

SUBSISTENCE AND ECONOMIC ADAPTATION  
IN THE ONION LAKE AGENCY,  
1876-1920

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
Master of Arts  
in the  
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

by

Laurel Schenstead-Smith

University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

c 1983

Laurel Schenstead-Smith

90260081843

The author has agreed that the Library, University of Saskatchewan, may make this thesis freely available for inspection. Moreover, the author has agreed that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised the thesis work recorded therein or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department or the Dean of the College in which the thesis work was done. It is understood that due recognition will be given to the author of this thesis and to the University of Saskatchewan in any use of the material in this thesis. Copying or publication or any other use of the thesis for financial gain without approval by the University of Saskatchewan and the author's written permission is prohibited.

Requests for permission to copy or to make any other use of material in this thesis in whole or in part should be addressed to:

Head of the Department of  
University of Saskatchewan  
SASKATOON, Canada.

## ABSTRACT

This study gives an historical summary of Cree and Chipewyan Indians who resided in the Fort Pitt District from 1876 to 1885 and in the Onion Lake Agency from 1885 to 1920, and examines their adaptation to reservation life, with emphasis on reserve settlement and subsistence activities. Four main topics are discussed: the historical position of the Cree and Chipewyan prior to 1876; identification of Indian bands who signed Treaty Six at Fort Pitt in 1876 and movement to their reservations; the physical environment exploited by these Indians; and, government policies and programs which influenced subsistence activities pursued by Indians in the study area.

The study concludes that Indian adaptation to reservation life involved a change in subsistence activities and settlement pattern which maintained a continuity with former lifeways and adopted certain introduced Euro-Canadian values and practices; policies and programs implemented by the government were guided by a desire for economy and exhibited a protectionist attitude; the attitude of the Indians was not always conciliatory towards government programs, and Indians chose certain aspects of these programs which were to their economic and material advantage; and, the pattern of reserve live which developed was closely related to the annual cycle of subsistence activities.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. M.C. Marino for her supervision and encouragement during the course of this study and for her insightful suggestions and constructive criticisms during the preparation of the thesis. I would also like to thank Drs. U. Linnaeae and A. Ervin for being on my thesis committee and reading the thesis.

Research for this thesis was made possible through the financial assistance of the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, the College of Graduate Studies and Research and the Institute for Northern Studies. For this assistance I am grateful.

Appreciation is due those archivists and assistants at the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon and Regina, the Public Archives of Canada in Ottawa, the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg, and the Glenbow Museum Archives in Calgary for their ready assistance in locating source materials useful to the study.

The author gratefully acknowledges the patient assistance of Ann Childs in the typing of various early drafts of the thesis and the final manuscript.

To my family and friends I am indebted for their confidence and patient expectations. Special thanks go to Kurt Tischler who reviewed the manuscript and offered encouragement and suggestions in preparation of the final draft, and to Marlene Schenstead who read the final manuscript for typographical errors and who assisted in numerous other ways during the final stages of thesis preparation. Deepest thanks is due my husband Douglas, for his optimistic spirit, helpful suggestions and loving concern during the writing up and final preparation of the thesis.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
LIST OF MAPS .....	ix
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Purpose of Study .....	1
1.2 Methodology and Sources .....	3
2. HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AREA AND ITS OCCUPANTS .....	8
2.1 Historical Position of the Chipewyan .....	8
2.2 Historical Position of the Cree .....	16
2.2.1 Divisions of the Cree .....	26
2.3 Treaty Six (1876) .....	28
2.4 Indian Groups in the Study Area .....	30
2.5 The Onion Lake Agency .....	32
2.6 The 1885 Rebellion .....	44
2.7 Population .....	50
2.8 Reserve Settlement .....	66
2.9 Reservation Surveys .....	76
2.9.1 Introduction .....	79
2.9.2 Indian Reservation No. 119 (Map 4) .....	80
2.9.3 Indian Reservation No. 120 (Map 5) .....	83
2.9.4 Indian Reservation No. 121 (Maps 6 and 7) ..	83
2.9.5 Indian Reservation No. 122 (Map 8) .....	87
2.9.6 Amalgamations .....	89

	Page
2.9.7	Indian Reservation No. 123 (Map 9) ..... 90
2.9.8	Indian Reservation Nos. 149, 149A and 149B (Maps 10, 11 and 12) ..... 93
2.9.9	Indian Reservation Nos. 161 and 161A (Map 13) ..... 105
2.9.10	Hay and Timber Reserves ..... 113
2.9.11	Summary ..... 117
3.	THE STUDY REGION ..... 120
3.1	Physiography ..... 122
3.2	Climate ..... 125
3.3	Drainage ..... 126
3.4	Soils ..... 127
3.4.1	Soils in the Onion Lake Reserves ..... 128
3.5	Natural Vegetation ..... 136
3.5.1	Grasslands Region ..... 136
3.5.2	Boreal Forest Region ..... 137
3.6	Faunal Resources ..... 141
3.7	Fish Resources ..... 144
3.8	Summary ..... 145
4.	GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS ..... 148
4.1	Introduction ..... 148
4.2	Rations and Food-for-Work Programs ..... 150
4.3	Farm Instructors and Home Farms ..... 166
4.4	The Manufacture of Useable Tools and Articles ..... 172
4.5	The Cattle Loan System and Department Herd ..... 174
4.5.1	The Cattle Loan System ..... 174
4.5.2	The Department Herd ..... 179
4.6	Individual Farm Sites ..... 185
5.	SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES ..... 193
5.1	Agriculture (Gardening and Grain Growing) .. 193

5.1.1	Introduction .....	193
5.1.2	Gardening .....	196
5.1.3	Grain Growing .....	204
5.1.3.1	The Chipewyan Band .....	204
5.1.3.2	The Cree Bands .....	209
5.1.3.3	Problems Encountered in Grain Growing .....	221
5.2	Stock Raising .....	236
5.2.1	Cattle Raising by the Cree .....	236
5.2.1.1	The Number and Quality of the Herds .....	236
5.2.1.2	The Care of Cattle .....	244
5.2.1.3	Dairying .....	249
5.2.1.4	The Beefing and Sale of Cattle .....	250
5.2.2	Cattle Raising by the Chipewyan .....	259
5.2.3	Other Livestock and Poultry .....	266
5.3	Other Industries .....	271
5.4	Fishing .....	279
5.5	Hunting, Trapping and Gathering .....	286
5.6	The Fur Trade .....	291
5.6.1	The Hudson's Bay Company .....	291
5.6.2	Outposts and Opposition .....	296
5.6.3	Fur Returns .....	307
5.7	Adult Male Involvement in Various Occupations .....	329
5.8	Earnings of the Indians .....	332
6.	ANNUAL SUBSISTENCE CYCLE AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN .....	343
6.1	Introduction .....	343
6.2	The "Working" Cree .....	350
6.3	The "Hunting" Cree .....	368
6.4	The Chipewyan .....	372
7.	CONCLUSION .....	379
	REFERENCES CITED .....	403
	APPENDIX I .....	413
	APPENDIX II .....	415
	APPENDIX III .....	416

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Chiefs and Councillors in the study area who signed Treaty Six in 1876 .....	29
Table 2: Department Personnel in the Onion Lake Agency, 1885-1916 .....	37
Table 3: Houses and Stables in the Onion Lake Agency, 1897-1920 .....	43
Table 4: Population of Treaty Number 6, 1876-1917 ...	53
Table 5: Population of the Onion Lake Agency according to Bands, 1876-1917 .....	55, 56
Table 6: Onion Lake Reservations, Townships and Ranges .....	79
Table 7: Rations Issued in the Onion Lake Agency by band for the year 1918-1919 .....	160
Table 8: Issues of Flour and Bacon for the year October 1882 to September 1883, Fort Pitt District ...	163
Table 9: Comparative Statement of Rations Issued by Band for the Years 1912, 1913 and 1914 .....	165
Table 10: Statement of Department Herd at the Onion Lake Agency, as of 30 June 1892 .....	181
Table 11: Approximate number of acres sown and harvested of root crops grown in the Onion Lake Agency, 1881-1920 .....	202
Table 12: Approximate number of acres sown and harvested of grains grown in the Onion Lake Agency, 1881-1920 .....	219
Table 13: Average yield of grains grown in the Onion Lake Agency with a comparison to the same for Saskatchewan, 1905-1918 .....	220
Table 14: Condition of Crops and Weather recorded for the Onion Lake Reserves, 1881-1900 .....	223
Table 15: Implements belonging to the Indians in the Onion Lake Agency, 1891-1920 .....	234



	Page
Table 16: Livestock on loan and privately owned by the Indians, 1882-1895 .....	238
Table 17: Livestock and poultry returns for the Onion Lake Agency, 1893-1920 .....	239
Table 18: Wild hay and fodder cut (tons) in the Onion Lake Agency, 1886-1920 .....	248
Table 19: Fort Pitt and Saskatchewan District Returns for Outfits 1872, 1873 and 1874 .....	309
Table 20: Fort Pitt Returns for furs traded in Outfits 1872, 1873 and 1874 .....	311, 312, 313
Table 21: Fort Pitt Returns for Outfits 1885-1890 ....	314, 315, 316
Table 22: Saskatchewan District Returns for Outfits 1885-1890 .....	317, 318, 319
Table 23: Trade in furs for the Saskatchewan District, 1916-1919 .....	324
Table 24: Numbers of adult males involved in various activities in the Onion Lake Agency, 1905-1916 .....	330
Table 25: Able-bodied Male Indians above the age of 18 years and Occupations for 1917 .....	331
Table 26: Statement of earnings of the Indians in the Onion Lake Agency, 1890-1920 .....	335, 336, 337
Table 27: Source of Funds and Purchases for the Years 1915-1917, by Band .....	340
Table 28: Entries from the Onion Lake Agency Department journal for June and July, 1892 .....	366

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Population of Treaty Six area, 1876-1917 ..	54
Figure 2: Population of the Onion Lake Agency, 1876-1917 .....	57
Figure 3: Population of the Onion Lake Agency Bands, 1876-1917 .....	58
Figure 4: Onion Lake settlement and IR's 119 and 120, 1889 .....	298
Figure 5: Annual Cycle of the "working" Indians (Cree) in the Onion Lake Agency .....	367
Figure 6: Annual Cycle of the "hunting" Indians (Cree) in the Onion Lake Agency .....	373
Figure 7: Annual Cycle of the Chipewyan in the Onion Lake Agency .....	378

## LIST OF MAPS

	Page
Map 1: Location of study area in the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta .....	77
Map 2: Indian Reservations in the study area .....	78
Map 3: The Study Region and reservations .....	<b>map envelope</b>
Map 4: Seekaskootch Indian Reservation No. 119, as surveyed by G.A. Simpson, 1879 .....	81
Map 5: Mahkayo Indian Reservation No. 120, as surveyed by G.A. Simpson, 1879 .....	84
Map 6: Oonepowhayo Indian Reservation No. 121, as surveyed by G.A. Simpson, 1879 .....	85
Map 7: Oonepowhayo Indian Reservation No. 121 .....	<b>map envelope</b>
Map 8: Puskeeahkeewein Indian Reservation No. 122, as surveyed by G.A. Simpson, 1879 .....	88
Map 9: Keeheewin Indian Reservation No. 123, as surveyed by A.W. Ponton, 1884 .....	91
Map 10: Cold Lake Indian Reservation No. 149, as surveyed by J. Lestock Reid, 1903 .....	95
Map 11: Cold Lake Fishing Station, Indian Reservation No. 149A, as surveyed by J. Lestock Reid, 1907 .....	98
Map 12: Cold Lake Indian Reservation Nos. 149, 149A and 149B .....	102
Map 13: Island Lake Indian Reservation Nos. 161 and 161A .....	110

	Page
APPENDIX I - Excerpt From the 1894 Inspection Report Describing the Agency Ranches at Long Lake .....	413
APPENDIX II - Individual holders of livestock by band for 1914, 1915 and 1917 .....	415
APPENDIX III - An account of the July 1st festivities at Onion Lake as they were during the early 1900's .....	416
. APPENDIX IV - Map 3: The Study Region and reservations .....	map envelope
APPENDIX V - Map 7: Oonepowhayo Indian Reservation No. 121 .....	map envelope

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to give an historical summary of the Cree and Chipewyan Indians who were defined by the Department of Indian Affairs as members of the Fort Pitt District from 1876 to 1885 and the Onion Lake Agency from 1886 to 1920, and 2) to examine their adaptation to reservation life with emphasis on reserve settlement and subsistence activities.

The late 18th to early 20th century was a time of transition for the Indian people when changes occurred in their physical, political, economic and social environments. The study period (1876-1920) was chosen because it has been largely ignored in publications dealing with Indian history and yet the changes occurring during this time are crucial in explaining later developments among the Indian people. Although this study focuses on developments among one group of Indians - the Cree and Chipewyan bands of the Fort Pitt and Onion Lake area - as they adapted to reservation life, the description and analysis performed will be helpful in our understanding of this period in the history of Indian people in western Canada.

In this study four main topics are discussed. The first topic concerns the historical position of Indians in the study area. Geographic movements and subsistence activities of the Cree and Chipewyan during the years 1750 to 1876 are sketched. Their movements were circumscribed because of a depleted resource base and the invasion of their territory by Metis and Europeans. The transition from a nomadic to sedentary

lifestyle was most pronounced among the Plains Cree who exploited the grasslands. As their main resource - the buffalo - disappeared, it became necessary for them to find an alternate resource base. The Wood Cree and Chipewyan, who exploited the woodlands and forests were faced with increased competition in the fur trade and dwindling fish and game resources. By mid-1870 many of the Plains Cree and some of the Wood Cree and Chipewyan were willing to accept the government's<sup>1</sup> proposal for settlement on reservations and aid in agriculture.

Secondly, this study identifies the Indian bands who signed Treaty Six in 1876 and who subsequently settled on a group of reservations defined by the government as the Onion Lake Agency<sup>1</sup>. Through the establishment of agencies the government grouped a number of reservations together under the management of agents, who were to encourage and guide Indian progress. After the signing of Treaty Six the government implemented a survey program which divided the North-West Territories into a grid system based on Townships and Ranges, and made possible the survey and establishment of Indian Reservations promised by treaty. Many Indians settled on reservations within five years of signing Treaty Six while it took others up to 15 years before they settled permanently on reservations allotted them. Establishment of reservations for the bands in the agency and the reasons for delays in reserve settlement are discussed.

---

1. The term "government" is used to refer to those government officials who were in charge of Indian affairs prior to the formation of the Department of Indian Affairs in 1880. The term "department" is the designation used for the Department of Indian Affairs. The Onion Lake Agency is often shortened to "agency."

Thirdly, the physical environment of the Onion Lake Agency and surrounding area which was exploited by the Cree and Chipewyan is described. This description serves to increase our understanding of the resource potential of the study area and the seasonal subsistence activities of the resident population.

The fourth and major topic discussed in this study is the adaptation of the Indians in the agency to reservation life during the period 1876 to 1920. The development, implementation and results of policies and programs designed by the Department of Indian Affairs to make the Indians sedentary and self-sufficient are identified and the subsistence activities of the Indians in relation to subsistence cycle and settlement pattern are discussed. The department programs initiated in the agency included the rations and food-for-work programs, farm instructors and home farms, the cattle loan and department herd programs, the manufacture of useable tools and articles, and the formation of individual farms. The subsistence activities examined include agriculture, stock raising, hunting, trapping and fishing, and wage labour.

## 1.2 Methodology and Sources

An historical study describes the development of a culture over time. It seeks to describe the past "as it really was," to show how the past and present interact, and at the same time, to recognize a bias stemming from one's own point of view. An anthropological study describes the functions of certain aspects of a culture as they relate to a specific situation in the past or present. Anthropologists concerned with change

follow the development of a society over time while others concentrate on the interdependencies between various aspects of a society at a specific time.

Both historians and anthropologists look at the same events and some of the same regularities in those events. But, they may examine different relations between these events. Each approach has its special purpose and utility and each can be used separately or simultaneously. By utilizing both approaches it is possible to gather data to reconstruct an historical picture or model of the past which may be useful in identifying changes which occurred to bring about the present situation.

The relevance of the historical perspective to anthropology is not new (Carmack 1972). Interest in history by anthropologists has increased since the 1950's. More recently - beginning in the late 1960's and early 1970's - anthropologists have worked out the intellectual relationship between the two disciplines, historical research has become legitimized in anthropology through the research method of ethnohistory, and anthropologists have begun to develop some of the skills and techniques necessary to do such research.

Ethnohistory combines the sources and methods of cultural anthropology and history to reconstruct and analyze socio-cultural and historical developments within a given region and period of time. This approach can enlarge the body of data significantly and increase the time depth in tracing a particular sequence of socio-cultural change. Using the ethnohistorical approach this study seeks to add to our knowledge of the Indians in western Canada through a detailed study of primary data



relating to one group of Indians

Investigation of the role of the native people in Canadian history in which Indian groups are taken as the focus has largely been neglected. James Walker (1971:40) calls for "a greater research interest in Indians, a more objective use of primary sources, and a greater recognition of published material both within and without the traditional historical discipline." From being a significant element in the early fur trade period, the Indians, by the late 1800's, had become peripheral to Canadian history and were increasingly ignored. The history of western Canada emphasizes settlement and development. This historians and writers who have focused on the Indian during the twentieth century tend to ignore the early reservation years and focus instead on problems with the Indian Act and issues such as assimilation and enfranchisement. Yet, there is a wealth of material available which deals with the early efforts of the Indians to adapt to reservation life through the exploitation of various subsistence activities. Many of the problems which developed later and are evident among the Indian people today had their beginning during this time. For this reason and for the purpose of giving some detail on events occurring during the early reservation period this study seeks to draw together and present the material available on the Indians and agency at Onion Lake. The ethno-historical approach seemed to be the most valuable orientation to adopt in dealing with the proposed research problem.

Ethnohistory is a research technique. It consists of the use of primary documents to gain knowledge of a given culture as it existed in

the past and how it has changed (Hickerson 1970:6 ). Techniques used are similar to those used by the historian and include the use of critical analysis and evaluation of primary - library and archival - materials. Primary documents include the writings of traders, government officials, travellers and missionaries, who witnessed and participated to some extent in the events which they describe. Evidence from such documents is valuable in showing the historical development and continuity of events from past to present and gives a time depth which is necessary for the study of culture change.

For this study, research consisted primarily of using written documents found in archives. Documents included reports (annual and inspection), census material, letters, diaries, and financial returns. Archival sources used in the research included published and unpublished materials of the Department of Indian Affairs available through the Public Archives of Canada (PAC), Ottawa, the Hudson's Bay Company records (HBC), Winnipeg, and reports and miscellaneous items found in the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (PAS), Saskatoon and Regina, and the Glenbow Alberta Foundation Archives (Glenbow), Calgary.

One of the problems faced in this study, as in most studies on native peoples, was a lack of Indian source material. Euro-Canadian sources constitute the principal records of the native people during the study period. The researcher must transcend the prejudices and limitations of these sources in the interpretation and assessment of their accuracy as they relate to the Indian and must be aware of the ways in which data from different sources compare with each other.

Much of the material used in this study consisted of Department of Indian Affairs records and therefore, the views expressed often reflect the attitudes of department personnel. The Hudson's Bay Company records provided information on the fur trade and subsistence activities relating to hunting and fishing while department records emphasized the development of government programs in the areas of agriculture and stock raising.

A limited amount of ethnographic work was begun with two respondents on the Seekaskootch reserve at Onion Lake but, due to time constraints and the death of one of the respondents, was discontinued. It is acknowledged that a wider perspective would have been obtained and the documentary sources more accurately evaluated if it had been possible to supplement the latter with ethnographic data. The personal history of Joseph Dion was a valuable ethnographic source. Dion was born and raised in the study area during the study period and, as a member of Keeheewin band, offers the perspective of a Cree Indian on some of the events and activities dealt with in the study.

Analysis of culture change is a primary anthropological concern which can be studied from various perspectives. Acculturation models have been used to explain changes occurring as formerly distinct cultural groups come into contact with one another. The processual perspective can expand our knowledge of contact situations by focussing on processes and events of change in individual and group behaviour and interaction. Rather than begin with a specific theoretical orientation, this study seeks to draw together the material available in such a way as to construct an historical picture of change which will increase our data base for further studies in culture change.

## 2. HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AREA AND ITS OCCUPANTS

This chapter identifies the social and geographical units of study. It begins with an outline of the pre-treaty position of the Chipewyan and Cree Indians. Treaty Six, the political event which defined Indian "bands" and prepared the groundwork for reservation life, is discussed briefly. The geographic boundaries of the agency are defined in a detailed description of reservation surveys.

The Onion Lake Agency was an aggregate of nine Indian bands during the study period (1876-1920). This study is concerned primarily with five Cree bands, including Seekaskootch, Mahkayo, Oonepowhayo, Puskeeahkeewin and Keeheewin, and one Chipewyan band, that of Kinosayo. The Island Lake, Joseph Bighead and Loon Lake bands are dealt with only briefly.

### 2.1 Historical Position of the Chipewyan

There are two predominant views with regard to the early historic location of the Chipewyan. The traditional view, and that cited by Curtis (1928) and Jenness (1932), place the Chipewyan in the Peace River region, the source of the Churchill River and at Lake Athabasca in aboriginal times. The Chipewyan were supposedly driven north-northwest towards Peace River and Great Slave Lake by the Cree as the latter pushed west at the forefront of the fur trade. According to Curtis (1928:8, 10):

The Cree, holding the country about the southwesterly shores of Hudson Bay, obtained firearms at an early date, and with this advantage they pressed beyond Churchill River, which had been their northerly limit, drove the Athapascans before them, and took possession of Athabasca river down to the lake.

Curtis goes on to write that "prior to the establishment of the first trading posts in Athapascan Territory" the Chipewyan obtained firearms from English traders at Fort Churchill and "forced the Cree southward to the Saskatchewan" (*ibid.*). Later, the Cree were able to re-establish settlements at Lake Claire and Ile-a-la-Crosse.

This view suggests a relatively recent westward expansion of the Cree into the Upper Churchill drainage and Athabasca region due to the expansion of the fur trade, a movement which displaced or pushed back the Athapascan-speaking groups in these regions.

Petitot (1883:651) identified the Cree as carrying on a "pitiless war" against the Chipewyan in the Athapascan territory in which the Chipewyan were forced to give up their territory but were able to regain some of it after the Cree were weakened substantially by the 1781 smallpox epidemic. Petitot suggests that the Chipewyan spread northwest from Athabasca towards the shores of the Great Slave Lake and east and northeast towards Hudson Bay where, having met with vast herds of reindeer, they settled on the Barren Grounds, living from that time under the names of Yellow Knives and Caribou Eaters (*ibid.*).

These interpretations of Chipewyan movement out of and back into the Upper Churchill River drainage and Athabasca region and their relatively recent movement into the barren lands are disputed by Gillespie (1975) and Smith (1975, 1976a, b). Using recent archaeological, ethnohistorical and ethnographic data, Gillespie and Smith argue convincingly that the Churchill River region as far west as Lake Athabasca

was in the hands of the Cree prior to the expansion of the fur trade, that the traditional homeland of the Chipewyan was in the tundra-forest transition zone and the barren grounds east of Great Slave Lake towards Hudson Bay, an area which is a considerable distance north of the Churchill River system, and that the southward and westward movement of the Chipewyan into the full boreal forest south of Great Slave Lake and Lake Athabasca as far as the Churchill River drainage began only in the late eighteenth century. The Chipewyan were intruders into Cree territory as a result of the fur trade and by the nineteenth century they dominated the native groups of the Churchill River system and Lake Athabasca region.

According to this view, movement of the Chipewyan southward began only after some had entered into the fur trade as a result of the peace made between the Chipewyan and Cree by Hudson's Bay Company personnel in 1715-16. After the establishment of Fort Churchill at the mouth of the Churchill River in 1717, the Chipewyan were encouraged to move southward into regions rich in fur bearing animals.

By the 1740's the Chipewyan had increased their trade in meat and caribou hides but, except for a limited number of bands bringing in furs, the fur catch was minimal. By 1760 some Chipewyan trading at Fort Churchill were travelling across the barren grounds from as far west as Lake Athabasca where they traded furs with the Yellow Knives. Peace between the Cree and Chipewyan in this region was probably made by the 1760's (Hearne 1958:225; Gillespie 1975) as it was after Hearne's inland journey in the 1770's that the Chipewyan began more steadily to exploit the boreal forest and became more proficient in trapping.

The Chipewyan did not find it easy or profitable to exploit the resources of the boreal forest exclusively, and for some time, those involved in the fur trade continued to exploit the transitional forest-tundra region while gradually adapting to the resources of the northern boreal forest. The move south and southwestward required a subsistence shift from almost exclusive reliance on the barren ground caribou to exploitation of a region with other large game such as woodland caribou and moose and more abundant fur bearing animals. Adaptation to this environment involved the learning of new hunting and trapping techniques, the preparation of hides, travel in a new style of canoe and the use of guns (Gillespie 1976).

According to Gillespie (1975:366, 367), the Chipewyan trade in furs improved in the 1760's and 1770's and was occasionally described favourably by Hudson's Bay Company traders. However, in their trade at Fort Churchill the standard complaints about Chipewyan disinterest in the fur trade, and especially about those who remained reliant on their taiga-tundra economy, continued throughout the historic period. The abundance of caribou and the ease with which it was hunted often drew them back to the barren grounds.

During the 1770's Chipewyan groups were found on Lake Athabasca and the Churchill River. Some had ventured as far south as Cold Lake by 1795. Their movement southward and involvement in the fur trade was facilitated by the establishment of posts by the Hudson's Bay Company and Montreal traders during the 1780's and 1790's. Fort Chipewyan was built in 1788-89 and by the 1790's Ile-a-la-Crosse had become a major

interior post, much of its trade being done with the Chipewyan.

Philip Turnor met Chipewyan at Ile-a-la-Crosse in the 1790's while David Thompson located them on both sides of the Athabasca River south to the Clearwater (along with the Cree) and east all along the Churchill River in 1795. Some Chipewyan were making occasional excursions as far south as Lac la Biche and Cold Lake (Turnor 1934:359; Thompson 1916: 135).

At this time the Chipewyan were again being encouraged by the traders to engage in the fur trade. Upon meeting a group of Chipewyan near Reindeer Lake in 1793, William McGillivray encouraged them to meet him in the fall and he would "endeavour to find out some place for them where they could kill Beavers" (Gillespie 1975:383). Apparently McGillivray had already encouraged some Chipewyan to hunt in the Beaver River area near Cold Lake (*ibid.*). Cold River drains Cold Lake and flows into the Waterhen River system which joins the Beaver River and drains into the Churchill River at Ile-a-la-Crosse. Cold Lake was accessible from Ile-a-la-Crosse by way of these two rivers and it is probable that the Chipewyan at Cold Lake migrated from the Churchill River area by this route.

The movement of Chipewyan southward may have been facilitated in the early 1800's by increased exploitation of buffalo herds on the plains by the Saskatchewan River Cree. While some Cree spent their winters hunting and trapping in the southern boreal forest, others were spending more time on the plains following the buffalo, a practice which required that they travel further from their home country as the



herds decreased and came less frequently to the northern plains. This meant that during the season of least subsistence pressure from the Saskatchewan River Cree the southern boreal forest area was open for exploitation by those Chipewyan involved in the fur trade.

While spending some of their time hunting and trapping in the boreal forest during winter the Chipewyan often returned to the barren grounds during the summer to be "with their relatives and friends in the enjoyment of that plenty which is derived from numerous herds of deer" (Mackenzie 1927:96; Gillespie 1975:382, 383). Mackenzie (1927:86) identified Ile-a-la-Crosse as the usual trading post of the Chipewyan but felt that they viewed themselves as strangers, and seldom remained "longer than three or four years, without visiting their relations and friends in the barren grounds," which they referred to as their native country.

Those Chipewyan who moved south of the Churchill River were cut off from easy access to the barren ground caribou. Smith (1975:419) holds that for the Churchill River Chipewyan, the caribou winter range would be within the limits of exploitation, but that the summer ranges were a great distance from the lakes on the Churchill drainage. For those Chipewyan involved in the fur trade it would not have been advantageous to travel to the forest-taiga transition area to hunt caribou during the winter season as at that time furs were at their prime in the forest. During the summer season, when it might have been possible to travel some distance to hunt caribou, the herds were no longer within easy reach (*ibid.*). The seasonal cycle of the Chipewyan moving southward was no longer governed by the movements of the caribou. Fishing became

the most important summer subsistence activity and semi-permanent settlements were established near those lakes which offered good fishing, such as, Cold Lake, Lac la Biche, Lac la Loche and Ile-a-la-Crosse.

The Chipewyan were divided into two major territorial divisions during the early historic period, the Yellow Knives or Copper Indians, who exploited an area to the far north, and the Chipewyan or "Northern Indians" who inhabited the taiga-tundra region. Some differentiation took place among this latter group during the historic period (as outlined above), which resulted in the formation of a number of distinct regional bands comprised of local bands. Smith (1976a:2) identifies the three regional bands: the *Etøen-eldili-dene*, who remained in the traditional region of transitional forest and tundra; the *Kkrest' ayle kke ottine*, who dwelt in the region of the trembling aspen and who were also known as Athabaskans; and, the *Thilanottine*, who dwelt at the head, that is, the lakes of the Upper Churchill River.

Curtis did a limited amount of fieldwork among the Cold Lake Chipewyan in the 1920's. He defined the range of the Chipewyan at that time as the area "from Slave River southward to Cold Lake, and from Heart Lake eastward to Reindeer Lake in north-central Saskatchewan" (1928:3).

The Chipewyan at Cold Lake in the 1920's identified four divisions of Chipewyan for Curtis. These included: *Kai-theli-kē-hot!innē* ("willow flat country up they-dwell"), centering about the western end of Lake Athabasca at Fort Chipewyan and extending northward to Fort Smith on Slave River and southward to Fort McMurray on Athabasca River; the *Kēs-yē-hot!innē* ("aspen house they-dwell"), at Lac Ile-a-la-Crosse,

Portage La Loche, Cold Lake, Heart Lake and Onion Lake; the *Hâthêl-hot!înně* ("lowland they-dwell"), in the region of Reindeer Lake; and, the *Gâně-Kúnă -hot!înně* ("jack pine home they-dwell"), in the barrens east of Lake Athabasca and centering at Fond du Lac.

Penard, who spent some time at Beauval, Saskatchewan with the Roman Catholic Mission, placed the Chipewyan who had previously moved south from the caribou country in a location similar to that of Curtis. Penard suggested Cree Lake as the central point of their territory and reported that at that time (the 1920's) they extended:

to the south all around Lac Ile a la Crosse, Lac Clair, Lac du Boeuf, Lac des Iles and Lac La Loche; to the west around Lake Athabasca, and along the river of the same name as far as Fort McMurray. To the southwest some of their colonies have even gotten as far as the territory of the Prairie Cree at Cold Lake and at Las (sic) de Coeur near Lac La Biche (Penard 1929:20).

It was the group of Chipewyan identified as the *Thilanottine* by Smith who moved southward during the historic period, entered into the fur trade and began to exploit the southern boreal forest and transitional mixedwood environment of the Upper Churchill River and south westward towards Cold Lake and Lac la Biche. This group was identified by Petitot (1883:651), as the *Thi lan Ottine* or "men of the end of the head" and by Curtis as the *Kĕs-yĕ-hot!înně* or "aspen house they-dwell."

The term *Kĕs-yĕ-hot!înně* or "poplar (aspen) house people" was used by the Cold Lake Chipewyan to identify themselves and those at Ile-a-la-Crosse in the 1920's (Curtis 1928:3), and by the English River Band at Patuanak to identify themselves in the 1970's (Jarvenpa 1980:44).

The prefix *kesye*, which translates as "poplar house" or "headquarters," is the Chipewyan designation for the settlement of Ile-a-la-Crosse, which was used by the people at Patuanak as their primary trading store until the early 1900's (*ibid.*).

The *Thilanottine* or *Kēs-ye-hot!innē* divided into a number of local groups situated south of Lake Athabasca at Buffalo Narrows, Cold Lake, Lac la Biche, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Janvier and Patuanak. These groups were recognized as bands in Treaties Six (1876), Eight (1899) and Ten (1907). The Chipewyan in the study area resided near Cold Lake and south towards the Beaver River and signed Treaty Six in 1876.

## 2.2 Historical Position of the Cree

Rapid changes in population movements and way of life took place among the Cree during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as they moved into the northern plains area and adopted a way of life dependent upon the buffalo. This movement is documented in detail by Milloy (1972) and Ray (1974). Cree expansion westward was a result of the fur trade which had also pushed westward by this time. As middlemen in the trade, the Cree were at the forefront of the trade network. It is possible that some Cree were in the Upper Churchill River area prior to this time (Smith 1975, 1976a; Gillespie 1975). Their expansion southward into the parkland and grassland regions began in earnest after the smallpox epidemic of 1781-83 severely depleted their number and made them vulnerable to the Chipewyan who were beginning to press southward due to involvement in the fur trade. By 1790 areas which the Cree had

occupied around Portage La Loche, Ile-a-la-Crosse and Methye Portage to Lake Athabasca were controlled by the Chipewyan (Hlady 1960:28-42; Milloy 1972:29; Ray 1976:98).

Wood Cree abandoned their territory between the Lake of the Woods and Lake Winnipeg in the early 1800's. Many also deserted the forested areas of the Swan River area for more permanent utilization of the grasslands. Cree who spent their summers in the Swan River area left it during the winter to hunt buffalo in the parklands. The Swampy Cree and Ojibwa took advantage of this absence and moved into the valleys of the Carrot, Red Deer and Swan Rivers in order to utilize the large moose populations. Palliser placed the Thickwood Cree as far west as Fort Pitt by 1860 and stated that this tribe was more closely allied to the Cree of the Prairies than the Swampy Cree (Spry 1968:251, 252).

The Saskatchewan River Cree, those who initially used the North Saskatchewan River as their route west rather than the Churchill River system, exploited the forest and parkland environments. Theirs was a summer fishing, winter trapping and hunting subsistence cycle. Some of these Cree began to use the buffalo resources of the plains while still trapping and hunting in the parklands. However, the failure to conserve large game animals in the woodlands as well as the relative ease of the way of life on the plains during the first half of the nineteenth century caused many Cree to move during all or part of the year onto the plains to hunt buffalo. Hind (1860:123), wrote that, "game of different kinds had become so scarce" in the Saskatchewan valley by the late 1850's, that "during some seasons starvation was no fiction."

As a result, many Wood Cree abandoned the woodland environment, kept horses and enjoyed "the advantage of making the prairie and forest tributary to their wants" (*ibid.*, 311).

As the Cree moved onto the plains they adopted a way of life which relied heavily on abundant buffalo herds. The Cree adapted to the plains environment and during the first half of the nineteenth century developed their version of plains society, a description of which is found in Mandelbaum (1979) and Denig (1961). They also established themselves among other Indian groups. Milloy (1972) refers to the years between 1810 and 1850 as a period during which the Cree attempted to consolidate their position on the plains by consciously working to establish new military and trade patterns. He outlines in detail the Cree-Blackfoot trade relationship and its breakdown due to wars over horses and buffalo.

After 1850 the Plains Cree faced a crisis situation as the plains way of life, which they had so recently adopted, was threatened by the disappearance of the buffalo, which had become an economic resource for Metis provisional hunters and traders moving into the west. Increased volume in the exploitation of buffalo led to the gradual destruction of this resource.

The evidence of traders, missionaries, Indians, government personnel and travellers attested to the fact that after 1850 the buffalo herds began to disappear. The growing scarcity was a regional phenomenon at first, occurring at unequal rates in different parts of the plains. However, it soon became a reality throughout the plains area (Roe 1970)

and the three decades between 1850 and 1880 marked both the beginning and the end of the disappearance of buffalo from lands occupied by the Saskatchewan River Cree.

There is considerable evidence that before 1850 buffalo were plentiful along the North Saskatchewan River. On a journey along this river between Edmonton and Fort Pitt in January of 1848 Paul Kane (1859:396), wrote in his diary of the abundance of these animals.

The animals had, we were told, never appeared in such vast numbers, nor shown themselves so near the Company's establishments; some have even been shot within the gates of the fort (Pitt)...These remarks convey but a faint idea of the astonishing numbers of these animals: within the whole distance we had travelled on this journey we were never out of sight of large herds of them,...

In December of 1857 Hector found the plains a few days travel west of Fort Pitt "covered with buffalo" (Palliser 1859:25). He had passed nine Indian camps since leaving Fort Carlton on his winter journey and at almost every camp the Indians had erected a pound in order to drive in the buffalo. Hector noted that about 100 buffalo were impounded and killed in one of the camps and suggested that this means of capturing buffalo was responsible for a very large number of them being killed yearly in the Saskatchewan district.

Many buffalo were killed during autumn or early winter, a season when the buffalo were abundant in the wooded areas of the parklands. According to Hind (1860:115), the "prairie buffalo" generally kept to the open country except in the winter when they moved into the wooded areas of the Qu'Appelle and North Saskatchewan River valleys and the

Touchwood Hills. The western herds wintered between the north and south branches of the Saskatchewan and south of the Touchwood Hills. In June and July the herds moved south to the prairies crossing the Qu'Appelle valley between the elbow of the South Saskatchewan and Fort Ellice. They then moved towards the Grand Coteau, across the Missouri and up the Yellowstone, returning to the Saskatchewan as winter approached (*ibid.*, 116).

