liberate the individual from the clutches of such interests.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, many in the CCF were animated by a heightened sense of Christian humanitarianism, often personified by the Premier himself. Douglas and others in the CCF believed fervently in the canons of social gospel, based upon the New Testament emphasis on establishing the Kingdom of God on earth. It was a philosophy premised on the doctrine of love and it proclaimed the sanctity of cooperation as opposed to competition; hence, it represented an explicit rejection of the "survival of the fittest" ethos through which big business rationalized the gap between the rich and poor.<sup>37</sup>

Colonies, as a rehabilitation scheme for the Métis, were entirely in keeping with this thinking because they were seen as a way of making the Métis competitive in mainstream society. By removing the Métis from the road allowances and grouping them into distinct settlements, the government would be able to manipulate the environment to maximize local community development. The understanding was that, if the Métis could not integrate individually, they might do so collectively through the creation of economically-viable, self-sustaining, communities. Through proper training, self-actualization and co-operation, they would evolve as a community of farmers contributing to the regional agrarian economy. The scheme seemed all the more realistic because it was widely assumed that the Métis, as Natives, shared the Indians' reverence for collectivist principles. In practice, this meant that the Douglas government, while in many ways replicating the Green Lake scheme, sought to impose its own philosophical stamp on the development of colonies.

While maintaining Green Lake as the northern limit of its colonization policy, the CCF assumed control over a similar kind of settlement at Lebret in the Qu'Appelle Valley and made it the flagship of Métis rehabilitation in

the south. Under a previous agreement with the Patterson government, the Oblates had operated a farm about a mile north of the village of Lebret for the purpose of employing and training Métis labourers.<sup>38</sup> In 1945, the CCF purchased the farm from the Order, assumed direct control over its operation, and expanded the holdings to two sections. The intent was to make the farm a “model” of a mixed farming community. It functioned as a “work and wages” enterprise, providing adult employment for an average of nine families and supporting about sixty-five people.<sup>39</sup> In addition, Lebret was designed as a support agency for the development of other colonies in the south. Not only did government personnel from Lebret offer advice and direction for colonization elsewhere, but also Lebret's heavy machinery, livestock and crops were used to aid development of those colonies during the start-up phase.<sup>40</sup> Although there were approximately thirty municipalities containing sizable Métis enclaves, it was only in those areas where the problems seemed especially acute that additional settlements were established. By the late forties, there were colonies at Crooked Lakes, Lestock, Crescent Lake, Baljennie, Willow Bunch, Duck Lake and Glen Mary and they, along with Green Lake and Lebret, contained about 2500 Métis residents.<sup>41</sup> Administratively, Green Lake remained under the jurisdiction of the LID branch, while the southern colonies came under the control of the Department of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation (DSWR) which, in cooperation with other departments, oversaw the delivery of all services to the colonies.

Central to the creation of a colony was the establishment of a school, administered directly by the Department of Education but financed by the DSWR. In some cases a new school was built and in others an older building was hauled to the site. There was also one instance where the children were bused to a nearby village school comprised mainly of Métis children.<sup>42</sup> Close to the school, lots were divided off and assigned to incoming families on a long-term lease. In addition to housing classroom instruction for the children, the school building was designed to serve the wider interests of the community, providing facilities for recreation, adult education classes, and meetings of every description. The school, in fact, was meant to be the birthplace of community identity and development.

By design, the curriculum tended to be “culture specific” and fashioned as an instrument of integration through which Métis children eventually would be absorbed into the work force. Unlike the Patterson government before it, the CCF administration believed in adult education and the possibility of improving the outlook and standards of the older generation; but like its predecessor, it also believed that the greatest potential for Native integration rested in the education of the children.<sup>43</sup> That potential,

however, could only be realized through an altered school curriculum which would acknowledge the cultural differences and special circumstances of the Métis.<sup>44</sup> In practice, this translated into a school system which aimed at basic literacy but emphasized vocational training appropriate to the rural economy. There was no expectation that Métis children would aspire to the professional ranks, nor were even the most accomplished students earmarked for anything but additional vocational education.<sup>45</sup> The curriculum in fact had a very definite race/class bias.

The administration of the colonies mirrored a rather uneasy alliance between the CCF and the Catholic Church. Before and after coming to power, the Douglas regime did everything in its power to reassure the Catholic community that the CCF could not be equated with communism and its promotion of a godless society. The CCF, it was argued, was in the tradition of the British and Australian Labour Parties and neither represented an assault on private ownership nor an attempt to substitute materialist culture for spiritual values.<sup>46</sup> In radio broadcasts and editorials, the Premier in particular vehemently insisted that the brand of socialism represented by the CCF was in complete harmony with the teaching of the Christian community.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, it was evident that, ideologically, the new government was opposed to denominational privilege of any sort and was decidedly hostile to church-run school systems supported by tax dollars, especially Catholic Indian residential schools. In 1947, Morris Shumiatcher—at the time a special legal advisor to the Premier—provoked a reaction in the Catholic community when he suggested publically that Catholic control over Indian Residential schools had been a disaster for Indian education.<sup>48</sup> These and similar comments by high-ranking politicians only served to embitter relations with local school officials, especially in the Métis communities where the Catholic church often represented entrenched authority. Douglas soon realized that his colonization projects were very much dependent on the good will of the local priests and that it would be expedient to arrive at an accommodation. For this reason, the cooperation with the Church started at Green Lake under the Liberals was not only continued but also expanded to the development of colonies in the south. Not untypical was the appointment of Father Blanchard to the staff of the Department of Welfare. Blanchard was a favourite of local municipal officials and school teachers and was a specialist in teaching cooperative principles. He served in an advisory capacity to the Métis Management Board of the Lacerte Co-op Farm (Willow Bunch) and he was personally responsible for organizing various co-operative projects on other colonies.<sup>49</sup>

