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Vol. 14, #12

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Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
Ministère des Affaires Indiennes et du Nord canadien

Indian NEWS

Vol. Fourteen, No. Twelve

Ottawa, Canada

1972

INDIANS GET INVOLVED IN FUR BUSINESS

By GARY BALL,
Nugget Staff Reporter

Indian trappers are becoming involved in the Ontario Trappers Association as they have never been involved before.

There were some 40 native trappers from remote Northern communities at the OTA convention which wound up here Monday night.

In addition, there were Indian

trappers in attendance from southern centres.

The Indian trappers entered in the fun and competition of the convention . . . taking a number of prizes for skinning and fur handling.

But perhaps more important was the increased Indian involvement in the business side of trapping.

With the aid of the OTA an experimental project will be attempted to help the Indian trapper beat the problem of low fur prices paid in remote settlements.

Chief Eli Baxter of Ogoki Post, 180 miles North of Nakina, is a key figure in the experiment.

He said he will return to North Bay for training by the OTA staff in fur grading.

Then, back at Ogoki, he will seek Indian band funds to provide a pool

(see page 3)

R.A.V.E.N.

SOCIETY OF B.C.

— Chief A. "Bud" Recalma

The R.A.V.E.N. Society is the official communications Society for the Indians of British Columbia, the letters stand for Radio And Visual Educational Network.

The Society was incorporated in May, 1969, and has an eight member Board of Directors.

The Society is based on the Qualicum Reserve on Vancouver Island and operates with a very small staff (three at the base and three in the field). The reason for keeping the Core Staff at a minimum is that the District Councils control the operations for their member Bands at the District level.

There are fifteen distinct Districts in British Columbia. As the R.A.V.E.N. Society is requested radios are installed in the villages in each District. The licenced villages then elect a member of their Band to represent them at the annual meeting of the Society. The Bands also decide which of the villages will be the sub-base for their District. The village nearest the Indian Affairs Office, Doctors, etc. is usually chosen so that information and services can be readily dispensed to the more isolated Bands. So far the R.A.V.E.N. Society is working from the lower mainland along the West Coast and up the Nass Valley (Fraser, South Island, West Coast, North Island, Bella Coola, North Coast and Terrace Districts). When the radios in these Districts are

(see R.A.V.E.N. page 4)

THE TRIAL

The simple honesty, subtle humour, and quiet alertness of Indians living in the far north made itself known that day in the classroom-courthouse. The whole trial was a statement on the people who have been surviving in the northern wilderness for centuries.

It was a very small Indian community set amidst towering mountains beside a winding, swiftly-flowing, still-clear river. Many of the men from the village worked as guides during the hunting season, and when this was over, there wasn't much to do for excitement. This may have led to the incident.

It had all happened so suddenly, and a newspaper two hundred miles away called it "NIGHT OF TERROR IN RED RIVER". Anne was teaching in the Indian residential school beside the Red River village where it all took place. Everyone had just calmed down from a grizzly-bear scare and only a week before had let up on the armed patrol which kept a twenty-four hour watch on the school yard. Now there was an attempted murderer running loose in the woods. Every day about 30 R.C.M.P. came down to the school and village and combed the forest on both sides of the river. They also kept a constant watch on the houses in the village. Mrs. Jack had been flown to a hospital to have her slit throat stitched, and was still in shock. She had only had to remain in the hospital for a couple of days, and any damage done wasn't fatal — but still it was a shock to her aging body. It had been her own nephew who had committed the crime, but she didn't want to press charges against her own kin. The law was so complicated, especially since her understanding of legal-language, let alone plain English, was not too good. But the state decided to go ahead and bring Joe Jack to justice.

(see THE TRIAL page 3)

has made a public statement about the Quilt inquest, in particular the Chief Coroner, has stated that it was not important that Indian people be represented on the Inquest jury, this group strongly disapproves of an investigation by the Chief Coroner.

This group respectively demands that you order a public inquiry to investigate the late Fred Quilt case."

This telegram was signed by 52 persons who were in attendance at (see Quilt Inquest page 3)

QUILT INQUEST

From: Provincial Headquarters —
BCANSI
Re: Telegram to Attorney General
Lester Peterson re Inquest into
Fred Quilt's Death

The following is a copy of the telegram mailed January 30, 1972 from a meeting held at the Vancouver Indian Centre, sponsored by the Greater Vancouver Local, BCANSI at which Clarence Dennis, Court-worker for the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, was a guest speaker.

"The B.C. Association of Non Status Indians express their deep concern over the handling of the inquest into the death of Fred Quilt of Williams Lake. The observations of the many responsible native leaders who attended the inquest, make it extremely difficult to arrive at any conclusion other than bias on the part of the jury. In view of the obvious strength of these leaders convictions, which only reflects the opinion of most British Columbia Indians, it is imperative that you, as Attorney-General, initiate a full investigation into the conduct of this inquest.

We strongly urge you to give this matter your most serious consideration.

nce Dennis was in attendance the inquest of Fred Quilt's held in Williams Lake, B.C. 13th to 15th, 1972.

ause Coroner MacDonald

OJIBWAY TRAPPER GIVES VIEWS

Indian trappers have been slow to become involved in the Ontario Trappers' Association.

Over the years, Indians have attended the OTA convention in North Bay.

But they came most often as observers, saying little.

Monday night, a young Ojibway trapper overcame his hesitancy.

Speaking to an assembly of more than 300 at the windup banquet at the Empire Hotel, Gary Potts, of Bear Island, shook visibly.

He took the opportunity to speak as he accepted a second place award for no time-limit beaver handling competition.

After he spoke he left the banquet and broke down briefly. It was just (see page 3)

FOR CIRCULATION



Subvention à l'Association de la jeunesse autochtone du Canada

OTTAWA — L'honorable Gérard Pelletier, secrétaire d'État, a révélé, au cours d'une récente conférence de presse, que l'Association de la jeunesse autochtone du Canada, dont les bureaux sont à Montréal, a reçu une subvention de la citoyenneté de \$15,423, pour l'aider à s'acquitter des frais d'exploitation et d'administration et à mettre au point des programmes d'épanouissement de la jeunesse autochtone.

L'Association de la jeunesse autochtone du Canada a été formée, il y a trois ans, par un groupe d'étudiants universitaires autochtones à l'emploi du gouvernement fédéral pendant l'été. Elle regroupe des

jeunes Métis et Indiens, tant inscrits que non inscrits.