Seasonal fluctuations of buffalo herds occurred in the study area. Hector reported that as his group travelled towards Fort Pitt in December of 1857, they travelled "amongst immense herds of buffalo" (Palliser 1863: 69). Several days journey west of Fort Pitt buffalo were still abundant. However, by mid- to late winter the buffalo had moved south and west and in February 1858, it was reported that they had not come near Fort Pitt for some time and consequently,

there has been a great scarcity of provisions throughout the Saskatchewan district; the Indians have been reduced to eating their horses, and hunting wolves and foxes for food, as not a single buffalo has appeared for many miles on either side of the river, except at Edmonton where they have been so thick as to defy the hunters running them (Palliser 1859:23).

Because of the fluctuations in seasonal movements of the buffalo it is difficult to determine the first noticeable decline of the herds.

The decline was evident during the Palliser expedition:

Although the buffalo still exist in immense numbers, they must be on the decrease, and it is well known that on the southern prairies they are becoming very scarce, and on the west side of the mountains are extinct; while in the country of the Saskatchewan, notwithstanding that the contrary opinion is held by many, they are also decreasing, being now unknown in places where they were formerly abundant...(*ibid.*, 39).



By 1870 the buffalo seldom came to the wooded areas of the North Saskatchewan River. Butler reported on the absence of animal life all along the Qu'Appelle, upper Assiniboine and along the line of the North Saskatchewan River from Carlton to Edmonton House in 1870-71. Butler travelled during the winter from Red River to the Rocky Mountains without seeing one buffalo. He concluded that the buffalo herds, which had roamed in many herds between the South Saskatchewan River and the Eagle Hills, "were in numbers far short of the immense herds in evidence a few years previous" and that:

year by year the prairies which once shook beneath the tread of countless herds of bison, are becoming denuded of animal life, and year by year the affliction of starvation comes with an ever-increasing intensity upon the land (Butler 1872:56, 358, 359).

Selwyn (1874:61) of the Geological Survey of Canada, wrote in his 1874 report that while on his trip through the North-West Territories "not a single buffalo was seen...and very little game of any kind."

By 1875 it was "a well known fact" that the hunt was rapidly decreasing every year" and was "profitable only to those who travel a considerable distance" (SP9, 1876:33). M.G. Dickieson, in charge of the Northern Superintendency, reported to the Minister of the Interior on October 7, 1876, that the subject of most concern in the North-West Territories was the preservation of the buffalo.

The rapid decrease in the numbers of the buffalo has become a matter of alarm to the Indians, who see that, unless steps are speedily taken to arrest it, their future condition will be one of extreme hardship. That the buffalo are decreasing in numbers in a rapidly increasing ratio is a fact admitted on all sides (SP11, 1877:xxxv).

Dickieson went on to note that a "few years" previous the buffalo were plentiful in the North-West and that during the summer of 1876 the buffalo came further east than they had for many years. There were, however, few found to the north and west. It was his opinion that in not more than ten years the Indians in the North-West, who relied upon the buffalo for their subsistence, would require the government to feed and maintain them.

The Council of the North-West Territories finally considered the question of the extermination of the buffalo, and on March 22, 1877, passed an ordinance which was aimed at reducing the number of buffalo killed. The ordinance forbade the use of "pounds," the running of buffalo over steep banks or precipices, the wanton destruction of animals for only choice parts such as the tongues, choice cuts, or hides, and the killing of animals under two years of age. A close season for cows was established from mid-November to mid-August, with exceptions made for the Indians who were allowed to hunt during the winter months. It was impossible to enforce this ordinance as it met with opposition from Indian, Metis and White hunters and it was repealed in the following session of the North-West Council.

Dickieson's concern with the diminishing buffalo herds caused him to write frequently to the Minister of the Interior. The situation was complicated by the arrival of refugee Sioux and Nez Perces from the United States. In 1878 he wrote the following to the Deputy Minister.

Had these (the Sioux and Nez Perces) not crossed the line there was a chance of the buffalo lasting until our own Indians had made such a commencement

in farming and stockraising that they would have been able by this means to support themselves for part of the year at least. That chance is gone. The buffalo in the territories will be exterminated within a short time and we will have our own Indians and the refugees...entirely on our hands for support. The situation is grave and calls for the serious and early consideration of the Government (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3672 F.10,853, Pt. 1, Dickieson to Meridith, 2 April, 1878).

Dickieson went on to state that the supply of pemmican purchased by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1878-79 was very small, that at Fort Pitt in August of that year there were only two bags in the company's store, and that the Hudson's Bay Company man at Fort Pitt was required to send his own men to the plains to secure provisions for their own use during the winter (*ibid.*, Dickieson to Vankoughnet, 26 July 1878).

The buffalo herds were almost non-existent in Canada during the autumn of 1879. Indian Commissioner Dewdney made a trip at that time from Battleford to Fort Walsh and reported that "for the last four or five years the buffalo have gradually been creeping south" (SP14, 1881:93). They were no longer coming as far north as they had previously. This made it difficult for the Indians to hunt buffalo, as in pursuing the herds they were drawn into closer proximity to one another and forced to encroach upon the hunting grounds of other tribes. The Cree and Assiniboine approached Blackfoot territory from the east. The conflict which resulted is described in detail by Milloy (1972). Dickieson, in a letter to Vankoughnet, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, wrote of the problem.

The territory in which buffalo are found having been so circumscribed the Indians are becoming

concentrated within bounds very limited to what they have been accustomed to roam over, and the few animals remaining are being slaughtered at a rate which will soon lead to their utter extermination (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3672 F. 10, 853, Pt. 1, Dickieson to Vankoughnet, 26 July 1879).

During the late 1860's and early 1870's the Saskatchewan River Cree were led by a number of noted leaders. Chief Paspaskies from Fort Pitt, Misticpictoons and Sweet Grass were all noted for their attempts to establish peace between the Cree and Blackfoot. Misticpictoons lost his life in April 1869 during an effort to bring about a peace settlement. It was his death which prompted the last great battle between the two groups in 1870. At that time, the North Saskatchewan Cree were led by Little Pine. The Blackfoot had been severely hit by the smallpox epidemic, and, thinking to take advantage of this, the Cree gathered together a group of between 600 and 800 warriors in October of 1870 to move against the Blackfoot. The Cree were defeated, losing between 200 and 300 warriors, while the Blackfoot lost only about 40. A formal treaty was made between the two groups the following autumn (Milloy 1972:259, 260), which ended the state of war between the two groups, although horse raids continued throughout the 1870's.

It was during this period of conflict and dwindling subsistence resources that the Dominion of Canada purchased title to the North-West Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company. The government commissioned Colonel William Francis Butler to report on the situation along the North Saskatchewan. He was to look into several matters including:

reports of disorder, which supposedly made it unsafe for settlers; the effects of the 1869-70 smallpox epidemic upon the physical state of the Indians; and, the nature of the trade in furs conducted upon the Saskatchewan.

Butler concluded that the country was "without any executive organization and destitute of any means to enforce the authority of the law" (1872:357). Fort Pitt, a favorite camping spot of the Cree, and Edmonton House were both located in the war country of the Cree and Blackfoot and had been the scenes of many conflicts. The Cree often raided both the posts and the Blackfoot camps for horses. This state of lawlessness was apparent at Fort Pitt where the officer in charge reported that the Indians had recently been overbearing in their manner and sometimes threatening. He felt that the White men dwelling in the Saskatchewan did so by sufferance and were entirely at the mercy of the Indians. Several years prior to Butler's visit to Fort Pitt the Blackfoot had plundered the post (1872:311, 312).

Butler reported that the Hudson's Bay Company, which held title to the North-West before 1870, had not the military or judicial strength to keep order or to protect their posts in the Saskatchewan District. White traders sometimes found themselves at the mercy of the Indians.

Threats are frequently made use of by the Indians and halfbreeds as a means of extorting favourable terms from the officers in charge, the cattle belonging to the posts are uselessly killed, and altogether the Hudson's Bay Company may be said to retain their tenure of the Upper Saskatchewan upon a base which appears insecure and unsatisfactory (*ibid.*, 366).

The fear the Cree felt as a result of the disappearance of the buffalo and the absence of animal life along the North Saskatchewan River was reflected in a changed attitude towards the White man. Friendliness was supplanted by discontent and bitterness toward trader, Metis and settler. The smallpox epidemic further intensified these attitudes as they saw many of their family members and fellow tribesmen fall victim to the disease. Many were left destitute and starving.

Butler reported that the trade of the Saskatchewan District had "long been in a declining state" (1872:378). Contributing to this decline was the scarcity of good furs, competition among free traders and the heavy expense of sustaining the Hudson's Bay Company posts in the district. This expense increased as the buffalo decreased, and with it the supply of pemmican and buffalo meat. The situation reported by Butler was magnified during the next 15 years as famine and destitution increased among the Indians.

### 2.2.1 Divisions of the Cree

There appear to have been, by the early 1800's, three divisions of Cree. These included the Woodland or Muskego Cree, the Thickwood Cree and the Plains or Prairie Cree. The Muskego Cree were situated north of the parklands along the southern portion of the Churchill River system. They were referred to by the Plains Cree as the "Forest People," by Hector and Vaux (1860:248) as the Muskego or Swampy Cree, and by others as the Western Wood Cree.

According to Hector and Vaux, the term Saskatchewan River Cree

included both Thickwood and Prairie Cree. The Thickwood Cree inhabited a belt of country to the west of Lake Winnipeg stretching along the northern border of the Saskatchewan country as far as Edmonton House. They were numerous in the vicinity of Fort Pelly and Fort-a-la-Corne and also traded at Forts Ellice, Carlton, Pitt, and Edmonton. The Plains Cree pitched their tents as far west as the Elbow of the South Saskatchewan River and roamed the area north towards Fort Edmonton and the Beaver Hills. Hector and Vaux (1860:248) described the seasonal movements of the Plains Cree.

During the summer their favorite camping grounds are along the Qu'Appelle River to the Missouri Coteau...They are also found in the Bad and Eagle Hills, between the two branches of the Saskatchewan and along Battle River to the south of Fort Pitt, or to the south-east of the Beaver Hills...During winter, as the buffalo seek the shelter of the partially wooded zone of country, the Plains Indians tent nearer the North Saskatchewan or towards the Touchwood Hills and Fort Carlton.

Mandelbaum (1979:7-13) referred to the Saskatchewan Cree as the Western or Plains Cree. For the years 1810-1850, he divided them into the Upstream and Downstream People. The Upstream People were the most numerous and most westerly of the Plains Cree, living along the North Saskatchewan and Battle Rivers from Fort Carlton to Edmonton House. They included the River People who lived between the North Saskatchewan and Battle River, the Beaver Hills People living west of the River People, the House People living in the Fort Carlton area, and the Parkland People who lived to the east of the House People.

The Downstream People was the name given collectively by Mandelbaum

to the eastern bands. This division included the Calling River People, the Rabbit Skin People, the Touchwood Hills People and a mixed band of Cree-Assiniboine who lived in the vicinity of Wood Mountain. According to Milloy (1972:255), the Downstream People moved west towards the Cypress Hills and into Blackfoot territory between 1835 and 1868.

The Cree Indians in the study area were probably those referred to by Mandelbaum as the River People. They included both Plains and Wood Cree. According to Dion, who grew up in the study area during the study period, the Cree recognized a distinction between Plains and Wood Cree. He states that "there has always been a marked distinction between the prairie people and those who resided in the wooded lands" (Dion 1979:3). The natural habitation of the Wood Cree was on the shores of the many lakes found in the parkland and in the southern boreal forest. In the study area the Wood Cree lived near Frog, Fishing, Moose, Goose, Long, Island, Cold and Loon Lakes, while the Plains Cree roamed the North Saskatchewan River area from Fort Carlton to Edmonton House and south to the border area.

### 2.3 Treaty Six (1876)

Control of Indian Territory in the North-West was transferred from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada in 1870. Through seven treaties signed between 1871 and 1877, the Indian tribes between Lake Winnipeg and the Rocky Mountains negotiated and agreed to this transfer in exchange for land reserves, presents and various other terms of treaty.



Treaty Six was negotiated by Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris with the Indians of the Fort Carlton and Fort Pitt areas during the late summer and early fall of 1876. The Fort Pitt Indians signed on September 9th. In accepting the terms of Treaty Six, the Indians agreed that they would become "good and loyal subjects of the Queen," maintain the peace and observe laws established and enforced by the new government. They also ceded all rights, titles and privileges pertaining to their aboriginal land title. In return, the Indians were to receive reserve land, the right (subject to government regulation) to continue hunting, trapping and fishing on lands surrendered, an annual annuity payment and a number of items such as ammunition, twine and cattle.

The chiefs and councillors who signed Treaty Six at Fort Pitt and who came under the jurisdiction of the Fort Pitt District from 1870 to 1885 and the Onion Lake Agency from 1885 to the end of the study period are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Chiefs and Councillors in the study area who signed Treaty Six in 1876

<u>Chiefs (Cree)</u>	<u>Councillors (Cree)</u>
Weekaskookeepayin (Sweet Grass)	Seewaskwan Wahwayseehooweyin
Peeyaseewahkahwechahkoot (Thunder Companion)	Tipeeskowahchak Paypayseeseemoo
Seekahskootch (Cut Arm)	Oonowukeepahchas Myoowaysees Ahsis Wahkeyseekoot
Tustuskeeskwaiss	Oospwahkhunis Neyyepetayaseekayse
Keeyewin	Charles Cardinal Pierre Wahbiskaw
<u>Chief (Chipewyan)</u>	<u>Councillor (Chipewyan)</u>
Kinoosayoo	Antoine Xavier

Source: Morris, 1971:358, 359.

Paymotayahsoo, Kahseemutapoo and Nahpaysis (Keeyewin's head man) signed the treaty on August 9, 1877, and Puskeeyahkayweyin, Mahkayo, Paypahmuskumicknium and Isidore signed on August 19, 1878.

Three other Cree bands were located in the study area. These were the Island Lake, Joseph Bighead and Loon Lake bands. From 1876 to 1906 members of the Island Lake band were paid with Seekaskootch and Oonepowhayo (Tustuskeeskweis' son) bands. They had adhered to Treaty Six with these bands, but lived some distance north on the shores of Island Lake. In 1910 a reserve was set aside for them and from then on they were treated as a separate group.

On June 25, 1913 the Joseph Bighead band signed their adhesion to Treaty Six. Members of the Loon Lake band originated from the Island Lake band and were considered as a separate band for the first time at the 1914 annuity payments. The Indians in these three bands were Wood Cree hunters and trappers. During the study period they followed a subsistence pattern based on game animals and fish and are included in the category of "hunting" Indians.

#### 2.4 Indian Groups in the Study Area

Various terms were used in the sources to identify the Indian groups in the study area. They were identified as bands by the Department of Indian Affairs and given the name of their leader who signed Treaty Six as well as a number. Because of extensive movement between bands during the late 1870's and early 1880's the band populations tended to fluctuate and the term "band" did not reflect

an entity or group of persons that was permanent. Bands were also referred to by their location. The following bands are identified for the study area:

- 1) Seekaskootch, No. 119 - often referred to as the Onion Lake band;
- 2) Mahkayo, No. 120 - occasionally referred to as Weemisticooseahwasis band;
- 3) Ooneepowhayo, No. 121 - signed treaty under Ooneepowhayo's father Tustuskeeskwas, were located at Frog Lake and were sometimes referred to as the Unipoucheous band;
- 4) Puskeeahkeewin (Puskeeyahkayweyin), No. 122 - located at Frog Lake;
- 5) Keeheewin (Kee ye win), No. 123 - sometimes referred to as the Long Lake band;
- 6) Kinosayo, No. 149 - also referred to as the Cold Lake band;
- 7) Island Lake, No. 161;
- 8) Joseph Bighead, No. 124; and,
- 9) Loon Lake, No. 129 - also known as Makwa Lake band.

The term "Onion Lake Bands" was used from 1885 to 1903 to refer to members of the Seekaskootch band as well as those members of Mahkayo, Keeheewin, Ooneepowhayo and Puskeeahkeewin bands who collectively lived on Indian Reservations 119 and 120 at Onion Lake. These Indians were also identified by the term "working" Indians while those Indians who remained on or near their own reserves and continued a subsistence pattern based on hunting and fishing were referred to as "hunting" Indians (cf. section 2.6).

In 1914 Seekaskootch and Mahkayo bands amalgamated to form the Onion Lake band, No. 119 and Ooneepowhayo and Pushkakeewin bands amalgam-

ated to form the Frog Lake band, No. 121.

The only Chipewyan band to sign Treaty Six had built houses and planted gardens near Cold Lake prior to 1876. The location of this settlement and the desire for reserve land which provided access to Cold Lake indicated the importance of this lake for their subsistence needs. Besides fishing, the Chipewyan hunted and trapped in the region to the east and northeast of Cold Lake and along the Beaver and Waterhen Rivers towards Ile-a-la-Crosse. They interacted with Chipewyan at Heart Lake, Lac la Biche and Ile-a-la-Crosse. The Chipewyan band settled on Indian Reservations 149, 149A and 149B in the early 1900's.

## 2.5 The Onion Lake Agency

The Cree and Chipewyan Indians in this study occupied an area which was politically defined as the Fort Pitt District and came under the jurisdiction of the Indian agent in Battleford for the Treaty Six area from 1876 to 1885 and as the Onion Lake Agency from 1886 through the remainder of the study period. Because of distance, lack of funding and the large number of Indians who needed attention on reservations closer to Battleford, the Indian agent at Battleford found it difficult to manage the Fort Pitt District Indians. In 1879, the government increased its personnel in the Treaty Six area by sending out farm instructors. P.T. Williams and John Delaney arrived in the Fort Pitt District in the fall of 1879 to establish Farm 14 on Seekaskootch Reserve (IR 119) and Farm 15 near Frog Lake. In 1883, George Mann took over Farm 14 from Williams as acting farmer. That same year, the

department directed farm instructors to close the home farms and devote their time to helping Indians with agriculture on the reservations. (Farm instructors and home farms are discussed in section 4.3).

Thomas Quinn was sent as acting sub-agent to the Fort Pitt District in 1883. On June 29, 1884 he moved his headquarters from a building rented from the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Pitt to Farm 15 at Frog Lake. By this time a small village, including the Roman Catholic mission and Hudson's Bay Company outpost had grown up adjacent to the farm. A grist and saw mill were being erected and a number of traders expressed their intentions to erect buildings near the agency (SP3, 1885:143).

By 1884 reservations had been surveyed for bands 119, 120, 121, 122, and 123, and many of the Indians in the area had moved to their respective reserve. Some had begun to farm. In 1884, a local person by the name of Beadreau was placed in charge of farming operations on Keeheewin reserve at Long Lake. Fitzpatrick was sent to provide agricultural help to the Chipewyan at Cold Lake who had taken a keen interest in cattle but did little or no grain growing.

Farming activities were disrupted in 1885 due to the North-West Rebellion. Government buildings and machinery were destroyed by the "rebel" Indians and many treaty cattle were used for food. After the Rebellion the government decided to sub-divide the larger Indian agencies. The Fort Pitt District now became the Onion Lake Agency with its own agent, Mr. G.G. Mann, the former farm instructor on IR 119. The purpose for the subdivision of the larger agencies was to provide "a sufficient number of officials to allow of each giving careful personal attention to

those under his charge" (SP6, 1887:109). The Indian Commissioner reported in November 1886 that, besides being economical, the move provided the Indians with greater accessibility to the Indian agent.

One unquestionably good result of this power of ready personal access to the agent by each Indian, is that any little complaint or petition can be at once heard and dealt with. Formerly, when this was not the case, the Indians would store up every little matter about which they felt dissatisfied; and would then make up parties to go and interview officials, which not only had the effect of encouraging them to wander about at times when they should be at work, but led to their magnifying enormously every little want or grievance which they had (*ibid.*).

In the Onion Lake Agency there appears to have been good communication between agent and Indians during G. Mann's term as Indian agent. Dion (1979:122) wrote that:

when G.G. Mann became the first agent at Onion Lake, he proved to be a very capable superintendent. During the 15 years or so that he worked at his post there he had brought the majority of the Crees to a state of self reliance; many were taking a lively interest at improving their home life, and some were doing very well around their various holdings...*Mokalass*, The Bittern, as we called Mr. Mann, was the only Indian agent who did not mind travelling around on a saddle horse to personally inspect the work in the reserve and to visit with his people.

According to Dion, changes occurred after the transfer of Agent Mann which made communication between agent and Indian difficult and which discouraged the Indians. Mann's "humble office" was replaced by a small waiting room reserved for the Indians.

A peep hole or wicket which was regulated from within was our only communicating link with the office and no matter how urgent our call we had to wait until the agent was good and ready to see us. It became common, even during the busy

time of spring or fall, to see a number of teams standing along the fence, the owners sitting in a circle playing cards, swapping yarns, or just killing time while they waited for the "money chief" to spare them a few minutes of his time. There were many instances where an Indian had to make several trips to the agency before he could get a hearing. Yes, many treaty Indians could truly say that half their lives were spent in waiting, waiting till they lost interest (Dion 1979:132, 133).

Agent Mann was well liked by the Indians and was held up as a model agent by the Inspectors and Indian Commissioner. Assistant Commissioner Hayter Reed reported to the Superintendent General in January of 1888 that Mann had served as a "model of what is considered Agents in charge of... the smaller sub-divided Agencies, should be," and that "less fault has been found with the manner of conducting his office work than with any other [agent]" (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3785 F.41,783-6).

Inspector McGibbon inspected the agency in 1894 and found that it was in excellent order. He reported that Agent Mann

continues to give his undivided time in overseeing the various departments, and the success in managing his Indians is due to his straightforward way of dealing and the system observed in carrying on the work (SP14, 1895:109).

G. Mann acted as agent until December 1899, when William Sibbald took charge of the agency. Sibbald was agent during the remainder of the study period and was agent during a time when the Indians had become discouraged with grain growing but were interested in stock raising (cf. Chapter 5). The permit system, which was set up in an effort to control the indiscriminate sale of cattle, was enforced after his arrival. In 1906 the work of the agency, and especially the duties of the agent, were increased considerably due to efforts made to have

the Frog Lake and Long Lake Indians establish themselves on their own reserves and in their own industries (SP27, 1906:179). This meant more travel for the agent and an increased number of personnel under his charge as farmers were hired for the Cold Lake and Keeheewin reserves.

Sibbald appears to have been a "tougher" agent than Mann in his dealings with the Indians. Nevertheless, the Inspector wrote in 1917 that Sibbald was "gentlemanly in his dealings with the Indians and white alike and is well respected in the community in which he has for so long and conscientiously served the Department" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1917). By 1917 Sibbald had been ill for several months but continued to travel periodically to the various reserves under his charge. Due to his illness Sibbald took a leave of absence in 1918 during which time the agency was under the charge of Acting Agent Lang Turner who had been Sibbald's clerk since 1906. Turner already did much of Sibbald's travelling around the reserves by 1917 and was praised by the Inspector as being "neat and methodical" in his work as clerk. While acting as agent in Sibbald's absence his duties as clerk were taken over, to a large extent, by his daughter, Lulu, who appears to have been quite capable in this area.

Various other personnel assisted the agents (Table 2). There was generally a clerk in charge of the paper work. An interpreter assisted around the farm at the agency and with the Indians on the outlying reserves. In the early years, and while most of the Indians were resident on the Onion Lake reserve, the agent acted as a resident farmer. John Bangs began work for Agent Mann in 1893 and he was placed



Table 2: Department personnel in the Onion Lake Agency, 1885-1916

---

1885	G. Mann (Indian Agent)
1888-89	G. Mann, P. Boudreau (interpreter), W.J. Barker (clerk)
1890-91	Mann, Boudreau, J.J. McFeeters (clerk)
1892	Mann, Boudreau, McFeeters, Blair (miller and farmer)
1893-97	Mann, John Carney (general assistant), Joseph Taylor (carpenter, later he was the engineer and miller), John Bangs (interpreter and department herd), Blanche Mann (clerk)
1898	G. Mann, Blanche Mann, Taylor, Bangs
1899	G. Mann, B. Mann, Wm. Slater (stockman), Taylor
1899 (Dec. 31)	Wm. Sibbald (Indian Agent), B. Mann, Taylor, Thos. Slater (stockman)
1900-03	Sibbald, J. Taylor, Thos. Slater, L. Lovell (clerk and farmer)
1904	Sibbald, Taylor, W. Deeman (farmer)
1905	Sibbald, Taylor, Slater, J.B. Ross (clerk), W. Vivier (interpreter)
1906-07	Sibbald, Taylor, Slater (farmer-Keeheewin reserve), Vivier, L.E. Turner (clerk)
1908	Sibbald, Taylor, Slater, Turner, John Bangs (interpreter)
1909	Sibbald, Taylor, Slater, Turner, Bangs, R. Pratt (assistant interpreter)
1910	Sibbald, Taylor, Slater, Turner, Bangs, Pratt, Geo. Kennedy (farmer)
1911-12	Sibbald, Taylor, Slater, Turner, Bangs, Pratt, Z.A. Lefebvre (farmer-Cold Lake reserve)
1913-14	Sibbald, Taylor, Slater, Turner, Bangs, Pratt, A. Martineau (farmer-Cold Lake reserve)
1915-16	Sibbald, Taylor, Turner, Bangs, Pratt, Martineau, F.J. Dresser (farmer-Keeheewin reserve)

---

in charge of the department herd at Long Lake. From 1908 until 1917 he was the interpreter at the agency and assisted the agent in the area of stock raising. By 1917 Inspector Crombie reported that Bangs' work

was more in connection with department stock and dispensing of rations than in the instruction of Indians in farming and suggested that Bangs be more involved with the Indian herds and keep a better count of Indian cattle sales (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1917). It appears that Bangs was expected by the Inspector to act as resident farmer. Rupert Pratt was the assistant interpreter during the early 1900's and upon his death his son, George Pratt, took over as interpreter.

Jospeh Taylor was a long-time employee of the agency. He was hired as a carpenter in 1893 and later became miller, engineer and general mechanic for the agency. Taylor was a local Indian who attended the Battleford Industrial School. He was always well spoken of and worked for the agency until he decided to farm on his own in 1918.

A number of farmers were hired to help those Indians who wished to farm on the outlying reserves after their return from the Onion Lake reserves in the early 1900's. William Slater was hired as a stockman in 1899. Thomas Slater took over this position in December and continued in it until 1906 when he became the farmer on Keeheewin reserve. He served until 1915 when he was replaced by F.J. Dresser. A. Martineau was the farmer on the Cold Lake reserve from 1913 through the remainder of the study period. Crombie reported in 1917 that this man was "capable in many ways" (*ibid.*). He was a good mechanic, operated the steam threshing engine, superintended threshing operations on the reserve, acted as sawmill engineer and cared for the department stock and bulls on the reserve. He was criticized by the Inspector for

not being able to control the excessive sale of cattle by the Indians under his charge.

Indians of the agency were served by a number of doctors. Mrs. E.G. Matheson was resident doctor on the Onion Lake reserve and visited the Island Lake Indians when called upon. Her husband was the Church of England minister there during the late 1890's and early 1900's. In the early 1900's Dr. Matheson built a hospital on IR 120. Dr. Hill, and in his absence Dr. Eacrett, of Lloydminster, were hired to make periodic visits to the reserves in the agency. Dr. Charlebois of St. Paul Des Metis, was appointed in 1916 to attend to the Indians at Frog Lake and Cold Lake.

Resident in the community at Onion Lake was a small police force detachment, mission and school personnel for both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England and the Hudson's Bay Company officer and clerk. Garson was the Hudson's Bay Company trader for many years at Onion Lake and was well liked by the Indians. Dion wrote of him:

Carson [sic] was the only factor that I really knew, as did every man, woman, and child for miles around during his many years as chief factor of the big store on top of the hill. Mr. Carson's Indian name was *Oyahiso*, the Blacksmith;...As a storekeeper Mr. Carson's generosity was legendary. I do not remember much talk about money for there was not enough of it to make the people anxious for its keeping. All goods at the store were obtained by trade or barter; the Indians' credit was unlimited. I honestly believe that some of the boys never did a tap of work from early spring until the hay-making time; they lived on "jaw-bone". Of course when the treaty payments were issued to the Indians the H.B. store got every cent of it; the same thing with their steer money in the fall and the fur catch in winter.

Credit must be given to Mr. Carson for he was a wise

counsellor, father, and friend of all the Crees and Chipewyans who resided on six widely separated reserves (Dion 1979:124).

The social aspect of the agency at Onion Lake was very important to the Indians. Festive occasions broke the monotony of the subsistence cycle and gathered the people together for socializing. There were a number of annual events in which Indians from all of the Cree reserves participated and at least one occasion which brought the Chipewyan to Onion Lake. This was the July 1st holiday and sports day. Other occasions included Christmas and New Year's, Easter, Treaty Payments and the Thirst Dance. These occasions are discussed in section 6.1.

Improvements in buildings and facilities at the agency at Onion Lake was a priority during the duration of Agent Mann's term. In December of 1885 the agency received seven oxen so that they were able to haul a large quantity of house logs to the agency. By the fall of 1886 Mann, with the help of Indian labourers, had rebuilt the agency farm. An agency storehouse, farm storehouse, tool house and harness room, cattle stable, interpreter's house, agent's house, workshop and roothouse had been built of flatted spruce logs with thatched roofs. The buildings were well floored and ceiled with whipsawn lumber (SP6, 1887:170, 171). Besides the agency buildings many Indians had built houses for themselves. The Indians whipsawed all of the lumber required for the government buildings and the Indian houses on the reserves.

In 1889 the agency buildings included a piggery and a milk house, which was built over a recently dug well. Mann reported that shingles were being used now instead of thatch.

A grist and saw mill were erected at the agency in 1890. Mann commented

that this pleased the Indians so much that "every man turned out last winter and helped to cut and haul to the mill one thousand seven hundred fine logs for timber" (SP14, 1892:72). The mill was an encouragement to the Indians and the families were eager to improve their dwellings. Mann reported that one man had already shingled his house and that thatch would soon "be a thing of the past" (*ibid.*).

In 1892 a new carpenter and blacksmith shop and a two storey granary were added. The granary was adjacent to the mill and was to provide storage space for grain as well as for farm equipment and implements.

The Inspector reported in 1893 that the "whole premises in and around the mill and agency buildings, were in good order, and had a thriving appearance..." (SP14, 1894:192). Six new Indian houses had been built during the year and twelve new stables. The houses were reported to be clean and, in many cases, comfortably furnished. They were all whitewashed with white clay, a practice which was regularly carried out each fall. The Indians continued to improve their dwellings and to furnish them with beds, tables and seats made by themselves.

The Indian dwellings, chiefly of logs, are kept in good order. All the houses have open fireplaces. The furniture consists of tables, benches, bedsteads, and shelves, all of the Indian's own manufacture. The neat and clean appearance of the premises is a great credit to them (SP14, 1896:83).

Between the very early 1900's, when housing is still reported as being good, and around 1914, interest in improving dwellings seems to have lagged. The Inspection Report of 1914 gave the following assessment of the housing situation which is very different from earlier reports.

For many years this reserve was backward in matters of house construction, few of the Indians showing ambition for anything better than a sod-roofed shanty, notwithstanding that from an early date there had been a saw-mill at the agency and lumber had been cut on several occasions. A start has however, at least been made, and last summer three respectable looking dwellings were built. They are of sufficient height to afford an upstairs; the roofs are shingled, the floors of good material and well laid, and the doors and windows well fitted. The walls and roofs are true...all were built by the Indians without other assistance. There were already five shingled houses on the reserve, two of which are of a similar description to these newer ones; but about three quarters of the houses are still of the old class (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1).

From 1912 to 1915 there appears to have been a building boom (Table 3). On the Frog Lake reserves ten new and improved dwellings were erected and 15 new houses were built on Keeheewin reserve between 1911 and 1914. Many of these dwellings were two storeys and were reported to be well built. However, there were still many "shanties" being used by the Indians. While the Cold Lake, Keeheewin and Frog Lake bands "had mostly good log dwelling-houses with shingled roofs" in 1916, Agent Sibbald reported that at Onion Lake there were several good log houses with shingled roofs, but the majority of the dwellings on that reserve were but shacks (SP27, 1917:66). At Island Lake, Loon Lake and Joseph Bighead's the buildings were chiefly pole and sod shacks.

Table 3: Houses and Stables in the Onion Lake Agency, 1897-1920

Year	Houses Frame	Log	Cattle Stables	Year	Houses Frame	Log	Cattle Stables
1897		83	76	1909		113	67
1898		83	76	1910		123	71
1889		n/g	n/g	1911		124	73
1900	1	89	83	1912	3	154	90
1901	1	87	82	1913	3	149	89
1902	1	87	83	1914	4	148	89
1903		86	80	1915	4	158	90
1904	1	87	59	1916	4	163	90
1905				1917	4	165	131 <sup>1</sup>
1906				1918	4	167	121
1907		104	62	1919	5	167	121
1908		107	64	1920	5	167	118

Note: 1 includes cattle stables and storehouses

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports.

The ambition for building and improving houses as well as keeping them tidy appears to have varied with individuals. The presence of a saw mill meant that logs could be cut and shingles made for those Indians who desired to build houses. The numbers in Table 3 suggest that log houses predominated over frame houses and that the presence of a saw mill did not ensure a better class of building.

During the latter portion of the study period fewer buildings were required by agency personnel at Onion Lake and some of the buildings formerly used fell into disuse. The Inspection Report of 1917 gives a

detailed description of the buildings, which included an office building, agent's dwelling, three sheds, horse stable, a store and ration house and the old flour mill buildings which were now considered beyond repair, not having been used for some time (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1).

## 2.6 The 1885 Rebellion

The 1885 Rebellion has been dealt with in detail by a number of writers including Stanley (1978), Dion (1979) and Dyck (1970). It is not within the scope of this thesis to detail the events of the Rebellion but only to touch on some of the events at Frog Lake and to identify the consequences of the Rebellion for the Indians in the study area.

By 1880 the Indians had experienced much hardship and some starvation due to the disappearance of the buffalo which the Indian linked to the arrival of the White man. According to Ahenakew (1952:5), missionary in charge of the Onion Lake District in the Church of England Diocese of Saskatchewan in the late 1910's, feelings of resentment arose among the Indians as they "began to see that in their own land, where their word had always been law, they were slowly becoming nothing but lookers-on."

When Reed assumed the position of Indian Agent at Battleford in 1881 he reported that the Indians were in an unsettled state. This was particularly marked amongst the Plains Cree band of Big Bear who had been encouraged to sign treaty and settle in the Fort Pitt District. However, it was also evident among members of other bands. Reed



attributed the restlessness of the Indians to a number of factors including their nomadic habits, the monotony of reserve life, a strong interest in what was occurring in the south and a desire to hunt the buffalo. He reported that the Indians had made "extravagant" demands upon him, that he held to government policy and, by withholding assistance except to those who were willing to work, he had managed to retain some on each reserve except for the band under Poundmaker which was in a "constant state of disquietude" (SP6, 1882:75).

Other problems also arose that year. Attempts were made by the Indians to take cattle from reserves at Battleford and Fort Pitt. Farm Instructor Williams, on Seekaskootch reserve, was the recipient of a threat in which the Indians informed him that no work would be performed yet all were to be fed. If he did not comply with this, they threatened to take away all the cattle and butcher them as required for food in the absence of game. Williams was able to stop this attempt (SP6, 1882:80). Such threats as these, and the feelings of frustration and restlessness amongst the Indians, possibly explain the limited progress that was made in agriculture during the 1881 season.

Dyck (1970) outlines the government practice of placing economy above all other considerations in dealing with the Indians and suggests that a reduction in rations and the enforcement of the food-for-work policy were responsible for growing Indian resentment and the reaction which developed in 1884. The farm instructor at Frog Lake was threatened at knife point when he refused to give out rations to an Indian who had returned from an unsuccessful hunt. During the summer the number and size of Indian

gatherings increased. An Indian Council was held in conjunction with the annual Sun Dance and Big Bear and a number of chiefs from the Carlton district met with Louis Riel in July of 1884.

The situation appeared to have settled and a sense of calm came to the area during the following winter. In March, Big Bear agreed to settle at the mouth of Dog Rump Creek close to Frog Lake. Sub-Agent Quinn reported that Big Bear's band had cut cordwood for their rations during the winter, but as they could do little hunting due to the severe cold, they had been unable to earn any clothing for themselves. About 180 persons in Big Bear's band were situated at Frog Lake. Stragglers, who were in the Battleford area, were expected to return, thus bringing the total to around 500.

P. Ballendine was sent to the area to keep the Minister's office informed of all events involving the Indians. He reported that the Indians around Frog Lake and in Big Bear's band "appear to be well disposed and do not seem to desire to cause any further trouble..." (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3715 F.21, 264, March 19, 1885) and on the 16th he informed Assistant Indian Commissioner Reed that he had "never left any band of Indians this winter more satisfied than those round Frog Lake" (*ibid.*, March 16, 1885). This seems to have been a false sense of calm which hid the underlying tension and resentment of the Plains Cree. Though they had worked for rations at Frog Lake, they resented doing so. According to Dion (1979:89), they had tried to adapt to the forest but in the face of near starvation had to come to the agency at Frog Lake for rations.

They had never worked. They could not adapt themselves to the deadly monotony of reserve life. They resented the idea of total subjugation and having to chop a cord of wood for a pound of bacon. They vainly tried their hand at moose hunting, which was hard even for the seasoned hunters, for game was very scarce (*ibid.*).

Finally, in April of 1885, several of the younger men in Big Bear's band became reckless in their actions and very demanding in their requests of Sub-Agent Quinn. The outcome of their action was the deaths of nine White men and the pillaging and looting of government and Hudson's Bay Company stores at Frog Lake, Onion Lake and Fort Pitt. According to Edward Ahenekeew (1952:5), this action, including the massacre at Frog Lake, was "evidence of the last attempt of the Indian to register his disapproval of the ever-increasing power of another race in the land."