Co-operatives, combined with a self-help philosophy, were generally

seen as the instruments of effective community development in the colonies. In keeping with social democratic understanding, Métis families were encouraged in every way possible to maximize their own potential through active participation in community-based activities. Special agents appointed by DSWR as well as representatives from the Department of Co-operatives acted as instructors and organizing agents in mobilizing collective community action.<sup>50</sup> The first step was usually the organization of a savings union, with each member required to make a small deposit on a weekly basis, no matter how small the amount. The fund eventually was used to finance community projects, including cooperative gardens, wood cutting, livestock raising, and winter fishing. As an incentive to co-operative organization, the government normally provided various kinds of assistance, including long-term interest-free loans to finance the purchase of land or members' homes.

Among the most ambitious schemes were attempts to organize farm production co-operatives. After the second World War, co-operative farms had sprung into existence in various parts of the province, and although they were never that successful, in their heyday they were perceived as an important innovation in allowing small landowners to participate in large scale farming. (MacPherson, 1984:190-191) In the case of the colonies, only two such farms were created—the Lacerte Co-op (Willow Bunch) and Blanchard Co-op (Lestock)—and neither proved viable for precisely the same reason farm co-operatives did not do well elsewhere. Large-scale land development required massive capital, a high degree of managerial skill and a renunciation of private ownership. In the Métis colonies, as elsewhere, all three were seldom present. (MacPherson, 1984:190-191; Bennett and Krueger, in Lipset, 1950:355-356).

#### 4

During the first decade of operation, colonies were portrayed as a huge success by the provincial government and that was the impression communicated to both the popular press and other levels of government. In reality, the scheme was laced with administrative and structural problems which, despite some additional reforms, continued to persist. By the mid-fifties, serious doubts were being raised about the viability of Métis colonies, and by the end of the decade, the CCF administration had largely abandoned colonies as a solution to the Métis problem.

Of fundamental importance was the fact that the CCF had misinterpreted what Métis people wanted. It was simply assumed that an agrarian existence was the most appropriate means to Métis self-sufficiency. Even

as late as 1954, the Premier was still insisting that “Only in this way can they ever hope to make a decent living and to become part of our society.”

<sup>52</sup> In actual fact, many in the colonies were more interested in wage labour than in working the land. This was true in virtually all settlements. Indeed, in Green Lake the indifference to farming was so pronounced that in the late forties the LID branch completely revamped the land allotment system.

<sup>53</sup> Under the new scheme, a 40 acre plot was granted to settlers for only a 33-year term, with the possibility of leasing an adjoining 40 acres once the clearing and breaking of the first plot—a task performed by government crews using machinery from the Central Farm—had been paid for by the lessee. Thereafter, the actual farming operation on the various plots was carried out, not by the lessees, but by the government on a share crop basis. The families who held the leases stood to gain a small income, assuming there was some profit after the government had deducted operating costs and any outstanding rents owed by the lessee. But essentially, although lessees might be employed as farm labourers, they were no longer expected or encouraged to farm their own lands as independent producers.

A similar kind of problem figured into the widespread failure of the various co-operative programs. Departmental reports clearly indicate that, despite government incentives and prodding, the Métis found most co-op ventures, especially production co-operatives, an alienating and unworkable experience. Not untypical was the Lebret winter fishing co-op. By 1956, after two seasons of operation, there were only a handful of members; before the fishing season began, two members decided not to participate and a third took a job on the railway; this left only two members who then proceeded to buy out the interests of the others at “depreciated value” and transform the operation into a private venture. <sup>54</sup> Likewise, the Blanchard farm co-operative at Lestock seems to have been in crisis almost from the very beginning. The Métis co-op purchased a quarter section of land from the DSWR through an agreement calling for a \$400 down-payment and thirty annual payments of \$500. The co-op was able to come up with the down payment, but could pay only a portion of the first annual payment and quickly fell in arrears. <sup>55</sup> Within two years, the land was returned to the government and the farm co-op transformed into a house-purchasing co-operative. <sup>56</sup> To explain the failure, some Métis pointed to the fact that members on welfare did not fully commit themselves to making the farm a success because they feared that their social aid would be cut back, <sup>57</sup> while bigoted Whites in the town of Lestock blamed the improvident character of the Métis. <sup>58</sup> The real explanation, however, was that co-operative principles were largely anathema to what the Métis themselves

wanted.