L'organisme a pour but de favoriser la communication et l'échange d'idées entre les jeunes autochtones, de coordonner des programmes locaux et régionaux, et de former les futurs dirigeants des autochtones du Canada.

Depuis sa fondation, l'Association a tenu trois conférences. Le concept d'un organisme national a été approuvé, lors de la première conférence nationale tenue à Vancouver au mois d'août dernier, par cinquante délégués d'associations provinciales de Métis et d'Indiens, venus de tous les coins du pays.

Editorial

par David Monture

Un article de la Presse canadienne, paru l'an dernier, dit de M. William Wuttunee, de Calgary, qu'il est un avocat dans l'vent, un dur dans les affaires, un Indien Cri qui n'a pas peur d'envoyer promener les dirigeants indiens et leurs revendications. L'article souligne même qu'il se vante du fait que sa fille, à l'âge de quatorze ans, ne prête de l'argent à ses frères et à ses soeurs que sur intérêt.

M. Wuttunee, ancien président du Conseil national des Indiens, organisme dépassé s'il en est, vient de publier *Ruffled Feathers* (Les plumes hérissées), ouvrage des plus sévères. Aux yeux de certaines personnes au fait des questions indiennes, ce livre vient même à son heure.

L'auteur y attaque M. Harold Cardinal et son livre, *The Unjust Society* (La société injuste), l'Association des Indiens de l'Alberta, l'administration financière au sein de tous les organismes indiens et le souci des dirigeants pour les droits des autochtones. Il dit de ce souci qu'il fait partie de «l'esprit de traité». En défenseur du Livre blanc, il écarte l'argument des partisans du pouvoir rouge en ces termes: «La ségrégation des Indiens des Blancs, la création d'une administration parallèle financée par les contribuables canadiens et contrôlée par les organismes indiens... le développement d'une culture toute de peau de daim et de plumes, et la tentative des dirigeants indiens de museler tous les Indiens qui critiquent leurs agissements... les sempiternelles jérémiades contre la Direction des affaires indiennes et la chasse aux sorcières dont les victimes sont des Blancs».

Ces critiques pourraient être constructives, puisqu'il est grand temps que les Indiens examinent de plus près les transactions financières de leurs représentants, ou du moins de ceux que le gouvernement considère comme leurs représentants. Mais nous savons très bien que M. Wuttunee peut se permettre de dire tout ce qu'il veut, puisqu'il fait partie de l'establishment et que ses critiques peuvent même lui attirer la clientèle des réactionnaires blancs.

S'il ne dépendait que de lui, toutes les lois concernant les Indiens seraient abrogées: «La Loi sur les Indiens nourrit le sentiment d'infériorité et, avec l'esprit de traité, constitue l'une des causes principales des difficultés actuelles». Les associations autochtones, au contraire, préconisent une étude attentive de la question des droits indiens, avant que les liens constitutionnels spéciaux avec la Couronne ne soient dénoués. M. Wuttunee prétend que les traités ne sont que des bouts de papier, que les dirigeants indiens les interprètent de manière exagérément favorable et que, de toute façon, ce sont bien les Indiens, et non les Blancs, qui ont rompu les traités, par leur participation à la révolte de Riel, en 1885. Il poursuit: «Le gouvernement fédéral a respecté ses engagements en vertu des traités. Depuis le début du siècle, il a dépensé, pour les Indiens, deux milliards de dollars». Allons donc, M. Wuttunee! Nous reproduisons néanmoins une autre de ses tirades sur les traités: «Tant que les Indiens tiendront les traités pour solennels et tant qu'ils se réfugieront dans le passé, le Canada devra faire face au problème d'un peuple incapable de se tenir sur ses pieds, de participer

THE Indian news

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The Indian News is a publication devoted to news about Indians and Indian communities in Canada and is a vehicle for the free expression of viewpoints and opinions held by Indian people. The opinions and statements contained in its pages are not necessarily those of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, which produces this publication each month for free distribution to Indians and other interested persons and organizations. Any article may be reproduced provided credit is given the author or this paper.

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à la vie de la nouvelle société». M. Wuttunee ne décrit pas cette nouvelle société, mais nous, nous l'imaginons assez bien: une société de concurrence, aussi cauchemardesque que celles qui sont dépeintes dans les romans futuristes. Nous croyons que M. Wuttunee voudrait faire passer tous les Indiens dans un grand ordinateur qui les plongerait, fût-ce de force, dans le moule culturel et constitutionnel des Blancs de la grande ville. M. Wuttunee entretrait probablement dans le moule du gros bourgeois. Charmant, n'est-ce pas?

Dans tout le livre, l'auteur utilise la troisième personne pour parler des autochtones; il ne dit jamais: «Nous»...

L'auteur n'a que faire des réserves (voilà près de trente ans qu'il n'est pas retourné dans sa réserve de Red Pheasant). Il est catégorique: «Il faut encourager les jeunes à quitter la réserve à la première occasion et à s'intégrer au mode de vie canadien». Se peut-il qu'il n'ait pas en-

core entendu dire, comme nous le répète constamment le gouvernement actuel, qu'il y a plus d'un mode de vie au Canada. M. Wuttunee parle d'intégration à sens unique, alors que celle-ci devrait aller dans les deux sens; ce qu'il veut, c'est l'assimilation des Indiens par les Blancs. Le passage suivant est sans doute celui qui, dans tout le livre, choque le plus: «Le problème n'est plus la responsabilité du Blanc, mais bien celui de l'Indien, qui doit réviser ses positions sur l'intégration». L'auteur ne semble pas se rendre compte qu'un nombre croissant de personnes — les jeunes, les membres de groupements minoritaires, les parvenus, même — ne veulent pas plus de son Canada uniformément bourgeois que les Indiens. En fait, il ferait bien d'aller prêcher ses doctrines d'uniformité culturelle aux Blancs, car ils n'en veulent pas davantage.

Mais avant qu'il ne poursuive sa mission, peut-être devrait-on délivrer à M. Wuttunee sa carte de Blanc inscrit...