The actions at Frog Lake initially involved only a few of the Plains Cree, but ultimately the entire band of Big Bear as well as the Cree bands under Chiefs Keeheewin, Ooneepowhayo and Seekaskootch became involved. Although these latter bands did not willingly enter the conflict, the issue was forced by the actions of some of their younger men. The majority of the members of these bands travelled north to Makwa Lake with Big Bear's band where they finally surrendered.

The actions of the Indians had certain consequences in the years following the Rebellion. Those who participated in the Rebellion were labelled "rebel" Indians and Chiefs Keeheewin and Ooneepowhayo were deposed by the Deputy Indian Commissioner Reed. Many of the Wood Cree moved into the forested area north of the agency, while a few wandered

southward to the United States. Members of bands in the agency were given a choice to settle on the Onion Lake reserves, where the agency was being rebuilt, or to make their own living from the forests and lakes in the study area.

The future management of these Indians was of concern to the department and, upon the recommendations of Deputy Indian Commissioner Reed, who had little sympathy for the "rebel" Indians, the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Vankoughnet drew up a number of guidelines concerning the management of these Indians (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3584 F.1130 Pt.1B, Vankoughnet to Dewdney, October 28, 1885). The guidelines were: those Indians who had not been disloyal or troublesome were to be treated in the same manner as before; those Indians who had taken part in the uprising were to be treated in such a way as to demonstrate clearly to them and other Indians that the department disapproved of their actions; the tribal system was to be broken up so that Indians could be dealt with individually instead of through the Chiefs and was to be done carefully so that hostile feelings would not be aroused; annuity payments were to be withheld from "rebel" bands as well as individuals from other bands who had been active in the Rebellion until property destroyed had been paid for; Indians were to be disarmed gradually by persuasion; passes signed by an official of the department were to be required for all Indians leaving their reserves for any reason; Indians were not to congregate in large groups without the permission of the Indian Agent; the members of Big Bear's band were to be distributed among the other bands; and, the food-for-work policy was to be enforced for

all able-bodied persons.

In Reed's opinion, the Indians of Cold Lake, Long Lake, Moose Lake, Frog Lake and some of the Onion Lake Indians "with the exception of a few who might be cutting hay or ploughing should not be fed until they are actually starving and cannot really provide for themselves" (*ibid.*, Reed to Dewdney, May 6, 1885).

The Onion Lake Agency as set up in 1885 included the same Indians as the Fort Pitt District had included, although the bands were somewhat disorganized due to the Rebellion. Formerly there were six bands. After the Rebellion, the bands of Chiefs Keeheewin and Oonepowhayo were broken up. The above-mentioned conditions resulted in the separation of the Cree in the agency into two groups. Those Indians who wished to farm were to move to Seekaskooth reserve No. 119, where the agency was established, and to Mahkayo reserve No. 120. These Indians were known as "working" Indians or the "most industrious" Indians in the agency. Those Indians who remained on their reserves and who hunted and trapped in the area to the north of Frog Lake, Long Lake and Island Lake were known as "hunting" Indians. After 1885 the "working" Indians were aided by the department through rations, farm instruction, cattle and other incentives while the "hunting" Indians received rations and aid only when absolutely necessary. The latter were encouraged to settle and farm if they expected to receive aid.

By 1889 a large number of the Indians from Keeheewin's reserve and the Frog Lake reserves had settled on the Onion Lake reserves. At Onion Lake a community grew up which included two missions, the

Roman Catholic and the Church of England, each having its own boarding school, the Hudson's Bay store and a detachment of the North-West Mounted Police.

## 2.7 Population

According to Hector and Vaux (1860:187) the Thickwood and Plains Cree numbered approximately 12,500 persons in 1860. This total is similar to Palliser's estimate of 11,945 (1863:202) in which Palliser included 1920 lodges of Plains Cree and 85 lodges of Thickwood Cree. The Plains Cree were calculated at six persons per lodge which would give a total of 11,520 persons. Because the Thickwood Cree had smaller family sizes Palliser suggested roughly one less per lodge which worked out to 425 persons. The Fort Pitt Cree, who inhabited the area north of the North Saskatchewan River, were identified by Palliser as Thickwood Cree. They numbered 40 lodges and had a population of 200.

Following the smallpox epidemic of 1870-71, Butler estimated the Cree along the North Saskatchewan, who traded under Chiefs Sagamat and Sweet Grass at Carlton, Pitt, Victoria, Edmonton and Battle River, at 7,000 (Butler 1872:387).

The number of Indians paid at the signing of Treaty Six at Fort Pitt in 1876 was put at 1,032. There is an error in addition on the payroll which shows the actual total to be 1,039. Approximately 790 of these persons settled in the study area. These included the bands of Sweet Grass with a total of 236, Keeheewin with 56, Tustahsaskwani with 179, Seekahskootch with 187, Peeyasiewahkahweechakoot with 74 and

Kinosayo with 58.

Several problems arose in relation to the 1876 population returns. First of all, many families belonging to the bands whose chiefs signed treaty were absent. Indian Commissioner Christie reported that as close as he could ascertain "there seemed to be about 57 Tents or Families absent" (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3641 F.7570). Christie averaged six persons per tent, which would mean that approximately 342 Indians had not been paid.

Based on the total of 1,039 Indians paid at Fort Pitt, and if dividing the total number of annuitants by 234, the total number of families represented, this gives approximately 4.4 persons per family. For the bands in the Fort Pitt District the average number of persons per family was five, with the exception of the Keeheewin band which averages only 1.5 persons per family. Without a detailed study of the early annuity lists, it is impossible to determine the actual number of individuals in a social grouping or to explain why the average family size for Keeheewin band is so low.

Another problem which made it difficult to count accurately the Indians in the immediate post-treaty years was the action of some Indians who attempted to take advantage of the annuity system. They did this by changing their names and disguising themselves by painting their faces. Some men borrowed other people's children and gave different names for them. "One young man was known to have borrowed a woman and five children. He drew \$15 for each of them" (Dion 1979:78). In time the agents came to know the Indians and such discrepancies were worked out.

The population figures for 1876-1880 reflect the totals for those bands whose leaders signed Treaty Six, but who may have annually moved in and out of the treaty area, depending on resource availability and exploitation. However, these bands considered the valley of the North Saskatchewan River their homeland and for that reason had adhered to Treaty Six.

As the buffalo disappeared, those bands hunting on the plains gradually returned to the north to settle on their respective reservations. In 1883, Indian Commissioner Dewdney reported that "some 1,500 to 2,000 Indians have during the past season been forced from the South to settle principally in the Battleford and Pitt districts of this Treaty" (SP4, 1884:101). As reserve settlement increased and the Indians became less nomadic, the population figures reflected a more carefully calculated and more accurate total.

Table 4 gives the population totals for the Indians in the Treaty Six area from 1876 to 1917. The totals are shown in graph form in Figure 1. From 1881 to 1894 the population figures are complicated by two significantly different returns. The earlier census returns entitled "Number of Indian Tribes in the Dominion of Canada" were based on annuity paylists of the previous year and therefore indicate a population figure reported almost two years late. The population returns from this source were taken from the total given for Plains and Woods Cree in the Treaty Six area and are represented on the graph by a dotted line.

In 1881 a new return was included in the Annual Reports entitled "Number of Indians in the Northwest Territories and their Whereabouts on



Table 4: Population of Treaty Number 6, 1876-1917

Year	Population	Year	Population	Year	Population
1876	2776	1890	5793	1904	5985
1877	6390	1891	5561	1905	6106
1878	4954	1892	5455	1906	6553
1879	6744	1893	5642	1907	6636
1880	8508	1894	5351	1908	6636
1881	8233	1895	5466	1909	6726
1882	8786	1896	5658	1910	6266
1883	8356	1897	5855	1911	7324
1884	8414	1898	5933	1912	7363
1885	7381	1899	6061	1913	7489
1886	6376	1900	6054	1914	7538
1887	5842	1901	6159	1915	7537
1888	5790	1902	6236	1916	7718
1889	6068	1903	6216	1917	7864

Source: Canada, *Sessional Papers*. Department of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports and Tabular Statements*.

1876-1880	Number of Indian Tribes in the Dominion of Canada
1881-1894	Number of Indians in the Northwest Territories and their Whereabouts...
1895-1917	Census Return of Resident and Nomadic Indians

(date)." This return, which began in 1881 and continued until 1894, listed the individual band totals and the number of persons in each band. This return is represented by the broken line from 1881 until 1894. In 1894 the census return became "Census Return of Resident and Nomadic Indians." From 1894 to 1917 a broken line is used to represent this census return.

Figure 1: Population of the Treaty Six area, 1876-1917

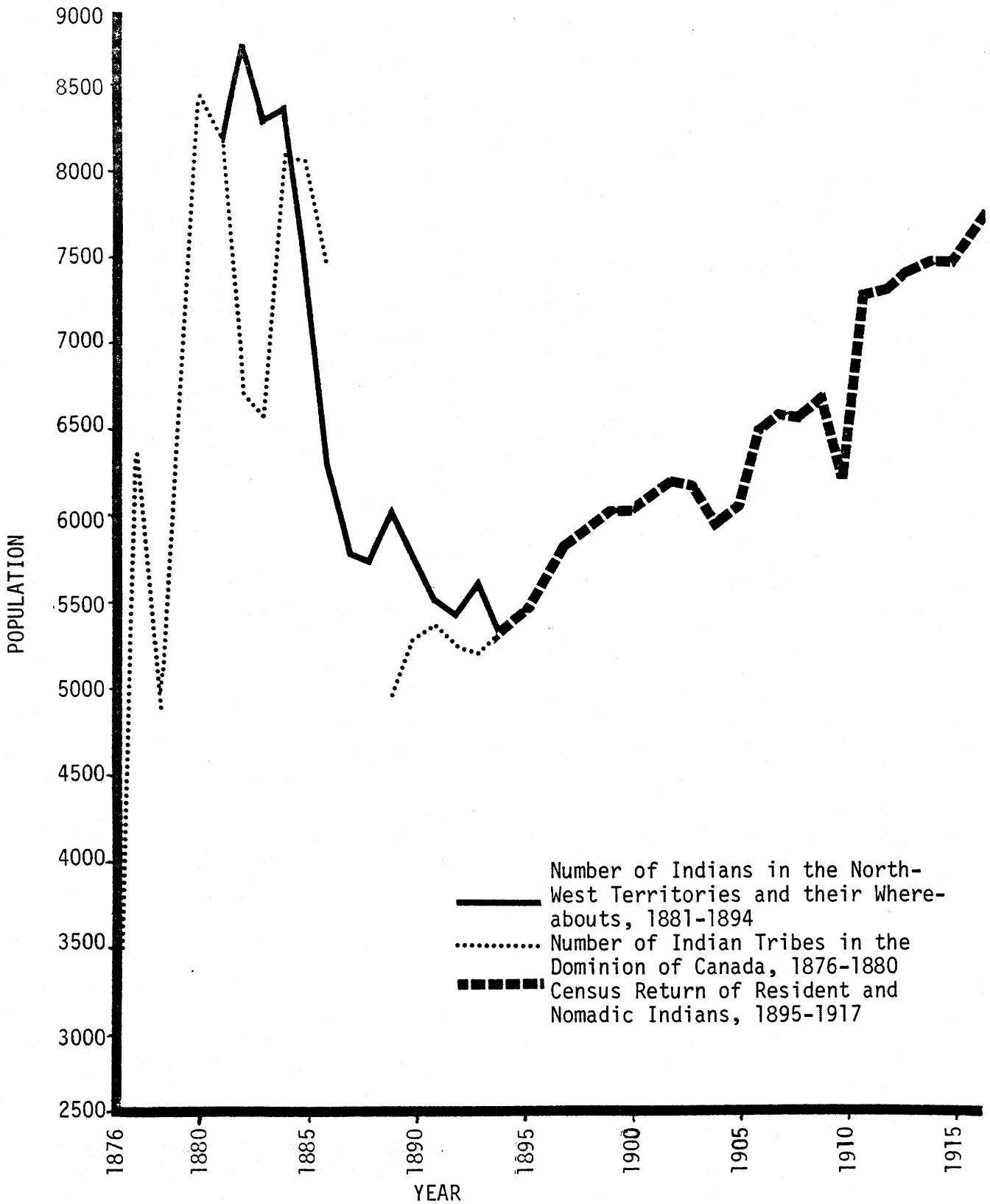


Table 5: Population of the Onion Lake Agency according to Bands, 1876-1917

Year	119 <sup>(7)</sup>	120	121-122	123	(149)	Other	Total
1876	493	-	179	56	58		790
1877	505	-	143	89	167		904
1878	754	96(1)	159	183(1)	211	107	1510
1879	757	58	143	229	146	106	1439
1880	228	92	101	51	168	112	752
1881	166	68	86		163	115	598
1882	191	64	60	40	135	113	603
1883	207	76	73	41	167	115	1037
1884	227	113	73	31	146	120	1230
1885	221	(2)	210(2)		145	123	1193
1886	262	(2)	738(2)	(2)		123	1123
1887	198	102	61	25	115	132	1083
1888	197	91	68	30	130	132	798
1889	216	95	80	32	120	128	821
1890	212	95	66	32	110	128	643
1891	200	95	66	30	118	151	660
1892	177	90	61	28	105	151	612
1893	186	97	68	30	103	163	647
1894	186	106	60	29	108	169	658
1895	191	105	68	24	111	169	673
1896	191	104	77	22	116	167	679
1897	199	104	79	22	118	186	708
1898	199	111	83	22	120	201	736
1899	268	110	90	25	122	224	839
1900	272	111	85	26	117	240	851
1901	269	108	86	27	119	239	848
1902	255	107	92	30	121	253	858
1903	276	96	92	31	122	256	873
1904	294	94	101	31	124	264	908
1905	298	90	103	32	130	277	930
1906	311	87	105	29	135	275	943
1907	324	93	106	28	143	273	967
1908	336	91	103	26	145	273	974
1909	341	93	111	25	150	284	1004
1910	219(4)	79	(4)52	23	179	284	1015
1911	203	80	49	23	189	279	1010
1912	201	81	51	24	186	275	1001
1913	200	82	55	24	205	282	1036
1914	204	80	59	23	199	279	1059
1915	234	-(3)	144(3)		163	277	1055
1916	239	-	152		163	270	1058
1917	232	-	149		162	281	1062

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports and Tabular Statements.

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

## Notes:

- (1) Mahkayo (No. 120) and Puskeeyahkayweyin (No. 122) signed adhesion to Treaty Six in August 1878.
- (2) The population figures for these bands were included in the population total for bands 121 and 122. These Indians were considered "rebels."
- (3) On January 16, 1914, bands 119 and 120 amalgamated to form the Onion Lake band and bands 121 and 122 amalgamated to form the Frog Lake band. Therefore, from 1914 to 1917, the population total for band 120 is included in the total for 119 and the total for 122 is included in the total for 121.
- (4) From 1876 to 1906 the Island Lake band was paid under Seekaskootch (No. 119) and Ooneepowhayo (No. 121) bands. In 1910 a reserve was set aside for them and they were counted as a separate band (No. 161) from then on.
- (5) On June 25, 1913 the Joseph Bighead band signed adhesion to Treaty Six and in 1914, 56 Indians from the Island Lake band joined the Joseph Bighead band (No. 124).
- (6) The members of the Loon Lake band originated from the Island Lake band which had signed Treaty Six under Chiefs Seekaskootch and Tustuskeeskwaish. In 1914, the Loon Lake band was considered for the first time as a separate band in the paylists. The totals found in the "Other" column indicate totals for the Island Lake, Joseph Bighead and Loon Lake bands.
- (7) The totals given for Seekaskootch band No. 119 from 1876 to 1917 include a portion of the Sweet Grass band, while the totals from 1876 to 1894 also include the Thunder Companion and Paymootayahsoo bands. In 1881 Paymootayahsoo band, a part of Sweet Grass band and Thunder Companion band moved to Seekaskootch reserve. These three bands officially amalgamated in 1883.

Figure 2: Population of the Onion Lake Agency, 1876-1918

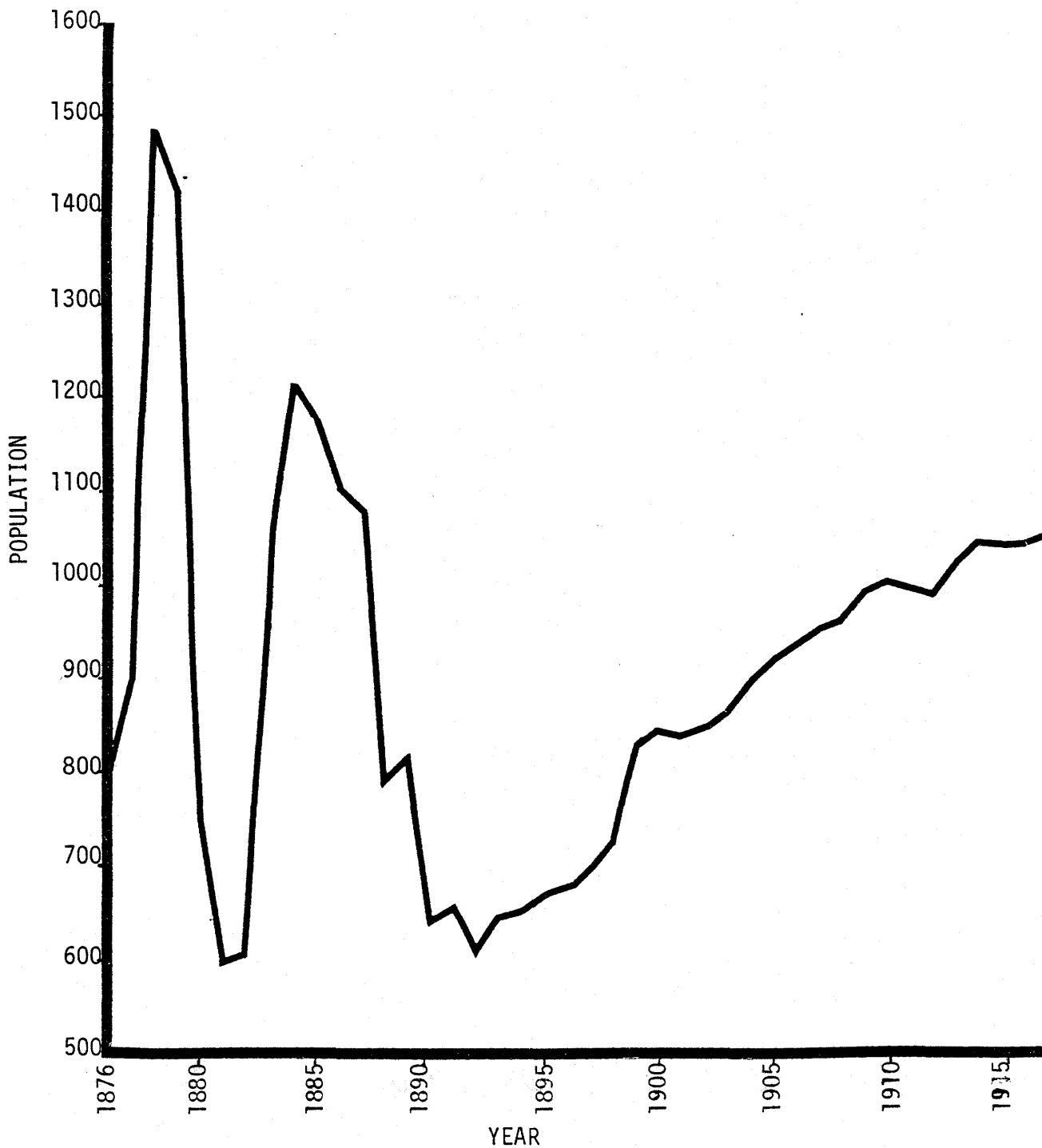
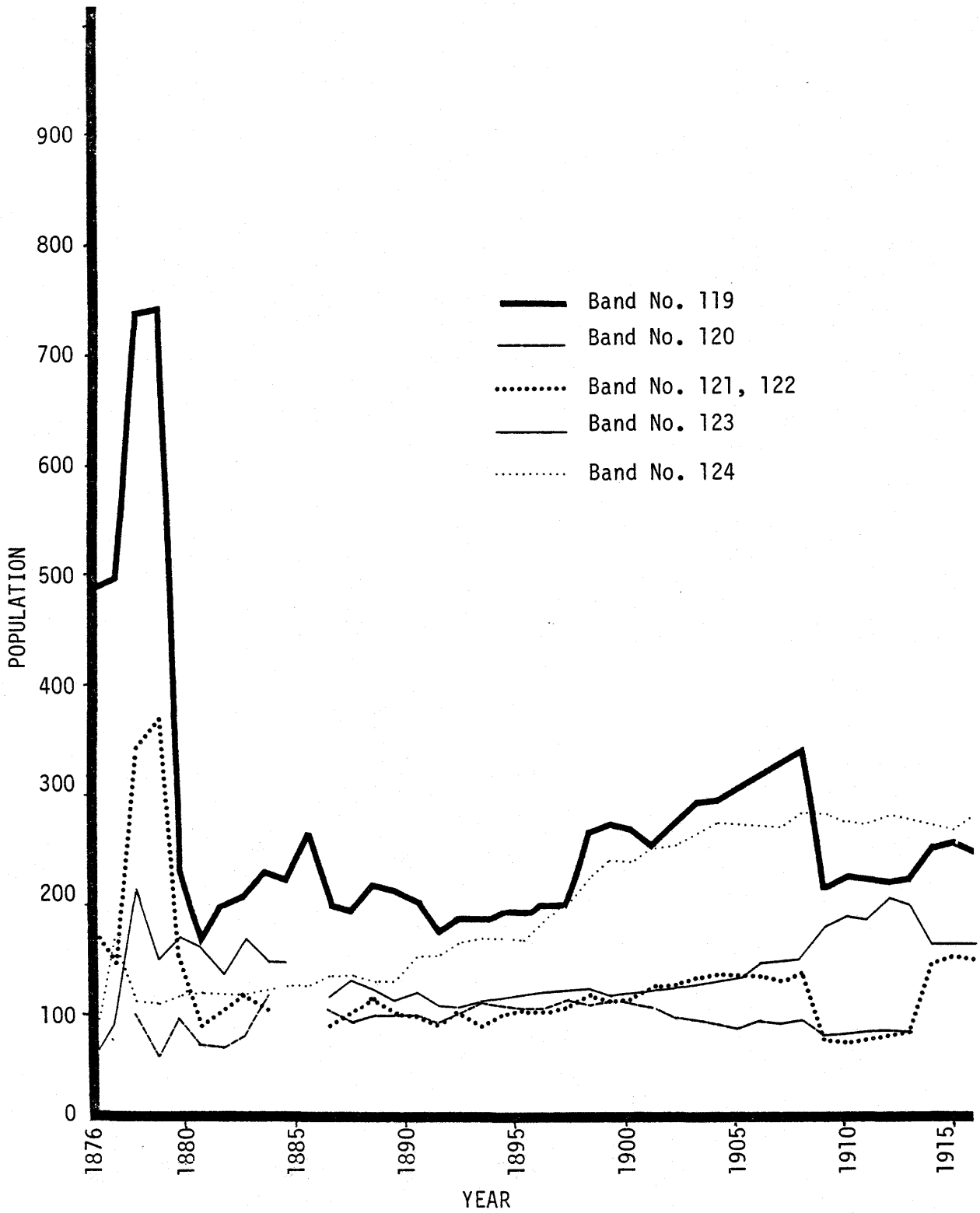


Figure 3: Population of the Onion Lake Agency Bands, 1876-1917



The band populations for the Onion Lake Agency are shown in Table 5 and in Figures 2 and 3. The pattern which developed for the agency total follows a pattern similar to the total for the Treaty Six area as shown in Figure 1.

During the 1880's and 1890's there was considerable movement between bands, between reserves, and on and off the reserves, which sometimes resulted in two or more bands being counted together. A number of bands joined together, some dispersed and others moved. Kinosayo band No. 149 increased several times due to individuals moving from Heart Lake to Cold Lake. Mahkayo's band is listed separately except for the years 1885 to 1886 when it is included in the population total for the Frog Lake bands and after 1914 when it is included in the total for Seekaskootch band.

Keeheewin band is listed separately except for the year 1886 when it is included in the population total for the Frog Lake bands. Except for 1885 and 1886 the Frog Lake bands are listed separately until 1914 when they amalgamated to form one band. The total given for 1885 includes Mahkayo's band and for 1886 includes both Mahkayo and Keeheewin bands. This represented a total given for the "rebel" Indians.

There was tremendous fluctuations in population during the decade following the signing of Treaty Six in both the agency and the treaty area. A large increase is noted for the years 1879 to 1880 and may have been due to a large number of Plains Indians moving north to their reservations because of the scarcity of buffalo. There is no clear indication as to how many persons died due to starvation during the time when

buffalo were scarce. The situation appears to be reversed the following few years when Big Bear's band and several other bands again moved south in pursuit of the buffalo. In 1882 Big Bear agreed to sign treaty and his band was paid annuity at Fort Walsh. In 1883 the band was in the Fort Pitt area at the time of annuity payments.

A low population count of 612 occurred in the agency in 1892. After this point the population in each band increased for a time, but then began to decrease or remain at a relatively stable point. Band No. 120 shows the most noticeable decrease. Decreases in Bands No. 119 and 121 in 1910 may be, in part, due to the Island Lake band being counted separately.

It is clear from figures gathered that the population growth in the agency was not substantial. There were a number of factors which affected population growth, although the extent of their effects is not clearly shown by the statistics.

Migration was one factor in changes of population. In 1904 seven persons were added to bands in the agency and four were deleted, the latter all being from Mahkayo's band. Migration was common in the 1910's. In 1914, the population in the agency increased by seven migrations in and decreased by five migrations out. In 1915 there was an increase in population due to 134 persons migrating in, but this was decreased through 130 migrations out. In 1916 the number altered as a result of 16 migrations in and 12 out. The reasons for these migrations are not clearly stated in the sources which were available, but it appears that many of the migrations were due to marriages which took place between



individuals on different reserves within and outside the agency.

The population of the Indians in the agency did not rise significantly even though the Indians were often mentioned as being in a healthy state and are commended for their good state of health by the agent and inspectors. In 1888 Inspector Wadsworth recorded ten deaths since his previous visit in 1887. Compared to other agencies, this was a low death rate which he attributed to "a life of regular habits, regular food, regular work, and good habitations" (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F. 53,828-3). In 1892 Agent Mann noted that the Indian women "take particular pains to keep their dwellings neat and clean" (SP14, 1892:72). This, he felt, helped maintain the good health enjoyed by the Onion Lake Indians. There were eleven deaths recorded that year.

The agents were concerned with the housing of the Indians as well as sanitary precautions relating to their living premises. Badly ventilated and overcrowded houses were viewed by the Department as a major hindrance to good health. Ideally, the Department encouraged "a building sufficiently commodious to admit of separate apartments being provided for the different sexes to sleep in and for the family to cook and eat in" (SP14, 1892:xv). In actuality, many Indians lived in small, one-room log houses. This was particularly true of the Indians at Long Lake and Frog Lake. In 1901 Inspector Chisholm described them as living in "poor hovels" (SP27, 1902: 194). Several years later he was critical of the housing situation.

The Indian dwellings are of a poor description and continue from year to year with but slight improvements, notwithstanding that they have skill in dressing house logs and in building walls, and have a saw-mill at the agency head-

quarters and a timber limit but a few miles away (SP27, 1905:194).

This statement suggests that it would have been possible for the Indians in the agency to live under better housing conditions. Chisholm goes on to say that the poor housing was partly due to the practice of moving frequently from one part of the reserve to another and, therefore, the lack of motivation to improve upon essentially temporary dwellings. However, as noted in section 2.5, some Indians did build good houses and continued to improve them.

Crowding and the presence of refuse contributed to the spread of disease. Therefore, one important precaution taken against the spread of disease was the instruction and help given in cleaning up outside and inside buildings and houses each spring. It was regularly reported in the agency reports that sanitary measures had been observed and the agency diaries mention the fall whitewashing of buildings and spring cleanup around the buildings.

Sanitary precautions are strictly observed by the Indians: in the autumn all the buildings are whitewashed inside and out, and this spring all the refuse accumulating in the vicinity of dwellings during winter months was removed and burned. The houses and premises are kept in good order and in their personal appearance the Indians are neat and clean (SP14, 1899:157).

In 1909 Agent Sibbald reported:

Effort is made to induce the Indians to keep their houses clean, in many cases with continued success, in others there is no sign of improvement. In spring-time however, there is a general cleanup, and the rubbish and filth which always collects round the houses during the winter is raked up and burned; in the fall, also, the houses are remudded

and made comfortable for winter and in many cases, limewashed (SP27, 1909:145).

During those years for which mortality records are available, it was noted that deaths among infants and young children was very high. Of 26 deaths for 1888-89, 17 were children under six and five were children between the ages of six and 18. Most of these deaths were among the Chipewyan Indians and resulted from measles. In 1890 11 out of 18 deaths on the Onion Lake reserves were of children under five and in 1894, 16 out of 21 deaths were of children, nearly all under five years of age.

Deaths also occurred due to old age, tuberculosis and infectious diseases. Old age took its toll of deaths with several older persons dying annually, and in 1911 it was reported that a large proportion of the deaths that year were due to old age (SP27, 1912:144). Deaths due to disease were often higher than natural deaths.

Tuberculosis, from which a number of persons died annually, was a continuing problem. The earliest mention of tuberculosis and scrofula in the agency reports were found in Agent Mann's report of July 25, 1889 (SP12, 1890:70). He mentioned "some deaths" from consumption and scrofula. Of 11 deaths in 1891, six were from scrofula and consumption "of long standing" (SP14, 1892:72). Two children and three adults died from tuberculosis in 1896 (SP14, 1897:192). In 1903 it was reported that scrofula and consumption "are more or less evident in the majority of families" (SP27, 1906:174), and Agent Sibbald reported in 1905 that "there are certainly many cases of consumption and scrofula, but few excessive ones" (SP27, 1906:136). The following year Sibbald noted that "there are

of course cases of consumption, scrofula, and sore eyes which are common complaints among the Indians, but the two former diseases are, I think, below the average" (SP27, 1907:133). In 1909 a table indicating the number of tuberculosis deaths found in certain bands is listed in the Department report. In the Onion Lake Agency, 16 out of 329 men and 28 out of 421 women were reported to be tubercular. This meant that approximately 6.5 percent of the adult population had tuberculosis.

In 1915 tuberculosis was still prevalent. The agent reported that "there were a good many scrofulous and tubercular cases" in the agency (SP27, 1915:60). The above quotes give support to remarks made by Deputy Superintendent General Smart in December 1898 (SP14, 1899:xix):

Pulmonary phthisis and scrofula with the tendency of the latter to develop into the former, may be said to be the scourge of the native population and responsible for a very large portion of the death rate.

The Indians in the agency were exposed to most of the major communicable diseases including smallpox, measles, influenza, typhoid fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, mumps and chicken pox (Schenstead-Smith 1982). Smallpox was reported in the agency for the years 1901, 1907-08 and 1914. In 1901 it was reported as a very mild form which prevailed throughout the west. There were at least 40 cases reported at the English Church Mission and school on Seekaskootch reserve (Ahenakew 1973:105). Seven cases were reported at Frog Lake. The disease was reported in Onion Lake in 1907. The Hudson's Bay Company clerk recorded in his diary entry for November 9, 1907 that "smallpox has broken out all over the country" (HBC B.323/a/7). Over 100 Indians were directly

affected as a result of this outbreak and at least 20 of these cases were severe (SP27, 1909:275, 276), although Agent Sibbald and Chief Medical Officer Bryce reported that there were no deaths among the treaty Indians in the agency due to the smallpox.

The occurrence of measles followed a pattern similar to that of smallpox. Of the 26 deaths reported in the agency between October 1, 1888 and August 6, 1889, most were attributed to measles or complications experienced as a result of measles (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F.53, 828-3). Agent Mann reported in June 1890 that the deaths of that year were accounted for by the children being attacked by whooping cough and acute bronchitis which accompanied measles. Measles occurred with mumps on the Cold Lake reserves in 1901. In 1908-08 measles occurred with whooping cough and bronchial pneumonia at Onion Lake and with whooping cough at Frog Lake and Long Lake.

Diphtheria was reported in the agency during the years 1905 to 1908. It caused at least 19 deaths among the Chipewyan in January 1906 (SP27, 1907:189). Typhoid fever occurred in the agency in 1915-16. At Cold Lake 22 cases were reported and four persons died (SP27, 1917:6).

Influenza, commonly referred to during the study period as "la grippe," was common in the study area. A severe form of influenza occurred in 1890, 1893-94, 1907-09 and in 1918-19. A mild form prevailed annually during the winter and spring months on various reserves. Influenza was often complicated by pneumonia and bronchitis. The famous influenza epidemic or "Spanish Flu" of 1918 caused many deaths among the Indians in the agency. At least 44 deaths were reported among the Indians at

Island Lake and 25 deaths occurred on Keeheewin reserve (Dion 1979:150). Many of the deaths occurred among older people, children and infants. Dion states that the Chipewyan were "perhaps the hardest hit of all the reserves in the West." According to Dion (1979:150) they took sick in late fall of 1918 and "soon they had piled up 74 of their dead in sheds and old shacks."

It is suggested that the increase in population in the Onion Lake Agency remained significantly low because of a relatively high number of deaths due to disease. While epidemics took their toll of deaths other diseases such as tuberculosis and influenza became endemic among the people throughout the study period and resulted in the a large number of deaths. Without a detailed study of the birth and death rates and the specific causes of each death, it is difficult to correlate accurately the disease pattern with fluctuations in population totals.

## 2.8 Reserve Settlement

The population returns given in the Annual Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs indicate the location of Indians who were away from their reserves at the time of annuity payments. This section identifies some of the reasons why individuals left their reserves.

In 1879-81 the Indians in the Saskatchewan area were in an unsettled state. Of a number of factors prompting them to leave their reserves the most important was the desire to hunt buffalo. When Indian Commissioner Dewdney left the Territories in November, 1879, a large number of Indians were starting out to hunt buffalo which were

reported to be located between Fort Macleod and Wood Mountain (SP14, 1881:93). The following year Dewdney reported that

nearly 4,000 of the Indians absent from their reserves are south of the line, and may at any moment be driven back by the American soldiers, who are instructed to do so...They are the most worthless and troublesome Indians we have, and are made up of Big Bear's old followers and Indians belonging to different bands in the north (SP6, 1882:54).

Because of rumours that the buffalo were approaching in large numbers, many of the North Saskatchewan River Cree started south in search of the herds. During the 1879 annuity payments at least 125 members of bands in the Fort Pitt District were paid at Fort Walsh. This included five families from Keeheewin band, at least one family with ten members from Seekaskootch band and 19 other families.

In 1879 a large number of the Fort Pitt District Indians were paid at Sounding Lake, a location which was previously known for its abundant buffalo herds. The Indians included 76 from Sweet Grass band, 67 from Seekaskootch, 135 from Keeheewin, 21 from Oonepowhayo and approximately 185 from Thunder Companion bands. In 1880 two families, with a total of 27 persons from Thunder Companion's band, were paid at Fort Walsh and approximately 25 persons from Paymootayahsoo's band were paid at Sounding Lake. Other than 97 of Thunder Companion's band being paid at Battleford in 1880, most members of the bands in the Fort Pitt District appear to have taken annuity at Fort Pitt that year. In 1881 all but a few members of Thunder Companion's band were paid at Fort Pitt. This seems to indicate that the Indians were staying

closer to their reservations or at least within their district.

A number of other activities and interests took the Indians away from their reserves in 1881. These were identified by Indian Agent H. Reed and included a general strike and refusal to work while still demanding to be fed, a thirst dance which brought together Indians from the entire Saskatchewan district, a two week assembly following the thirst dance to protest against payments of annuity money being made upon the reserves, and the movement of Indians to Battleford before the scheduled arrival of the Governor General (SP6, 1882:75).

The previous year some of the young men from the reserves in the Treaty Six area were involved in horse stealing expeditions which took them away from their reserves. Dewdney reported that many Indians had lost their lives in conflicts with hostile Indians and that almost every tribe had horse stealing expeditions out (SP14, 1881:92).

Some bands simply found it too monotonous to stay on their reservations and tended to wander around in the area. In the summer of 1882 the Puskeeahkeewin band from Frog Lake travelled south. They could not be persuaded by Reed to remain in the district and, as a result, left only a young man and a half-blind man behind to guard the crops. The Keeheewin, Mahkayo and Ooneepowhayo bands were also on the move that summer. Reed reported that he "strained every point and extended tempting inducements to endeavour to prevail" upon these bands to remain on their reserves and work "but without avail" (SP5, 1883:81). They straggled to Battleford where they were given a cool reception in the hope of showing them it was better to remain on their own reserves



than to wander about.

Hunting, fishing and trapping took Indians away from their reserves as well. In 1881 nine individuals were away fishing from bands 119, 120, 121, and 122, while 49 out of a total population of 163 were away fishing from Keeheewin reserve. In 1882, 238 Indians out of a total of 483 Indians from bands 119, 120, 121, 122, and 123 were away fishing and hunting north of Fort Pitt. Only 13 out of a total of 113 Indians in the Chipewyan band were absent due to fishing and hunting.