Production co-operatives in particular were often torn apart with infighting, bickering and sometimes an inability to distinguish between private and co-operative property. In the Blanchard co-operative, meetings were stormy and ruckus affairs. This was especially so on one occasion when it was discovered that some individuals had been using co-op machinery for private gain.<sup>59</sup> Such problems were endemic to co-operative organization, especially during the start-up phase, and the Métis were no different than people elsewhere. What was different was that the continuing poverty of the Métis not only enhanced social tension but also acted as a barrier to mobilizing effective labour. At Lestock, for example, the Blanchard members commonly ran up bills at the local stores during the winter months. To pay them off, employable males had no choice but to leave the colony early in the spring in order to secure wage labour and this often meant that the only people left to carry on the farm operation during the summer were “unmarried mothers, widows or those who are physically unable to carry on the work.”<sup>60</sup> Also at play was the fact that the most active and most ambitious members were not interested in farming cooperatively. What they wanted was to own their own land or develop their own business, and when they found out this was not possible, they simply quit the colony and moved on. In the case of Blanchard, almost all of the original members left the colony within the first year or so, and as DSWR reports admitted, they “...have improved their lot a good deal by so doing.”<sup>64</sup> On all colonies, there was considerable unhappiness over the lack of opportunity to develop privately owned and Métis-controlled businesses. According to an official at Green Lake:

Many of their complaints may be imaginary; but some of them are justified. The root cause of dissatisfaction is not so much policies or specific actions of individuals, but the growing wish of the natives to run their own businesses.<sup>62</sup>

The fact was that co-operatives very much ran against the grain of what most aspiring Métis wanted. And those who tried to make a go of the co-operatives were often those least able to provide the labour and commitment needed to make the co-op a success. Co-operatives, like farming itself, represented one more example of the government's misreading of Native society.

The unwillingness of government to individualize some of the economic activity in the colonies stemmed from something other than an ideological commitment to collectivist principles. In point of fact, government functionaries—especially at the local level—doubted the competence of Métis people. This was clearly indicated in the discouragement of elected advi-

sory councils in the colonies and of individual business activities.<sup>63</sup> Commenting on the Canwood district, local DSWR reports insisted that the Métis lacked the value system necessary for success and that they could not benefit from government programs unless they were constantly supervised.<sup>64</sup> The pessimism about the Métis character in general was a constant refrain in numerous field reports and explains why the government, despite petitions from the Métis for a loan system to finance farm purchases and small businesses,<sup>65</sup> did little to assist Métis entrepreneurship outside the co-operative movement. In a stereotypical way, officials tended to see Métis as being only manual labourers, lacking the attributes needed for upward social mobility, and in at least one instance, this had the effect of widening race and class divisions. During the late fifties, the LID Branch encouraged White people to move into Green Lake in order to operate stores, cafes, filling stations and other small businesses.<sup>66</sup> In effect, the Métis were systematically excluded from the more remunerative activities and relegated to the role of waitresses, janitors and other forms of casual labour in the service industry.<sup>67</sup> The fact that no attempt was made to include the Métis in the business community was a clear reflection of the class limitations of the government's rehabilitation program, and in the end, it served to inflame racial tensions in the community.

Another problem was that the purpose of government policy was not always honoured at the local level. It was one thing to have the cabinet determine policy but it was quite another matter when it came to having local officials implement that policy in a way that did not violate the intent. In the mid-fifties, for example, the government decided to take a number of families from Lestock, Glen Mary and Baljennie in the south and relocate them at Green Lake in the north. The families came from areas that had a weak economic base, and even when employment for farm labourers was available, officials suspected that the Métis were being exploited as cheap labour.<sup>68</sup> Also, there was concern about inbreeding and the possibility that the limited gene pool was causing health problems.<sup>69</sup> The intent was to relocate the families in the Green Lake settlement where there were greater opportunities for wage labour, as well as a wider and more varied social context for marriage. The families themselves were closely consulted; a delegation from each community was sent to Green Lake to check out the advantages; and families were given free transportation and various incentives, including money, homesites, building materials and assistance in breaking the land for gardens. And yet within two years of their arrival, many of the families had left Green Lake and returned to former districts. In the case of Lestock immigrants, Green Lake officials blamed the failure on their "nomadic nature," but the real reason was contained in a confidential

memorandum to the Director of Rehabilitation from a DSWR Supervisor who had been asked to look into the matter. According to the Supervisor, the man in charge at Green Lake believed that the newcomers were a “shifty bunch” who could not be relied upon to stay, and so had done very little to assist them in getting started. As he put it, “...although I have no proof of this, these people were not really given all the encouragement they might have been, and consequently felt that they were not treated the same as the others, thereby forcing them to leave.”<sup>70</sup> The incident speaks to the fact that, as well meaning as the relocation scheme may have been, the arbitrary and capricious actions of local officials sometimes undermined the intent of government policy.