Historical Notes

ENFRANCHISEMENT

In 1918 Parliament added the following section to the Indian Act with regard to enfranchisement:

122A. (1) If an Indian who holds no land in a reserve, does not reside on a reserve, and does not follow the Indian mode of life, makes application to be enfranchised, and satisfies the Superintendent General that he is self-supporting and fit to be enfranchised, and surrenders all claims whatsoever to any interest in the lands of the band to which he belongs, and accepts his share of the funds at the credit of the band including the principal of the annuities of the band to which share he would have been entitled had he been enfranchised under the foregoing sections of the Act, in full of all claims to the property of the band, or in case the band to which he belongs has no funds or principal of annuities, surrenders all claims

whatsoever to any property of the band, the Governor in Council may order that such Indian be enfranchised and paid his said share, if any, and from the date of such order such Indian, together with his wife and unmarried minor children shall be held to be enfranchised.

(2) Any unmarried Indian woman of the age of 21 years and any Indian widow and her minor unmarried children, may be enfranchised in the like manner in every respect as a male Indian and his said children.

(3) This section shall apply to the Indians in any part of Canada.

Prior to the passage of this amendment it was necessary for an Indian to be in possession of land on a reserve in order to become enfran-

chised under the Act. If the applicant did not happen to be in possession of land when his application was submitted he was obliged to secure a location from the council of the band. Among the more progressive bands the lands are all occupied, and there are no common lands from which locations could be given, and the enfranchisement, therefore, of individual Indians without lands was impossible. There are Indians from such bands who earn their living at various industries in towns and cities, and who would be glad to be enfranchised without claiming any land on the reserve whatsoever. These Indians have demonstrated their ability to support themselves and to exercise the rights and privileges of enfranchised persons, and it was, therefore, considered undesirable that their enfranchisement should be longer obstructed.

The applicant in each case is required to furnish a statutory declaration by a priest, clergyman or minister of the religious denomination to which he belonged, or by a justice of the peace or a notary public, to

the effect that to the best of the knowledge and belief of the deponent the applicant has been for at least five years a person of good moral character, temperate in habits and of sufficient intelligence to hold land in fee simple and otherwise to exercise all the rights and privileges of an enfranchised Indian.

The manner in which so many of the Indians have availed themselves of the opportunity to become enfranchised is gratifying and proves that the laws were needed. I think it would be in the interest of good administration if the provisions with regard to enfranchisement were further extended so as to enable the Department to enfranchise individual Indians or a band of Indians without the necessity of obtaining their consent thereto in cases where it was found upon investigation that the continuance of wardship was no longer in the interests of the public or the Indians.

Report of the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Dec. 1919

FUR BUSINESS—

(continued from page 1)

of capital for Indian trappers.

With the training and the cash Chief Baxter hopes to be able to advance money to trappers as fur is delivered to him for shipment to the OTA sale.

Chief Baxter said that with the project he hopes to beat problems faced by Indian trappers.

Fur prices paid by buyers at outposts are very low, considerably below prices for fur at the OTA's fur sales in North Bay.

OTA officials spoke earlier of Indian trappers being paid \$3.00 for fox and \$10 for otter about a year ago when the same fox and otter were bringing better than \$15 and \$50 respectively.

Chief Baxter said he hopes to

set up a fund large enough to grubstake the trapper at the beginning of the year.

That grubstake, he said, may break the traditional hold of the store which grubstakes trappers at the start of the season.

In the past, the Indian trapper who wished to ship his fur out for better prices was faced with a long wait until the fur was sold and his money arrived.

"Maybe now our trappers will see more than a bag of flour for their furs," he said.

Chief Baxter said the Indian trappers hope to see the establishment of this sort of co-op in many other areas.

Somebody's got to succeed first though," he said, "and we will try it at Ogoki."

(continued from 'THE TRIAL' page 1)

It took well over two weeks to track him down in his own land — a land he was used to fighting with for a living, without modern technology. Packs of police dogs and groups of officers couldn't find a trace of him in the wooded area surrounding the village. But the search went on until they found him one night in the home of his friend.

His friend was Charlie Williams, age 21, who was living with his common-law wife and her mother. He was a tall, quiet fellow who had been in jail a couple of times on a few minor charges; it was probably there that he learned a little of how to defend himself in court and what law and court-houses were all about.

The police picked up both he and Joe that night at his mother-in-law's house. It was decided that the preliminary hearing for Joe would be held in the basement of the school near their reserve and Charlie would have his trial there. This meant the judge and prosecuting attorney would have to

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TRAPPER'S VIEWS

(continued from page 1)

nerves and fear, he said. This is what he told the trappers:

"I am glad to attend the convention. I have learned many things and met many interesting people.

"I would like to say something for the native people, being a native myself. These are my views.

"Like all associations for working people, the OTA is a great thing and it will become even greater with the participation of the native people.

"The majority of white trappers that I have spoken to have made me feel welcome here.

"It took me years to develop the courage to speak to people. You have to take into consideration that we, the native people, have been told that our way of life is wrong ever since the white man first came to our country and we being people that basically want to get along with people, allowed ourselves to be led this way, not realizing what the end result would be.

"Because of this we are in great danger of losing our language and heritage.

"In my opinion, the Canadian people will lose a great deal of knowledge and understanding if the present government policy of complete integration into white society is followed.

"The result will be the loss of what can be described as a complete Canadian culture forever. If the white people want the native people to take an active role in the Canadian nation, we can only give true representation when the government recognizes our heritage, and when this happens, the government will see that proud natives can and will contribute a great deal to the Canadian nation.

"We want to work with you — not against you.

"When this comes to pass and I am sure that it will, the Canadian nation will have one of the strongest societies in the world."

As he walked from the microphone the entire room rose in applause.

QUILT INQUEST

(continued from page 1)

the meeting. There were many interested people from other organizations present at the meeting, also.

THE REPLY from L. R. Peterson, Attorney General read:

"It is difficult for me to deal with the matter raised in your wire without being in receipt of a copy of the inquest."

"I am advised that this will be in hand shortly. An examination of the inquest will then be made to determine what further course of action should, if any, be taken."

Please note the words "IF ANY".

THE TRIAL

(continued from page 3)

travel a few hundred miles.

The hearing and trial began in the late afternoon after cases of fraud and other such matters were settled. People from the village flocked over to the classroom-courthouse to watch the trial. It was quite an event for them, because their community is so isolated from what everyone calls the "Outside World". By the time Anne got there after school that day, the preliminary hearing was just beginning. She sat towards the rear of the court-room to see everything in perspective.