By 1883 many of the members of bands in the study area had settled on their reserves and some were seriously attempting to farm. Some still participated in the winter and spring hunt off the reserves or maintained winter traplines. In 1884 it was reported that most of the Indians in the agency were on their reserves. Only 41 were absent, some being at Battleford while others were at Island Lake. Big Bear's band, numbering approximately 520, were at Long Lake.

The tendency to change reserves frequently in the early years was discouraged by the department. Indian Agent Reed stopped the issue of rations to roving or wandering Indians because, in his opinion, this movement "owing to that inherent, restless disposition" of the Indians desiring a change of scene by wandering from one reserve to another or in search of game occurred "at times when their presence is particularly required on their fields" (SP6, 1882:75). Absence from the reserves frustrated attempts at agricultural production.

The 1885 Rebellion resulted in reserve settlement being disrupted to

an even greater extent. After the Rebellion many Indians in the study area were absent from their own reservations. Twenty members from Seekaskootch band, wives of non-treaty men, were in Battleford. Thirty-eight members were in the woods to the north hunting. Mahkayo, Ooneepowhayo and Puskeeahkeewin bands joined together and most were near Moose Lake hunting. Eighty-three left the neighbourhood of Fort Pitt after the surrender and were scattered on the plains and in the woods; some went south. Seventy-one members of Keeheewin's band were at Moose Lake and 74 were absent on the plains or in the woods. The Chipewyan band did not participate in the Rebellion. However, due to their regular seasonal movements, 23 out of a total of 123 were away in the woods or to the north hunting.

In 1886 members of Big Bear, Mahkayo, Ooneepowhayo, Puskeeahkeewin and Keeheewin bands were absent from their reserves and were reported to be hunting and fishing in the woods. Members of Big Bear's band were scattered and had not settled on a reserve location. Some members were in American territory and in the southern part of the Territories. The situation was very similar in 1887, but by 1888 many of the Indians in the agency had moved to the Onion Lake reserves. This was the result of the policy recommended by Reed (p. 48), and adopted by the department to deal with the Indians in the agency.

As previously stated, the Onion Lake Agency was opened at Onion Lake in the fall of 1885 under the charge of G. Mann. In September, Assistant Commissioner Reed visited the area, interviewed the Indians,

and decided that all farming would now be done on the Onion Lake reserves but that he "would allow any of the Indians belonging to the various reserves to make their own living hunting if they did not wish to farm" (SP6, 1887:129). According to Hudson's Bay Company trader McKay, Reed had

left it optional to each individual Indian as to whether he would go on the Reserve at Onion Lake and work under the supervision of the Farming Instructor for the privilege of receiving rations and other government aid for himself and his family or their [sic] to be provided with a shotgun, a certain quantity of powder and shot and twine for nets, also a weeks rations for himself and family and be allowed to live off the Reserve and hunt for a living in any part of this district providing he did not remove to the Battleford or Edmonton districts (HBC B.165/b/1, McKay to Belanger, November 18, 1885).

McKay estimated that one half of the Indians who were formerly on reserves were now left to their own resources and cut off from regular rations from the Department. He expected that the fur catch would be good as many of these Indians would now be required to hunt and trap in order to earn a living.

The following year McKay reported that, with the exception of a few families who moved to the Onion Lake reserves,

the majority are still at large hunting and providing for themselves. Many of these are now becoming destitute and rather than accept Government aid under the conditions it is extended to them they prefer keeping off the Reserve and are struggling to support themselves. Owing to the extreme cold and depth of snow, the hunt was not so good for January (*ibid.*, McKay to Davison, February 12, 1886).

It was McKay's opinion that one of the reasons these Indians would not

move to the reserves at Onion Lake was their refusal to accept the condition that they work for rations.

For several years after the Rebellion these Indians did well. In 1887 Agent Mann reported that "a great many Indians are hunting in this district and are making a good living" (SP15, 1888:93). However, in the next few years many of the hunting Indians moved to the Onion Lake reserves as they found they could no longer subsist by hunting and fishing. In May 1888, Mann reported that "many hunting Indians have come in and desire to remain on the Reserve and work. Game is giving out and only a few Cree families still remain in the woods" (Glenbow, AB Mann, May 1888). Those who came to the reserve included deposed Chiefs Keeheewin and Ooneepowhayo. Puskeeahkeewein had come in the previous year.

According to Indian Commissioner Reed, the hunting Indians were moving to the agency and asking for the means of entering farming because of the obvious decline in fish and game that season and the consequent hunger as well as a relatively successful agricultural season (SP16, 1889:124).<sup>1</sup> Reed reported that, during the past year, the Indians had shown "less inclination to move about the country," and had "exhibited a stronger tendency to regard their reserves as their homes and to remain quietly on them" (*ibid.*).

In 1889 there were about 150 persons left in Big Bear's band but these had not been in the North Saskatchewan River area since the Rebellion. The remainder of the band had amalgamated with other bands. Out of 215 members in Seekaskootch band, 159 were on the reserve in 1889 and 57 were absent. Thirty-six of the absentees were around

---

1. The crop yields were good during the 1887 season but were very low in 1888 (cf. Tables 12 and 14, pp. 219 and 223).

Battleford, four were south and 17 were away hunting. Ten members of Keeheewin's band were around Battleford and ten were in the south. Twenty-two members of Ooneepowhayo's band and ten members from Keeheewin's band were hunting.

The number of Indians absent from their reserves decreased substantially in the 1890's. In 1892, twenty hunting Indians returned to the district. A number of Indians still lived on the reserves at Long Lake and Frog Lake. Of these, Inspector Chisholm reported:

With one exception they live in poor hovels, and lead a rather miserable existence, depending for a livelihood upon a scanty hunt, a little gardening and occasional employment at the neighbouring Indian office (SP27, 1901:195).

Chisholm reported in 1903 that about one-half of the Indians in the agency were settled on the reserves at Onion Lake. Of the remainder, "a small number have their abodes on the other reserves, while about two hundred who follow hunting live at Island Lake, Moose Lake, and other points in their region favourable for their occupation" (SP27, 1904: 202). According to Chisholm then, quite a number of the Indians in the agency were still not resident on the reserves at Onion Lake. Those who were received the direct care and attention of the agent and other personnel of the department, and lived "largely by the recognized industries." That is, by grain growing and stock raising.

By 1904 some of the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves had moved back to their own reserves. That year there were "regularly settled on the reserve, engaging in agricultural industries, and exclusive of hunters" approximately 55 members of the Frog Lake band out of a total

of 132 and 40 members of Keeheewin band out of a total of 124 (SP27, 1905: 193). Other members of these bands still resided on the Onion Lake reserves. In 1905 the latter were encouraged to return to their respective reserves as the hay resources on the Onion Lake reserves could no longer support the cattle which were there. Settlement was also increasing in the area and this was expected to further decrease the hay resources available outside the reserve (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27,115-5).

In 1907 Inspector Chisholm reported that one third of the Indians in the agency lived solely by hunting and fishing, but that this also included the Chipewyan band. It also included 165 Cree in treaty and about 80 who did not then take treaty money (SP27, 1908:152). These Cree included those who now claimed that they were not members of this or any other band. In 1911 the Island Lake Indians were registered as a separate band.

The Chipewyan band at Cold Lake was located in a settlement on the Beaver River approximately 65 miles north of Onion Lake from before the signing of Treaty Six to 1882 when they moved to the south side of Beaver River. The move was made because they felt their original location was outside of the treaty area (SP5, 1883:49). When their reserve was eventually surveyed in 1903 it included their settlement.

The Chipewyan band under Kinosayo was located furthest south of any Chipewyan band, the nearest of which were located at Heart Lake and Lac La Biche. The population of the Chipewyan band at Cold Lake increased as members of the Heart Lake band migrated to Cold Lake.

Heart Lake was in the Saddle Lake Agency which was also in the Treaty Six area. In 1892 the agent at Saddle Lake reported that he had not seen the Chipewyan band at Heart Lake since the previous annuity payments as they had maintained themselves during the winter, but that "two more families of this band were, in March last, transferred to the Chippewyan Reserve at Cold Lake, whither, in time, they will all migrate" (SP14, 1894:77). The following year he reported that the population of the Heart Lake band had fallen to 66. He felt that this band would "shortly be absorbed by the larger Chippewyan Band on the Cold Lake Reserve..." (SP14, 1895:81).

The Chipewyan at Cold Lake also interacted with Chipewyan at Ile-a-la-Crosse. Some of those absent from the reserve area in 1889 were at Ile-a-la-Crosse. Prior to 1890, approximately 26 Chipewyan from Ile-a-la-Crosse had desired to move to the Chipewyan settlement on the Beaver River but this was discouraged by the Department because Ile-a-la-Crosse was beyond the Treaty Six area (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3668 F.10,505). Acting Sub-Agent Quinn dealt with this in 1884.

A great many Chipewyan's are coming from Isle a la Crosse and wish to settle among the Chipewyan's of this district. I have told them that they would not be allowed to settle among the other Indians and that they need not expect to be admitted into the treaty (SP3, 1885:86).

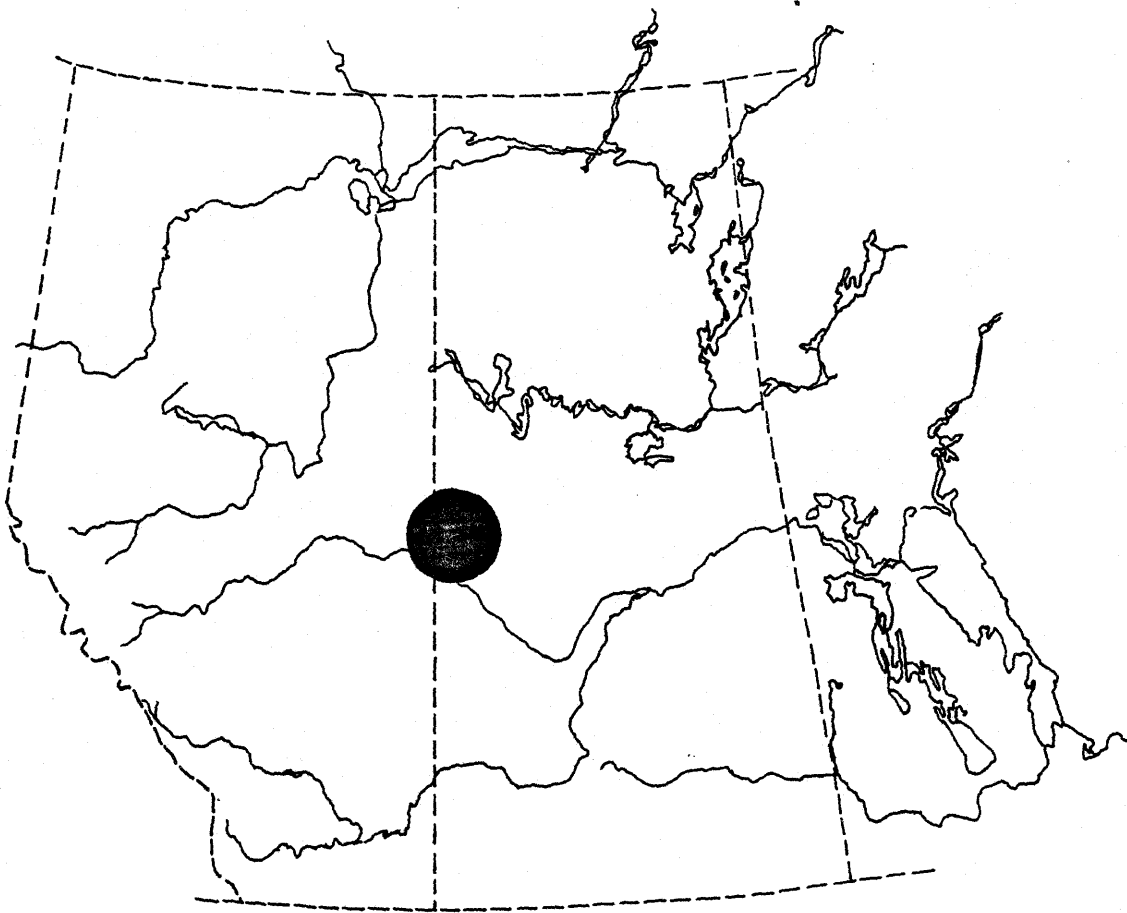
The Chipewyan at Cold Lake followed a seasonal subsistence pattern which took them some distance away from their settlement on the Beaver River during the winter trapping season. Curtis (1928:19) wrote that the "winters are spent in localities remote from the summer camps, never more than two trappers being associated." During the fishing

season many of them resided near Cold Lake where they fished for subsistence needs and for sale. These Indians became interested in raising cattle shortly after the signing of the treaty and spent a part of their year in the settlement near Beaver River. This time increased during the latter part of the study period as they become involved in grain growing. During the second half of the study period these Indians built houses which were highly praised by both agent and inspectors, suggesting that they spent a good portion of their time on their reserves.

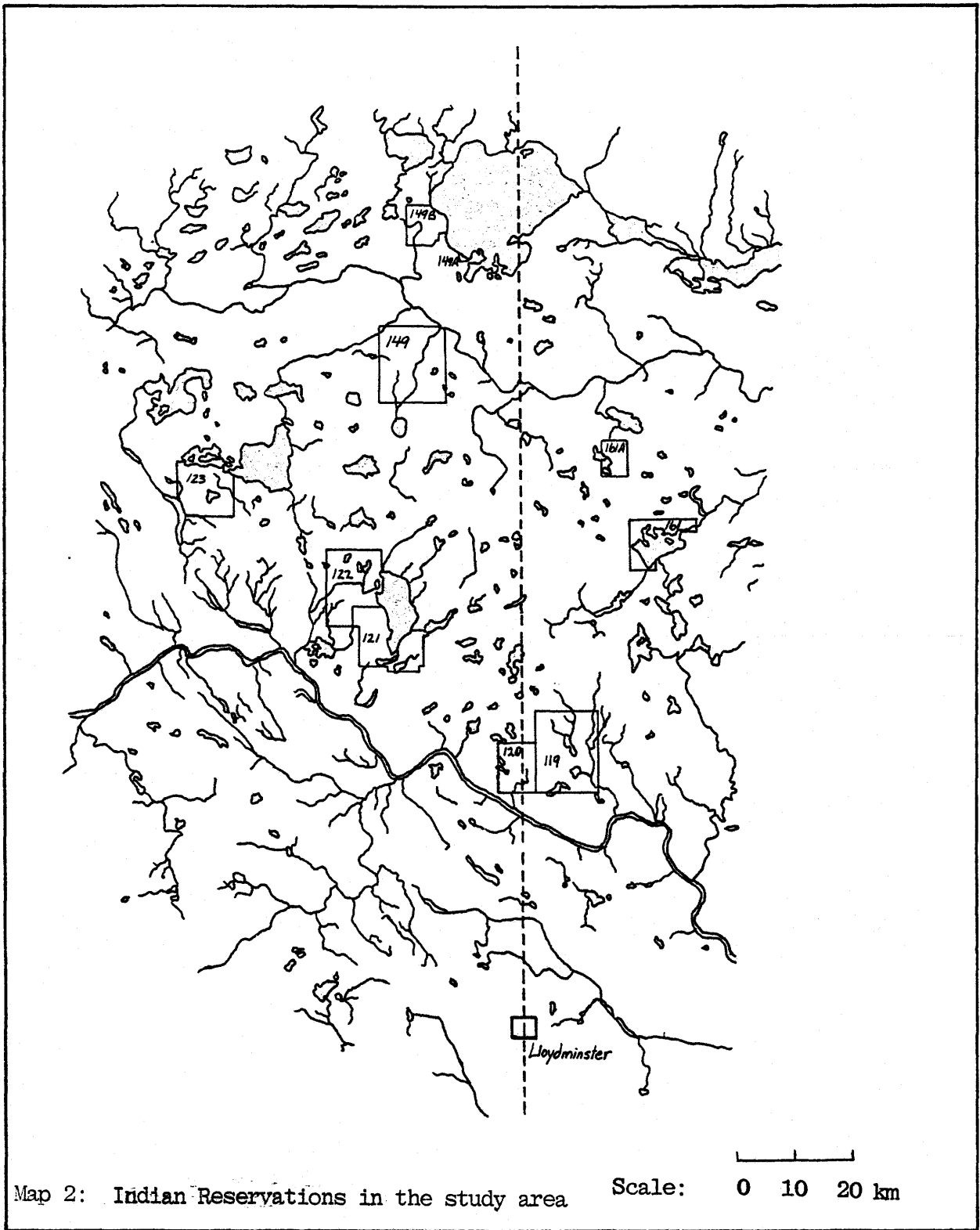
## 2.9 Reservation Surveys

This section details the establishment of reservations for the Indian bands in the study area. These Indians occupied 12 Indian Reservations in an area directly north of the North Saskatchewan River, straddling the 4th Meridian, which in 1905 became the border between the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta (Map 1). This section deals with the survey and establishment of ten of these reserves (Map 2). The Townships and Ranges in which each of the reserves was located are shown in Table 6. Map 3 shows the study region in geographic detail. It shows the natural environment which was exploited by the Indians and the social environment, including reserves, agency and numerous hamlets in the area.





Map 1: Location of study area in the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta



Map 2: Indian Reservations in the study area

Scale: 0 10 20 km

Table 6: Onion Lake Reservations, Townships and Ranges

Indian Reservation (IR)	Township (Tp)	Range (R)	
119	54, 55	26,27	West of 3rd Meridian
120	54	27,28	West of 3rd Meridian
	54	1	West of 4th Meridian
121	56,57	2,3	West of 4th Meridian
122	57,58	3,4	West of 4th Meridian
123	58,59	6,7	West of 4th Meridian
149	61,62	2,3	West of 4th Meridian
149A	63	1,2	West of 4th Meridian
149B	63,64	2	West of 4th Meridian
161	58	24,25,26	West of 3rd Meridian
161A	59,60	25,26	West of 3rd Meridian

### 2.9.1 Introduction

The Crown set aside lands as reserves for the benefit and use of the Indians through the signing of treaties. In the Treaty Six area, grants of land were made on the basis of "one square mile for each family of five, or in that proportion for larger or smaller families" (Morris 1971:353). That is, 640 acres were granted to each family of five or 128 acres to each individual. The size of the reservation was determined primarily on the basis of population of the band assigned to a given reservation. Other factors considered in the outlining of the reserves were the nature of the soil and what use the land would serve. For example, among the Indians in the study area, fishing was an important resource activity, and it was the government's expectation that cattle raising and agriculture would become important

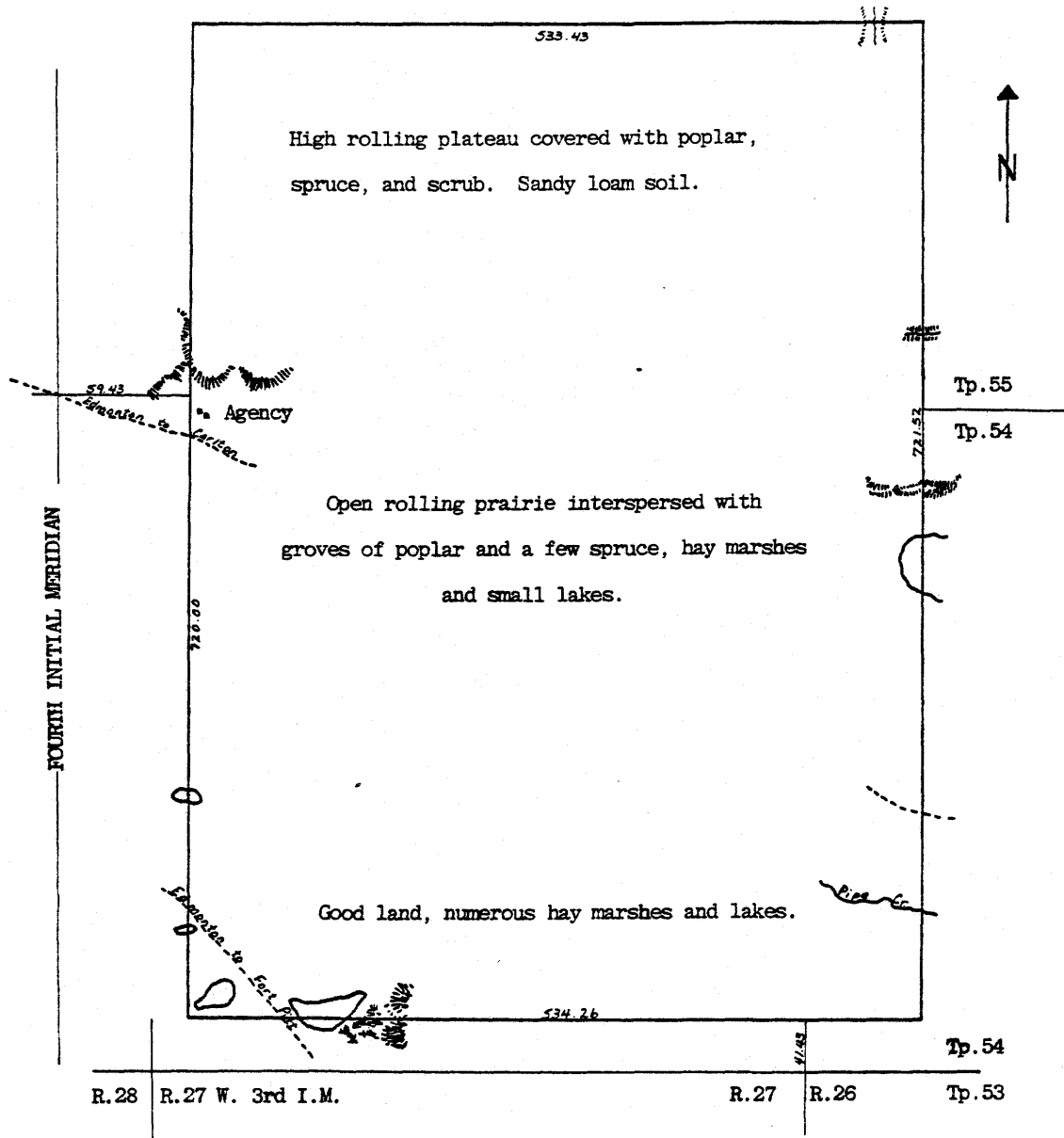
subsistence activities. Consequently, several of the bands received reserves with good agricultural or hay lands as well as a fishing reserve on a nearby lake.

After signing treaty Indian Commissioner Christie, formerly with the Hudson's Bay Company, was requested by Morris to confer with the chiefs as to the location they wanted for their reserves (SP11, 1877:lxiii). Government survey of the land was to follow. The Dominion Lands Survey was an important factor in opening up the area so that the survey of reserves could proceed. The readiness of the Indians to settle was another factor in the timing of the surveys. The first surveys in the study area were done by George Simpson in 1879.

Surveyors did not always find the Indians agreeable to the project or in agreement with the Crown about the amount of land to which they were entitled, or the exact location of the reserve. Surveyors acted as negotiators, interpreters, mediators and census takers. They advised Indians and agents on such matters as soil comparisons, land values and the precise location of reservations, and were responsible for the correct mapping and the explicit description of reserve lands.

#### 2.9.2 Indian Reservation No. 119 (Map 4)

In 1876 Indian Commissioner Christie reported that Seekaskootch requested his reserve be on Little Red Deer River about 25 miles below Fort Pitt on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River. There were 187 persons in the band.



Map 4: Seekaskootch Indian Reservation No. 119, as surveyed by G.A. Simpson, 1879.

Source: Description and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 1889.

George A. Simpson surveyed IR 119 for this band in 1879. At that time the band was comprised of 278 persons entitling them to 35,584 acres. The increase in population since 1876 was due to members of Sweet Grass, Thunder Companion and Paymootayahsoo bands being included as members of Seekaskootch band. According to Simpson, the population for this band from the 1878 payroll was only 256 which would entitle them to 32,768 acres. However, in outlining the reserve area, he allowed for a 7 percent increase in population or a total of 275 persons.

IR 119 was situated about six miles north of Fort Pitt on the trail to Edmonton in Townships 54 and 55, Ranges 26 and 27, West of the 3rd Meridian. Simpson described the soil as being a sandy loam over a clay loam and clay subsoil. There was timber in the north and west parts of the reserve, water was generally alkaline, and there were no fish in the lakes within the reserve boundaries. At the time of the survey the band had about five fenced acres under cultivation.

In 1881 the Paymoostayahsoo band, Thunder Companion band and a part of the Sweet Grass band led by Young Sweet Grass, amalgamated with the Seekaskootch band and moved onto IR 119. This amalgamation was officially recognized at treaty payments in 1883.

On May 17, 1889, Seekaskootch IR 119 was confirmed by Order-in-Council. The total reserve acreage allocated was 38,400 acres and was described as follows:

The southern part contains some very good land, hay marshes, and numerous lakes. There are sandy ridges. In the middle, the country is open rolling

prairie, interspersed with groves of poplar, and a few spruce. The northern part is a high rolling plateau of loam soil, partially wooded with poplar, spruce and scrub (Description and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North West Territories, 1889).

### 2.9.3 Indian Reservation No. 120 (Map 5)

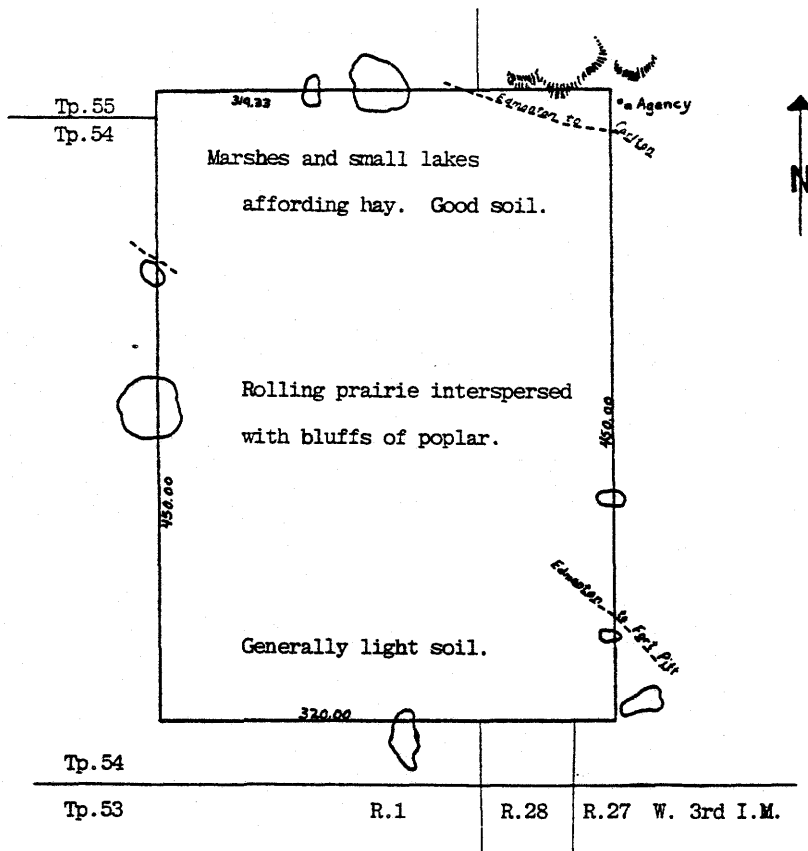
Mahkayo signed adhesion to Treaty Six on August 19, 1878. IR 120 was surveyed by Simpson the following year. Situated about eight miles north of Fort Pitt, this reserve is adjacent to IR 119 and is located in Township 54, Ranges 27 and 28, West of the 3rd Meridian and Township 54, Range 1, West of the 4th Meridian. The allocation of 14,080 acres was given to a band of 96 members as shown on the paylists. It was confirmed by Order-in-Council in 1889 and described as follows:

On the southern portion of this Reserve the soil is generally light; towards the middle it is of fair quality. The surface is rolling and interspersed with bluffs of poplar and scrub, alternating with lakes and ponds. The northern part contains good soil, and valuable hay marshes (*ibid.*).

### 2.9.4 Indian Reservation No. 121 (Maps 6 and 7)

The band which settled on IR 121 signed Treaty Six under Chief Tustusheeskweis who desired that his reservation be located at Frog Lake about 40 miles northwest of Fort Pitt.

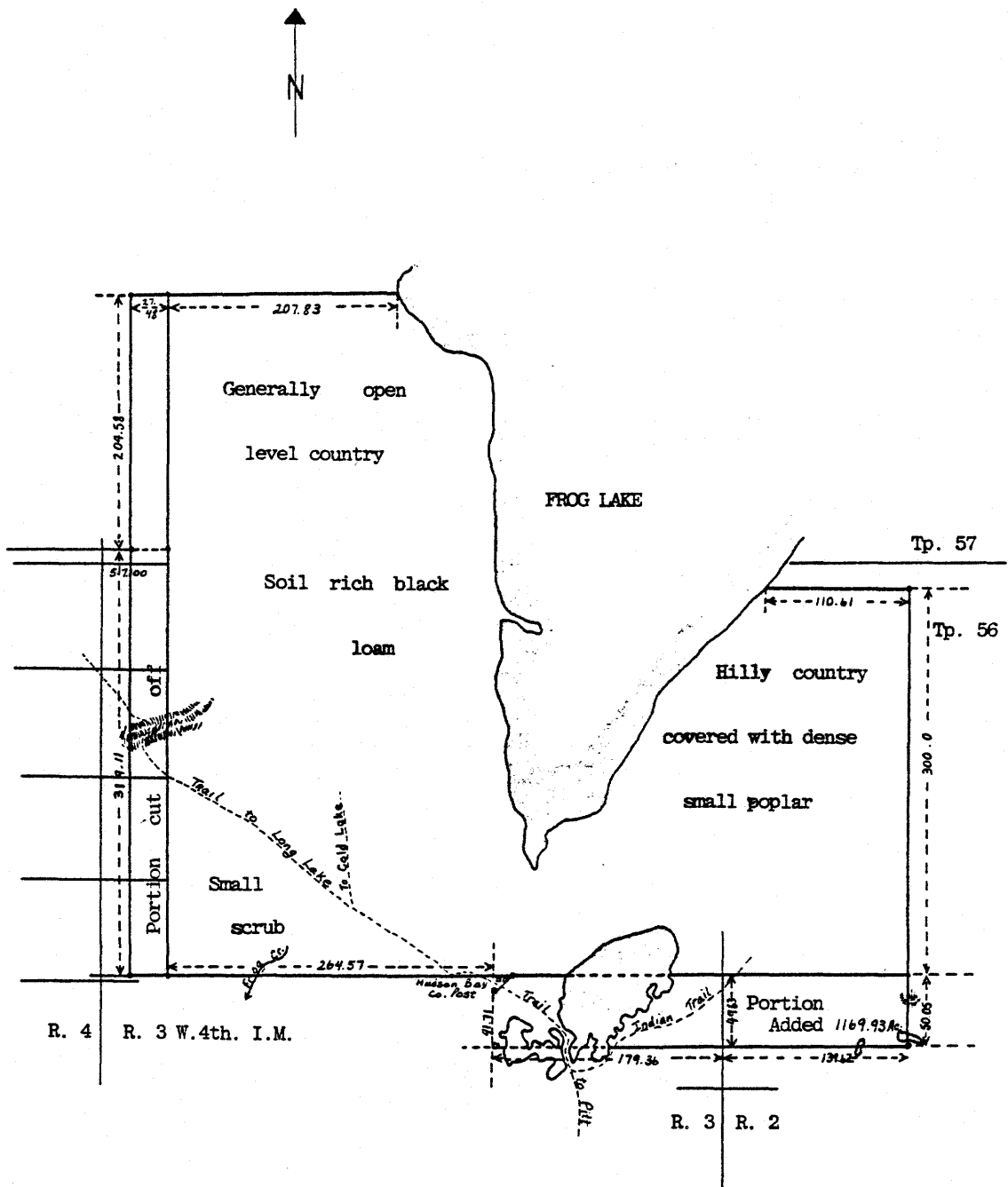
Simpson surveyed a reserve for this band at Frog Lake in 1879. The band was now under the leadership of Ooneepowhayo who became chief after his father, Tustusheeskweis, died. Simpson allowed for 160 persons in allotting 20,480 acres to the band. When this reserve



Map 5: Mahkayo Indian Reservation No. 120, as surveyed by G.A. Simpson, 1879.

Source: Description and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 1889.





Map 6: Oonepowhayo Indian Reservation No. 121, as surveyed by G.A. Simpson, 1879. Alterations surveyed by A.W. Ponton, 1884.

Source: Description and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 1889.

was confirmed by Order-in-Council in 1889, 21,120 acres were allotted to the band which then numbered only 80 persons according to the paylist.

The increase in land allotted was based on the initial 20,480 acres outlined by Simpson plus an additional 640 acres included as the result of an agreement in 1884 to give Home Farm 15, situated adjacent to the southern boundary of the reserve, to Mahkayo Band for their use. While the land was for the use of Mahkayo's band it was surveyed as a part of IR 121. The alteration included an addition to the reserve on the south side which included the farm and a deduction from the west side (Map 6).

Simpson described the reserve in 1879 as having fair soil on about one third of its extent. The other two thirds of the reserve had light sandy loam soil. The timber was primarily poplar except for three groves of fir which covered an area of about two square miles each. Simpson found the people in a destitute condition and little effort had been made by them to till the soil. A few potatoes had been planted and two acres of barley sown but not harvested as the people had left either for treaty payments or hunting. The lake abounded with jackfish but the people preferred whitefish which was obtained principally from Fishing Lake, a small lake three miles east of Frog Lake.

In 1908 agreements were signed which gave the Ooneepowhayo band land access to Fishing Lake by creating IR 121A (Map 7). The Report of the Committee of the Privy Council stated that:

in order to make provision for the future supply

of fish for food, for the Frog Lake (Ooneepowhayo) band of Indians, it is desirable that an exchange of 154 acres of land situated in the South-east corner of this reserve, No. 121, in the Province of Saskatchewan, be made for an equal area of Dominion Lake situated on Fishing Lake, and abutting on the North-east corner of the said reserve (PAC RG10 Black, Vol.4046, F.353,647, 23 May 1908).

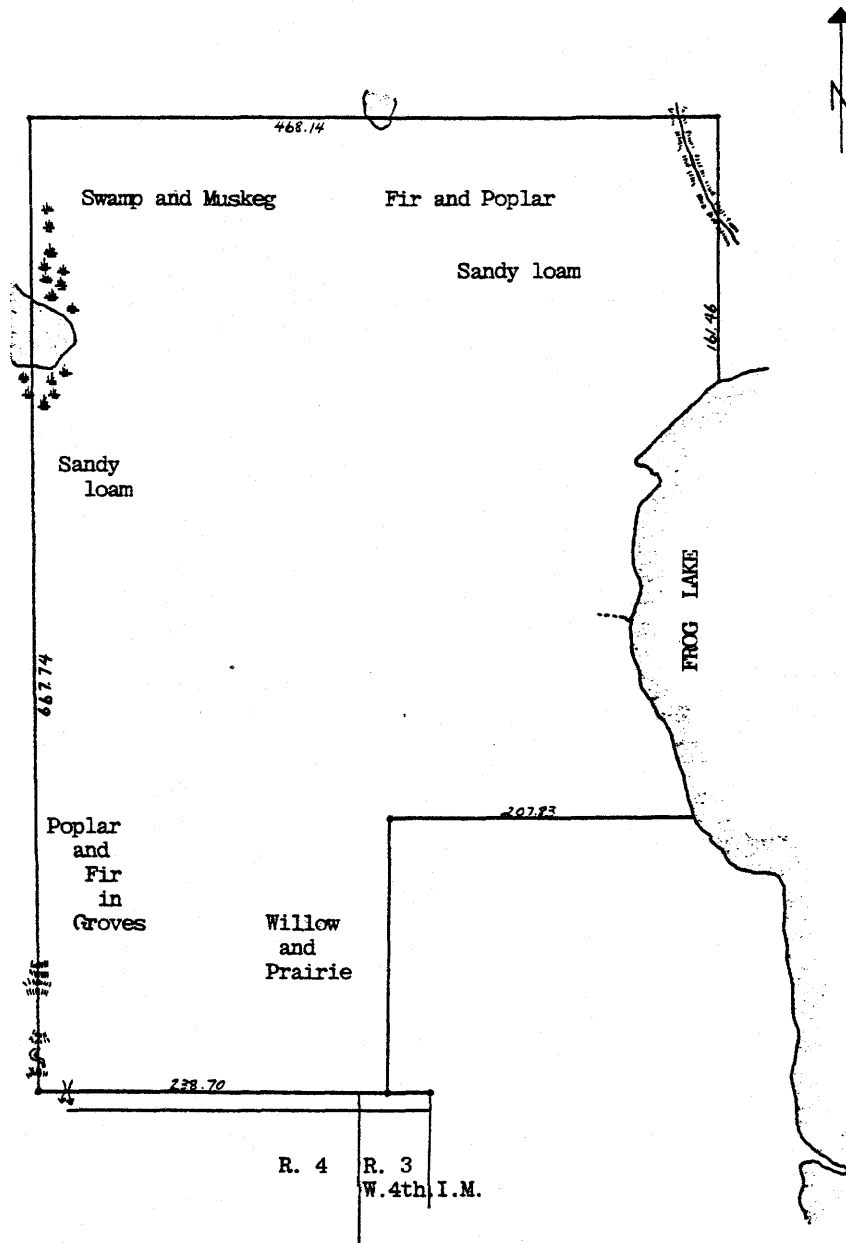
On March 9, 1908 Ooneepowhayo and six of the leading men of the band signed an agreement of surrender to the Crown for 154 acres of land. The surrender was given "in exchange for a portion of equal area situated at the Northeast end of our said reserve and fronting on Fishing Lake" (*ibid.*).