Not all distortions of policy, however, happened without full departmental compliance, and in some instances, rehabilitation policy took second place to expediency. Departments delivering services to the colonies were under constant pressure to trim expenditures and this occasionally had the effect of victimizing the very people for whom programs were meant. In 1955, the DSWR revealed that the LID branch, with the full knowledge of the Municipal Affairs Department, had been purposely restricting welfare benefits in Green Lake. Not only had the branch actively discouraged social aid applications, but for those receiving various kinds of “categorical assistance,” such as mothers' allowances and old age pensions, it had been paying out fewer benefits than recipients were entitled to by law.<sup>71</sup> The ostensible purpose for these practices was to reduce social aid costs,<sup>72</sup> but given the fact that such costs were automatically billed back to the DSWR, it seems unlikely that that was the real reason. On the contrary, it is entirely possible that the policy stemmed from the fact that, as one of the largest employers in the Green Lake area, the LID branch stood to benefit directly from a restricted welfare system. The branch owned a central farm, centralized farm operations on the plots, a winter logging operation and a summer milling business, and in each case, financial viability was dependent on modest wage demands. According to DSWR reports, past practices of the branch had had the effect of suppressing wage scales in the area,<sup>73</sup> and it may well be that restricted welfare was meant to keep employable adults in the labour market as well as reduce wage expectations. This may also explain why the Métis from Lestock had found Green Lake unacceptable as a relocation center.

An even more troublesome problem had to do with the weak economic base of the colonies. Generally, colonies were located on marginal lands which had been purchased by DSWR from private owners or leased from other government departments. The inability of the land to sustain meaningful development became increasingly apparent, especially in contrast to

the burgeoning economic opportunities in other rural areas and in the cities. In the late fifties, there was a dramatic increase in cottage development in the Qu'Appelle Valley owing to better highways from Regina and "Monday closings," and this acted as a magnet in drawing the Métis away from Lebret in search of summer employment on the beaches.<sup>74</sup> Likewise, the development of industries in the urban areas, especially Regina and Prince Albert, led to a veritable exodus of Métis from the rural area to the cities. Officials at Willow Bunch said that as many as two-thirds of the Métis population had left the area and similar findings were reported for Crescent Lake and Lestock.<sup>75</sup> The result was that colonies increasingly became repositories of unemployed and unemployable dependents subsisting on government programs. during winter months, when there was less demand for casual labour, there was a slight reversal in the trend in so far as "unemployed employable" often returned to the colonies in search of social assistance and a place to stay until the spring.<sup>76</sup> But colonies never evolved into economically self-sustaining communities and this was as true of Green Lake as it was of the southern colonies. The only real difference was that at Green Lake the migrants moved, not to the cities, but to the far north before returning to the colony for the winter months.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the result was the same: the persistence of poverty, dependency and social problems for those who remained.<sup>78</sup>

The irresistible conclusion drawn from all of this was that colonies did not work. The government, of course, attempted to put the best face on the situation and as late as 1964 even recommended to the Indian Affairs Department that the Green Lake model be adopted as a formula for the evolution of Indian reserves to municipal status.<sup>79</sup> Well before that, however, the enthusiasm for colonies had waned. The change was denoted in the contention that there was no short-term solution to the Métis problem and in the admission, at long last, that not all Métis wanted to be farmers. The new orthodoxy also condemned colonies as a form of segregation that perpetuated Métis poverty. As the Director of Rehabilitation concluded in 1960,

It would seem that the objectives for these people can only be accomplished over a long period of time—probably several generations. If human are the produce of their hereditary nature and the environment in which they live, there is not likely to be a quick road to success for these people.

Many people automatically think in terms of rehabilitation farms of various kinds for them, either as co-operative ventures or work and wages projects. I don't believe that all Métis are natural agriculturists [*sic*] any more than non-Métis are.

I have considerable apprehension about long-term results of the con-

centration (deliberate or not) on the government's part of Métis people in such areas as Lestock, Crescent Lake, Green Lake, etc. These people are segregated from the community at large and the economic base of the area or least that portion available to them can only continue their depression.<sup>80</sup>

The strategy now adopted by the government was to de-segregate Métis society by accelerating migration from the rural areas to the town and cities, with the ultimate goal of urban integration. In 1959, there was some talk about the DSWR taking over the administration of Green Lake and maintaining it as a colony, but the proposal was squarely rejected by the Director of Welfare:

Our policy as regards depressed groups such as this, is designed to help them leave the Métis community and become part of the large community. We would hesitate to take on a project of this kind and maintain a policy on segregation... This is foreign to our philosophy as our programs are designed to integrate Métis with other people.<sup>81</sup>

Those who remained in the rural areas as depressed groups would be supported as welfare recipients, but the whole concept of special settlements was now foresworn as government policy. Wisdom dictated that pre-apprenticeship and vocational training appropriate to city life would be the new focus of Métis education, although academic training for some students was also sanctioned. The benchmark of success was now the extent to which Métis children were leaving the rural areas for employment in the cities. As a report on Lebret proudly proclaimed in 1960, "There are no children on the project not going to school. All of the older children are employed away from the valley. Most are in our cities in steady employment."<sup>82</sup> The change in policy was a repudiation of rural-based rehabilitation and it was the first step toward re-defining the Métis problem as an urban phenomenon.

## 5

Conclusions about the CCF in relation to Métis colonies must be provisional because in themselves the settlements represented only one of many CCF policy initiatives in the Native field. At very least, a proper evaluation would have to include the revolutionary changes in welfare legislation, the reforms introduced in the northern part of the province and the CCF stance on Indian affairs. Nevertheless, the history of colonies does permit some tentative judgements about the CCF government.