The Judge was a somber-looking fellow who gave the impression of being a very just man. By looking at him meditating and weighing evidence as the proceedings went on, you could tell he really believed the accused was innocent until proven guilty. For some reason, this seemed unusual as far as Indian trials go, and to find it in the North was almost incredible. His appearance was always very calm.

The Prosecuting Attorney, on the other hand, was highly dramatic, cold and very involved in his "role". One got the impression that he was acting for a television series. He strutted around in front of the ignorant masses in cynical pleasure as though he were some kind of god manipulating the fates of many. The clerk read the charge against Charlie Williams and handed the blue paper to the judge. Charlie was charged with harbouring a criminal, but it was not established legally that Joe was indeed a criminal. It was thence, more or less, a simultaneous trial, which struck the Indian viewers as very *absurd — but interesting!*

The first witness called was Mrs. Jack. Margaret Jack was getting on in years, probably about 64. She was a very quiet, refined lady who had lived in the village all her life. Margaret had never had anything to do with the law and had never been in court before, and definitely didn't want to go before a stranger who might do something awful to her kin. Life was very simple to her — you either just lived or you didn't, but the police said she had to prosecute and it was so complicated. The Prosecuting Attorney, not the clerk, held the Bible before her and she took it. It could have been a gift for all she knew, and she wondered why he kept taking it back. After about fifteen minutes, she finally realized what he wanted her to do with it. By that time he was getting a little more than frustrated because there was no communication between them. He kept asking her questions about the events leading up to Joe's crime, and kept asking her to speak louder so the clerk could record them. He could hear very well what she was saying, but the clerk couldn't, so he constantly asked her to speak up. Didn't he know that she had had her throat slit, was in shock yet, and the stitches on her neck were causing pain? It was a tragic ordeal for both she and the attorney, and both were relieved when it was finally over. To sum up her statement, he asked her if the accused was now in the courtroom, and she said she didn't know because she couldn't see too well — which was true, but still he was perturbed. He concluded by pointing her hand in the direction of Joe Jack.

The second witness was her husband, Andrew Jack, about 67, who was very hard of hearing, and also upset at all these legal complications. The Attorney showed him the Bible and he kissed it. That's what you do with Bibles if you've been brought up as a Christian. The Attorney again put the Bible before him and was trying to explain that you place your right hand on it and swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help you God. Andrew again kissed the Bible. It was quite some time

before they communicated, and Andrew was probably getting a little weary of kissing the Bible by then — and was probably wondering what was wrong with the Attorney. He wasn't there to tell anything but the truth and didn't really see any sense in all these legal acrobatics. Questions. Questions. More questions. Andrew's hearing problem didn't help the Attorney's mood any. The Attorney wanted to get things done as quickly as possible, but Andrew was taking life at a very slow pace and wasn't about to get excited at something he didn't understand. Finally, the Attorney asked him if the accused was in the court room and would he point to him. Unfortunately, Andrew also had a sight problem, and since he had been going blind for the last couple of years, he was unable to point out the accused. It was a very maddening moment for the Prosecuting Attorney. He felt that he wasn't getting anywhere. What do you do when your prize witnesses don't possess enough vision to point out the accused? (Maybe they didn't even know who committed the crime!) The Indians watching the case found it all very interesting, and it appealed to their incredible sense of humour.

Regardless, the Attorney had Joe Jack bound over for trial in southern B.C.. He would be sent to the B.C. Penitentiary or Okalla Prison Farm to await trial, and so now it was Charlie's turn.

Charlie had decided to conduct his own legal defense and had two witnesses, one of which was Joe Jack. Charlie had only gone to grade four and he knew he was up against a man who had gone through many years of school and university to obtain a law degree, but it had no effect on him. He sat there very calmly scribbling notes, sprawled himself comfortably on the chair and smiled to himself a lot.

The Judge explained to Joe that anything he said could not be used against him in his own trial if he quoted a specific law everytime he made a statement. Joe explained how he ended up at Charlie's house the night they were picked up. He had returned to the village and climbed in a window unknowingly in the middle of the night. The window was 6"x9", and the Prosecuting Attorney refused to believe that any man could get in such a small window; but Joe proudly said he had been in smaller holes than that one. The whole court went over to Charlie's to watch Joe climb in — all this was supposed to mean that Charlie was not knowingly harbouring a criminal.

Next, Charlie called his common-in-law wife's mother as a witness. The Prosecuting Attorney asked her everything but anything related to the case in point, and so when Charlie's turn for questioning came around, it was a shock to the P.A. It was established through his questions that the house he lived in did not belong to him and that he had no house and so it was impossible for him to have harboured a criminal — technically speaking. Case dismissed.

The Prosecuting Attorney stood there in the courtroom a very disillusioned fellow, because it isn't possible to lose a case to a strapping young Indian fellow with no education. It isn't possible to lose a case to an Indian who has only been to grade four and lives in a little community which is so isolated from the world where he was born and raised. Is it? The people from the village left him ranting and raving in the courtroom and couldn't understand why he was so upset. It hadn't been his trial — or had it? They had had an enjoyable experience learning something about the white man's justice!

Note: Joe Jack went to trial three months later and was convicted on a criminal charge.

R.A.V.E.N.

(continued from page 1)

functioning well the Society plans to accept applications from the remaining Districts in northern and central British Columbia. Since this is such a large undertaking (both administratively and financially) the progress is slower than originally anticipated, but the system is functioning well in the villages that are using the facilities at the present time.

The R.A.V.E.N. Society is endeavouring to utilize as many forms of communications as possible so that people can choose whichever

method suits the needs of their areas.

The backbone of the Society is the Radio Network which links Indian Villages together using single side-band radio transceivers. The Society has twenty-nine licences and has applied for seventeen more so there should be more than sixty villages (20,000 people) communicating before spring (some of the smaller villages share a radio). The radios are situated in both isolated and urban villages so that communication is available to the isolated villages for the first time as well as making available to them information which is readily available to the urban villages. These radios are for 2-way communications to

be used for emergency use and the dissemination of information requested by various villages. At this point, the Society is not geared for broadcasting. The DOC has allocated four private frequencies to the Society. At the base there are four radios, one channel in each so that it is possible to transmit simultaneously on all four.