Acting Agent Lang Turner and Chief Ooneepowhayo signed a statement witnessing that the surrender was assented to "by a majority of the male members of the Band of the full age of 21 then present," at a meeting of the band "summoned for that purpose" (*ibid.*, 14 March 1908). The reserve area was to be increased by one acre. However, when the readjustment was confirmed by Order-in-Council P.C. 1203, an increase of six acres was made giving a total of 21,126 acres of land allotted.

#### 2.9.5 Indian Reservation No. 122 (Map 8)

In 1878 Chief Puskeeahkeewein claimed as his reserve the country between Angling and Cold Lake, an area of 40 square miles. IR 122 was surveyed by G.A. Simpson in 1879 and confirmed by Order-in-Council in 1889. Forty square miles or 25,600 acres were allotted to the band.

Puskeeahkeewein IR 122 was situated west of Frog Lake, adjacent to the northern border of IR 121 in Townships 57 and 58, Ranges 3 and 4,



Map 8: Puskeeahkeewin Indian Reservation No. 122, as surveyed by G.A. Simpson, 1879.

Source: Description and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 1889.

West of the 4th Meridian. In 1879 it was described as follows:

The south-eastern corner is generally hilly, with dense, small poplar. The soil is a rich black loam. The western and northern portion of the Reserve is generally open; the soil is a sandy loam. Spruce is found on the western side of Frog Lake (Description and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North West Territories, 1889).

#### 2.9.6 Amalgamations

In 1909 Agent Sibbald was encouraged by the Department of Indian Affairs to amalgamate Seekaskootch IR 119 with Mahkayo IR 120 and Ooneepowhayo IR 121 with Puskeeahkeewein IR 122, and to obtain a surrender for the sale of one reserve in each locality. In 1914, two separate agreements were signed which created two reserves out of the four. None of the reserves were sold. On January 16, 1914 Seekaskootch band No. 119 amalgamated with Mahkayo band No. 120 to form the Onion Lake band, thus uniting IR's 119 and 120. The members and descendents of each band were now to have a joint and undivided interest in all lands, moneys and privileges possessed or enjoyed by the amalgamating bands and any claims to IR's 121, 121A and 122 at or near Frog Lake or to any other reserve lands were relinquished. This latter clause was necessary because between 1884 and 1914 there was some confusion regarding the relationship between the members of Mahkayo's band and those of the Frog Lake band on IR 121 stemming back to the time when Mahkayo's band was granted use of the land once occupied by Home Farm 15.

On March 10, 1914, Ooneepowhayo band No. 121 and Puskeeahkeewein band No. 122 amalgamated to form the Frog Lake band No. 121, thus

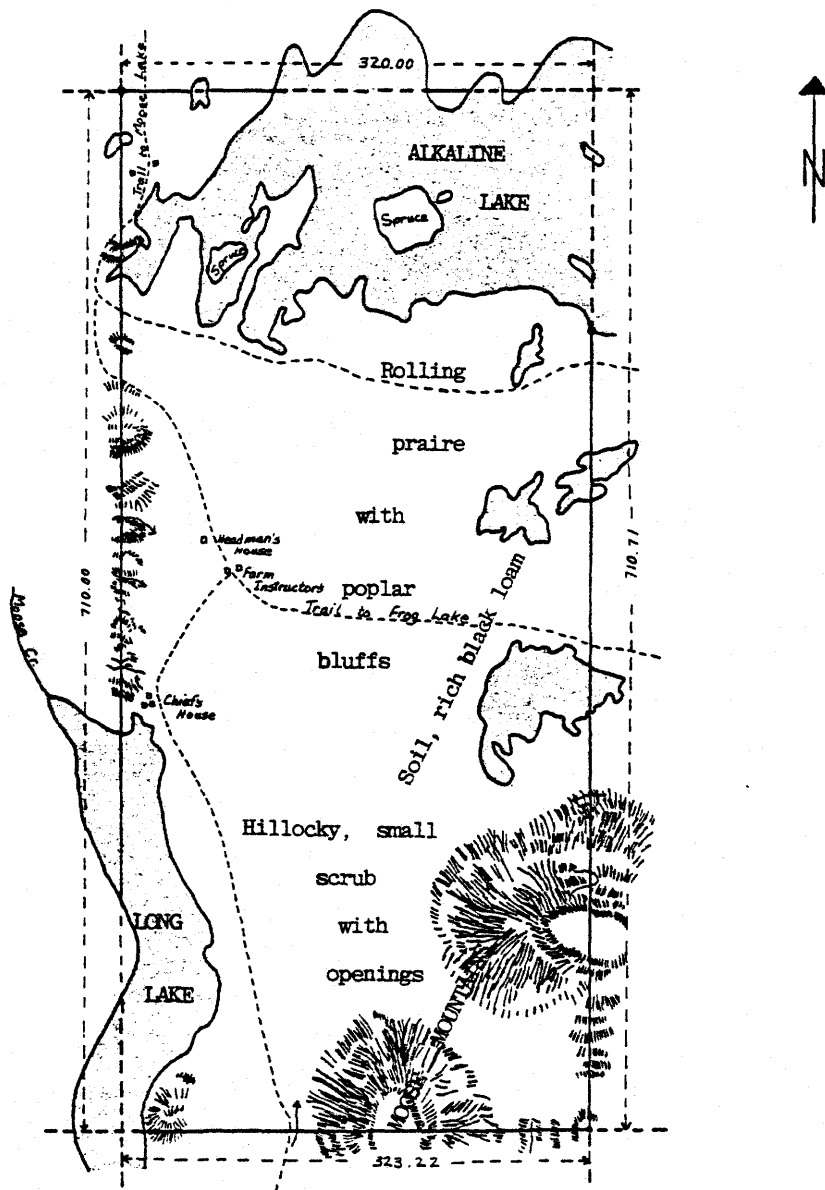
uniting IR's 121, 121A and 122. With the amalgamations, the ownership of the reserves was settled and individuals were urged to reside on their own reserves rather than moving from one to another.

#### 2.9.7 Indian Reservation No. 123 (Map 9)

Keeheewin signed Treaty Six in 1876. He asked that his reserve be located between Goose Lake and Moose Lake north of the North Saskatchewan River and had his band members scatter over a wide area in an effort to obtain a large reserve. Keeheewin's claim was for about 200 square miles. After some discussion between Keeheewin and Agent Quinn, the chief was persuaded to accept surveyor Ponton's ideas as to a land allotment more in keeping with the guidelines outlined by treaty. An area of about 18,000 acres was surveyed for the band in October 1884. On May 17, 1889, an Order-in-Council set aside 28 square miles or 17,920 acres as IR 123 for Keeheewin band. The reserve was described as follows:

In a large alkaline lake extending into the northern part of the Reserve there is an island, containing an area of about 120 acres, covered with good large spruce. The interior of the Reserve is a fine rolling prairie with black loamy soil, luxuriant herbage, and poplar bluffs. The southern part, which includes a portion of the Moose Hills, is covered with a dense growth of poplar (Description and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 1889).

Agent Sibbald made a request in 1904 to the department for the Indians of Keeheewin's reserve, who desired to have a portion of the northern part of their reserve cut off and to add an equal area to the eastern side. Their object was to gain better hay and farming lands (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-5, Assistant Indian Commissioner



Map 9: Keeheewin Indian Reservation No. 123, as surveyed by A.W. Ponton, 1884.

Source: Description and Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 1889.

to Secretary, March 23, 1904).

The land at the northern part of the reserve contained some good timber, but was more or less useless as farm land because it contained a large alkaline lake. Sibbald recommended the change as being in the interest of the Indians and, upon agreement from the Department of the Interior, the department had the reserve surveyed in 1904.

Department Surveyor Reid cut off a portion on the north and south sides of the reserve and added an equal portion on the east side.

In a reply to the question by Agent Sibbald as to whether the land added was equal to that deleted, Indian Commissioner McLean replied:

The area of the reserve was 28 square miles exclusive of Long Lake at its Southwest end and the Alkaline Lake at its North or Northeast end. The area of the reserve as adjusted is 28.15 square miles, exclusive of Long Lake at the Southwest end, and a portion of a large lake at its Northeast end. The reserve is, therefore, 15/100 of an acre larger than before (*ibid.*, McLean to Sibbald, April 6, 1905).

It was impossible at that time to map accurately the reservation as no surveys had been made in the immediate neighbourhood of the reserve.

In 1906 the Indians claimed they did not realize that the hay lands to the south of Sinking Lake (the alkaline lake) had been eliminated from the reserve. Sibbald appealed to the department in 1909 to extend the reserve boundaries to include again the hay lands. At this time the population was 177, leaving an area of one square mile short for every five persons on the reserve in a total area of 28.15 square miles, so Sibbald felt the reserve area could be increased (*ibid.*, Sibbald to



Secretary, December 22, 1909). As hay and pasturage was required for the band cattle, and as the population was increasing rapidly due to a number of Indians moving to Keeheewin's reserve from the Onion Lake reserves, the department agreed to extend the northern boundary of the reserve to the south shore of Sinking Lake.

On February 10, 1912 the Indians on Keeheewin IR 123 surrendered three portions of their reserve amounting to about 11 sections of which five and one-half sections were water. The piece of land obtained in exchange contained about nine sections with little water and with soil better adapted to growing hay. Order-in-Council P.C. 1151 was rescinded by Order-in-Council P.C. 413 of February 16, 1915, which re-defined the reserve and allotted the band 20,531 acres. IR 123 was located in Township 59, Ranges 6 and 7, West of the 4th Meridian and south of Sinking Lake.

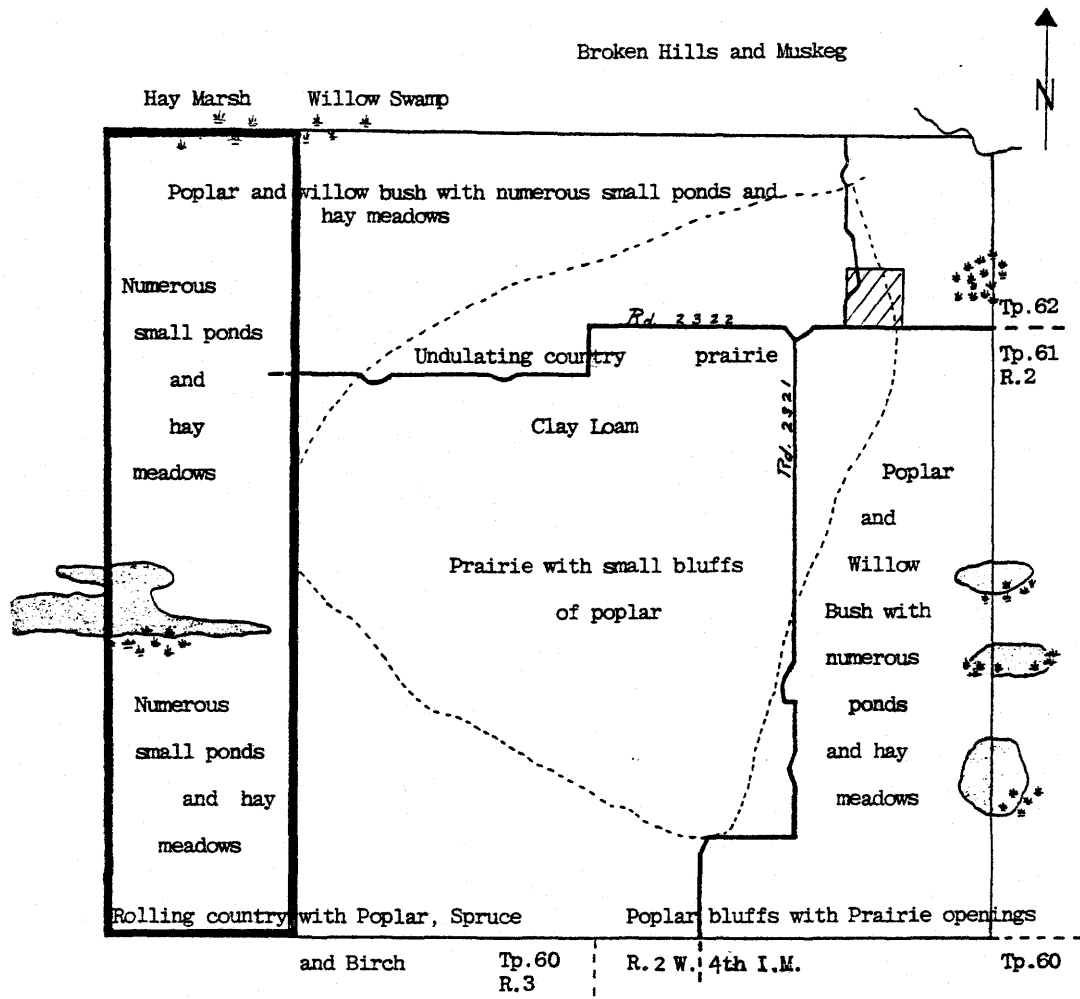
#### 2.9.8 Indian Reservation Nos. 149; 149A and 149B (Maps 10, 11 and 12)

The band of Chipewyan Indians near Cold Lake who signed Treaty Six in 1876 under Kinosayo informed Indian Commissioner Christie that they desired a reservation extending from Angling Lake towards the Beaver River, between two creeks north of Fort Pitt, and about 30 miles north of Frog Lake. The band had resided in that area for some time, had built homes there and had sown potato gardens. When George Simpson visited the band in 1879 he reported that they appeared very industrious as they had done some ploughing, had built two bridges over a large stream running into the Beaver River and had built 12 timber houses. They had

chosen for their reserve an area of land immediately south of the Beaver River crossing approximately ten miles south of Cold Lake. The crossing was about 150 yards in width with steep banks and the area was well timbered with large fir and poplar (SP7, 1879:51).


The survey and allotment of this reserve was deferred in 1879 because the locality was some distance from any settlement and the surrounding area had not yet been surveyed. In 1902 the Indians, fearing an influx of settlers, became concerned about the allocation of their reserve and signed a petition requesting a stretch of land 17 miles long starting from the shore of Cold Lake, and reaching in a southwesterly direction, about eight miles wide, and consisting of about 136 square miles. They were then located on this stretch of land. Bishop Legal sent the petition containing approximately 46 names, to Agent Sibbald to be forwarded to the Superintendent General (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-3, Legal to Sibbald, August 2, 1902).


Dominion Lands Surveyor Reid surveyed IR 149 (Map 10) south of Cold Lake for this band in 1903. An area of 46,720 acres in Townships 61 and 62, Ranges 2 and 3, West of the 4th Meridian was confirmed by Order-in-Council P.C. 688 on April 19, 1904. In 1903 the population of this band, according to the paylist, was 259, entitling them to 33,152 acres. They were allotted 13,569 acres above their entitlement. Indian Commissioner Laird suggested an outside total population of 330 persons by including the total number at Cold Lake of 251 and at Heart Lake of 78. To be "on the safe side" he suggested that an area of 72 square miles be set aside for the band (*ibid.*, Laird to McLean, March 10,



Map 10: Cold Lake Indian Reservation No. 149, as surveyed by J. Lestock Reid, 1903.

Area: 73 Sq. Miles

 Roman Catholic Mission

 Portion exchanged for IR 149B

1903). The extra area would allow for those Chipewyan who wished to move from Heart Lake to Cold Lake.

In 1905 the Chipewyan Indians requested that a reserve for fishing purposes be set aside for them at Cold Lake, as fishing was their main source of subsistence (*ibid.*, Sibbald to McLean, September 19, 1905; Legal to Oliver, September 18, 1905). There was some question as to the reason for the reserve and one member of the Department of Marine and Fisheries objected to shutting off settlers from access to the lake. There was also the suggestion that the Indians would become less dependent on fishing as they came to rely more upon agriculture and, therefore, the reserve would be unnecessary. Nevertheless, others saw it as a reasonable request and Chief Surveyor Bray recommended that action be taken as soon as convenient,

to the effect that a small reserve be laid out for these Indians where they may desire at Cold Lake in exchange for an equal area to be cut off from their present reserve (*ibid.*, Bray to Acting Deputy Superintendent General, October 4, 1906).

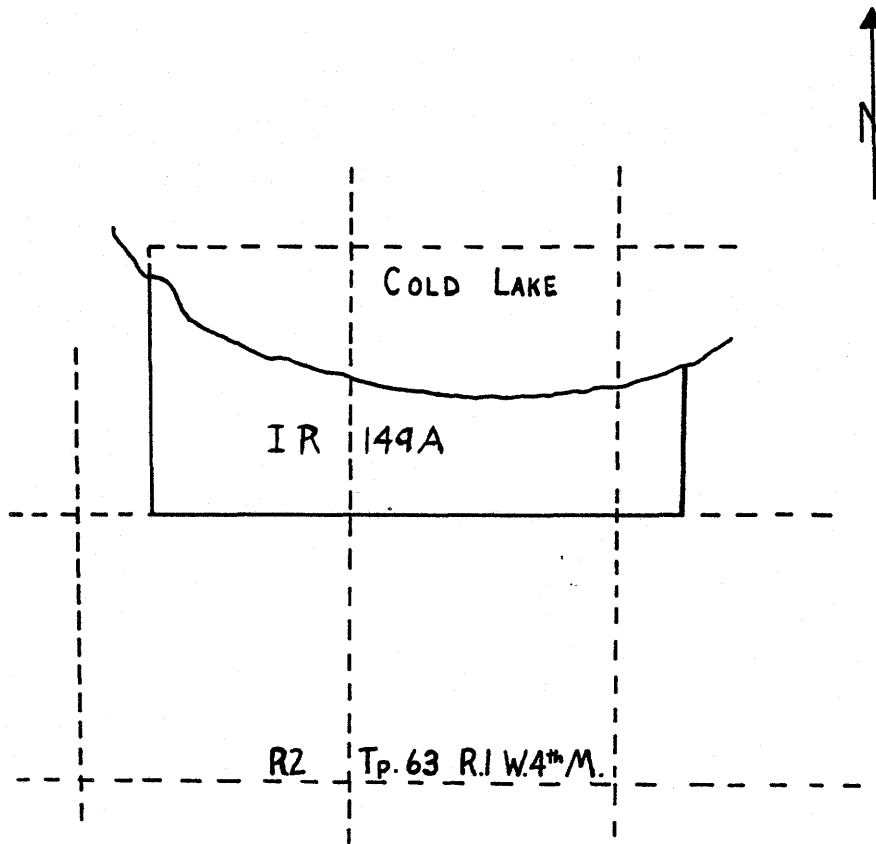
That same year (1906) Bishop Legal requested that 160 acres be assigned for use as Mission property in the Cold Lake reserve (*ibid.*, McLean to Laird, October 6, 1906). This was a large area to request; the usual allowance for mission property was two to ten acres. Laird, in bringing the request to McLean, noted that

the Indians have generally objected to large areas of land for Mission purposes unless there is a Boarding School in connection therewith. But if a missionary keeps a couple of horses and cows perhaps 40 acres is not too much. In every case of this kind, however, the consent of the Indians should be asked to its occupation by the Mission while such is maintained on the reserve (*ibid.*, Laird to Secretary, October 12, 1906).

The problem arose because Father LeGoff had been living for many years on a piece of land which was incorporated into IR 149 when it was confirmed in 1904. It appears to have been an oversight on the part of the surveyor to have included LeGoff's mission within the reserve boundaries. This land could not be taken from the reserve now without adequate compensation being given to the Indians, nor was it agreeable with the Department to allow the mission such a large amount of land on the reserve. Therefore, it was suggested that 160 acres be granted Father LeGoff as a homestead and the same amount of land be granted to the Indians as the proposed fishing reserve on Cold Lake. On November 7, 1906, Assistant Secretary Steward notified Reverend Father Leduc at St. Albert that 160 acres on the Cold Lake Reserve No. 149 would be transferred to mission property.

In 1907 Reid was sent to make adjustments required and to explain the changes to the Indians. Upon his arrival at Cold Lake, Reid called a meeting of the Indians at which Father LeGoff was also present and informed them of his intention to cut off from their reserve a piece of land for mission purposes and to give them an area of equal size at Cold Lake as a fishing station. Reid then made the appropriate survey deducting 160 acres from IR 149 for the Roman Catholic mission and laying out a fishing station, IR 149A (Map 11), for the band at Cold Lake. The fishing reserve was granted in exchange for land taken from the reserve for the mission. If the Indians desired more than 160 acres at Cold Lake, then an equal portion of land would need to be deducted from the present reserve. The fishing reserve was to

Map 11: Cold Lake Fishing Station, Indian Reservation No. 149A



COLD LAKE FISHING STATION No 149A

177 ACRES

SURVEYED BY J. L. REID D.L.S. 1907

SCALE 20 CHAINS TO 1 INCH

be seen as an exchange for an equal portion of IR 149 and not as additional land. Reid reported that the Indians seemed quite satisfied with both the surrender and the addition. Father LeGoff also expressed satisfaction with the decision (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-3, Reid to McLean, January 13, 1909). Thus, the southeast quarter of section 24 of Township 62, Range 2, was relinquished to the Department of the Interior with the suggestion that it be given to the Roman Catholic Church mission as Father LeGoff had resided there for some time, in exchange for a fishing station located on the shore of Cold Lake, consisting of 177 acres in the southwest quarter section 19, Township 63, Ranges 1 and 2. This arrangement was accepted by Order-in-Council P.C. 1326. The fishing station was to be known as IR 149A.

It was important that the Cold Lake Indians understood the changes that had taken place as there was some dissatisfaction among them with regard to the location of IR 149. Inspector Chisholm reported in 1907 that only about one half of the band was living on this reserve. The remainder were living to the east not far from the border and to the north as far as the shores of Cold Lake, some eight to ten miles from the reservation. They claimed that they had not been consulted as to the location of the reserve when it was first laid out because they had been away hunting. They desired that the reserve be extended to the lake, which would mean including their present location as well as giving them uninterrupted fishing access to the lake. Such a change, however, required alterations to be made to IR 149.

Father LeGoff wrote to the Minister of the Interior Frank Oliver

outlining the Indian's request. He stated that they desired land to the south of Beaver River, where IR 149 was located, as well as land from Beaver River to Cold Lake. According to Father LeGoff,

the reason of their request was that they were anxious to get that good portion of land, called Portage Le prairie which extends from the Beaver River to Cold Lake, and which since many years past has been their residing ground (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-3, LeGoff to Oliver, October 7, 1907).

The area referred to as Portage Le Prairie consisted of an area of good land about ten miles long by three miles wide bordered on either side by muskegs and land of little agricultural value. LeGoff asked the government to exchange about 16 square miles of the less valuable land on the west side of IR 149 for land at the lake where these Indians could live. The Indians refused to cross the Beaver River to settle on IR 149 as this would suggest that they become "prairie" Indians. Agent Sibbald agreed with this request and recommended it to the department. The department consented to the exchange and agreed to send surveyor Reid during the 1909 field season.

On April 14, 1909 the Cold Lake Indians surrendered 10,240 acres of IR 149 for an equal area on Cold Lake. There was some problem agreeing on the land at Cold Lake as there were a number of squatters in the region, some of whom would need to be compensated for the buildings they had erected and improvements made if the land desired by the Indians was to be granted them (*ibid.*, Sibbald to McLean, September 13, 1909). Because of this problem the Indians were unable to have their first choice of land. It was the department's policy when laying out a new reserve, to exclude any lands which had been occupied or were in the

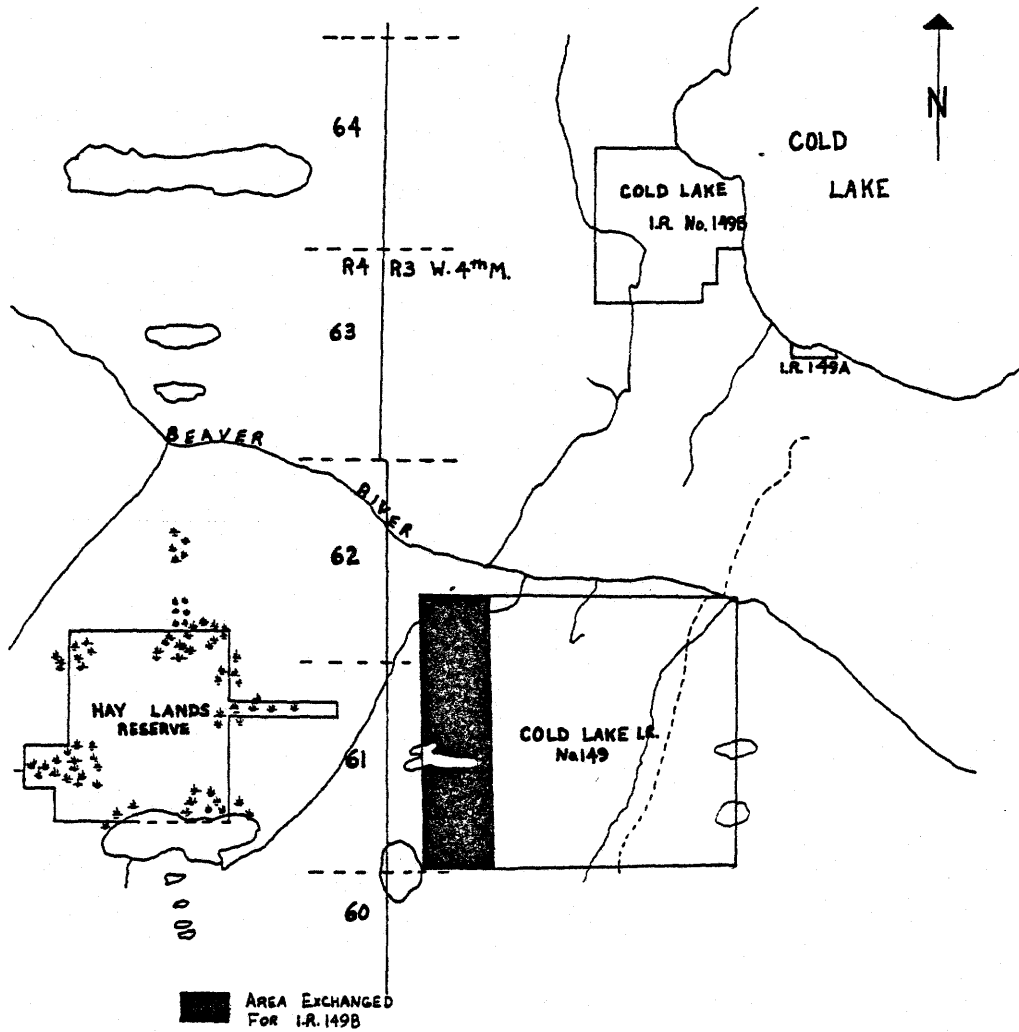


occupation of squatters. However, if any persons settled upon land, having the knowledge that the land was to be included in an Indian reserve, he did so at his own risk and did not receive the same consideration from the department (*ibid.*, McLean to Lessard, July 22, 1909).

A year later the issue was still unresolved and the Cold Lake band expressed their discontent over the uncertainty of the land exchange. The land situation, along with the lack of promise by the department to build a boarding school on the reserve, contributed to the band member's unwillingness to comply with the permit system which the department was attempting to enforce in the selling of cattle (*ibid.*, Sibbald to McLean, March 30, 1910).

The surrender of 10,240 acres of IR 149 in Townships 61 and 62, Range 3, West of the 4th Meridian was finally accepted by Order-in-Council P.C. 2670 on January 11, 1911. Order-in-Council P.C. 86 of January 20, 1911 set aside a new reserve, IR 149B, consisting of 10,269.1 acres and located in Townships 63 and 64, Range 2, West of the 4th Meridian. Thus, the band received a portion of land near the lake as they had requested (Map 12).

However, Agent Sibbald then reported that, while these adjustments were being completed, the band had reconsidered their request and desired to cancel their surrender of the 16 square miles. The band consisted of two factions; the main group, which resided on IR 149 south of the Beaver River, realized the value of the land they had surrendered, and a small group who had left the Heart Lake band and joined the Cold



Map 12: Cold Lake Indian Reservations Nos. 149, 149A and 149B.

Lake band. The latter wished to occupy the land at the lake and refused to join those on IR 149. Because they were unable to obtain the land they had originally requested - the cost of remuneration to squatters occupying these lands being too great - the entire band had reconsidered their decision and asked to cancel the surrender. Sibbald relayed this request to the department but did not add his recommendation as the request was delayed and much effort had already been expended by the department to effect the exchange (*ibid.*, Sibbald to McLean, February 7, 1911).

The Cold Lake band then petitioned that the southwest quarter of section 28 and the south half of sections 29 and 30 in Township 63, Range 2, be included in the reserve, and the northwest quarter of section 16 and the north half of sections 17 and 18 be left out. The request was made because the land asked for contained good timber, farm and hay lands. McLean's reply to Sibbald was simple and direct.

The recent changes in connection with these reserves have been confirmed by Order-in-Council and the matter closed. Unless you find it advisable to report that the new changes desired or any others proposed are in your opinion a necessity for the Indians, the Department does not feel disposed to again open the question (*ibid.*, McLean to Sibbald, June 5, 1911).

In May, 1912 Sibbald reported that, in light of McLean's reply, and after further discussions, the band now considered the matter closed, had settled down on the new reserves, and appeared "quite satisfied."

One further change to IR 149 took place in 1912 when 12.1 acres were surrendered for transfer to the Department of the Interior for road allowances. The stipulation for this surrender had been provided

for in the Order-in-Council P.C. 89 of January 20, 1911.

Finally, in 1915, Indian Reserve Surveyor Robertson reported to the Secretary that he had surveyed and posted the boundaries of IR 149B, which had not previously been surveyed (*ibid.*, Robertson to Secretary, November 24, 1915).

In 1919 the question arose concerning dividing the two factions of the Cold Lake band. When Sibbald visited the Chipewyan on April 22, 1919, the primary topic of discussion was the disposition of money collected from permits to settlers for cutting hay on IR 149. During the previous year this had amounted to just over \$600.00. One proposal was to use the money to fence in the reserve. Sibbald felt this would be beneficial as settlement was encroaching on the boundaries of the reserve and in some places settler's cattle had wandered onto the reserve causing damage to valuable hay lands. Fences would help prevent Indian cattle from straying off the reserve and being lost. Sibbald realized the cost for fencing would be great and, in asking for the department's help, stated clearly that the band would be "unanimous" in not exchanging or selling any of their land to purchase the wire.

The question also arose as to whether or not a portion of the money received from hay cut on hay lands in IR 149 should go to the members on IR 149B. McLean noted that, unless the two factions were recognized as separate bands through a written agreement obtained by the consent of the band, the Indians living on IR 149B were entitled to a share in the revenue realized from the land in IR 149, and vice versa. When Sibbald met with the band in July 1919, they had made up their minds to

remain as one band. Sibbald then informed the band that he would distribute the \$606.54 in hay money on ratio according to the number of families shown in the paysheets of the most recent annuity payment.

#### 2.9.9 Indian Reservation Nos. 161 and 161A (Map 13)

The Island Lake band, otherwise known as the Ministikwan Lake band, drew annuity with Seekaskootch and Ooneepowhayo bands from 1876 to 1908. A surveyed reserve was of concern to this band as early as 1905 when Sibbald reported that three leading men of the band had called upon him protesting against the proposed intention of a man by the name of McPherson to cut timber on a portion of land which they had been settled upon for years. It was their intention to ask the department for a reserve at Island Lake (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-6, Sibbald to McLean, November 21, 1905). McLean immediately informed Sibbald that application had been made to the Department of the Interior to

temporarily reserve a tract of land six miles deep around Island Lake, and not to grant any timber licenses therein, until the question of surveying a reserve for the Indians of that locality had been decided (*ibid.*, McLean to Sibbald, December 5, 1905).

At this time there were about 30 families in the band as well as another small group living at Loon Lake about 20 miles east of Island Lake.

According to the payroll of 1909 there were an estimated 179 persons in the band, although not all were recognized as having taken treaty and therefore, were not all entitled to land. However, Agent Sibbald reported that,

finding themselves strong in number, and most

of them living in the neighbourhood of Island Lake, it has been thought well to show them separately, and it is intended ere long to have a reserve surveyed for them (SP27, 1910:140).

Inspector Chisholm was directed by McLean to ascertain whether any of these Indians had received land elsewhere as well as any other information necessary for the setting aside of a reservation. Because it was difficult to determine whether or not these Indians had taken land elsewhere, or had been included in the allotment of land to other bands in the agency, the department decided to set aside a reserve calculated at one square mile for each family of five at their present population (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-6, McLean to Chisholm, March 1909). Inspector Chisholm reported that population to be 250, including 117 at Island Lake, 27 at Loon Lake and 24 at Big Island Lake. They were entitled to 50 square miles.

Reid was commissioned to survey the reserve for this band after he had consulted with the Indians and with Inspector Chisholm. McLean suggested that a single reservation was most desirable, but that two or more separate reservations might be necessary for the different groups at their respective locations if the Indians absolutely refused to live together on the same reserve.

In his annual report for 1910, Agent Sibbald stated that the reserve, while not yet laid out, would cover the major portion of Township 58, Range 25, West of the 3rd Meridian. He noted that

the locality where they are choosing to have their reserve is not well adapted for farming, but will embrace some valuable hay-land and from the lake they draw a large number of

whitefish, the principal item of their food supply (SP27, 1911:147).

In response to reported dissension among the Island Lake Indians with regard to the location of their reserve, Acting Agent Turner held a meeting with the band on January 28, 1911. There were 23 persons present with the heads of most families attending, and with Little Hunter as the principal speaker. Turner reported that the surveyor had indicated that almost all the lake would be inside the reserve and that if any other Indians wished to join the band the reserve would be enlarged. However, the way the reserve was planned it appeared to the Indians that only a small portion of the north shore of the lake was included and a number of houses belonging to members of the band had been excluded. Little Hunter suggested that someone had changed the plans to include hay lands, but that the Indians preferred to include the lake as it was from the lake that they made their living. He asked for

all the lakeshore except a small portion of the south shore; also a piece of land running south from the south-west corner, and to give up a strip off the west side of the present reserve (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-6, Turner to McLean, February 3, 1911).

Turner stated that he had been present at a meeting held by the surveyor with the Indians before the survey was made, at which time the Indians expressed their desire to have a reserve which would surround the lake and include some valuable hay lands. They were advised by Reid and Turner to "secure the haylands and not to think so much about the lake." The majority favoured the lake. However, one of the leading men with his followers visited Reid after the meeting to express their desire to include the hay lands. Reid and Turner, therefore, attempted to

shape the reserve in such a way as to include both the lake and the hay lands. Turner concluded:

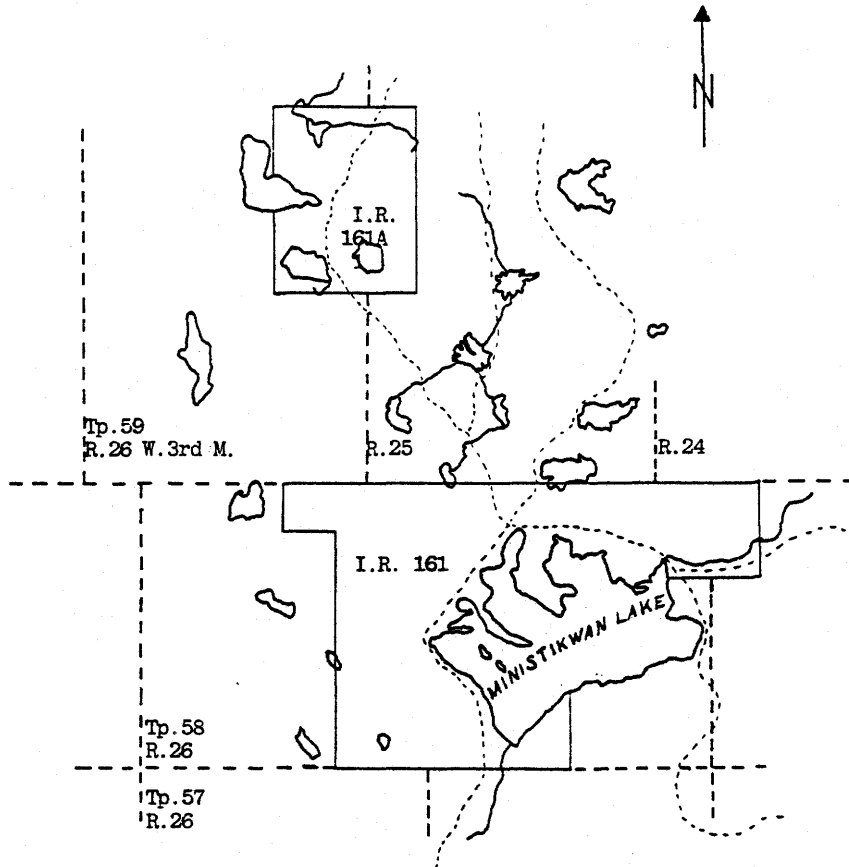
As I believe the country all around the lake has been surveyed, it would not be difficult to alter the reserve if the department wished to do so, but, with the interests of the Indians in view, I would not recommend that land should be given them round the lake in place of the haylands to the north, but a portion of the west side might be given up, to allow the land on which buildings are now situated being included (*ibid.*).

According to Chief Surveyor Bray, the Indians were in error as to the position of some of the houses they thought were outside the reserve. Some of them were actually within the boundaries of the reserve. He recommended the changes which Turner had suggested and Agent Sibbald held a meeting with the band in early June to explain the recommended changes. The band now appeared pleased with the division of the reserve into two and requested only a few section changes.

IR 161, containing 20,645 acres and located in Township 58, Ranges 24, 25 and 26, West of the 3rd Meridian and IR 161A, containing 6,989 acres and located in Township 59, Ranges 25 and 26 and Township 60, Ranges 25 and 26, West of the 3rd Meridian were confirmed by Order-in-Council P.C. 1704 on August 3, 1911. This gave the band a total area of 27,543 acres.