It is quite clear that, in terms of reformist zeal and sense of humanitarian mission, the CCF represented a sharp departure from past governments. During the Patterson era, welfare had been crassly manipulated as part of

the patronage system mobilized to win elections,<sup>83</sup> while the problems that plagued Métis society were simply an embarrassment obviated with band-aid solutions. What was radical about the Douglas government was not so much the content of its Native policies but a sense of real commitment firmly anchored in the precepts of social justice and human dignity. While there were those in the CCF who may have sensed some political advantage in winning the support of the Métis, existing correspondence and departmental records clearly indicate that the colonies received government services as a matter of legal and moral right, not out of political partisanship. What was also dramatically different about the Douglas government was the enduring faith in the potential of Native people to take control of their own lives as a pre-condition to integration. That faith was given vivid expression in the concept of self-help and the development of co-operatives. Although it was sometimes based on a stereotypical misreading of Native society, and shaken by the actual failure of colonies, it nevertheless remained a central feature of CCF thought.

At the same time, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the CCF was not terribly original in its approach to Métis rehabilitation. Indeed, it is entirely evident that, far from pioneering new solutions, the government was very much a prisoner of prevailing social thought. The whole idea of Métis colonies, both in Alberta and Saskatchewan, had been the brainchild of the Catholic Church, and in the latter province, much of the groundwork had already been laid by the Liberal government when the CCF came to power. It is true that many of the features most characteristic of the colonies—community development, self-actualization, co-operatives—were introduced by the Douglas regime; however, it is equally true that the overarching purpose and rationalization for Métis reformation were remarkably similar to those for Indian reserves. Although colonies represented a form of separation from mainstream society, it was always understood that the central purpose of segregation was a training process whose ultimate goal was social integration. Throughout the Douglas era, this was the *raison d'être* of Native reform, although the self-evident failure of colonies necessitated a re-definition of how integration was to be accomplished. Community-development programs implied that colonies would meld with rural society as self-sufficient communities; but when out-migration from the colonies undermined that assumption, CCF policy made a virtue of necessity and conceded that integration would take place on an individual basis in a largely urban setting. Indian Affairs had long since arrived at the same conclusion about reserves, and for the same reason, had already instituted policies aimed at breaking down the isolation of reserve communities as a first step to integrating Indians into provincial populations (Barron, 1984).

It was precisely the integrationist goals of the CCF, coupled with its strong egalitarian strain, that locked the Douglas government into conventional solutions. There was no experimentation with even minor forms of self-determination, nor any acknowledgement of national or even special status for the Métis. This was clearly illustrated in 1952 when the Green Lake Co-operative Association was advised by the resident Director of the Saskatchewan Marketing Services not to include the word "Métis" in the name of their organization. As he explained, "I strongly urged them not to use the word...since we are looking forward to the day when all citizens of Saskatchewan are of equal status, regardless of race, colour and creed. I therefore urged them not to brand themselves with any name indicating special race or colour."<sup>84</sup> Métis people received government services as disadvantaged people, not by virtue of Aboriginal status. Among other things, this meant that the CCF did little to encourage the political organization of the Métis or to give the existing Métis society any real role in the development of colonies. Ironically, the Douglas government was very involved in the organization of a provincial Indian organization mainly because it wanted an Indian collective to bolster its own position in confrontations with the Indian Affairs Department, especially after Diefenbaker came to power in the late fifties. But because the Métis were a provincial responsibility, there was little benefit—and some liability—in encouraging a Métis organization that had the potential to obstruct CCF reforms.

In the final analysis, the development of colonies spoke to the inherent conservatism of the Douglas government. Even the economic framework within which rehabilitation was to take place owed little to radical thinking. The fact is that the co-operative movement in Saskatchewan had grown up as the hand-maiden of the wheat economy and at no time were co-ops ever rationalized as a repudiation of capitalism *per se*. On the contrary, they were essentially a means of making the "little guy" more competitive in a capitalist system (Bennett and Krueger, 1950:351), and it was expressly within that context that co-operatives were developed for Métis colonies.

By the same token, for all its faith in Métis rehabilitation, the CCF could not shake off the prevailing class/racial perceptions about Native people. At no time did the government ever vary from the premise that, for the most part, Métis participation in the economy would take place through vocation training at the working-class level of society. In one sense, this was a logical conclusion based on the general lack of education in the Métis community; but it also reflected the racist belief, expressed especially after the failure of colonies became apparent, that there was something inherently wrong with the Métis character. While CCF rhetoric commonly attributed poverty and social abuse to the evils of the capitalist system, the government's

critique of the so-called "Métis problem" not infrequently blamed the Métis themselves for their own misfortune. The fact that the Director of Rehabilitation in 1960 alluded to the Métis "hereditary nature" (above) as a barrier to immediate reform was itself a vivid expression of the perceived racial limitation to both rehabilitation and upward social mobility.