The base is on stand-by twenty-four hours a day for emergency purposes, a tone and bell has been installed for night use. The villages have one radio which has four channels.

Another thing which the Society is endeavouring to do is to build up

a video tape library of educational, informational and cultural activities pertaining to the Indians of British Columbia (for instance the three B.C. Chiefs Conferences are on videotape and are available to Bands for viewing). The information gathered, at the moment, is being stored at the base. The Society has five video play-back sets in the field and are sending approximately 15 sets into Indian Villages early in the New Year so that the tapes now being stored can be utilized by the Bands. Also, if the District Council wishes to submit any tapes which have been made in the field these tapes will be added to the main library for cross distribution. The Society hopes to provide tapes to

R.A.V.E.N.*(continued from page 4)*

The Indian Education Resource Centre for British Columbia to be used as curriculum supplements, particularly in school districts where there is a large proportion of Native Students.

On a lesser scale, the Society is also building a film library of black and white pictures, slides and Super 8 film as well as audio tapes of the elders in the villages telling stories in their own dialect and singing their own songs.

The Society is working only on Indian Reserves at the moment, but the constitution does not exclude use of the facilities by non-status Indians if a request is received.

The Society is funded mainly by the British Columbia Government through the B.C. First Citizens' Fund. When radio or video equipment is requested by an Indian Band, the Bands pay a portion of the capital cost and then the equipment is turned over to them. The Band then becomes the owner of the equipment and must operate and maintain it themselves. The tapes are paid for by the Bands out of their library grants. In this way participation is at a maximum since the Bands use the equipment as they see fit and are not inhibited by outside influence.

A small starting grant from the Donner Canadian Foundation got the project off the ground and a grant in the amount of \$25,000.00 has been received by the RAVEN Society from the Department of the Secretary of State.

Since incorporation, almost three

**THE PATH OF
BIG BEAR**

by: Robert Whelan

(continued from Vo. 14 #11)

Big Bear was one of the greatest of the prairie leaders, although few non-Indians of his day would agree. He was a personal thorn in the side of the original Great White Father, Mr. Lawrence Vankoughnet, the

years ago, the Society has received in grants a total of \$200,000.00. The Society has \$50,000.00 earmarked for equipment for the Radio Network. There is over \$80,000.00 in equipment paid for to date by the Society. Contributions from the Bands for their share of the equipment will be paid at the beginning of the next fiscal year, making new money available for equipment for Bands coming into the system.

The Constitution of the Society assures that control of the direction will always be with villages making use of RAVEN facilities. Each Band receives one vote as they join and the membership then expands so that two-thirds of the members are always users. One third are members at large. Staff of the Society are non-voting associate members.

The system set up by the RAVEN Society for the Indians of British Columbia is being studied by both the Yukon Native Brotherhood and the Indian Brotherhood of the North West Territories, with a view of setting up something similar for the Native people in the Territories.

Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, who ruled the department through the critical years when the Indians of the plains came under the dominance of the white man. In Big Bear Indian hopes and beliefs found their most extreme embodiment. He was a Cree from the Carlton district. In the early sixties he moved to Fort Pitt where his self-reliance, determination and intelligence were recognized and twelve lodges made him their headman. If a great man is he who can rise to the demands of great events, Big Bear was surely great; a wave of white humanity was about to engulf his people and he decided to stand up against it and hold as much of what was theirs as was humanly possible. Of the chain of events that enmeshed all the people of the Western plains, one incident marks the first response of Big Bear. In 1875, a year before Treaty Number 6 was signed, the Government sent in a missionary trusted by the Crees, the Reverend George McDougall, who tranquilized most of the Indians by letting them know that commissioners would be coming through to make a treaty with them. Big Bear's career as an Indian activist began with his reply to McDougall: "We want none of the Queen's presents; when we set a fox-trap we scatter pieces of meat all around, but when the fox gets into the trap we knock him on the head; we want no bait, let your chiefs come like men and talk to us." He had become the man at the centre; stubborn Indians joined the man who would not let things fly apart and made him their chief; government officials tore their hair over this man and his stubborn followers. "They are the most worthless and troublesome Indians we have," wrote the Honourable Edgar Dewdney. But he'd been appointed Indian Commissioner in 1879 to act as an on-the-spot troubleshooter in the North West Territories and Big Bear by just existing stirred up trouble.

Not only had Big Bear refused to sign Treaty Number 6 but every year after for seven years he refused the Government's invitation to sign an adherence to it. One year his reason was that he did not think the buffalo would disappear so quickly; next it was because the Treaty might not provide enough for the Indians to live on; another year he had to wait and see if the Government would really carry out the terms of the Treaty. And so on, anything to gain

time. Big Bear knew what was happening, that the great days of Indian freedom were over and his people would have to live within the restrictions the white man would impose on them. He wanted to delay that day of reckoning as long as possible, to enjoy what remained of the old life and to hold out to get the very best deal for the new one. The die-hard Indians rallied around him and the government saw him as the largest human obstacle in the way of civilization's inevitable and merciless thrust. He caused a lot of trouble to the civilizers but the point of his life and the measure of his greatness surely are in that whatever "Indianness" is finds its standard of measurement in Big Bear.

But Big Bear was a ghost from the past, an embarrassment to the Indians who were too weak to resist civilization and a problem to the white man. They could only hope that he would go away. It literally would take a war to get rid of Big Bear.

By going on reserves Indians had to turn themselves inside out; the way of life of the Indian was based on moving about. His security was in adaptability to his environment, in constant change. He was confined to one place by people from a civilization built on the ability to stabilize the environment and who, paradoxically, found freedom in restraint.

Many factors were involved in the situation which led to the Riel Rebellion. And each involved the strong feelings of a central character in the drama be it Riel, Gabriel Dumont, Poundmaker or any of the people among the champions of the cause of the original people of the plains.

The strongest force in Big Bear was one which all men aspire to but few maintain: the desire to be free to make his own choices in all the important events of his life.

His path throughout his lifetime was based on this need to be independent. And he was no fanatic; his decisions were based on reason. A tolerance for others which may not show in his photograph in chains was surely in his character. Not only do the qualities of wisdom and tolerance show up in events of his life but they are necessary elements of any leader; fools and boors do not last long for the followers of such independent men soon seek a less dangerous and more comfortable leader. Another quality of a leader is courage: the ability to take a stand and keep it. Big Bear had great courage. The point of this is to suggest that Big Bear was no mere stubborn hold-out against machine civilization; he knew what he had to do. His wisdom, tolerance and courage

*(see Big Bear p. 6)***LEUKEMIA???**

What? Have I this dreaded disease?
My white cells are destroying my precious red ones.
They have declared war;
A cruel and parasitic war.
They attack with no reason at all.
But Ah; I expected this.