In February 1912 the Indians at Island Lake asked for the addition of certain sections around the southeast shore of the lake so that the entire lake would be included in the reservation. Sibbald informed them that as they already had the land they were entitled to, he would mention their request to the department, but would not recommend





Map 13: Island (Ministikwan) Lake Indian Reservations Nos. 161 and 161A.

the change.

When Sibbald visited the Indians at Big Island Lake he found 46 treaty and 33 non-treaty people. At a meeting with them to discuss a reserve, they refused to leave the district they were then in or to have a reserve unless they were given a large tract of country north of the Beaver River which was their usual hunting ground. Sibbald reported that these Indians refused to understand the survey system, pretended to know little or nothing about the treaty and believed that the government had no control over the country north of the Beaver River. Because the majority of the Indians were away hunting, it was impossible to determine their wishes. Nevertheless, he suggested a tentative location in Township 63, Range 24 and Township 62, Range 24.

Because the Indians at Big Island Lake refused to join the Indians at Island Lake, it became necessary for the department to reduce the area of the reservation at Island Lake to an area more in keeping with treaty allowances according to population. The Island Lake Indians had been granted a reserve for 207 persons while they numbered only 117. Sibbald held a meeting with these Indians in May 1913 at which he informed them of the decision of the department to reduce the area of their reserve. He recommended the deduction of 13 sections on the east side of the lake which were of very little agricultural value, being rough and scrubby, and left the Indians to judge for themselves what would be of least value to them in the remaining three sections. After some discussion the band reported that they did not want to relinquish any part of their land. The band was still adamant in their

refusal when Sibbald visited them in December 1913, so he recommended to the department the deduction of those sections in Township 58, Ranges 24, 25 and 26 which were of least agricultural value. In April 1914, the Indians on IR 161 refused vaccination. Sibbald reported that,

they had asked the Department to allow their reserve to remain as it was originally surveyed and that if their request was granted they would then say what they would do with regard to vaccination (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-6, Sibbald to Secretary, April 2, 1914).

The value of the land in IR 161 became a matter of concern when Sibbald reported that "even if two square miles were allowed for every five souls, it would not compensate for the difference in value" between the land contained in this reservation and the land in the other reservations of the agency (*ibid.*). He then recommended allowing the Indians to have the land they asked for. Until this was taken care of he felt these Indians would remain obstinate in their opposition to him and the vaccination program.

The department did not fall in with Sibbald's suggestion; the treaty allowed 640 acres for each family of five and this band had been allotted an area much larger than the actual number of persons willing to reside on it.

Surveyor for the department, E. Robertson, reported in March 1915 that he had surveyed Island Lake IR's 161 and 161A and reduced them by cutting off 10,279 acres, even though the Indians strongly objected to this reduction. IR's 161 and 161A now contained a total area of 17,264 acres. Order-in-Council P.C. 976 dated April 27, 1916 authorized the

elimination of the area deducted by Robertson and confirmed the remaining portions of IR 161 and IR 161A.

Reserves were surveyed in 1916 for Joseph Bighead Band at Big Island Lake (Lac des Isles) and for the Loon Lake Band at Loon (Makwa) Lake.

#### 2.9.10 Hay and Timber Reserves

Hay and timber reserves were surveyed and allotted to various Indian bands in the agency. It was understood that, while these lands were for the use of the department and Indians, they were not to be considered as part of the reserve lands granted through treaty. The Department of the Interior willingly permitted the Indians to use these lands until such a time as they were withdrawn from the available Dominion Lands for homestead purposes. These lands would become less available as settlement increased.

The Onion Lake Agency needed hay lands in order to supply winter feed for their cattle. By 1895 Agent Mann had some 400 head of cattle at the department ranch near Long Swamp immediately north and east of Keeheewin Reserve No. 123. He had harvested the hay he needed from the swamp for the two previous years and in 1895 he requested that this land be set aside as hay lands for the department herd. He felt this was necessary as a rancher had moved into the swamp with a large number of cattle and horses and this would mean that the department herd would be short of hay. Because the area had not been surveyed, it took several years to settle the request.

Ponton surveyed the lands in 1897-98 and a permit was granted for this hay reserve to the Onion Lake Agency in November 1899 (PAC RG10 CRF,

Vol. 7769 F.27115-5). The agent of Dominion Lands in Edmonton was instructed by the Secretary of the Department of the Interior to reserve this tract of land in Township 62, Range 5, West of the 4th Meridian. A free permit to cut the quantity of hay necessary for their use was to be issued each year. If the Indians desired to sell the hay, it would be necessary for them to pay regular dues. In 1908 the subdividing of this area meant a change to the boundaries in which a small area was lost, but approximately 20 acres were added.

By 1908 a number of squatters had settled on the land set aside as a hay reserve in 1899. The Department of the Interior at this time decided to consider and grant the squatter's claims to the land within the hay reserve. Because of unusually wet seasons in 1900 and 1901, the agency had established new winter ranches on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River and had not cut hay on the hay reserve for several years.

At the new ranches the hay reserves were not set aside for the Indians and settlers could cut hay at the same place as the Indians. Sibbald expressed his concern regarding this to Laird in 1902 saying that if there was another wet season they would probably not be able to cut sufficient hay for the herd but there might be enough hay at Long Swamp if the area were drained. However, this would entail considerable expense and the department would not consent to it. Sibbald then requested that lands immediately south of the river in Townships 52 and 53, Range 27, West of the 3rd Meridian and in Townships 52 and 53, Range 1, West of the 4th Meridian be reserved for the agency as hay lands (PAC RG10 Black,

Vol. 3579 F.102-2, Sibbald to Indian Commissioner, January 2, 1902). The Department suggested that it would be better to discontinue the department herd by distributing it among the Indians. It is difficult to see how this would have solved the problem as the cattle still needed hay which could not sufficiently be produced on the reserves.

In 1909 Sibbald reported that hay had not been cut for the agency for some years at the Long Swamp and that the Onion Lake bands were finding it difficult to procure enough hay for their cattle as the hay lands on the reserve were insufficient. He therefore suggested that the Department attempt to retain the lands north of Keeheewin Reserve for the Indians, although a number of settlers had located themselves on the hay reserve in hopes that it would soon be made available for homesteading (PAC RG10 CRF Vol. 7769 F.27115-5, Sibbald to Secretary, January 13, 1909). The Department of the Interior preferred to open the area for homesteads while allowing the agency to choose other hay lands in unoccupied Dominion Land. However, settlers were coming in quickly and good unoccupied hay lands were difficult to locate. In 1910 the hay reserve was formally cancelled and hay permits granted in Township 61, Range 5 and Township 62, Range 5, West of the 4th Meridian. In 1911 some of these lands were withdrawn. The Schedules of Indian Reserves in the Dominion for 1913 lists a temporary reserve consisting of an area of 820 acres (designated No. 120A) in Townships 61 and 62, Range 5, West of the 4th Meridian, as hay lands for the Onion Lake Agency.

As reservations were surveyed and allotted the presence of hay lands was an important factor in choice of location. Keeheewin IR 123 was

adjusted in order to gain better hay and farm lands. When the Island Lake reserve was resurveyed in 1913, the surveyor reported that the portion left to the Indians has many spots of excellent hay land and sufficient timber and that the Indians valued the hay land especially as it enabled them to cut and sell hay (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-6, Bray to Deputy Superintendent General, April 14, 1914). By the 1910's the Indians desired hay lands not only for stock needs, but also for their value as a financial resource.

The Onion Lake Indians obtained lumber from Dominion Lands upon which they had been given permission to cut logs. On land set aside as timber reserves for the Indians, no permit was needed for wood cutting as long as it was for their own use and not for sale. Logs cut from Dominion Lands in the late 1890's were cut under permits issued to the Indians with a charge of \$2.50 per m. foot.

McLean, in a letter to Indian Commissioner Laird (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3470 F.102-2, November 4, 1898) requested that the Onion Lake Agency be granted some wooded areas near the reserve for their future use, as mercantile timber was scarce in the vicinity of the reserve. Since the department had a sawmill at the agency which was able to cut and trim logs for housing, it was important to be able to obtain the logs. In reply, Laird instructed the Agent of Dominion Lands at Battleford to withhold permission for anyone to cut timber on the lands requested by Agent Mann until a survey could be made.

In 1902 Sibbald wrote the Indian Commissioner stating that several Indians had, without permission, been hauling dry wood from the timber

limit and selling it to the Hudson's Bay Company and Church of England mission. Dry wood was scarce and therefore controlled through a permit system by the Dominion Lands agent. Sibbald imposed a similar regulation on the Indians whereby they could not sell dry wood unless permits were issued to cut extra wood for that purpose.

#### 2.9.11 Summary

The establishment of reservations proceeded smoothly initially with Indians involved in choosing their own reserve locations. At the signing of Treaty Six the chiefs made known to Indian Commissioner Christie the general area in which they desired their reservations to be located. When Simpson surveyed and established IR's 119, 120, 121 and 122 in 1879 there were no problems between him and the Indians with regard to location. Consultation between the Indians, Indian Agent and surveyor was important in the latter establishment of reserves and in effect the Indians chose their own reserve locations. Where they were undecided, as in the case of the Island Lake band, the agent and surveyor recommended to the department that a specific area be set aside by the Department of the Interior for further consideration. In each case, when the final boundaries of the reservations were established, the Indians were reported to be in favour of the area laid out.

There were three primary considerations besides the band's choice in determining the size and location of reservations. The first consideration was the treaty provision of 640 acres per family of five or 128 acres per individual. All bands in the agency received reserve



lands which fulfilled this requirement and some were given land in excess of the amount promised, based on their populations when the reservation was established. Band 119 received a land allotment which allowed for a 7 percent increase in population and in the establishment of IR 149 land was allowed for an expected increase in population through migrations from the Heart Lake band. The only major problem with regard to the size of reserves based on population was the Island Lake band. There appears to have been an oversight on the part of the surveyor, who did not ascertain the desire of all the Indians in the area before setting out the reservation. Some were away hunting at the time. Later, when the Indians with Joseph Bighead refused to move to IR 161 it was necessary to delete a portion of the reserve so that it would be closer to the amount established by the treaty.

Land use was another consideration. Subsistence activities and resource availability was an important criteria for the Indians as they decided on their locations. Bands 149 and 121 had settlements which they inhabited for a part of the year. These were included, as much as possible, in the reservations laid out. Lakes were important for most of the bands as both the Chipewyan and Wood Cree subsisted to a large extent on fish during the winter season. Where reserves did not include a good fishing lake or access to one the department allowed alterations to be made to the original reservations and the establishment of fishing reserves.

The department expected the Indians to become involved in agriculture and stock raising activities and therefore, the nature of

the soil and vegetation was an important consideration in the establishment of reservations. Most of the reserves included land with some agricultural potential and with hay marshes which were important for stock raising. Keeheewin reserve was resurveyed in 1904 and again in 1912 in order to gain better hay and farm lands. Hay lands were an important consideration to Turner and Reid as they recommended boundaries for the reserve at Island Lake. When part of a reserve was surrendered in exchange for a fishing reserve or for hay lands then land of the least agricultural value was surrendered.

From 1885 to 1905 hay and timber reserves were important to the Indians in the agency as a source of cattle feed and firewood. After 1905 timber lands were important for lumber and firewood but hay lands were of less concern as the number of reserve cattle did not increase substantially and more fodder was grown on the reserves. Hay lands became increasingly difficult to obtain due to settlement of these lands by squatters and homesteaders.

### 3. THE STUDY REGION

It is difficult to visualize accurately what the environment was like in the study area before the systematic collection of exact and detailed information on the landforms and geology of the west began during the mid 19th century. In 1857 both the British and Canadian governments sponsored expeditions to study the topography and resources of the west. Captain John Palliser was commissioned by the British government to record the physical features, principal elevations, soil potential for agriculture, timber and minerals of the northwest (Palliser 1858:4). The expedition lasted from 1857 to 1860. Two Canadian expeditions, led by H.Y. Hind in 1857 and by S.J. Dawson in 1858 were to inquire into the resources of the Red River colony and the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan countries. These expeditions marked the beginning of comprehensive and thorough scientific explorations of the Canadian west and laid the basic conceptual framework for present interpretations of the physical geography of Western Canada. They produced a tremendous amount of information on the geology, climate, vegetation, suitability of land for agriculture, population and nature of Indian settlement in the west.

The primary reason for the early studies of the west was the desire to settle the area and to develop its potential agricultural, forest and mineral resources. Land surveys, route surveys for railways, geological and botanical surveys helped to assess the area in more exact detail. After 1870, a steady accumulation of detailed information was begun by various government agencies. The Senate appointed a select

committee in 1870 to collect information and the Geological Survey became the government agency responsible for investigating the natural resources and agricultural potential of the west. The Dominion Lands Survey was established in 1869 for the purpose of surveying for agricultural settlement. The survey system it established eventually made it possible to describe any unit of land in western Canada. As surveyors were required to map the vegetation and major relief features, as well as measure the land, the descriptions which gradually accumulated were very detailed.

Studies done in the twentieth century have added to our knowledge of the environment during the early historic period. In describing the natural vegetation of Saskatchewan, Coupland and Rowe (1969) have mapped it as it occurred prior to the changes resulting from Euro-Canadian settlement. Detailed studies on the physiography (Richards 1969; Mitchell, Moss and Clayton 1950), climate (Moss 1965), drainage, soils (Moss and Clayton 1969; Mitchell, Moss, and Clayton 1944, 1950), natural vegetation (Coupland and Rowe 1969), and faunal and fish resources (Maher 1969) are valuable sources describing the natural environment.

The study area, narrowly defined as the Onion Lake Agency, was situated in the transitional zone between two major geo-environmental zones: the Grassland and Boreal Forest. This transitional zone exhibits a distinct physical geography which combines geophysical characteristics from the two environmental zones which meet within it.

The Indians who settled in the Onion Lake Agency utilized both zones to varying degrees before and during the study period. The Plains and Wood Cree moved about in both the grassland and southern boreal

forest according to the seasonal availability of resources (Hector and Vaux 1860). During the winter months the Plains Cree moved northward into the North Saskatchewan River area towards the Touchwood Hills and Forts Carlton and Pitt. This was an area inhabited primarily by the Wood Cree who moved further north during the winter season to hunt and trap. After the signing of Treaty Six, the Indians were drawn into more clearly defined and geographically confined areas. Their physical environment was circumscribed as they spent more and more time on their reservations.

Because an ecological approach is emphasized in the thesis, this chapter attempts to integrate factors of the environment into a comprehensive picture of what the physical environment was like during the study period. A number of variables including physical geography, climate, drainage, vegetation and natural resources are described.

### 3.1 Physiography

The province of Saskatchewan, in which the major portion of the Onion Lake Agency lies, is divided into three major physiographic regions on the basis of sub-surface geology. These include the Canadian Shield, the Central Lowlands and the Great Plains (Richards 1969:40, 41).

The Canadian Shield lies to the north and east of the Great Plains occupying the northern one-third of the Province with the southern limit extending obliquely from Creighton in the east northward to the Clearwater River in the west. This boundary area

is demarcated by numerous lakes which appear to separate the pre-cambrian rocks of the Shield from the sedimentary rocks of the Plains. It encompasses the area around Lake Athabasca and its southern border runs along the northern part of the Churchill River.

The Shield is characterized by extensive areas of exposed bedrock of hard, resistant Archaen granitic and basaltic rocks. Where precambrian rocks lie at the surface, the regional topography consists of bush, lakes, hard rock ridges, and rivers. Wetlands are characteristic of the Shield. Blocked by glacial deposits, rock basins and drainage channels have become lakes, muskegs, bogs and marshes.

The Shield region was exploited by the Chipewyan who were involved in the fur trade during the early 1800's. While the Chipewyan Indians at Cold Lake probably exploited the natural resources of the Shield region at one time, during the study period they resided in and exploited the natural resources of the other regions.

South of the Canadian Shield lie the Saskatchewan Plains Region, which is a part of the Central Lowlands, and the Alberta Plateau Region (Richards 1969:40, 41). They are separated by the Missouri Coteau. Some geographers place the Saskatchewan Plains Region and the Alberta Plateau Region in one physiographic region under the title of the Great Plains. In Canada the Great Plains Region comprises the area which lies between the Shield on the north and east and the mountainous Cordilleran Region in the west. The northern boundary of the Great Plains extends to the southern boundary of the present Northwest Territories (Mitchell and Moss 1948).

The topography of the Great Plains Region is generally level. It has developed on a nearly flat-lying soft strata of clays, shales and sandstone. Elevations range from about 4,000 feet in Alberta to about 800 feet in the Manitoba Lowland. The surface relief is undulating to rolling and is broken by a number of valleys, escarpments, plateaus and isolated hills.

Mitchell, Moss and Clayton (1950:12-16) describe the important landforms of the central portion of Saskatchewan. The Onion Lake Agency is included in this area. They divide this area into eight distinct landform units, four of which lie in the study area. These include the Missouri Coteau, the Paradise Hill-Lloydminster Upland, the Beaver River Plain and the Turtleford Dissected Plain.

The Paradise Hill-Lloydminster Upland is a roughly undulating to hilly upland area with elevations ranging from 2,000 to over 2,200 feet. Paradise Hill and Frenchman Butte are two high elevations in this unit. The area is cut by the channels of the North Saskatchewan River and the Big Gully.

The Missouri Coteau and the Paradise Hill-Lloydminster Upland are prominent "rolling upland" units while the Beaver River Plain and the Turtleford Dissected Plain are designated as "intermediate plains" (Mitchell, Moss and Clayton 1950). This term is used to "denote areas lying between the uplands and the lowest plain, and which in relief and topography form a transition between the highest and lowest lands of the area" (*ibid.*,13). The Beaver River Intermediate Plain lies directly north of the North Saskatchewan River and includes the

Beaver and Waterhen Rivers and a series of lakes joined by the Waterhen. The topography is nearly level to rolling. It was a primary hunting and trapping area for the Chipewyan and Cree Indians during the study period.

In a transition area between the Paradise Hill Upland and the Missouri Coteau and extending from St. Walburg southeast to Turtleford and Edam is the Turtleford Dissected Plain. The surface of this unit is undulating to rolling, the elevation ranging from 1,800 feet to 2,000 feet. A number of deep valleys dissect the area and move southward to the North Saskatchewan River. These represent drainage channels formed during the melting of the glacial ice.

### 3.2 Climate

The climate in the northern Great Plains Region has been described as a "cool semi-arid to sub-humid type, representative of the climate of the interior of a continental land mass in the north temperate zone" (Moss 1965:19). The southwestern section of the province has a cool semi-arid climate while to the east and north of this section the climate is sub-humid.

The study area is characterized by low precipitation, a factor which seriously affected the ability to grow gardens and crops in the Onion Lake Agency. The mean annual precipitation ranges from about 11 to 18 inches per year (Mitchell, Moss and Clayton 1950:23). More than half of the annual rainfall comes from May to August, which is the growing season. Wide fluctuations in annual and seasonal precip-



itation occur.

The mean monthly temperature ranges from 0 degrees F. in January to approximately 68 degrees F. in July. The minimum and maximum temperatures range from below -50 degrees F. to over 100 degrees F. (Moss 1965:19). The ground is frozen in the late fall and winter for approximately five months. The growing season, meaning "the period between the last killing frost of the spring and the first killing frost of the fall (29 degrees F. or colder)" (*ibid.*), begins in the southwest around mid-April. In general, the growing season is longest in the central sections of the agricultural region and shortest in the grasslands of the parkland region. The Onion Lake Agency falls within the latter region.

### 3.3 Drainage

Drainage is mainly west to east in the study area and conforms to the general slope of the land. Exterior drainage is effected through the North Saskatchewan and Churchill Rivers and their tributaries. These drainage basins are divided mainly by the Missouri Coteau. The Beaver River drains the northern portion of the study area and is a part of the Churchill River drainage basin. Its tributaries include the Waterhen, Makwa, Meadow and Cowan rivers, all of which originate in the Missouri Coteau.

The source of the North Saskatchewan River is located in the Rocky Mountains. Its main tributaries include Pipestone and Jackfish Creek, and the Monnery (Little Red Deer), Englishman, Turtle, Sturgeon,

Spruce and Garden rivers. Because most of the water of the Saskatchewan comes from the Rocky Mountains rather than local sources, it has little spring flood. It begins to rise in mid-June with the melting of snow in the higher elevations in the west and continues to rise for about six weeks. The river begins to subside in August and as the cool weather comes, its water level falls rapidly (Palliser 1859: 36).

Interior drainage conditions are most useful for agriculture in the nearly level to gently undulating areas. Much of the strongly rolling and hilly land is excessively drained due to the loss of precipitation through run-off into low-lying depressions (Mitchell, Moss and Clayton 1944:13). In the northern wooded areas, peat bogs, marshes, muskegs, and meadow soils are most commonly found in such depressions. In some areas surface water is concentrated in lakes. The larger lakes in the study area include Cold, Lac des Isles, Flotten, Jackfish, Makwa, Ministikwan, Brightsand and Turtle.

### 3.4 Soils

Soils are formed by a combination of factors including parent materials, topography and drainage, climate and the related natural vegetation (Moss and Clayton 1969:72). Climate affects natural vegetation while vegetative cover affects the amount of organic material in the soil. The latter affects soil colour.

In Saskatchewan, climate, natural vegetation and soil zones follow a similar pattern. In the southwest section of the province the associa-

tion is of dry (semi-arid) climate, prairie vegetation of thin grasses and light brown soils. This gives way eastward and northward to the parkland and mixedwood vegetation which thrive under more humid conditions. Heavier growth of grasses results in dark brown to black soils. Farther north, where the coniferous forest prevails, the climate is subarctic, the accumulation of organic matter in the soil is minimal and the soils are light grey.

#### 3.4.1 Soils in the Onion Lake Reserves

The following soil types have been identified for Saskatchewan: Brown, Black, Grey Podzols, and the "transitional" types, namely, Degraded Black and Wooded Calcareous (Mitchell, Moss and Clayton 1944; 1950). Mitchell, Moss and Clayton (*ibid.*) have also identified two soil regions - the Grassland Region and the Forest Region. The soils of the Grassland Region are characterized by dark coloured top soil. In general these soils develop under a vegetative cover of grasses and forbs which give a thick second layer which interferes with water penetration and root development. The Forest Region is characterized by a greyish leached topsoil layer which develops on sandy and acidic parent materials and where the climate is cool and moist. The Grassland and Forest Regions represent two groups of soils which in themselves are similar enough to produce climax formations of either the grassland or forest vegetation type.

The soil survey maps accompanying the Soil Survey Report of Saskatchewan (1950) omit mapping the topography and soil associations

found on Indian Reservations. However, by noting the topographic features and soil associations of those areas adjacent to the reservations, one may infer the general geo-physical character of the reservation. This may be compared with more general soil maps as well as descriptions of the reservations given by the Dominion Lands Surveyors.

Seekaskootch Indian Reservation No. 119 is situated in Townships 54 and 55, Ranges 26 and 27, West of the 3rd Meridian. Adjacent to this reservation, and straddling the 4th Meridian, is Mahkayo Indian Reservation No. 120, situated in Township 54, Range 1, West of the 4th Meridian. Both are situated in the northern Great Plains physiographic region.

In describing the landforms of this area Mitchell, Moss and Clayton (1950) place the northern half of IR 119 in the Missouri Coteau Upland and the southern half of IR 119 and the southeast corner of IR 120 in the Turtleford Dissected Plain. The remainder of IR 120 lies in the Paradise Hill-Lloydminster landform unit.

The Missouri Coteau Upland is topographically "moderately rolling to hilly." This means that the land is characterized by a succession of ridges and knolls which are separated by poorly drained depressions or sloughs. Because of steeper slopes in rolling areas, moisture retention and soil uniformity are inferior and consequently cultivation of large fields is impossible (*ibid.*,51). The Turtleford Dissected Plain is chiefly glacial moraine and outwash with an elevation slightly lower than that of the Missouri Coteau Upland. Here the land is undulating to rolling. The Paradise Hill-Lloydminster Upland is

topographically similar to the Missouri Coteau Upland but the hills are less steep.

Three general soil zones are comparable to these different landform units. The Missouri Coteau Upland has generally the Grey-Podzolic soils of the mixedwood forest. The Turtleford Dissected Plain has Black-Grey soils characteristic of mixedwood forest and parkland areas. Black soils are associated with parkland vegetation and are found in the Paradise Hill-Lloydminster Upland. The first two are podzolic soils, while the latter is a Chernozemic or dark coloured grassland soil.

Three main soil associations are identified for Indian Reservations 119 and 120. The Waitville-Bodmin complex with Grey Podzol soils is found in the northern portion of IR 119. This is the same type of soil which occupies the Boreal Forest area and forms the dominant upland soils of northern Saskatchewan. The southern portion of IR 119 and most of IR 120 has the Degraded Black soil of the Shellbrook association. Lying between these two associations in a narrow strip extending from the southeast corner of IR 119 through to the mid-section of the reserve is the Whitesand-Glenbush complex. These are similar to the Bodmin soil association. The Whitesand association is found in the Black soil group and is usually associated with the Parkland vegetation belt.

The topography of the Waitville association is undulating to strongly rolling forming a "wavy" surface. There is a succession of knoll and ridge, intermediate slope and depression or kettle

topography. The northern portion of IR 119 is mapped as gently to moderately rolling (Map 4). Glacial stones ranging from coarse gravel to large boulders are common.

The landscape of this association is characterized by a medium to heavy cover of mixedwood forest vegetation. This includes aspen, black poplar, white spruce, birch, willow and numerous shrubs. In most places the climax forest has been destroyed by fire and a secondary forest has grown up. Consequently, the proportion of spruce and birch is lower than that found in the climax forest. Immediately north of the reservation lies the mixedwood Bronson Forest Reserve.

The Waitville soils in this area are mapped as a complex with the Bodmin association. This association consists of Grey Podzolic coarse sandy and gravelly to gritty loams developed on glacio-fluvial deposits. As a result of the rapid melting of glacial ice and the washing of glacial deposits by large volumes of water, much of the fine textured material has been removed leaving a coarse textured outwash and stream-eroded boulder clay. These soils are usually mapped as light loam. Internal drainage is excessive placing this soil among the least drought resistant soils in the Grey soil zone. The soil is similar to that of the Glenbush association but is a lighter grey colour if cultivated because it is generally more leached. The topography of this soil area ranges from nearly level outwash plains to rough, rolling kame deposits. Tree cover is not well developed and agricultural development is poor.

The Whitesand Association is developed on glacio-fluvial deposits

consisting of coarse textured outwash, kames, and stream-eroded boulder clay. It is a Black soil consisting of black gravelly loams and sandy loams. Where sandy loam predominates, as in the study area, these soils are generally stone free. Texturally this soil represents a gritty loam. That is, it contains more coarse sand and fine gravel than is usually found in a loam. The Glenbush association is formed on parent materials similar to those of the Whitesand and Bodmin associations. It is a degraded black, coarse sandy and gravelly soil. The greyish top soil layer indicates that the Glenbush soils are more leached than the Whitesand soils.

The soil landscape of the Whitesand and Glenbush associations are characterized by coarse sandy to gravelly surface soils. Small rounded "cobble" stones are common in both but more frequent in the Glenbush association. Vegetation in Whitesand soil areas is of the parkland type. However, the tree growth is somewhat thin and scrubby and the grass is thin when compared to heavier textured Black soils. The tree cover in the Glenbush association is not dense or well developed as on better textured soils. Agriculture on both types of soils is relatively poorer than that in better soil areas. Internal drainage is excessive and these area among the least drought resistant soils.

The only soil association rated as fair to good for agriculture is the Shellbrook association, found in the lower portion of the reserve (Mitchell, Moss and Clayton 1950). Where these soils are sandy light loams and only slightly degraded, the agricultural potential

is very good. Soil moisture is generally favourable but in dry seasons yields may be low and soil drifting serious. Wheat is the main crop grown on Shellbrook soils.

The Waitville-Bodmin soil complex is found in the northern portion of IR 119. Both complexes have Grey Podzolic soils, and thus lower in organic matter, nitrogen, phosphorus and sulphur than other soils. Bodmin is rated as very poor soil and therefore not suitable for farming. It is low in drought resistance and natural fertilizer. Waitville soils may be soft and loose-structured when moist, but become "baked" or form a hard surface when dry. They are associated with a heavy cost of clearing trees and stones, a short growing season with the danger of frost damage, and a large proportion of rough topography or of non-arable muskeg and marsh areas. Wheat crops are grown on them but are of low quality.

The Whitesand-Glenbush complex consists of two poorly rated soil associations. Although Whitesand soils are Black soils, they are among the poorest agricultural soils of the Black soil zone. This is increased when associated with Glenbush soils which represent partially leached or degraded soils. Both types of soils are low in drought resistance, frequently associated with rough topography and relatively low in fertility.

IR 119, surveyed by George A. Simpson, D.L.S., in 1879 for the Seekaskootch band and comprising an area of 60 square miles, was divided into three distinct regions on the basis of physical characteristics. The northern part of the reserve was described as a high



rolling plateau of sandy loam soil, partially wooded with poplar, spruce and scrub. This portion of the reserve borders on a forested area now known as the Bronson Forest Reserve. In the central portion of the reserve was an area of open rolling prairie interspersed with groves of poplar, willow and a few spruce. Several hay marshes, from which a considerable quantity of hay was obtained in favourable seasons, and small lakes were located here. The southern portion of the reserve was said to contain some good land, hay marshes, numerous lakes and sandy ridges (PAS, Description and Plans of certain Indian Reserves..., 1889; SP, Annual Reports, 1904-1915).

IR 120, surveyed by Simpson in 1879 for Mahkayo's band, is adjacent to the southwest side of IR 119 (Map 5). Simpson described the southern portion as having generally light soil, the middle portion as having soil of a better quality and the northern section as containing good soil and valuable hay marshes. The southern half of the reserve was rolling prairie interspersed with bluffs of poplar and scrub with some lakes and ponds (PAS, Description and Plans of certain Indian Reserves..., 1889).

Situated on the southwest side of Frog Lake is IR 121 (Map 6). This reserve was also surveyed by Simpson in 1879. The southeastern portion was described as high rolling country partially wooded with poplar and spruce. The western portion was an open rolling prairie interspersed with bluffs of poplar and willow. There were three groves of fir trees which covered a total area of approximately six square miles (*ibid.*). Several hay swamps were found throughout the reserve

(SP27, 1901:175). The soil was reported by Simpson as being a rich black loam and in 1907 it was described as sandy loam with areas which were soft and boggy (SP17, 1907:135).

Simpson surveyed IR 122 for Puskeehkewein band in August 1879 (Map 8). It contained 40 square miles and was located on the west side of Frog Lake adjacent to the northern boundary of IR 121. The surface was described in 1901 as undulating with scattered poplar groves. The northern portion of the reserve was more heavily timbered, having fir and poplar. It was also swampy and in favourable seasons there were many spots where hay could be cut in considerable quantities (SP27, 1904:174). In 1909 it was reported that "hay can only be cut in small quantities, except in dry seasons when the water in the sloughs has become lower" (SP27, 1910:147).

IR 123 was surveyed in 1884 by A.W. Ponton, D.L.S. (Map 9). He described the southern portion of the reserve as covered with a dense growth of poplar. The southeast corner of the reserve reached into the Moose Mountains, while the southwest corner encompassed a portion of Long Lake. In 1904 the southern portion was described as hilly and well timbered with poplar and pine (SP27, 1905:165). The central portion was described by Ponton as a fine rolling prairie containing black loamy soil, luxuriant herbage and poplar bluffs. The northern portion of the reserve contained a large alkaline lake in which there was an island of about 120 acres covered with poplar, birch and large spruce (PAS, Description and Plans of certain Reserves..., 1889; SP27, 1903:155).

The Cold Lake Reserve No. 149 was described as having a flat topography in the centre which was marshy in wet seasons (Map 10). In drier seasons there were long stretches of excellent hay lands intermixed with wild vetch. The whole reserve was interspersed with poplar groves and the south and west was more heavily timbered with poplar and spruce. The soil was described as a rich loam (SP27, 1905:167). IR 149A and B were situated on the shores of Cold Lake. They were well adapted for cattle raising and the southern portion of IR 149B contained soil well suited for grain growing. Both reserves were well timbered with poplar and had a fair amount of spruce (SP27, 1914:151).

### 3.5 Natural Vegetation

A complex interaction of climate, physiography and soil determine the natural vegetation of the region. In the Great Plains Region grasslands have developed in a semi-arid climate on light brown to black soils, while the forest has spread where subhumid conditions persist and grey-wooded and podzolic soils are found. In Saskatchewan two major vegetation zones are represented - the Grassland and the Boreal Forest (Coupland and Rowe 1969:73).

#### 3.5.1 Grasslands Region

The Grasslands in Canada are an extension of the Central North American Grasslands. In Saskatchewan two major grassland associations are represented. The mixed prairie association occupies the brown and

dark brown soil zone and stretches across the southern portion of the province. The fescue prairie association occupies the black soil zone to the north of the mixed prairie and adjacent to the aspen forest lying in a belt, averaging about 50 miles in width and running in a northwesterly direction from the vicinity of Saskatoon to Lloydminster (Coupland and Brayshaw 1953:386). It lies to the south of the Onion Lake Agency.

### 3.5.2 Boreal Forest Region

The study area lies within the mixedwood forest zone on the southern edge of the Boreal Forest Region. Here, conifers thin out and aspen become more dominant. A small area of aspen forest occurs to the south of the North Saskatchewan River where it runs south of the agency. The mixedwood forest zone runs northwest to southwest across central Saskatchewan. It consists of mixed aspen, white spruce, balsam poplar, white birch, balsam fir and jackpine. Wetlands, characterized by fens, bogs and muskegs, are prominent throughout the area. Tamarack and black spruce are common in the spagnum bogs or muskegs.

The aspen forest (aspen parkland) is a transitional zone between the Boreal Forest and Grasslands dominated by aspen with some black poplar and willow. The area to the south of the agency is surrounded by fescue prairie which also reaches north of the North Saskatchewan River to the vicinity of Fort Pitt and St. Walburg. While at Fort Pitt, Hector (Palliser 1859:25) described this area as being partially wooded with poplar and willow clumps and having a luxuriant growth

of vetches and nutritious grasses. He felt this land was extremely valuable in its potential for winter pasturage as the clumps of trees would provide shelter for animals while the scrubby brush would keep the snow loose so that the animals would have no difficulty feeding.

Both the Chipewyan and Woods Cree exploited the mixedwood zone of the Boreal Forest. Prior to the study period these groups occupied the northern portion of this zone which lies in the lake area of the Upper Churchill River north to Lake Athabasca. This was predominantly a pine, swamp and bog association. The mixedwood forest, which was exploited by the Onion Lake Agency Indians during the study period, was an association of white spruce, aspen, poplar, pine, swamp and bog. White spruce is usually accompanied by shrubs and herbs such as willows, alders and sarsaparilla. Both white spruce and aspen prefer deep glacial soils and, while abundant in the southern mixedwood zones, are confined to river valleys and lake areas in the northern regions. Tall shrubs such as cherry, saskatoon and hazel are commonly found with aspen.

In the southern Boreal Forest aspen predominates while white spruce and poplar are common in the uplands. Jackpine dominates in areas which have sandy soils and in fire-prone areas because of its ready ability to regenerate. Its undergrowth includes heath shrubs such as blueberry and bearberry together with feather mosses and lichens.

Scattered throughout this region are large areas of wetland described as fens, bogs, marshes and muskegs. Bogs, which have an abundance of peat mosses, form where surface waters are stagnant and

and acidic. Fens or swamps are composed of less acid peat-forming mosses and sedges. Marshes are characterized by sedges, rushes, cattails and reeds and occur in bog, fen and forest complexes (Coupland and Rowe 1969:75).

In the Cold Lake area and north, northeast towards Ile-a-la-Crosse the predominant forest cover is white spruce, aspen balsam, poplar and pine. Pine is common in this area because of numerous fires. Swamps and bogs are found throughout the area, a large concentrated muskeg being found around the north, east and southeast of Primrose Lake which lies directly north of Cold Lake.

Crean (1909) described the area of Waterhen Lake, which is situated approximately 12 miles north of the Beaver River and directly northeast of IR's 161 and 161A. The Beaver River flows west to east past the northeast corner of IR 149 towards Green Lake, where it makes an abrupt 90 degree turn northward and flows into Ile-a-la-Crosse. The Waterhen River runs almost parallel to and slightly north of the Beaver River, flowing into it soon after the latter turns northward. Drainage is northeast to the Churchill River system. This area was exploited by the Chipewyan and the "hunting" Cree.

According to Crean, the country surrounding Waterhen Lake was "good." By this he meant it was useful for growing hay and perhaps useful for agriculture. Although the area was generally wooded, there were large open areas and many hay meadows. North of the Waterhen River lay a country of swamps and large muskeg. Northwest of Waterhen Lake, toward Canoe Lake, there was a land ridge with a substantial area of

large spruce timber which was used by the Indians for making canoes and paddles.

Vegetal foods were used extensively by the Plains Cree. Bits of roots and berries were put into meat soups and the Indian turnip was eaten uncooked, boiled, roasted, dried and crushed and added to soup or with the saskatoon berry (Hind 1860:414-415). Berries were important for food as well as ceremonial purposes. Mandelbaum (1979:75-76) lists 22 berries used by the Plains Cree. Most berries were dried, crushed and stored for later used.