## NOTES

1. This study is confined to the period of Douglas' premiership, ending in 1961 when Douglas resigned from office in order to assume the leadership of the federal NDP party. The focus on this period is not meant to suggest that Douglas was the CCF or that the CCF was a spent force after his departure. Rather, it reflects the fact that it was during Douglas' reign that the main parameters of the government's Native policies were defined, with little of importance being added during the last few years of the regime.
2. This is not to say that nothing has been written about the Native policies of the CCF. Dobbin has published a couple of articles on the government's policies in the north (1982;1985) and his book (1981) touches on the topic. Likewise, Littlejohn has written a doctoral dissertation on CCF education policies (1983). Nevertheless, there remains a dearth of information concerning the government's relationship to the Native community. Not untypical is Lipset's classic study on *Agrarian Socialism* (1950). The text of the book comprises nearly 350 pages, but its entire treatment of the Native issue consists of only a one-sentence oblique reference to a vilage of Métis, mistakenly describes as "French Indians." The same can also be said about the numerous biographies of the premier. The only exception is Shackleton's *Tommy Douglas* (1975), and even there, only three pages are devoted to Native policy and the discussion is little more than a laundry list of disjointed, and sometimes inaccurate, facts. There is little interpretive value and vew meaningful judgments about what the CCF actually accomplished in the Native area.
3. The term "colonies" is not found in correspondence and reports pertaining to Métis rehabilitation. Officials referred to the settlements as projects. Nevertheless, the term seems appropriate in light of CCF policies and is in keeping with the concept of "neo-colonialism," used by Dobbin and others (see Dobbin, 1985:7-40). The only literature on the colonies in print is in reference to Green Lake. Symington has

published one article (1953) , but it was written in 1953 and tends to be largely descriptive and unduly sympathetic. Likewise, Laliberte has published a three-page account (1985). It is very general and contains some glaring inaccuracies.

4. Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), Department of Education, Ed Addendum, file 49, Métis Schools, 19 June 1941.
5. SAB, T. C. Douglas Papers, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1, file XL 859 b(44), 13 July 1949.
6. See SAB, Department of Education, Ed Addendum, file 49, Métis Schools, RCMP "F" Division Report, 18 May 1944).
7. SAB, Department of Education, ED Addendum, file 49, Métis Schools, re. Métis and ST. Vital RCSSD No. 3, 2 May 1941.
8. SAB, Department of Education, Ed Addendum, File 49, Métis Schools, Special Report, 30 July 1943.
9. Idem.
10. Ibid., Superintendent of Schools to Deputy Minister of Education, Re. Pebble Lake SD no. 316, 28 Oct. 1941.
11. Idem.
12. "Indian Half-Breeds Cause Concern," Yorkton Enterprise, 21 January 1943.
13. Idem.
14. Idem.
15. "Conditions of Indian Half-Breeds Appalling Says Magistrate Potter," Yorkton Enterprise, 13 Aug. 1942.
16. Idem.
17. Archives Deschatelets, Province of Manitoba, L 282.M27T e, Premier W.A. Patterson to Rev. Alfred Beaudin, 5 Oct 1936
18. "Government Picks Métis Investigator," Regina Leader Post, 34 Apr. 1938.
19. Idem.
20. Located 35 miles northeast of Meadow Lake, Green Lake was on the northern fringe of Saskatchewan agricultural settlement. The soil was light and sandy, and at the time, the main crops were oats, barley and wheat. Star Phoenix [Saskatoon], 21 Sept. 1949.
21. SAB, Department of Education, Ed Addendum, File 49, Métis Schools, Hon. J. Estey to Hon. I. Schultz, 17 June 1941.
22. SAB, Department of Education, Ed Addendum, File 49, Métis Schools,

Commissioner G.J. Matte to the Hon. Ivan Schultz, 19 June 1941.

23. Idem.

24. Idem.

25. Idem.

26. Idem.

27. Idem.

28. Idem.

29. Indian Missionary Record, Nov. 1945.

30. Historically, the idea of a Métis colony or reserve was closely associated with Catholic missions in the west. During negotiations ending the Riel Rebellion in Manitoba, Father Ritchot had broached the idea to Prime Minister Macdonald. Likewise in 1879, Bishop Tache of St. Boniface once more raised the issue, this time with the Minister of the Interior as a solution to the destitution of Métis throughout the west. But the most determined advocate of Métis reserves was the Reverend Albert Lacombe, one of the first Oblates to be sent to the Territories and a man devoted to the welfare of Indians and Métis alike. In support of Métis colonization, Lacombe was able to win over his ecclesiastical superiors, Bishops Langevin and Grandin, and in 1895 he drew up a comprehensive plan which was forwarded to the federal government. The scheme called for a reserve on which was forwarded to the federal government. The scheme called for a reserve on which the landless destitute Métis of the west would be relocated; and it included provision for voluntary residence (unlike Indian reserves), usufruct land tenure, government assistance, and an agrarian sedentary existence. Almost immediately, the Ministry of the Interior agreed to the plan and to implement it set aside two townships in the vicinity of Egg and Saddle Lakes (modern-day Alberta). The new colony, which Lacombe named Saint-Paul-des-Métis, was placed directly under the authority of the Catholic Church. Father Adeodat Therien was appointed resident manager of the project; the Board of Management included Lacombe, the three western Bishops and two lay members appointed by them; and the Episcopal Corporations of the three Catholic dioceses were granted four sections of lease land to support the creation of a residential school. For more than a decade, Saint-Paul struggled for its existence, only to collapse in 1909. But the idea of Métis colonies persisted, especially in ecclesiastical and political circles, and it was within that context that the Patterson government inaugurated the Green Lake colony (see Stanley, 1978

[2]: 75-107).