Their lust for power, greed for wealth,
And hatred for one another slipped out of balance.
Will my poor innocent red ones withstand them?
They do not understand why their brothers have revolted.

My favourite red ones were filled with love.
Kindness and brother love flowed from them.
They were a part of Mother Nature and they loved her.
They left her alone.
Now they are being crushed.
Did I bring this on?

Where are you Great One?
Your children are dying.
Victims of genocide.
Have they no chance?

*Noble Coppaway GT/M.
Ojibway, Curve Lake, Ont.
(Sir Sanford Fleming College Student)*

BIG BEAR

(continued from page 5)



(North-West Rebellion — Poundmaker & chiefs. Photo Credit: Public Archives of Can.)

enabled him to do it. He may have died disappointed, but he did not die broken.

We have seen something of the events in the advance of an alien culture which enclosed him. Now let's look at the events in the life of his own culture which formed his character.

It is believed that he was born near Fort Carlton in what is now Saskatchewan about 1825 and that his parents were Cree, although Rev. George McDougall called him a Saulteaux; many of these people had married into Cree bands in this area of the North Saskatchewan River.

Big Bear was of the River People band in the Plains Cree Nation. The River People wintered along the North Saskatchewan from the Elbow River west one hundred and fifty miles to the Vermillion River. In summer some bands of River Cree, called Prairie People travelled south to the Cypress Hills and mingled with the lower Plains Cree and the Young Dogs, who were Cree-Assiniboines and sometimes known also as Prairie People. The most westerly bands of these people often hunted southwest of Fort Edmonton. Many people in this very large area of what is now Saskatchewan and Alberta later looked to Big Bear as the man at the centre of their struggle to come to better terms with the invaders from Western civilization who wanted this territory.

When Big Bear was in his early thirties he and his family wintered at Jackfish Lake north of where Battleford now stands and traded at Fort Carlton. Already the Cree knew his worth and when several bands gathered on the prairies he was accepted as their head chief.

About 1865 Big Bear moved west to trade at Fort Pitt as the head of a small band of perhaps one hundred people.

It appears that by then the Plains Cree at Fort Pitt were divided into two groups. One rallied around their own independent leaders; the others followed Chief Sweetgrass who was accepted as a Chief by the Hudson's Bay Company. Although the Company did not recognize Big Bear as a chief there is more than an indication of his courage and fairness in the fact that during a famine in 1872 he stopped his men from killing Company cattle.

Neither the Company nor the influential Métis on whom the Company depended for buffalo hides could confine Big Bear's independent spirit. In 1873 an event occurred which set the pattern of the path he would follow until he was literally chained to a prison floor. Indians and half-breeds were camped together and Gabriel Dumont, the "Prince of the Plains" and his uncle, both Métis, laid down the law on the rules of the buffalo hunt. Big Bear opposed this Métis assumption of power over the Indian. But they had to submit to the Métis majority. From then on, "The Prince," as far as Big Bear and his followers were concerned, was somewhat less than that, not completely an enemy, but certainly a usurper of the rights of the people of the land.

Big Bear had taken a stand; other independents rallied around him. The Blackfoot called them "horse thieves", the missionaries "pagans" and from the Company they were accorded the title reserved for the independent: "troublemakers". To the Plains People these were compliments. More people joined Big Bear. The government blinked; here was another rebel, another Little Pine,

another Piapot. Were the natives getting restless?

Soon his name was getting into official reports. In the 1879 Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, Mr. Edgar Dewdney, Indian Commissioner of the North West Superintendency, who had had several interviews with Big Bear, recorded these impressions of his character. "I have not formed such a poor opinion of "Big Bear," as some appear to have done. He is of a very independent character, self-reliant, and appears to know how to make his own living without begging from the Government."

It is quite possible that Big Bear knew of the words the Saulteaux Chief near Fort Francis spoke when the Western Indians were approached by representatives of the Canadian

government in December 1870 and first presented with the idea of making a treaty. Such news travels well and fast by person-to-person "bush telegraph".

The Saulteaux Chiefs words as reported on-the-spot by S. J. Dawson in his "Memorandum in Reference to the Indians" to the Canadian Government of December 19, 1870, are:

"We want much that the white man has to give and the white man, on his part wants roads and land. When we meet next summer you must be prepared to tell us where your roads are to pass and what lands you require.

"We are not afraid of the white man, the people whom you go to see at Red River are our cousins as well as yours. So that friendship between us is but proper and natural.

"We have seen an evidence of the power of your country in the numerous warriors which she has sent forth. The soldiers have been most orderly and quiet and they have held out the hand of friendship to the Indian.

"We believe what you tell us when you say that, in your land, the Indians have always been treated with clemency and justice . . . but do not bring settlers and surveyors amongst us, to measure and occupy our lands, until a clear understanding has been arrived at, as to what our relations are to be in time to come."

Many years later, in 1927, W. B. Cameron, set down his opinion of Big Bear. He knew him well, and being the only white male survivor of an outbreak of violence at Frog (see *Big Bear* p. 7)



Big Bear captured by Cts. Kerr, Sullivan and Nicols. Public Archives

from the U.S. —



photo by: NEWS BUREAU, B.Y.U.

With Miss Indian America Nora Begay, former student at Brigham Young University and a Navajo from Keibeto, Ariz., six members of the Navajo Tribal Council examine a student-made saddle blanket during their participation in Indian Week at BYU in Provo, Utah. From left to right, seated, are Dan Smith, council member from Arizona; Donald Noble, Judiciary Committee chairman from Arizona; Nora Begay; Donald Moses, Arizona; back row — Clare M. Thompson Sr., legislative secretary; Everett McCabe, Arizona; John Mason and Herbert Morgan, both from New Mexico. All except Mr. Noble are on the tribal Advisory Committee and attended the Indian week celebration in addition to participating in the three-day Agriculture and Home Economics Management Conference which had some 200 participants from throughout the nation.