The Woods Cree most frequently used the saskatoon and chokecherry. The saskatoon was dried whole or boiled with a small amount of water, crushed and pressed into small cakes, then dried. It was commonly used with dried venison and bear grease to make pemmican. Chokecherries were pounded or crushed between rocks, pressed into cakes and dried. Other berries were generally used raw.

Various wild berries were also seasonally important in the diet of the Chipewyan at Cold Lake. The blueberry, otter-berry, dwarf and swamp cranberry, and saskatoon berry were used (Curtis 1928:24). Dwarf cranberries, dwarf blueberries and bear berries occur in sandy, partially shaded soils. These were stored while the saskatoon berry was dried first and then stored. Blueberries were treated differently. They were often left on the plants through winter and picked in the spring. The Hudson's Bay Company officer at Onion Lake reports that the Indians were picking berries in April (HBC B. 323/a/5, April 14, 1902). Chokecherries were "crushed and dried in small cakes, to be

used as a relish and as an ingredient in meat stew" (Curtis 1928:24).

### 3.6 Faunal Resources

Before the influx of Indian groups from the north and east and the Euro-Canadian traders and settlers into the mixedwood forest and aspen forest of the southern Boreal Forest and northern Grasslands, the areas were heavily populated with large herbivores. Buffalo, elk, antelope, mule deer and moose grazed in the region. Predators of herbaceous animals included the buffalo, wolf, grizzly bear, coyote, red fox, badger and weasel. In the forest the snowshoe rabbit was the dominant mammal while the whitetailed jack rabbit was common in the grasslands. Beaver and muskrat were abundant in forested areas. The red squirrel, thirteen striped squirrel, Richardson's ground squirrel, pocket gopher, Franklin's ground squirrel, chipmunk and skunk were common. The latter three preferred the forest edge while the others were more common in the grasslands. Ruffed grouse and willow thrush lived in the forest environment while the sharp-tailed grouse was more abundant in the grasslands adjacent to wooded areas.

The above list includes only some of the more commonly found mammals in the study area. Maher (1969:82) lists seventy-eight species of wild mammals which inhabited Saskatchewan in historic times. Twenty-five of these have geographic ranges confined to the Boreal Forest Region, thirty-three have ranges in the Grasslands and eighteen have ranges which extend over both Boreal Forest and Grassland.

Fluctuations in species population are influenced by climatic



extremes, amount of food available, predation and disease. In the Boreal Forest fluctuations generally occur in a ten year cycle. Such fluctuations affected the availability of certain species to the Indians for hunting and trapping. The snowshoe rabbit, common throughout the study region and often used as food when other food resources were scarce, experiences a periodic epidemic approximately every ten years. The lynx, a predator of the rabbit also follows a ten year cycle, generally reaching its peak a year or two after that of the rabbit. After rabbits decline lynx move southward. The red fox and other predators of the rabbit, the marten and fisher, also appear to follow a ten year cycle. Following a similar cycle, but unrelated to the above, are the muskrat and mink and the ruffed and sharp-tailed grouse.

The buffalo, which inhabited the open grasslands and aspen parkland, was the dominant mammal of the plains before its demise due to over exploitation. It was hunted extensively by the Plains Cree as it provided for most of their material as well as food needs. The wood buffalo at one time inhabited the forested area between Lake Athabasca and the North Saskatchewan River, but by the 1880's it had retreated west between Lac la Biche and Fort McMurray. Two large predators of the buffalo, the buffalo wolf and the grizzly bear followed the buffalo to extinction in the Grasslands. The grizzly bear retreated to the mountain foothills while the wolf, because of its threat to livestock, was shot, trapped or poisoned.

Mandelbaum (1979:70) identifies those animals, other than buffalo, used by the Plains Cree before they became scarce in the parkland area.

These included the moose, elk, deer, coyote, badger, lynx, rabbits, gopher, prairie chicken and numerous water fowl. He lists twenty-six animals including the domestic dog and horse and the buffalo which were eaten by the Plains Cree.

In the early 1900's Crean (1909) reported that the Beaver River area was rich in all kinds of game animals including moose, deer, woodland caribou, elk, bear, lynx, wolf, fox, wolverine, otter, beaver, mink, marten, muskrat, rabbit and squirrel. Muskrat was found throughout the region.

Moose was the large game animal most used for food by the Chipewyan and Wood Crees. Moose generally inhabit forests with lakes and swamps, browsing on woody plants such as chokecherry, saskatoon and aspen in winter and preferring aquatic vegetation in summer. Their preference for low swampy areas made the area north-northeast of IR 149 an ideal habitat. In the 1920's Curtis (1928) noted that moose were still abundant in swampy areas near the reserve.

While the hunting area of the Indians of the Onion Lake Agency lies within the suggested habitat for woodland caribou, elk, wood buffalo and mule deer (Maher 1969:80-82), these animals were no longer common to the area during the study period. Woodland caribou, once found in the area, had moved north of the Churchill River system. Elk had, at one time, been abundant in the grasslands, but by the mid-1800's were seldom found in the study area. It was not a preferred food by the Chipewyan and Wood Cree as the meat was very lean (Dion 1979:24). Wood buffalo no longer ranged as far east as Cold Lake

and mule deer decreased with settlement.

The fur trade was the principal industry along the North Saskatchewan River and in the study area for some 150 years. During this time many mammals were extensively trapped and their numbers greatly reduced. The fur-bearing animals found in the study area included the fox (the red fox and its colour variations of silver and cross), lynx, wolf, coyote, marten, fisher, mink, otter, beaver, muskrat, skunk, weasel, ermine (short-tailed weasel), wolverine and bear. Beaver and bear were important for their skins as well as for dietary needs. The muskrat was trapped extensively. Its preferred habitat of marsh and sloughs was very common in the study area.

Waterfowl, including geese and ducks, were available to the Indians in the study area. The sharp-tailed grouse was common, feeding on rosehips, snowberries and the buds of trees and shrubs in winter - food sources commonly found in burnt areas. The ruffed grouse inhabits dense woods and willow swamps.

### 3.7 Fish Resources

Fish were abundant in the lakes and rivers of the study area. They were the most important food source for the Chipewyan at Lake Athabasca and southward (Curtis 1928:19), as they were usually available when game was scarce and could be caught at any time of the year. Those species caught by the Chipewyan at Cold Lake included whitefish, jackfish or northern pike and lake trout. During the warmer months lake trout and whitefish frequent deep, cool lake water preferring water below

60 degrees F. Consequently, these fish were caught in the fall and early winter. Jackfish was commonly taken in the early spring as they travelled up streams to spawn. Other fish used by the Wood Cree and Chipewyan included pickeral, dore, perch, suckers and tullibeas.

Fisheries in the study area included those at Turtle Lake, Waterhen Lake, Lac la Biche, Little Fishery, Frog Lake and Cold Lake.

### 3.8 Summary

The study area lies at the northern border of the Great Plains physiographic region and in the southern portion of the Canadian Shield. The topography is rolling or hilly upland with several intermediate plains, and cut by the channel of the North Saskatchewan River. The climate is characterized by low precipitation which seriously affects the ability to grow gardens and crops. The growing season is short. Drainage follows a west to east direction. The Beaver River and its tributaries drain the northern portion of the study area and the North Saskatchewan River drains the southern portion. Interior drainage results in peat bogs, marshes and hay meadows in some of the low-lying areas while much of the hilly land is excessively drained due to the loss of precipitation through excessive run off.

The study area is located in the transitional zone between two major vegetation zones - the Grassland and Boreal Forest Regions. The Plains and Wood Cree of the North Saskatchewan River area exploited both regions according to the seasonal availability of resources. During the late 1800's the Grassland Region became less important as a resource area due to the demise of the buffalo and the Indians moved into the

area immediately north of the river. This was in the mixed wood area of the southern Boreal Forest. It contains a number of good fishing lakes and rivers, was predominantly an aspen forest, and contained numerous swamps and marshy areas. For the Indians during the 1800's it offered an environment which was abundant in large herbivores, fur bearers, fish and vegetal foods. By the late 1800's it had been extensively trapped and the fish and game resources had declined significantly. During the study period moose was the only large herbivore hunted and muskrat was the most commonly trapped fur bearer. Both animals thrived in the mixed wood environment with its marshes and low swampy areas. Fishing was an important food source of the Chipewyan and some of the Cree during the study period. Berries were the most commonly used vegetal food used by the Indians.

The soils in the reservations of the agency contained different degrees of nutrient value and drought resistance. Their potential for agriculture was closely related to soil quality. Indian Reservation 119 was divided into three areas. The northern portion was described as nearly level to rolling, having a succession of ridges, and was poorly drained. Moisture retention in the light loamy soil was poor, soils were of the grey type and due to leaching had low natural fertilizer. They were among the least drought resistant soils, therefore potential for agricultural development was poor. The central portion contained several large hay marshes and coarse sandy to gravelly surface soils which are among the least drought resistant of the Black soil group. In the southern portion of the reserve the soil was rated as fair to

good for agriculture. Soil moisture was favourable but in dry seasons yields low and soil drifting serious.

The northern portion of IR 120 was considered good soil and contained valuable hay marshes. The Frog Lake reserves were partially wooded with poplar, spruce and fir. Both had patches of swampy land which became valuable hay marshes during drier seasons. The western portion of IR 121 was open rolling prairie with relatively good sandy to black loam soil. Indian Reservation 123 was well situated for timber, hay making and agriculture. A large alkaline lake was situated on the northern border. This was a shallow swampy area which produced excellent hay, except in wet seasons. The southern portion was well timbered and the central portion of the reserve was described as a fine rolling prairie with black loamy soil, luxuriant herbage and poplar bluffs. Excellent hay lands were located on IR 149 which had a flat topography in the centre which was marshy in wet seasons but provided hay in drier seasons. There was rich loam soils on both IR's 149 and 149B which were good for grain growing.

#### 4. GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

##### 4.1 Introduction

With the transfer of the North-West Territories to Canada and the signing of treaties the government assumed responsibility for the welfare of the Indian people. Both the Indians and government looked to agriculture as the resource base which would replace dwindling buffalo herds. Government policy and programs which encouraged agriculture and other subsistence activities were intended to make the Indians self-supporting and independent of government aid.

Government policy is outlined in a discussion of some of the programs which were implemented in the study area. These programs included a ration and food-for-work program, farm instructors and home or model farms, the manufacture of useable tools, the cattle loan program and department herd and the encouragement of individual farm sites.

Several years after signing Treaty Six the Plains Indians were affected by starvation and an exceptionally severe winter season. This made it essential that the government provide rations. The ration program was begun as a temporary measure which would be discontinued once the Indians could provide for themselves through agriculture. At the same time the government implemented a food-for-work program guided by the policy that Indians should work and earn their own living rather than receiving food and clothing from the government gratuitously (SP14, 1880: 77). Those Indians who worked on the reserves or who conscientiously hunted and thus endeavoured to make their own living were liberally

supported by instructors and agents while those who refused to work received little or no aid in terms of food and clothing.

A program involving farm instructors and home or model farms was the first step taken by the government towards encouraging agriculture. This was disrupted by the 1885 Rebellion. After the Rebellion the government was determined to make the reserve agricultural program effective. The program was begun with optimism but also with an attitude of practicing economy, an attitude which appears to have stifled much of the progress in agriculture on the reserves. Indians were assisted in pursuing industries besides agriculture which would enable them to become self-supporting.

Grain growing and stock raising were the major industries encouraged in the reserve agricultural program. The adoption of these industries was seen by the government as the "initial step towards civilization" and a necessary pursuit if the Indian was to keep pace with the White man (SP14, 1899:xxi). The government personnel expected that these industries would teach Indians the "deliberate method" of providing for their wants and needs, the necessity for systematic seasonal work habits, attention to detail, patience in waiting for results, the idea of individual proprietorship, habits of thrift and a sense of the value and useful investment of money (*ibid.*). In short, agriculture and stockraising would civilize the Indian and prepare him for enfranchisement.

The end in view in the policy adopted for the treatment of our wards is to lead them, step by step, to provide for their own requirements, through their industry, and while doing so, to inculcate a spirit of self-reliance and independence which will fit them for enfran-



chisement, and the enjoyment of all the privileges, as well as the responsibilities of citizenship (SP12, 1890:165).

One practice which was encouraged strongly by department personnel was that of requiring the Indians to make tools and articles for themselves. By doing this government expenditures could be decreased. This was perhaps one of the most obvious areas in which the department practiced economy.

Through the cattle loan and department herd programs the Indians of the agency were introduced to stock raising. Many Indians did very well in stock raising during the study period. The cattle loan program emphasized proprietary rights in cattle and was encouraged so that the Indians could attain a measure of self reliance and independence. The possession of wagons and implements purchased out of earnings gained through the sale of produce and cattle were seen by the department as evidence of the development of these attitudes in the Indians. Independent enterprise was encouraged through the establishment of individual farm sites. This affected the settlement pattern on the reserves.

#### 4.2 Rations and Food-for-Work Programs

The occasional movement of buffalo herds into the North-West was insufficient to sustain those Plains Cree and Assiniboine who had not moved to their reservations. Following the disappearance of the buffalo the Plains Cree were faced with the transition to a new subsistence pattern which required changes in their resource base. However, in the interim, before agriculture and stock raising could provide a new

subsistence base, the Indians were supplied with rations by the government.

The hope that buffalo herds would return to the area caused the government to delay giving rations to the Plains Indians. In the meantime, the scarcity of a food resource increased and the reports of need and destitution grew. Dickieson, who was stationed at Battleford with the department, wrote the Deputy Minister in July 1879, stating that "It may be asserted that the scarcity this year as in 1869 is exceptional and caused by the buffalo not having migrated north" (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3672 F.10,853, Pt. 1, Dickieson to Vankoughnet, July 26, 1879).

Edgar Dewdney was appointed Lieutenant Governor and Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories in 1879, a position he held until 1888. During the winter of 1879, he travelled through the Treaty Six and Seven areas and found the famine to be extensive and provisions allotted inadequate. He reported in January 1880 that many of the Blackfoot were destitute and on the verge of starvation. They had traded their horses for flour, had eaten their dogs and were living on gophers and mice. Dewdney reported that this condition prevailed throughout the North-West.

Many of the Plains Cree were destitute and hungry as they made their way to the reservations along the North Saskatchewan River. Those Indians who stayed in the territories and did not go south to hunt buffalo in 1880 "received almost continuous assistance" from the department during the winter (SP14, 1881:93). Lack of food and clothing meant that the Indians were unable to hunt as often and further increased their dependence upon the government for rations (*ibid.*).

The Wood Cree and Chipewyan were able to hunt game, but the Plains Cree, who made up the largest number dependent on the government, had exploited the buffalo herds and were not accustomed to hunting solitary game in the woods. There were also those in every band who were unable to provide for themselves. These included

numbers of helpless women and orphans, who can with difficulty get from their friends sufficient to exist on when food is comparatively plentiful; but in times such as these they are discarded and the Government must feed them... (*ibid.*, 94).

According to Dyck (1970) the government was unprepared and hesitant to meet financially the need to feed the Indians. While a famine clause was included in Treaty Six, the government understood it to mean that they were responsible to feed only those in real need. Therefore, in 1880 the government imposed the regulation that rations were to be issued to able-bodied Indians only in return for labour. In other words, all but the elderly and infirm, who became the regular recipients of rations, were expected to work for their rations when work was available. A policy of stringency was followed by the government in the issuing of rations. Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, L. Vankoughnet, cut to a minimum the expenditures for rations on the reserves and centralized the control of these expenditures. The policy of stringency and detailed accounting of rations made it difficult for personnel in the west to deal adequately with the Indians in giving rations.

Rations were to supplement food from hunting and agriculture when these resources were available. In 1881 Dewdney reported:

small game has been more plentiful this fall than usual which has enabled the northern Crees to help themselves to a greater extent than we expected, and the buffalo coming into the country in the fall also assisted those who were south, had it not been for this our expenditure would have been much larger than it is (SP6, 1882:54).

The department felt that when food was available from fish or game resources the Indians ought to require less rations. Indian Agent Reed visited the Fort Pitt Indians at their fishing grounds in October 1881. He felt their catch was large enough for them to subsist on for the next two months without government rations and, therefore, left instructions for rations to be withheld except for the helpless (SP6, 1882:81).

In reply to the Superintendent General's question as to why rations had not been reduced by 1885, Indian Commissioner Dewdney gave a number of reasons.

Among the number might be advanced the great difficulty experienced in causing the Indian to husband and not waste his crops after being harvested - the inability to prevent those who work from giving freely of their produce to non-workers and others off the reserve - the gradual disappearance of game, which formerly aided in maintaining the Indians, and consequently a proportionate increase in the numbers to be fed and quantity of rations to be issued - the lack of mills in some quarters to grind the grain raised, and it is found a matter of impossibility on the parts of the Agents to force Indians to live entirely on their own produce (although possessed in sufficient quantities) where it cannot be ground, as work would be stopped and

possibly much be lost thereby, besides the discontent that would exist on witnessing new-comers provided with flour while the old residents on the reserves were forced to feed on grain, the constantly occurring increase to the numbers on the reserve being of those who prior to the time of settling on the reservation were not in the habit of receiving regular aid (SP14, 1884:102).

Local agents were often sympathetic to the Indians and gave some rations liberally. At Onion Lake, Agent Mann attempted to be fair in his distribution of goods on ration day. Dion wrote of the distribution at Onion Lake in positive terms.

It is true that Mr. Mann was strict. He made the people to understand that the agency was not a charitable institution and he never allowed any loafing around the government buildings. If someone called at the office he was taken care of as soon as possible and then sent away to go about other business.

Mr. Mann liked to supervise personally the issuance of flour, beef or bacon on ration day, which was Saturday. On these occasions he never failed to put in a word of encouragement to those he knew were really trying to help themselves. The men who were inclined to lag were sometimes reprimanded and asked to give an account of their activities for the week (Dion 1979:122).

In 1889 Inspector Wadsworth reported on the situation at Onion Lake with regard to provisions made available to the Indians by Agent Mann. The supplies provided for the agency included implements, ammunition and twine, clothing and food provisions. Wadsworth considered them to be "ample and to spare." However, he reported that

this liberal provision has not led to extravagant issues, but on the contrary, has proved to be, in the hands of such a prudent Agent as Mr. Mann, a safeguard against unusual calls for aid; and has produced among the Indians a decided tranquility

and relief from uneasiness; they have been well fed, and well clothed, and kept steadily at work; this latter being the greater factor in keeping them from mischievous thoughts and actions (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F.53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1889).

The ration program at Onion Lake worked in conjunction with the food-for-work program. The Indians were not to expect handouts, but rather, were encouraged to work at whatever labour was possible around the agency (SP14, 1881:91). During the first few years on the reservation it was sometimes difficult to find enough work for those Indians willing to work.

In 1882, H. Reed, Indian Agent for the Treaty Six area, had Indians bridge and repair about 40 miles of trail from Fort Pitt to Frog Lake (SP5, 1883:50). He reported that the Indians had also cut a large quantity of cordwood and rails for sale which enabled them to purchase clothing and other necessities.

The food-for-work program worked well on the Onion Lake reserves while Agent Mann was in charge and especially while the agency and farm buildings were being erected following his return in 1885. Mann reported that when he returned in the fall the Indians showed a keen desire to work. They had cut a large quantity of hay, had done some ploughing and had rebuilt the agency farm buildings by the next fall. All the lumber required for the agency buildings and for Indian houses had been whip sawn by the Indians (SP7, 1887:129). The agent's house, houses for the clerk, interpreter and farmer; the storehouse, granary and buildings for the mill, as well as stables and corrals, were all built with Indian labour which was paid for with rations of food and clothing.

The experience which the Onion Lake Indians gained in this work

encouraged them and helped them in building their own houses and stables. During the 1880's and 1890's these Indians were noted for being industrious and willing to work, always building and repairing houses and stables. Men did the building while women were able to whitewash the agency buildings in the fall for food or material. In 1893, the Inspector reported that the Indians at Onion Lake were "hard-working and industrious, but they have no opportunity of earning anything in the way of working for outsiders" (SP14, 1894:193). During the 1800's it was necessary that work be done around the agency and the reserves at Onion Lake in order to receive rations.

At one point Agent Mann was criticized for his handling of the Indian affairs of the agency. Inspector McGibbon visited the agency in 1888 to inquire into certain irregularities but found the reports to be unfounded. McGibbon held a meeting with about 75-80 members of the band who complained that the agent did not treat them properly. The ill treatment they complained of consisted of the agent not giving them any rations unless they worked for them. McGibbon pointed out that they received the benefit of the work they did such as putting up houses, fences, bridges, school buildings and putting in crops (PAC RG10 Black, Vol.3804 F.50, 774-6, Inspection Report, 1888). These Indians were working to benefit themselves and to improve the situation on their reserves. At the same time the department was giving them a "living allowance" in the form of a regular ration of flour and meat. This was continued until they could provide their own flour and beef.

A variety of jobs or activities qualified as work for which the

Indians received rations. The men did a good deal of building for the agency. Some men were able to help with the department herd at Long Lake for which they received a small wage and rations. The older women were able to work for food or material by helping to sort potatoes during harvest at the agency farm and by chopping fire wood for the agent.

Where labour projects were not available, Indians were encouraged to produce handicrafts or utility items rather than simply receiving rations gratuitously. The Chipewyan, who did not have an agency farm and so could not earn rations there, made shingles, canoes, carriages, flat sleds and other items in exchange for food and clothing. This band was least dependent upon the department for rations as most of them obtained an adequate amount of provisions through hunting and fishing. Certain occasions did arise, however, which made them dependent upon the department for food for limited periods of time. These included sickness, scarcity of fish and game and the close seasons for fishing and hunting which were legislated by the territorial, and later, the provincial governments. There were a few who were considered destitute at Cold Lake and who were given rations of "a little food and twine for their nets" more frequently (SP14, 1898:167).

Indians who showed a willingness to help themselves by improving their own houses and stables, by hunting and by working, were encouraged and aided by the department. As individuals became better able to provide for themselves, they were cut off from receiving rations or else cut themselves off from the ration house. Others sought to take advantage of the ration and food-for-work programs as long as they were



able. This appears to have been the case among the Frog Lake bands and Keeheewin band in the 1910's. Inspector Swinford reported that the Onion Lake bands had reduced their ration requirements in flour, bacon and beef while the other reserves had increased their requirements. He expected these requirements to be further increased as these reserves were getting farm instructors:

and the Indians always take advantage of anything in the way of work to first press the necessity of a supply of food before they can even bring their minds to think of it. The agent being good natured finds it almost impossible to say no to their wonderful pleadings of poverty and starvation when they are requested to work, although when away from the reserve they live and clothe themselves well from hunting and trapping (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8412 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914).

Swinford was suggesting that the Indians on the reserves now receiving farm instructors would take advantage of working at the agency farms for food rather than earning money for themselves or putting a serious effort into farming. He also noted in his report that some Indians had bought food from the agent over the previous two years and recommended that this be continued "as it teaches the Indians to buy this food instead of begging it at the agency..."(*ibid.*).

From the statistics available, it is difficult to estimate with any reliability the degree to which Indians were reliant on the government for rations or whether or not the Indians were given "living quantities" of rations. Certainly during the early years on the reserve, and before a grist mill was set up at the agency in 1890, it was necessary to give a regular and adequate ration of flour for the Indians to live on.

During the 1890's the agent attempted to raise pigs for bacon, but this does not appear to have been successful and very little mention is made of it. The beef ration was reduced through hunting, fishing and the raising of cattle by individual Indians.

The Indians were issued varying quantities of "regular rations." The term "regular rations" referred to those items given as rations on a regular basis, including flour, bacon and beef, rather than those issued on an irregular basis. The latter included rice, soap, tea and rolled oats in 1918-19. From Table 7, which shows the rations issued for the year 1918-19, it is clear that all individuals receiving rations did not receive an equal amount. Requirements varied with the ability of the different bands and individuals to produce certain food items such as meat and flour.

It is difficult to determine what quantities were issued of the different items and who received rations on a regular basis. The elderly and destitute received rations throughout the study period. According to Andrews (1972) and Dyck (1970), the amount of rations given in the early years was inadequate primarily due to the government's emphasis on the strictest economy during this time and due to the attitude that the Indians ought to work for what they received. Apparently Deputy Superintendent General Vankoughnet informed Dewdney that the Indians at Fort Walsh, during the winter of 1882, were to be kept on "starvation allowances" which would barely keep them alive so that they would not consider the rations easily obtainable each year (Andrews 1972:64). In other words, the Indians were to be kept alive at minimum expense.

Table 7: Rations Issued in the Onion Lake Agency by Band for the Year 1918-1919

Band	Number receiving rations	Flour (lbs)	Bacon (lbs)	Beef (lbs)	Remarks	
119, 120	per month for 12 months	34	680	72	336	24 received full rations of each item while 10 received full rations of flour only
			8,160	864	4,032	
	semi-destitute Emergency for sick	9	2,160	400	800	
	Total		11,000	1,500	5,000	
121, 122	per month for 12 months emergency for sick	18	360	30	45	15 received $\frac{1}{2}$ meat ration and full flour and bacon while 3 received flour only
			4,320	360	540	
			180	140	160	
	Total		4,500	500	700	
123	per month for 12 months emergency for sick	19	380	70	65	14 received full flour and about $\frac{1}{2}$ full meat ration while 5 received full flour rations only
			4,560	840	780	
			440	60	20	
	Total		5,000	900	800	
149	per month for 12 months emergency for sick	22	440	66	66	all received small meat ration (about 3 lbs each of bacon and beef) and full flour rations
			5,280	792	792	
			220	108	8	
	Total		5,500	900	800	
161	per month for 12 months emergency for sick	10	200	20	40	all received only about $\frac{1}{3}$ of full meat rations
			2,400	240	480	
			100	60	20	
	Total		2,500	300	500	
124	per month for 12 months emergency for sick	6	120	12	12	all received very small meat rations
			1,400	144	144	
			60	6	56	
	Total		1,500	150	200	

(continued)

Table 7 (continued)

## SUMMARY

Band	Flour	Bacon	Beef
119,120	11,000	1,500	5,000
121,122	4,500	500	700
123	5,000	900	800
149	5,500	900	800
161	2,500	300	500
124	1,500	150	200
TOTAL	30,000	4,250	8,000

The following supplies were not listed as regular rations, but are estimated for the destitute of the various bands.

Band	Rice	Soap	Tea	Rolled Oats
119,120	100	120	200	300
121,122	20	60	75	100
123	50	60	150	200
149	50	60	150	200
161	30	30	50	100
124	20	30	25	100
TOTAL	270	360	650	1,000

Source: PAC RG10 FOR, Vol. 9084 Book 16.

Those who could provide for themselves in some way were given fewer rations in terms of quantity and frequency than the elderly and infirm. Agents were encouraged to help the Indians become self-sufficient through farming and wage labour rather than become dependent upon rations. In this way, the amount of rations given to working Indians was decreased over the years. Agent Sibbald reported, in 1910, that working Indians were issued rations only when absolutely necessary, as when they were unable to support themselves with grain, cattle or game, or to find employment (SP27, 1911:145).

The sources available contain a number of reports indicating the amount of rations issued. Unfortunately, the number of persons receiving the rations is often not indicated.

In 1882, Indian Commissioner Dewdney reported that the regular ration of the Blackfoot Indians averaged 1 3/4 pounds of meat and flour per day. Indians on other reserves received a regular ration of 1/2 pound of flour and 1/4 pound of bacon, while others were rationed only with food-for-work (presumably the able-bodied) (SP6, 1882:54). The amount of flour and bacon issued to the Indians on Seekaskootch's reserve, consumed by employees of the agency on Farm 14, issued to the bands at Frog Lake and at the agency, and the amount given to Reverend Quinney for the school soup kitchen for the period October 1882 to September 1883 are given in Table 8.

During the period from August 1, 1885 to September 11, 1886, the approximate amount of rations issued to the Indians in the agency included 900 sacks of flour, 21,000 pounds of bacon, 28,000 pounds of

Table 8: Issues of Flour and Bacon for the year October 1882 to September 1883, Fort Pitt District

	Flour	Bacon	Number of persons (approximate)
Seekaskootch	28,455	8,614½	199
Farm 14 (employees)	2,524	631	
School	176	88	
Farm 15 (employees)	2,417	852	
Indians at Farm 15 (Keeheewin, Mahkayo, Kinosayo and Frog Lake Bands)	37,517	13,366	441
TOTAL (pounds)	71,089	23,551½	

Source: PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3640 F.7452-3, Inspection Report, 1883.

canned corned beef, 9,000 pounds of biscuits, 450 pounds of tea and 200 pounds of tobacco (SP6, 1887:171). In 1888 Inspector McGibbon was informed by some of the Onion Lake Indians who had gathered for a meeting with him at the Roman Catholic Mission, that they had received five tin cups full of flour per person for one week which he determined to be equal to about 3/4 of pound or 12 5/8 ounces per day. Besides this, they received the equivalent of about 3½ ounces of bacon and beef per day and a large quantity of powder and shot with which to hunt game. This was more than the average ration reported by Dewdney for 1882.

The rations indicated for 1885-1886 were supplementary to the

garden produce received by the Indians from their gardens and which the aged and infirm received from the agency garden, the milk which was obtained from cows, the wild game and fowl the Indians were able to hunt and the fish they were able to catch. Taken altogether, McGibbon felt that these Indians were well supplied and had no reason to complain regarding the rations they received (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3804 F.50,774-6, Inspection Report, 1888).

The annual report for 1891 states that the amount of rations distributed to Indians in the Territories was being "steadily and... rapidly reduced" (SP14, 1892:190). At Onion Lake, the amount of rations issued to the Indians for the year 1889-90 and 1890-91 are given as follow:

	<u>Flour (sacks)</u>	<u>Bacon (lbs)</u>	<u>Beef (lbs)</u>
1889-90	131	24,700	18,979
1890-91	557	19,300	4,400

The amount given for bacon is very close to the total amount of 23,551½ issued in 1882-83. These amounts reflect the agency's ability, by 1890, to provide some of its own beef. The demand for flour was still high as a grist mill was not yet in operation. As the Indians were able to supply their own beef and flour, rations were reduced and given only to the aged and infirm.

Those Indians who moved from the Onion Lake reserves to Frog Lake and Keeheewin reserves in 1903-1906 were to make their own living and were not to expect any rations from the department. This decreased the number of persons receiving rations at the agency. In 1906, rations

Table 9: Comparative Statement of Rations Issued by Band for the Years 1912, 1913 and 1914

Band	1912			1913			1914		
	Flour	Bacon	Beef	Flour	Bacon	Beef	Flour	Bacon	Beef
119, 120	26,970	3,853	11,247	24,650	2,984	10,124	20,640	3,631	10,585
121, 122	2,300	31	61	6,150	602	519	6,100	680	1,377
123	7,150	1,047	111	5,300	1,457	118	8,000	1,815	1,613
149	4,890	1,298	20	3,200	1,271	110	4,950	1,970	128
161, 161A	500	127	273	1,010	127	258	2,550	401	478
TOTAL	41,810	6,356	11,712	40,310	6,441	11,129	42,240	8,492	13,179

Source: PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915.



were issued to 122 persons on the Onion Lake reserves and two persons on IR 122. These 124 persons received a total of 939 pounds of beef and 147 pounds of offal during the month of September or an average of 4 2/3 ounces per person per day. The beef came from steers purchased from Indians on IR 119.

A comparative statement for rations issued for the years ended March 1912, 1913 and 1914 is given in Table 9. It indicates that a large amount of rations was still necessary and that, while the beef ration declined as people were able to provide their own, the flour and bacon ration was still very large.

The number of persons in the agency receiving rations of flour, bacon and beef is given by band for the year 1918-1919 in Table 7(p. 160). These are the amounts issued per month. The amounts indicate a substantial decrease in rations issued to the Onion Lake and Frog Lake bands.

#### 4.3 Farm Instructors and Home Farms

In 1879 a policy was set in motion by the government involving those Indians who settled and worked on their reservations. The government appointed farm instructors who were to establish home or "model" farms and who were to show the Indians, by example, how to cultivate the soil and raise crops and gardens. Crops and gardens were to produce the food which would ultimately allow the Indians to be self-sufficient and independent of government aid.

Farm instructors were sent to an area where a group of reserves

were situated so that the farmer would be independent of any one reserve and better able to work with all the bands in his area. The farms generally were not situated on reserves. This was in order to prevent Indians, upon whose land improvements might be made, from feeling that they were entitled to the improvements made and the crops raised. By placing instructors at convenient points near a group of reserves, the instructors were able to hear and attend to the grievances of the different bands and to ensure that treaty promises were fulfilled (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3704 F.17,858, Dewdney Report, 1880).

The farms served as a centre of operation for the farmer, a storehouse for supplies and implements and an agricultural centre where a supply of grain and root crops could be grown to provide seed for Indian farmers.

During the first few years the farm instructors, with Indian help, were encouraged to raise large quantities of produce so that rations could be decreased and eventually stopped. In 1880 Indian Commissioner Dewdney expressed this hope when he wrote that he hoped "the food raised this coming year on our farms, and reserves, will go a great way towards feeding the Indians who by that time will have become settled" (SP14, 1881:79).

Two farm instructors were sent to the Fort Pitt District in the fall of 1879. P.T. Williams established Home Farm No. 14 about 16 miles from Fort Pitt on IR 119. He was in charge of Seekaskootch and Paymootahsoo bands. John Delaney established Home Farm 15 near Frog Lake at the southern border of IR 121. He was in charge of the two Frog

Lake bands, Keeheewin band, which was located near Long Lake, Mahkayo band, which was at that time situated at Stony Lake and the Chipewyan band at Cold Lake. The Chipewyan band was given very little assistance as they showed little interest in grain growing during the early 1800's.

The establishment of Farm 14 was delayed by a dispute between Williams and Chief Seekaskootch over its location. Inspector Wadsworth travelled to the farm in October 1879 to deal with the dispute. The chief had forbidden Williams to occupy the farm site which had previously been chosen by Wadsworth and which was situated on the reserve, or to use the hay cut and stacked by Williams unless he paid \$20.00 for it. Because of the dispute, Williams started to build a house off the reserve, but Wadsworth considered his location a poor choice as there was little land suitable for plowing close by. After three days of discussion it was arranged that the Department would lease, for five years, the land on the reserve required for the farm. The lease gave them the right to cut wood and hay on the reserve. Wadsworth and Indian Agent Orde from Battleford felt this arrangement was necessary as the only arable land of any size was located on the reserve and they felt the Seekaskootch band was "wretchedly poor" and therefore, would benefit from the direct supervision of a farm instructor (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3706 F.18,745).

Several other problems arose during this time. Neither instructor spoke Cree and it had not been possible to hire an interpreter. Consequently, dealings with the Indians were slow and difficult. Further, some of treaty cattle which arrived that fall for the Indians, including 12 cows

and three bulls purchased at high prices in Prince Albert, were "a poor lot." The Indians had not cut hay for these cattle and therefore, the farm instructors were required to winter them.

The home farms had some success with the Indians near Farm 14 under the guidance of Williams and the leadership of Chief Seekaskootch. They were recognized by the Superintendent in his 1883 report for their farming activities. According to the report this band raised large crops, cultivated their land well and had surrounded their fields with "admirable fences" (SP14, 1884:1). The same, however, could not be said of the other bands in the district. The Superintendent reported that Mahkayo, Ooneepowhayo and Puskeeahkeewein bands appeared to have made little or no progress and devoted most of their time "to wandering about the country" (*ibid.*).

G.G. Mann took over from P.T. Williams as acting farmer for Farm 14 and IR 119 in 1883. He had a good influence on the Indians in the area of farming. The Inspector praised the band in 1884. He reported:

Almost every head of a family has some crop, and probably there is no band in the territory where the work done and the improvements made are so evenly divided among so many families. Heads of families have not hesitated to go to distant parts of the reserve, break land and farm; consequently they are fast learning individual rights to this kind of prosperity (SP3, 1885:149).

In 1883 the farm instructors in the North-West were directed to "close their home farms and devote their whole time and attention to the instruction of the Indians on their reserves" (SP14, 1884:1). Farm 14 was given to the Seekaskootch band upon whose reserve it was

located and Farm 15, except for a few acres which were retained for agency use, was given to Mahkayo's band to use while the land was added to IR 121. Although Mahkayo's band, now under the leadership of his son Weemisticooseahwas, had a reserve (No. 120) surveyed for them in 1879 adjacent to IR 119, they did not reside there.

Sub-agent Quinn explained the move to Farm 15 in his 1884 report:

They [Mahkayo's band] never did a day's work or any improvements there [IR 120], but squatted on a piece of land at Stony Lake, eight miles from Frog Lake, and their time was taken up travelling to and from Frog Lake for rations. I persuaded the band to abandon the Stony Lake and join O-nee-pow-hayo's band here, where they are under the eye of the Instructor. I have given them the land which was heretofore cultivated as the Home Farm, which is to be added to this reserve (SP3, 1885:86).

The farm instructor and home farm programs began with the optimistic hope that the Indians would take to farming and soon become self-supporting. However, by 1883, the program was not as profitable as had been hoped, and few bands could boast the reputation of the Seekaskootch band. It was expensive and the Indians were not becoming self-sufficient as quickly as expected. The failure of home farms was not necessarily due to a lack of enthusiasm and effort on the part of the Indians, agents or farm instructors as was evident on Farm 14. There were Indians who were beginning to farm successfully. However, there were still a large number of Plains Indians who had not settled on their reserves or who were moving about between reserves. This movement contributed to the lack of progress in these two programs.