31. Indian Missionary Record, Nov. 1945; SAB, Department of Education, Ed Addendum, File 49, Métis Schools, commissioner Matte to Hon. Ivan Schultz, 19 June 1941.
32. *Ibid.*, J.W. Estey to Dr. J.H. Mckechnie, 13 March 1941.
33. *Idem.*
34. SAB, T.C. Douglas Papers, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1, File XL.859a(44), Jos. Aubichon to Hon. TC Douglas, 25 July 1944
35. See, for example, SAB, Department of Education, Ed Addendum, File 49, Métis Schools, G. Matte to Hon. I. Schultz, 19 June 1941.
36. Arthur K. Davis, "The Saskatchewan CCF The Unfinished Battle for the Shire," Unpublished Manuscript, p.24, Public Archives of Canada (PAC), MG 32 C28, Vol 152, File Davis...
37. *Ibid.*, p.25
38. Archives Deschatelets, Province of Manitoba, L 282.M27T 41, Edmund Bridges to Carl P. Frank, 20 Jan. 1945.
39. Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare of the Province of Saskatchewan for the Fiscal Year 1955-56 (Regina: King's Printer), p.32.
40. Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare of the Province of Saskatchewan for the Fiscal Year 1953-4 (Regina: king's Printer), p.39.
41. This is only a rough estimate. There were about 1500 Métis receiving "direct assistance" in organized areas in 1848 (SAB, TC Douglas Papers, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1, File CL 859b(44), Minutes of Prairie Inter-Provincial Conference, held on 13 July 1949), while Green Lake had an estimated population of 850 in 1953 (Symington, 1953:128). This would place the total figure at slightly less than 2500, represented approximately 25 to 30 percent of the provincial Métis population by the late 1940s.
42. This is a reference to Lebret.
43. The contrast in perspective is indicated in the 1941 comments of the Commissioner of the Northern Areas Branch in reference to the establishment of Green Lake. The Commissioner argued that adults could only be educated in gardening and small-scale farming as a supplement to their meagre returns in trapping and fishing, and that the only real hope in absorbing the Métis was the education of their children. SAB, Department of Education, Ed Addendum, File 49, Métis Schools, Commissioner Matte to Hon. Ivan Schultz, 19 June 1941.

44. The importance of an altered curriculum for the Métis had been recognized earlier by the Patterson government in establishing Green Lake. In 1941, the Commissioner of the Northern Areas Branch noted how inadequate the regular public school course was where Métis people were concerned. He went on to say that "...it is my hope that a more practical curriculum for the school will be put into effect. I believe it is obvious that what is needed more for these people in the matter of education is moral and manual instruction." *Idem*.
45. At Lebret, for example, small children were abused to the local school in the village where they received a basic education in the three "Rs," but teenagers seem to have received very little academic training. According to a DSWR report, the Lebret colony "...provides some instruction in homemaking and health care. It provides training in modern farm methods and helps to develop knowledge, skills and work habit among teen-age boys living on the farm. In view of the increasing mechanization of farm operations the training of teen-agers is aimed at helping the Métis find a place in the economy of the province." *Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare of the Province of Saskatchewan for the Fiscal Year 1955-6* (Regina: King's Printer), p. 32.
46. Henry Somerville, "Many Catholics Vote CCF?" *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 2 Aug. 1943.
47. T.C. Douglas, "Religion and the CCF" Radio Broadcast, printed in *Saskatchewan Commonwealth*, 15 Nov. 1943.
48. "Dr. Shumiatcher's Charges," *Indian Missionary Record*, Dec. 1947.
49. SAB., DSWR, Willow Bunch Project Report, R85-308 933, File III, 41, Hon. J.H. Sturdy to J.S. White, 6 April 1953.
50. *Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare of the Province of Saskatchewan for the Fiscal Year 1955-6* (Regina: King's Printer), pp. 31-2.
51. SAB, T.C. Douglas Papers, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1 XL. 859 c(44), Correspondence between John Sturdy and J.S. White, 10/14 June 1954.
52. SAB, T.C. Douglas Papers, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1 XL.859 c(44), Douglas to Alex Bishop, 4 May 1954.
53. All details of the 1848 revisions in land allotment are taken from SAB, DSWR, Green Lake Project, R85-308 933, File III 30.
54. SAB, DSWR, Lebret Co-operative, R85-308 933, File III 40, W. Guthrie to K Forster, 26 Jan. 1956.