BIG BEAR

(continued from page 6)

Lake which has blackened the Cree Chief's name, his words are surprising: "Big Bear had great natural gifts: courage, a keen intellect, a fine sense of humour, quick perception, splendid native powers of expression and great strength of purpose . . . Big Bear was imperious, outspoken, fearless".

He would need that "great strength of purpose" for what lies ahead.

The natives were already aware of the changes the advance guard of Technological Civilization was making in their way of life. Fences they did not dream of but already the thinning of the buffalo and other fur-bearing animals was laid on the doorstep of the people of fences, lists and graphs. When the Chiefs of Edmonton and Fort Pitt were urged by the Hudson's Bay Company and the missionaries to petition the Canadian government to recognize aboriginal rights Big Bear always advised caution during the six year period in his late forties when the treaties were being negotiated and signed; he was making his own fences. Exactly what he thought is not known but a man with the "keen intellect" Dewdney spoke of must have known that if you make a deal with a strong opposition, you get the best one by con-

centrating rather than dissipating your own power.

Big Bear would have agreed with this attitude; to wait until he truly knew what the other party offered was the only way for the independent leader; anything less is for a fool or a beggar. And Big Bear was neither.

Two observations in this memorandum to the Government from Dawson are unusually acute and prophetic. The first would have pleased Big Bear. It urges the Government to be certain the Indians clearly understood what they are signing or there will be years of trouble. The other throws light on the so-called "Welfare mentality" of Indians; their considerable gathering at Fort Francis demanded rations simply because they lived by hunting and during the days of sitting around during the consultation they could not hunt.

But Big Bear was nowhere near as conciliatory as the Fort Francis chief. We know of Big Bear's "fox-bait" reply to the Rev. George McDougall when he was sent out to soften up the Indians to make treaty. It is not surprising that McDougall reported him to Lieutenant-Governor Marris in 1875 as a "troublesome fellow" who was "trying to take a lead in their (the Indians') councils."

To this day Indians of the Plains
(see Big Bear p. 8)

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sirs,

You may not know what your publication concerning the Indians means to us. The only thing about the Indians out here is that their eyes haven't fully opened. We went so far as to form our own political party, but we never get the chance to exercise our vote.

We, the Indians out here, are the true and rightful owners of the land of Guyana, and we should have a fair deal and equal rights as any other non-Indian citizen of this country. Instead, Indians here are the victims of the discrimination, and 'smoke screen' of the propaganda of this country. They don't want us to get any kind of contact from the outside world.

Therefore I kindly ask you if you can continue to mail me a few copies of THE INDIAN NEWS paper, so that I can keep learning about your people out there.

Sincerely,
R. S. Francis,
Guyana, South America.

Sir:

I recently came across a book called "Ruffled Feathers" written by a Sask. Indian by the name of William Wuttunee. I read the book with great interest as I had the earlier book by Harold Cardinal entitled "The Just Society".

I have put down my thoughts on Mr. Wuttunee's book in the form of a book review. Generally, I think Mr. Wuttunee is a bit hard on his people but one must not forget that he too had to struggle hard to make his way in the white man's world. As a nurse originally from Pasqua Reserve in Saskatchewan, I too have some idea of the difficulties of adapting to a new society and a new way of life. I detect a much more positive and constructive attitude in Mr. Wuttunee's book than I do in Mr. Cardinal's. Attached please find a review of a book by a Cree, by a Cree. When are the Mohawks and Ojibway in the East going to start contributing to the national discussion on Indian matters?

Yours sincerely,

R. Carlson (nee Cyr)
Toronto, Ont.

(Editor's Note: The book review which is referred to appears on page 8 of this edition.)

* * *

Dear Editor:

Enclosed is a clipping from the local newspaper concerning us, the native people. This is the first time I ever spoke in public and I have many mixed feelings about what other Indian people think. The only way that I can describe my feelings is in the way I live, when I wrote that speech it was with a feeling I had never felt before and I was shaking even while I was writing it; it took me about one half hour to 45 minutes to write it. These are thoughts I have had but could never say them until that moment. I feel that I have come to a great new lake and it has new ice on it, and that I have tested it in the Indian way, by hitting it with the end of a pole, and am now waiting for the sound to come back to me, to see whether it is safe to step out onto it. I feel that the younger Indians must show the elder people that we do not want the language and culture to pass away when they do. I sincerely believe that there are potential leaders and teachers on every reserve and

every reserve or tribe has its own individual history and this must be recorded by the tribe themselves. COMMUNICATION and UNDERSTANDING is the most important thing of all and the elder people will feel proud to know that their ways and the ways of their fathers will live forever. It is my heart's wish that with *communication and understanding* the Indian Nations will show the world what can be accomplished by working together for one common goal, that goal being that every form of natural life and that every race of people has the right to live and keep their identity in this world. Only through *communication and understanding by all people* — the future of this world relies on this and this only. We, the Indian people, must learn the white man's ways so we can defend our own culture and heritage thoroughly.

Sincerely,
Gary Potts,
Bear Island,
Lake Temagami.



BOOK REVIEW

by R. Carlson (nee Cyr)

Ruffled Feathers
Indians in Canadian Society
by William I. C. Wuttunee
Bell Books, Calgary, Alberta

"Ruffled Feathers" represents the second major effort in recent years by a Canadian Indian to describe and comment on the condition, past and present, of his people. Harold Cardinal's book "The Unjust Society", essentially a diatribe against almost everything in Canadian society but especially against its government, was published three years ago. Now along comes William Wuttunee, a Cree as is Cardinal, who maintains that the white man and his government has done and is doing well indeed by his people and that the blame for the Indians' sorry state, if blame is imputable, lies mostly with the Indian leaders and their people. Who, the curious reader will wonder, is speaking with a forked tongue?

BIG BEAR

(continued from page 7)

will take time to consider the worth of your character before extending their basic courtesy to an offer of friendship; they will observe you for some time, as long as several weeks, before they either accept you or stay away from you. Perhaps in trying to influence Indian Councils Big Bear believed that more time was needed to consider the real character of the strangers who were being approached with the trust and hope evident in these two petitions of 1871 from prairie Indians.

From Edmonton, Sweetgrass, one of the leading Cree chiefs, sent this petition to the Government:

"Great Father,—I shake hands with you, and bid you welcome.—We heard our lands were sold and we did not like it; we don't want to sell our lands; it is our property, and no one has the right to sell them.

"Our country is getting ruined of fur-bearing animals, hitherto our sole support, and now we are poor and want help—we want you to pity us. We want cattle, tools, agricultural implements, and assistance in everything when we come to settle—our country is no longer able to support us.

"Make provision for us against years of starvation. We have had great starvation the past winter, and the small-pox took away many of our people, the old, young, and children.

Mr. Wuttunee, a member of the Red Pheasant reserve in Saskatchewan, was early involved in the struggle of his people. But subsidies were hard to come by in the early 60's and the National Indian Council, of which he was for a time president, expired of terminal financial asphyxia. He has since, as a practising lawyer, carved himself a niche in the majority society and has been more an observer than a participant in Indian matters. It must be said in his favor, however, that he was in the fight long before the radical chic liberals and professional Indians began talking up the Red man's woes. Mr. Wuttunee has gone through the mill of integration, is apparently happy in the rat race, and wonders why his fellow-Indians will not or cannot do in like manner.

The central theme of "Ruffled Feathers" is that the Indian's lack

"We want you to stop the Americans from coming to trade on our lands, and giving firewater, ammunition and arms to our enemies the Blackfeet.

"We made a peace this winter with the Blackfeet. Our young men are foolish, it may not last long.

"We invite you to come and see us and to speak with us. If you can't come yourself, send some one in your place.

"We send these words by our Master, Mr. Christie, in whom we have every confidence.—That is all."

Richard Hardisty and the Rev. John McDougall sent in a petition in January 1871 from Seenum's Crees at Victoria and Whitefish Lake in Saskatchewan. Hardisty was the brother-in-law of Donald A. Smith; a year earlier when Smith was Canadian Commissioner to Red River, he had picked Hardisty as a trusted courier to Riel and his struggling provisional government. This Rev. McDougall (not the "George" of the fox-bait encounter) fifteen years later would precede Major-General Strange's column in the Riel Rebellion as it marched west to pacify the Blackfoot. McDougall's task was to win the Indians over with words. Here is part of the petition they forwarded from Seenum's Crees:

"We, as loyal subjects of Our Great Mother the Queen whom Your Excellency represents, wish that our privileges and claims of the land of our fathers be recog-

of progress is caused in large part by a paternalistic Indian Act which perpetuates an obsolete system of segregation especially as reflected in its institutionalization of the reserve system and of separate services for registered Indians. (The abolition of this Act, incidentally, was one of the proposals of the Canadian government's White Paper on the Indian question in 1969.) Mr. Wuttunee faults Indian leadership, especially the liberally subsidized Associations, Federations, Unions and Brotherhoods across the land for providing a leadership which, in his opinion, is reactionary, bitter, and which tends to promote distrust of and antipathy to the white man and his government. He ridicules the "treaty mentality" of most Indian leaders today and believes that the prevalent Indian psychology is bogged down in a quagmire of habitual dependency and that this mentality must be exorcised before progress can be attained either individually or collectively. He strongly urges that Indians be realistic, flush from their minds forever the fiction of aboriginal rights, anachronistic treaties, unenforceable land claims etc., and use the white man's generous assistance to lift

nized by Commissioners whom Your Excellency may hereafter appoint, to treat with the different tribes of the Saskatchewan, whereas at the present time, many of our fellow Crees entertain strange and wrong ideas regarding the way Your Excellency's Government is to treat with the different tribes of this country for their laws (sic). We are taught by our Missionary that the British Government has never taken advantage of the ignorance of any tribe of Indians with whom they have treated. We therefore hope that our rights shall be recognized."

The "whiskey forts", Whoop-Up in the buffalo country of the Cypress Hills in southern Alberta, and others on the prairies — Robber's Roost, Whiskey Gap, and Slide out — added to their confusion in this slam-on encounter of two opposite cultures. The forts, run by Americans, screwed down the Indian: many hides for rot-gut whiskey. Lieutenant William Butler wrote in 1871: "the Saskatchewan is without law, order or security for life or property."

Here's a letter of 1873 from Fort Whoop-Up Country:

Dear Friend:

My partner Will Geary got to putting on airs and I shot him and he is dead — the potatoes are looking well.

Yours truly,
Snookum Jim.

And Colonel Robertson Ross in

himself into the affluent society. Only when the Indian is working side by side and competing with the white man, says Wuttunee, will he gain the confidence in himself he so sorely lacks.

This book is by no means the definitive work on the Indian question but it expresses a viewpoint that was long overdue to give balance to the growing public discussion of this social issue. While this reviewer tends to agree with many of Mr. Wuttunee's assessments he realizes that the book will not be bedside reading for most Indian leaders if not for most Indian people. It was probably not too popular with our liberal (and increasingly subsidized) domestic publishing industry which may account for its printing in Japan. But it will have served its purpose if it prompts the Indian people to re-examine their attitudes and arouses the Canadian taxpayer to a thoughtful accounting of his massive financial investment in the welfare of the first inhabitants of this country. The book gains considerable credibility from the fact that Mr. Wuttunee is neither a professional Indian, a subsidized Indian leader, nor an administrator and/or advisor of any government.

an official report of 1872 said that: "the demoralization of the Indians and injury resulting to the country are very great." Drunken brawls between Cree and Blackfoot were common around these forts. The work of Butler and Colonel Ross resulted in the formation two years later of the North-West Mounted Police who, by closing down the whiskey forts and treating Indian and white alike, brought law and order to the Plains and the gratitude of Chief Crowfoot so that his powerful Blackfoot Nation was well-disposed to accept treaty offers.

But Big Bear continued his opposition during the consultation period and his influence was felt by the Commissioners at the signing of Treaty Number 6 in August and September 1876.

It is Friday, August 18, 1876 and there are two thousand Plains and Woods Cree, and a considerable number of half-breeds, waiting expectantly, about four hundred buffalo-skin tipis pitched in a wide half circle on a level tract of land bordered by woods and water some two miles from Fort Carlton. They have been there a few days talking about the Treaty to be signed. The principal chiefs are Mistowasis (Big Child) and Ahtukukoop (Star Child). Poundmaker from Battleford is there; but Chief Beardy of the Duck Lake Indians has not arrived, he sent greetings to the Commissioners but stayed at his camp, insisting that his treaty be signed there because of a vision he had experienced.

Part IV — Next Issue