55. SAB, DSWR, Lestock Project, R85-308 933, File III 31b, K. Forster to J.S. White, 12 march 1956; and W. Guthrie to K. Forster, 20 Dec. 1956.
56. Ibid., W. Guthrie to K. Forster, 27 Sept. 1957.
57. Ibid., W. Guthrie to K. Forster, 27 Jan. 1956.
58. Ibid., W. Guthrie to K. Forster, 20 Dec. 1956.
59. Ibid., Father Blanchard's Report on the Letstock Project in regard to local meetings held in De. 1954.
60. Ibid., W. Guthrie to K. Forster, 27 Jan. 1956.
61. Ibid., W. Guthrie to K. Forster, 27 Sept. 1957.
62. SAB, T.C. Douglas Papers, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1, File XL 859 b(44), James Gray to Harold Chapman, 19 Mar. 1952.
63. In the mid-forties, the government made provision for an advisory council at Green Lake. The council was to be elected annually by secret ballot and represent the settlement in discussion with the inspector appointed by Municipal Affairs to supervise the community. But the council never functioned according to plan and quickly fell into disuse. A decade later, the lack of a local council figured into DSWR's criticism of the LID branch's administration of Green Lake: "there does not appear to be any plan whereby the Métis can participate in planning community life. It was felt that the Métis should have a part in decision making and planning their future as much of the planning was superimposed on them." In response, the branch did agree to establish a committee of eight Métis with limited authority over local matters. See Saskatchewan Commonwealth, 23 Jan. 1946; and SAB, DSWR, Green Lake Project, R85-308 933, File III 30, Report of Pre-Conference Meeting of 26 Aug. 1955; and Report on 1955 Green Lake conference.
64. SAB, DSWR, Canwood Métis Study, R85-308 933, File III 1b, 1956.
65. A resolution calling for government loans for business and other purposes was passed unanimously at a Métis convention in Regina in 1949. "Sturdy Addresses Métis Convention," Regina Post Leader, 16 July 1949.
66. SAB, DSWR, Green Lake Project, R85-308 933, File III 30, R. Talbot to J. White, 16 Dec. 1959.
67. Idem.
68. There was one case in the Baljennie area where the Métis were used as cheap labour by another Métis who was a large land owner. SAB, DSWR, Baljennie Settlers, R85-308 933, File III 2, J. Elliott to Admin-

- istrator of the LID Branch, 10 Feb. 1955.
69. *Idem.*
  70. SAB, DSWR, Green Lake Project, R85-308 933, File III 30 W. Haggett to K. Forster, 28 Oct. 1953.
  71. *Ibid.*, Green Lake (Conference), p. 3.
  72. *Idem.*
  73. *Idem.*
  74. SAB, DSWR, Métis—General Correspondence, R85-308, File III 23, K. Forster to R. Talbot, 19 Apr. 1960.
  75. *Idem.*
  76. *Idem.*
  77. SAB, DSWR, Green Lake Project, R85-308 933, File III 30, Report by L.E. Brierley RE. Green Lake Community (1955).
  78. *Idem.*
  79. "Indians Asked to Consider Joining Municipal System," *Star Phoenix* (Saskatoon), 25 Sept. 1964.
  80. SAB, DSWR, Métis—General Correspondence, R85-308 933, File III 23, K. Forster to R. Talbot, 19 Apr. 1960.
  81. SAB, DSWR, Green Lake Project, R85-308 933, File III 30, R. Talbot to J. White, 16 Dec. 1959.
  82. SAB, T.C. Douglas Papers, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1 XL.859 c(44), J. White to A Nicholson, 5 Aug. 1960.
  83. It was common to dole out relief just before an election and cut it back afterwards, especially in constituencies which had returned an opposition candidate. See the reference to the plight of the Métis in the Lebret area following the election of 1944. SAB, DSWR, T.C. Douglas Paper, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1, File XL 859 a(44), Premier's Office to J Brockelbank, 18 Sept. 1944.
  84. SAB, T.C. Douglas Papers, Files of the Premier, "Métis," R-33.1, File XL 859 b(44), James Gray to Harold Chapman, 19 Mar. 1952.

## REFERENCES

Barron, F. L.

- 1984 A Summary of Federal Indian Policy in the Canadian West, 1867-1984. *Native Studies Review* 1(1):28-39.

Dobbin, Murray

1981 *One-And-A-Half-Men: The Story of Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris, Métis Patriots of the Twentieth Century*. Vancouver: New Star Books.

1982 CCF-NDP Northern Policies: A Continuation of Neo-Colonialism. *Briarpatch* 11(10):18-20.

1985 Prairie Colonialism: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan, 1944-1964. *Studies in Political Economy* 16:7-40.

Laliberte, Larry

1985 *New Breed* 16(7).

Lipset, Seymour

1950 *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Littlejohn, Cathy

1983 *A Historical Background of the Indian and Northern Education Program*. University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta.

MacPherson, Ian

1984 The CCF and the Co-operative Movement in the Douglas Years: An Uneasy Alliance, pp. 190-191, in J. William Brennan (Editor): *Building the Co-Operative Commonwealth: Essays on the Democratic Socialist Tradition in Canada*. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center.

Shackleton, Doris

1975 *Tommy Douglas*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd.

Stanley, George F.G.

1978 Alberta's Half-Breed Reserve Saint-Paul-des-Métis 1896-1909, pp. 75-107 in Antoine S. Lussier and D. Bruce Sealey (Editors): *The Other Natives: the-les Métis*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Métis Federation Press.

Symington, D.F.

1953 Métis Rehabilitation. *Canadian Geographical Journal*:128-139.