A number of other factors contributed to the closing down of home

farms in 1883. These are dealt with by Andrews (1972), Dyck (1970) and Stanley (1961). According to Stanley and Dyck, the program was unrealistic in its expectation to make the Indians self-sufficient in two or three years. Another problem was the lack of commitment to the program's objectives by persons within the government administration (Dyck 1970:50). Andrews (1972:105, 106) notes that by 1882 both Dewdney and Vankoughnet wanted to do away with home farms. The desire for economy on the part of the government, which was pressured by the opposition to account for its expenditures on the Indians, and the sudden recession facing the country from 1882 to 1884 also placed limitations on the extent to which the program could develop. By 1883, the government had decided that the home farms were too great a political liability and discontinued them (Dyck 1970:57).

Farm instructors were now to reside on the reserves and, through direct guidance, were to encourage the Indians to grow grain. Before the 1885 Rebellion disrupted the agricultural program on the reserves in the study area there were instructors on each of the reserves. Mann was on IR 119, Delaney was in charge of IR's 121 and 122, and Mahkayo's band which was also at Frog Lake, Fitzpatrick was sent to take charge of the Chipewyan at Cold Lake and a local person by the name of Beaudreau, was placed in charge of farming operations of Keeheewin band at Long Lake. After the Rebellion there was only one farm instructor in the agency until the mid-1900's. He resided on the reserve at Onion Lake. When some of the Indians who had resided on the Onion Lake reserves since 1885 returned to their own reserve at Long Lake

in 1903 the department hired a farmer. A farm instructor was hired for the Cold Lake band in the 1910's. The Frog Lake bands did not receive the direct attention of a farm instructor during the study period but were visited by the agent and the farmer from the reserves at Onion Lake.

#### 4.4 The Manufacture of Useable Tools and Articles

The manufacture of useable tools and articles was part of the department's policy to make the Indians self-sufficient. The department required that Indians learn to manufacture tools and other articles for their own use rather than the department purchasing them.

It must not be supposed that the sole saving to the Government resulting from the industries of the Indians is represented by their direct earnings, for the large reduction in expenditure for destitute supplies is considerably helped, by omission in whole or in part of such articles as axe and hay-fork handles, ox collars, milk pans, churns, rope, harness, bob-sleighs, etc., which the Indians are now required to make for themselves (SP14, 1893:49).

Wages earned by the Indians could now be directed towards the purchase of provisions and the government could direct its money towards relief for the destitute if the Indians could make items such as axe and fork handles, ox yokes, jumpers, hayracks, sleighs and harness which were of direct practical benefit to the Indians. This would save the department money as well as encourage the Indians to use their time profitably (*ibid.*).

Instructors and their wives were encouraged to "teach the Indians

of both sexes to employ their spare time in some useful manner" (SP14, 1892:196). Women were taught to knit mitts, socks and comforters, to make butter and to cut out and sew clothing. They were encouraged to make birch bark baskets for use as milk pans, mats and hats, and to continue to tan hides and make moccasins. These industries were seen as essential, as they were a means for the Indians to provide for themselves in a practical manner.

The Indians at Onion Lake and Cold Lake excelled at these industries. Inspector McGibbon noted that the Chipewyan manufactured "fork and axe handles, ox yokes, jumpers, hay racks and many other articles" (SP14, 1895:109). Agent Mann reported in 1892 that the Indians manufactured good serviceable articles such as straw hats and willow baskets for their own use (SP14, 1893:171), and in 1895 he reported:

Each individual Indian manufactures for his own use hay racks, ox yokes, sleighs, axe and fork handles. On account of the inferior quality of wood in this section of the country, these articles do not wear well; therefore the Indians are required to make them often. The Indian women of this reserve are very good butter makers... Nearly all of them can knit and sew very well (SP14, 1896:83).

The Chipewyans made birch bark baskets, which were used as milk pans, and shingles in exchange for food.

During the 1800's there were no commercial outlets close to Fort Pitt other than the Hudson's Bay Company. To freight in some of the heavier equipment and tools was expensive. Therefore, the manufacture of tools was almost a necessity during the early years on the reservations. As settlement increased and commercial centres such as Lloydminster



and St. Paul des Metis were established within easy reach of the Indians on the reserves in the agency tools were more readily obtainable. Through wage labour, which also increased with settlement, the Indians were able to purchase such items rather than having to manufacture them.

#### 4.5 The Cattle Loan System and Department Herd

In the early 1880's the department started a system whereby cattle were loaned to Indians in an effort to help them become self-sufficient and to help develop the concept of individual proprietorship through the development of cattle herds. The object of the department herd program was "to make the Agencies produce their own beef, and to furnish economical means of distributing more cattle among Indians" (SP14, 1892:194, 195). In other words, the beef ration was eventually to be supplied from the department herd and the herd cattle were to be used to furnish cattle for the cattle loan system. The programs complemented each other. Both were effective and successfully initiated in the agency. The beef ration was reduced and a number of Indians became successful stockmen.

##### 4.5.1 The Cattle Loan System

Through this system, cattle, other than those issued under treaty obligation, were given on a loan basis to individual Indians who were to raise their own animals from the progeny and thereby build up a herd for themselves. The progeny of animals lent belonged to the individual but were subject to department control if the individual wished

to dispose of them. After several years the original cattle, or acceptable replacements, were returned to the agent to be loaned to another person. Older animals were killed for beef and younger animals incorporated into the program.

In loaning these cattle, rather than giving them outright, the department hoped to prevent the excessive killing of stock and to teach the Indians a measure of animal husbandry. The department had experienced some problems with the issuing of cattle in fulfillment of treaty obligations in that a number of these animals had been taken from the reserves or killed for food. The cattle loan system was one way in which the department hoped to develop a sense of individual ownership and responsibility for cattle, and thus curb what they felt were indiscriminate practices of the Indians towards their cattle. Indian Agent for Treaty Six, H. Reed, outlined some of the problems he faced in his 1882 report to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs.

All the cattle placed in the hands of Indians over and above what they were entitled to receive, under treaty obligations, have been merely loaned, in order that the killing of them or their abduction might be prevented. This proved a pretext for ill disposed to give trouble (sic), and they persuaded the others to state that so soon as the season's work was finished they would hand them back and not make provision for their winter's keep. From present appearances, this difficulty, although at one time general, has, I think, been overcome, and a sufficiency of hay will be forthcoming (SP5, 1883:50).

Apparently, when the system was first introduced, certain Indians

attempted to return the cattle to the farm instructors rather than provide for their care during the winter. According to Reed, this problem was being taken care of as the Indians were able to obtain sufficient hay for winter feed.

By enabling the Indians to become individual owners of cattle, build up their own herds and sell beef and cattle, there was an increased interest shown by the Indians in their stock. This interest was developed over time. In order for the system to work and for this interest to develop, it had been necessary "to get the Indians to see far enough ahead to realize that present care and labour expended on their animals would eventually bring their reward" (SP14, 1900:xxv).

The indiscriminate disposal of cattle and beef was discouraged through two procedures. Agents were instructed to withhold assistance from those Indians who killed cattle which had been loaned to them (SP14, 1881:80) and a permit system was established which required that the Indians obtain permission from their agent before selling an animal. The department felt it had this right of authority over Indian cattle because of their input into Indian herds through the provision of initial stock and thoroughbred bulls. The department was also concerned that the Indians become self-sufficient, and this process could be impeded if the herds were decreased unduly. By controlling the number and type of animals sold or beefed, the department sought to prevent indiscriminate sales which would weaken the herds and threaten their ability to increase and to monitor sales so that Indians would receive a fair price for their cattle.

A large number of Indians were able to build up sizeable herds through the cattle loan system. Interest grew so great that in 1899 the Minister stated that the number of applications for cattle loans exceeded the department's ability to provide cattle (SP14, 1900:xxv).

Evidence of the cattle loan system in the study area was first found in Agent Mann's diary entry of August 1886. He recorded that every two Indians, presumably male family heads over the age of 21, on the Onion Lake reserves were loaned a yoke of cattle to look after for three years (PAS CM315). While on tours around the reserve the following winter the agent regularly checked the condition of cattle and stables. In December 1889, he reported that all but one Indian were taking good care of their cattle. This individual appeared to be too lazy to draw hay for the cattle. Therefore, the agent transferred the cattle to another stable.

The cattle did well the first few winters which encouraged the Indians and increased their interest in cattle raising. Large cattle sheds were built for the protection of cattle during the winter season and an adequate amount of hay for winter use was cut during the haying season in August and September. Hay was protected from prairie fires by burning for some distance around the stacks.

In November of 1889, when the three year term for the loan of cattle expired, Agent Mann reported that many of the Indians had made a good start in raising cattle and now had cows raised from the cattle which had been loaned. He was able to receive back the cattle and loan them to individuals who did not have stock.

Inspector Wadsworth reported that Seekaskootch band on IR 119 owned 160 head of cattle in 1889. The increase had been good that year; from 39 cows they had acquired 34 calves. The cattle were owned by 33 individuals with two owning seventeen, one owning eight, eleven owning six, seven owning five, four owning four, five owning three and three owning two each. This gives a total number of 180 cattle owned by these individuals. Either the first number indicated of 160 is incorrect, the breakdown is incorrect, or there is some unexplained discrepancy. Nevertheless, the increase had been good and the Indians owned a substantial number of cattle.

Each of these men wintered their cattle in their own stables and cared for them personally. As they had returned the cattle loaned them by the department the cattle they had were their own. It was now expected that they would continue to build their herds.

The cattle loan system emphasized individual ownership of cattle which was favoured over the department herd system by Inspector Wadsworth. His reason for this was an attitude which was also expressed by others in the department. He wrote:

It is for this individual ownership of cattle that I have always contended, as opposed to the herd system; the ownership and care of a few cattle makes the Indian proud of them; it domesticates the Indian as well as the animal; ...he becomes attached to it, and will provide for it; and only kill it when it has arrived at the proper age, and then only after due consideration (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F.53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1889).

As proof of the development of this attitude by the Indians, Wadsworth noted that the Indians on IR 119 were taking better care of their calves than they had previously:

Instead of picketing their calves in the old cruel way, with a short line to the hottest corner of their house, they have now large calf-corrals; and as the calves all look healthy, thrifty, and well grown they must be well looked after, and not deprived of a fair share of the milk (*ibid.*).

The cattle loan system very successfully introduced cattle to the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves during the 1800's. A discussion of the development of the cattle industry is found in the section on stock raising.

#### 4.5.2 The Department Herd

In 1888, Onion Lake was chosen by the department as one of two sites for an experiment in establishing department herds. At this time, the agency was about 100 miles from any settlement and consequently, there was no means of procuring fresh beef close by. One of the objectives of the herd was to supply the beef ration for the agency. Under the management of Agent Mann and farmer, John Bangs, this objective was accomplished.

Fifty heifers and three bulls were sent to the agency in the fall of 1888. The herd was wintered at Long Lake and placed under the care of the agency interpreter Pierre Boudreau and an Indian assistant. The following year the herd had increased to 98 head. Inspector Wadsworth, who had been critical of the expense involved in maintaining

the herd at Long Lake, noted that the herd had been successfully managed so far and admitted that it "may eventually result in providing sufficient beef to supply the demands of the agency" (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F. 53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1889).

In fact, Agent Mann was able to report in 1891 that he would be "able to reduce the 1892-93 beef contract to a minimum," and if all went well no contract beef would be required the following year (SP14, 1892:73). This proved to be correct as in 1893 Indian Commissioner Reed reported that the program had been so successful that the agency was off the ration list for beef as the beef rations could now be fulfilled at the agency.

The department herd was a profitable venture for the agency. The value of the herd was estimated in 1894 to show its financial profit. The total profit up to 1892, which Inspector McGibbon suggests may have been underestimated, came to \$6,758.05 (Table 10). This figure did not include a value for Indian labour in putting up hay because it was difficult to measure the value which should be assigned to Indian labour. During the 1890's the Indians put up hay for the department herd for rations or gratuitously. Even so, the Inspector thought the profit shown was good. Two years later he prepared a similar statement outlining the cost of the herd from its beginning to the time of inspection in December 1894. Taking the then present number of cattle at a fair evaluation, he estimated the profit to be \$15,061.12. This figure did not include the value of stables which had been built by

Table 10: Statement of Department Herd at Onion Lake Agency, as of 30 June, 1892

Expenditures	Cost
1888 50 heifers, 3 bulls	\$1,590.00
1889 12 heifers	396.00
1890 59 cows, 1 bull	1,870.00
1890 5 bulls	422.00
Salary of man in charge, 6 months each year, 4 years	840.00
Provisions for men in charge, estimates	<u>480.00</u>
Total outlay	5,598.00
Received for beef, to 1892, 4,015 lbs. at 7¢	281.05
On hand 30 June, 1892	
6 bulls at \$100.00	600.00
83 steers at \$30.00	2,490.00
153 cows at \$45.00	6,885.00
47 heifers at \$20.00	940.00
57 bull-calves at \$10.00	570.00
59 heifer-calves at \$10.00	<u>590.00</u>
To 30 June, 1892 (20 calves after this date, were not included)	12,356.05
Less outlay	<u>5,598.00</u>
Profit	6,758.05

Source: SP14, 1894:194, Inspection Report, 1892.



the Indians, and which were worth an estimated \$2,000.00. Nor did it include the value of hay on hand to feed the cattle until spring (SP14, 1896:243).

In 1894 the herd came under the management of agency farmer John Bangs. Under his direction, the agency employed six Indians to care for the cattle at the three stables near Long Lake. These facilities were described in detail by Inspector McGibbon (Appendix I). He spoke highly of the care given the cattle and recommended it as an example to other agents and farmers.

I have no hesitation in saying that these stables and sheds are the finest in the country, being strongly built and the arrangement perfect, reflecting much credit on the agent, who designed them, and on Mr. Bangs, who built them. I only wish that more of our agents and farmers had the same ideas of how cattle should be housed and cared for (SP14, 1896:243, 244).

The department herd continued to increase and to be described as being in good condition throughout the 1890's. The peak number of the herd was reached in 1898 when there was a total of 883 head. Their summer range reached from Frog Lake eastward along the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River. Here the steers and cows were herded separately (SP27, 1901:195). Winter quarters were at the Long Lake ranches which were annually repaired and improved. By 1899 there were five large stables situated at various points over a space of twenty miles extending northeast from Keeheewin reserve. The stables were located in spots which were well sheltered from winter storms, and well situated in relation to water and good hay swamps. By 1899

the hay put up for winter amounted to over 2,000 tons.

The Indians of the agency received the benefits of the department herd in that it furnished the beef supplied to working and destitute Indians at a price much lower than if the beef was to be purchased. Another benefit received was the purchase of farm implements and supplies for the use of working Indians from the income derived from the sale of surplus cattle. What were considered surplus cattle were being sold as early as 1899 when 61 head of heifers were sold (SP14, 1900:169). In 1901, 38 head of cattle were sold for \$1,064.00.

In 1901 Inspector Chisholm reported that the department herd had sustained a heavy decrease during the previous two years, in numbers reaching as high as 20 percent. This was due to a small natural increase, losses through straying and other causes, a heavy demand upon the herd for the agency beef supply and the beefing of a large number of cows and young steers (SP27, 1903:182). As a result it was necessary to purchase beef from Indians who had built up their herds and who were now in a position to sell cattle.

The department herd was a profitable enterprise for the agency for 14 years. Several years before it was disbanded difficulties arose in connection with its management. One difficulty was with regard to the hay reserve set apart for the support of the herd. The 1900 and 1901 haying seasons were particularly wet, and in 1900, the season also turned cold early making it difficult to obtain hay. During the summer of 1901 heavy rains flooded the swamps at the ranches to such an extent that hay had to be cut elsewhere. The only

place where hay could be found within a reasonable distance from the agency was on the south side of the river. This required that the cattle be moved some 60 miles to this new area where they were wintered in three temporary ranches. The following summer they were moved to the north side of the river close to Fort Pitt.

Hay lands became more difficult to locate for the department herd as settlement increased. Good hay lands were preferred by squatters and homesteaders.

Another difficulty which arose in connection with the management of the herd was the increased labour necessary to care for it. The department found it necessary to employ from ten to fifteen men during the greater part of the year as day labourers in this connection. According to Inspector Chisholm, the Indians who had been employed for some time by the agency in the care of the herd had grown "into habits of indolence and of dependence upon rations" (SP27, 1905:193). These men ranged in age from 20 to 30 and had never worked at other industries or had cattle of their own. One reason for discontinuing the herd was to encourage the men to be industrious, or, in the Indian Commissioner's words, "to make the Indians concerned more self-reliant, and give them more cattle to look after and profit by..." (SP27, 1904:237). The emphasis was once again being placed on the cattle loan system and the development of herds by individual Indians.

According to instructions received from the Indian Commissioner, Agent Sibbald and Inspector Chisholm distributed the herd in the fall of 1903. All breeding cows, heifers and calves were issued on a loan

basis to Indians who desired to increase their herds or who were commencing to raise stock. Many were issued to Indians who had been employed by the agency in the care of the herd. Apparently these men needed a large amount of attention and direction from the agent over the following few years in the management of this stock. Cattle from the department herd were also given to a number of individuals who had been residing on the Onion Lake reserves but were returning to their own reserves. Some steers were kept for the agency beef supply for 1904 and 1905, twenty-five steers and cows were set apart for the 1903 beef supply and arrangements were made with Agent Mann, now at the Saddle Lake Agency, for the filling of their 1903 beef contract. Thus, the department herd was disbanded and emphasis placed on the cattle loan system which appears to have continued for some years but was not mentioned again in the sources following this time.

#### 4.6 Individual Farm Sites

"Fixity of residence" was considered an essential part of the government's policy in settling the Indians of the North-West on their reservations. Without it, "neither churches nor schools nor any other educational influence can be established and applied" (SP14, 1899:xxi). Sedentism was considered to be the first step towards being civilized.

The policy of sedentism went hand-in-hand with the policy of individualism. As mentioned previously, it was the department's purpose to foster an attitude of individualism by encouraging the Indians to become individual owners of livestock. This policy was

also stressed with regard to settlement. Indian Commissioner Dewdney expressed this hope with reference to the southern Indians, that the department would be able to "by degrees...persuade each family to branch out and settle on a little farm of their own" in the same manner as the northern Indians, who lived a short distance from each other (SP6, 1882:40).

While this may have been true in 1881 of some of the Indians in the Saskatchewan area, many were not yet ready for individual farms. Indian Agent Reed expressed the view that, while it was "highly desirable to create as much as possible individuality among the several bands" (SP6, 1882:76), this was not always practiced for a number of reasons including an insufficient number of working cattle, the rapid destruction of property by Indians when not under immediate supervision, and the lack of energy and the unwillingness of Indians to work when not under the direct guidance of an instructor. At this time the Indians were still in an unsettled state and found many reasons to leave their reserves. There were some exceptions to the general pattern and individual Indians had begun to settle and commence agriculture as early as 1881. Reed reported that one man, belonging to Seekaskootch band, had broken and planted ten acres in the spring of 1881 using his own ponies (*ibid.*).

The department's policy of encouraging individual farms and their plan to subdivide reserves into individual holdings was meant to destroy several values of the Indians which were viewed by the department personnel as hindrances to civilization. According to Dewdney, the

tribal system had to be followed to an extent while placing Indians on reserves, but he felt that the subdivision of reserves would tend to strike "at the heart of the tribal system and that of community of lands" (SP6, 1887:108). Agents were encouraged to place those individuals who showed a desire to farm "on locations of their own and grant cattle and implements solely for their own use, where practicable" (SP5, 1883:51). Where there was a "lazy" band, they were to be kept working near each other so that they would be under the constant supervision of an instructor. Where Indians worked together in large fields these were to be sectioned and the "produce divided according to merit" and these Indians were encouraged to cultivate gardens and potato patches on their own "as a preliminary step to separation from the rest" (*ibid.*).

By promoting individual farm and house sites, the department hoped to "foster self-reliance, to increase a spirit of emulation in their labors, and hasten the attainment of independence" (SP5, 1887:108). It was Indian Commissioner Dewdney's view that,

had the land been portioned out to individuals as farms, instead of having been given to bands, as reserves in common, when the treaties were first made with them, the sense of personal proprietorship and responsibility would have advanced them far beyond the stage at which they have arrived today (*ibid.*, 109).

By 1888 the work of sub-dividing reserves had begun and "every effort" was being made "to implant a spirit of individual responsibility" in place of the tribal system (SP12, 1890:165). Forty acre lots were to be set aside for those Indians who desired to farm and hay and timber lands on the reserves were still held in common. This system

was viewed as an important preparation for the enfranchisement of the Indian which, in 1888, appears to have been the government's goal for the Indians. The Indian Commissioner wrote:

The end in view in the policy adopted for the treatment of our wards is to lead them, step by step, to provide for their own requirements, through their industry, and while doing so, to inculcate a spirit of self-reliance and independence which will fit them for enfranchisement and the enjoyment of all the privileges, as well as the responsibilities of citizenship (*ibid.*).

Some of the Indians in the Onion Lake Agency adapted to government policy by building permanent houses and by farming individual plots of land. The Cold Lake Indians and the Indians on IR 119 were praised for their progress in these areas during the early years before the Rebellion. Indian Agent Reed reported that the Cold Lake band had moved south of the Beaver River from their location "in a collected form on the borders of Cold Lake to different plots, after the manner of whites, on which they have built good houses and stables" (SP5, 1883: 49). In 1882 Inspector Wadsworth reported that the Indians on IR 119 tended to settle near the western side of the reserve (SP4, 1884:123). The following year he reported:

Almost every head of a family has some crop, and probably there is no band in the territory where the work done and the improvements made are so evenly divided among so many families. Heads of families have not hesitated to go to distant parts of the reserve, break land and farm; consequently they are fast learning individual rights to this kind of property. By each family thus keeping by itself it derives the full benefit of its labour, the most careful and industrious being the most successful (SP3, 1885:149).

The Indians on IR 119 were praised for the improvements they had made by building and repairing houses, barns and stables (see also Section 2.5). The Minister reported:

These Indians' houses are built on their farms, instead of, as is generally the case, being contiguous to one another. The result of the Indians being thus scattered is, that the work on each holding is done systematically by the occupant of the field for the benefit of himself and family, and emulation is aroused between the various holders of land, each vieing (sic) with the other for superiority of crops, buildings and fences (SP3, 1885:xliv).

Although work was disrupted by the 1885 Rebellion, by 1886 the Indians on IR 119 had 32 dwellings and nine stables. Eleven new houses were built and were a storey and one-half high with thatched roofs, flatted spruce logs and whipsawn lumber. At this time there were 262 Indians on the reserve, 100 being adults, and 40 listed as "able-bodied" men. This suggests that many family units had their own home sites.

It was this type of settlement pattern, based on individual farm sites which the department encouraged. Having built their houses and farms at some distance from each other, the Inspector felt that there would be no difficulty in dividing the reserve so that each farmer could hold his lands in severalty (SP16, 1889:138). By 1888 there were 45 separate holdings, each forming a homestead consisting of cultivated fields and dwelling houses. Eighteen had stables and stock yards.

Indian Commissioner Reed reported in 1888 that the tendency of the Indians to settle on separate farm sites was more or less general,



but nowhere has it been seen more conspicuously during the past year than in the Onion Lake Agency. On one reserve there, the once rebel Indians have not only settled down to work, but have taken up separate lots (SP16, 1889:129).

This, Reed felt, was due to the "energetic, pains-taking, and thoroughly practical agent in charge of that agency" (*ibid.*).

Individual farm sites were encouraged for those Indians who moved to the reserves at Keeheewin and Frog Lake in 1903-1906. At Keeheewin reserve these Indians lived close together and had a common stable and shelter for the first year. It was intended, however, that they separate and take up positions in different parts of the reserve. As these Indians were progressive the agent expected them to succeed (SP27, 1907:136). The following December, Agent Sibbald reported that these Indians had dispersed and most of the families now had separate houses (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-5). In some cases several families had stabled their cattle together (SP27, 1908:132).

The Frog Lake Indians worked hard during the 1911-12 winter and spring seasons in "getting out logs" and "sawing lumber." The purpose, according to Agent Sibbald, was that "the most thrifty of them propose taking up new locations on the reserves; building new houses and stables and starting new farms" (SP27, 1912:153). When they did build, the Frog Lake Indians built their dwellings some distance apart.

Inspector Chisholm reported of the Frog Lake band in 1915:

In building their new houses they have exercised good judgement in searching out the most desirable locations with a view particularly to advantages for farming and proximity to water and hay. The

consequence is that instead of being situated along the lake shore, in the rough and timber portions of the Reserve, they are now scattered widely and occupy some of the best and most favourable lands for farming purposes (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914-15).

A map of the reserves at Frog Lake in 1923 shows that, while there was a tendency to congregate at the south end of the lake at the junction of the various trails which crossed the reserve, many of the Indians had settled on scattered farm sites throughout IR 121 and a few had settled likewise on IR 122.

The Indians in the agency who resided on the Onion Lake reserves in the 1800's and those who also resided on the Frog Lake reserves and Keeheewin reserve during the 1900's appear to have adapted to the government policy which stressed individual farm sites for each family. One problem which arose and disrupted the complete adaptation to this policy was the practice of moving to a new house site following the death of an individual in the family group. This was a custom of the Cree long before they moved to their reservations. Dion's account of the smallpox epidemic of 1869-1870 provides a good illustration (Dion 1979:67-69). Each time a death occurred in the family mentioned, they moved to another location.

This practice was referred to by several of the Inspectors. In 1895 Inspector McGibbon noted that "in one or two cases where deaths occurred, good houses were abandoned, and smaller ones put up" (SP14, 1895:95). It is not clear, however, if the "good" house was abandoned for a specific period of time only or how temporary the smaller house might have been.

The movement from one house site to another was also referred to by Inspector Chisholm and given as one reason why the Indians' dwellings were poor.

The Indians' dwellings are of a poor description and continue from year to year with but slight improvement, notwithstanding that they have skill in dressing houselogs and in building walls, and have a saw-mill at the agency headquarters and a timber limit but a few miles away. This is partly due to the practice which has prevailed of moving frequently from one part of the reserve to another (SP27, 1905:194).

The practice of moving from one location on the reserve to another due to subsistence activities or death was discouraged by the department. Houses were neglected and fell into disrepair while residing at one location, it was felt, would encourage the individual to care for and improve the premises.

## 5. SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

This section is concerned with the various subsistence activities employed by the Indians in the study area to make their living. The Chipewyan and "hunting" Indians were involved primarily in hunting, fishing and trapping. The Plains Cree found it difficult to hunt in the woodlands and turned more readily to agriculture and stock raising which were encouraged by the Department of Indian Affairs. Some of these Indians did adapt to trapping and many were involved in early spring fishing. The Chipewyan adapted readily to stock raising early in the study period. During the latter part of the study period the Chipewyan became involved in growing grain.

The department encouraged the Indians to engage in "other" industries which would enable them to become self-sufficient. Employment off the reserves became more frequent as settlement increased in the study area. Many of the Indians were engaged in such employment.

The Indians varied in their adaptation to these different subsistence activities. In this section agriculture, including gardening and grain growing, stock raising, other industries, hunting and gathering, fishing and involvement in the fur trade are discussed. The earnings of the Indians from these various activities are indicated.

### 5.1 Agriculture (Gardening and Grain Growing)

#### 5.1.1 Introduction

Immediately after the transfer of the North-West Territories to Canada the government received petitions from Indians in the North

Saskatchewan River area requesting the assurance of assistance in settling down to a life of agriculture. It was evident from these requests, from Butler's Report (1872) and from reports of the Indian Commissioner and missionaries in the North-West that the loss of the buffalo was a severe blow to the subsistence base of the Saskatchewan River Cree. Both Indians and government officials looked to agriculture and stock raising as the resource base which would replace the dwindling buffalo herds.

Sweet Grass, one of the leading chiefs of the Cree, made his petition to the government in 1871. Realizing that fur bearing animals were almost gone and were not enough to support the Cree along the North Saskatchewan, Sweet Grass recognized a need for agriculture and requested help from the government. He wrote:

We want cattle, tools, agricultural implements,  
and assistance in everything when we come to  
settle - our country is no longer able to  
support us (SP22, 1872:33).

Inherent in the treaty provisions of reservations and such items as farm implements, seed grain and cattle, it was the government's intention that the Indians become self-supporting through agriculture and stock raising. Lieutenant Governor Morris, in his opening remarks when negotiating Treaty Six at Fort Pitt, envisioned a road from Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains, by way of Forts Carlton and Pitt upon which he saw "all Chippewas and Crees walking, and...along it gardens being planted and houses built" (SP11, 1877:1x).

Morris was "agreeably surprised to find so great a willingness on the part of the Crees to commence to cultivate the soil" (*ibid.*, lxiii).

Some of the Indians in the treaty area had already begun to settle and plant gardens as they realized that they could no longer acquire sufficient buffalo in the grasslands to meet their subsistence needs. Sweet Grass again proclaimed his willingness to settle immediately after the signing of treaty at Fort Pitt and requested that oxen, seed grain and ploughs, promised by treaty, be sent quickly. He stated that he "would commence at once to prepare a small piece of land and his kinsmen would do the same" (*ibid.*, 1x). Certainly some of the Cree at Fort Pitt in 1876 professed a willingness to commence agriculture.

The Indians in the study area were familiar with a limited form of agriculture before 1876. They had observed Hudson's Bay Company personnel at Fort Pitt, Edmonton House and Victoria planting gardens and growing grain. The extent of this activity was limited due to the attitudes and activities of the Indians in some instances. Colonel Robertson Ross quoted the officer in charge of Fort Pitt as saying that the company "dare not venture to introduce cattle or stock into the country, or cultivate the ground to any extent for fear of Indian spoliation" (Stanley 1961:200). The Indians milled around the posts with little respect for fields or gardens.

The results of the attempts made by the Hudson's Bay Company personnel were described in 1863 by Dr. Hector of the Palliser Expedition.

Grain is said not to succeed well, but I suspect they have chosen a bad spot for their field, turnips grew well when they were tried, and the place is quite famous for the quantity and quality of potatoes

which are raised (Palliser 1863:70).

In 1873-74 Selwyn, of the Geological Survey, noted that there were "fine crops of barley and potatoes" at Fort Pitt and added that wheat had not been grown at the Fort but barley was almost always a successful crop (1874:35).

Apparently garden produce had been grown successfully at Fort Pitt. The crops planted were not always successful. Nevertheless, the gardens and crops grown by Hudson's Bay Company personnel and by missionaries in the area must have been successful enough to assure the Indians of the benefits of these activities, because by 1876 the Chipewyan band and the Wood Cree band at Frog Lake under Tuskeeahkeewein had gardens in which they planted potatoes. The Whitefish Lake Cree under Seenum had houses, gardens, and crops of wheat and barley near Saddle Lake to the northwest of the study area. In identifying the locations they desired for a reserve the chiefs of these bands requested land which encompassed their houses and gardens.

In this section the subsistence activities of gardening and grain growing are discussed. The annual Agency and Inspection Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs, both published and unpublished, provide the documentary material used in this section. Detailed agricultural and livestock returns, which were regularly sent from the agency to the department headquarters provide data as well.

### 5.1.2 Gardening

The initial policy of the government toward the Indians was guided

by the immediate need for food which would enable the Indians to meet their subsistence needs. Gardens provided a ready source of potatoes and vegetables during the season as well as produce which could be stored for winter use.

Under the guidance of P.T. Williams and then G. Mann on IR 119 and John Delaney on the Frog Lake reserves, gardening was encouraged and got off to a good start. During the growing seasons from 1881 to 1884 inclusive, more acres were sown to potatoes than in any subsequent years during the study period (Table 11). The Chipewyan at Cold Lake also had gardens and were able to grow potatoes on their own without the direct supervision of a farm instructor.

In the spring of 1885 the agricultural program on the reserves in the study area was interrupted by the Rebellion. A large number of Indians from the Frog Lake reserves and from Keeheewin reserve, as well as some from Seekaskootch reserve, were absent from their reserves as a result of the Rebellion, and it is unlikely that gardens were planted. There are no agricultural returns in the sources given for the 1885 growing season.

Under Agent Mann gardening was once again encouraged. The agency garden, which provided produce for agency personnel as well as rations for Indian employees, was always, weather permitting, an example of success to the Indians during Agent Mann's term. Many of the Indians on the Onion Lake reserve had their own gardens during this time in which they grew potatoes, turnips, carrots and onions. In 1888 the Inspector visited the Indian houses on the reserve. He



found "in every house cellars, in these were their potatoes, which varied in quantity in accordance with the crop grown" (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F.53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1888). Agent Mann reported in 1896:

Each family has a splendid garden, consisting of potatoes, turnips, carrots and onions. A great deal of pride is taken in keeping them free from weeds and in good order (SP14, 1897:192).

And in 1898 he reported that "in connection with their farms each Indian had a very good vegetable garden, containing potatoes, turnips, carrots and onions" (SP14, 1899:158). These four vegetables were commonly grown by the Indians. The agency and missions also grew beets, corn, cabbage and cauliflower (SP16, 1889:139).

While gardens were grown successfully in the late 1800's the acreage sown after 1885 was less annually than the acreage sown annually prior to the Rebellion. After 1900 the total acreage sown decreased even more. At the low point in 1907, only 10 acres of garden produce were reported to be sown. During this time references to gardens belonging to the Indians are much less positive. The Inspector reported in 1903 that among the Cree bands

roots and vegetables are still a meagre crop. Few Indians pretend to raise a full supply of anything except potatoes. The garden plots are small, poorly cultivated, and in need of thorough fertilizing (SP27, 1904:203).

In 1905 the Inspector noted that "the garden products were entirely insufficient for the needs of the Indians" that season (SP27, 1906:180), even though garden seeds and seed potatoes had been

distributed among the Indians and weather conditions were favourable. The agency and school gardens both showed a good return in garden produce. In the agency report for that year, Agent Sibbald mentioned gardening only in connection with the Chipewyan band (SP27, 1906:137).

There are few references to Indian's gardens between 1906 and 1915 except in 1908 when Inspector Chisholm reported that the crop of roots and vegetables was good. The returns show that, in fact, the approximate bushels per acre of potatoes harvested for 1908, 1909 and 1911 were the highest average yields reported during the study period. The daily journals kept by the agency clerk indicate that garden seeds were still being issued to the Indians at Onion Lake. In 1910 twelve persons received 32 bushels of seed potatoes and in 1911 fifty-two and one-half bushels of seed potatoes were issued to 22 persons and garden seed was issued to 20 persons (PAC RG10 FOR, Vol. 9084 Books 14 and 15).

In 1914 the Indians increased the acreage sown to potatoes but raised very few turnips, carrots and onions. Inspector Chilsholm reported that on the Onion Lake reserves the Indian gardens were "an almost uniform failure and very few have had a supply even of potatoes for winter use or will have seed for the spring" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915). The reason given by the Indians for such a poor harvest that year and, for some years before, was the weather. However, the Inspector noted that the agency and mission school gardens generally showed good yields and he concluded that the real reason lay in the failure of the Indians to cultivate, seed, care

for and harvest their gardens properly. There was some question whether the Indians actually planted the garden seed issued to them. The farm instructor had neglected to see that the gardens were properly prepared and cared for, spending the majority of his time with livestock concerns. Consequently, potatoes which did not need as much care as other root crops, were the only garden produce which showed any significant return. In Chisholm's words:

There is no doubt the season was unfavourable, but in the Agency garden almost all roots and vegetables yielded abundantly and some hundreds of bushels of potatoes were pitted in the fall. At the Roman Catholic Boarding School the returns were similar; and there is not the slightest doubt that if the gardens were properly planted, the surface cultivated and weeds kept down throughout the growing season, similar and very valuable results would have been obtained. For this purpose a farmer is employed; but he has either no influence with the Indians, or he counts this matter as too trivial for his notice, or for some other reason utterly neglects it. It is not to be supposed that all the Indians would neglect instructions if properly given and if they realized that they were to be watched in the carrying out of those instructions. If the proper cultivation of these gardens were insisted upon, a product would be obtained, which would be a material help to the Indians towards furnishing their food supply (*ibid.*).

Evidently, the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves were not dependent to any large extent on their gardens for their subsistence needs. The other bands in the agency did raise potato crops in 1914. Both the Frog Lake and Keeheewin bands had a good crop of potatoes. The Chipewyan band had, by this time, settled on their reserve and in 1914 it was reported that nearly all of them raised a good supply of potatoes and about one half also raised turnips, carrots and onions. By 1914, then, gardening on the Onion Lake reserves had decreased considerably while on

the outlying reserves it had substantially increased.

The final report on gardens for the study period was found in the Inspection Report of Inspector Crombie for 1917.

Generally speaking the crop of vegetables was very poor on all reserves. At Long Lake Reserve there were some very good results got but they were the exception. At Cold Lake reserves where the gardens as a rule are good the crop was practically a failure in 1917 owing to the dry season (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol.1, Inspection Report, 1917).

The approximate acres sown and yields of root crops harvested in the agency are shown in Table 11 and are based on the returns given in the department reports. The returns given for 1881 to 1884 included Farms 14 and 15, the Frog Lake bands, Keeheewin band and Onion Lake band. From 1886 to 1903 the returns given are for the agency farm and the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves as well as the Chipewyan band at Cold Lake. After 1903 the returns included the acreage sown and harvested by those Cree who returned to their former reserves at Frog Lake and Long Lake as well as the Indians on the Onion Lake and Cold Lake reserves. The average yield given is a general average of the total crop sown and harvested.

Potatoes generally showed a good return in the agency although, during some years, the yield was light due to dry weather. The yield for 42 acres sown by the farm instructors and Indians in 1881 was 1,540 bushels or 36.7 bushels per acre, even though the gardens were damaged by an early frost which destroyed approximately 1,800 bushels of potatoes. In 1883 the acres sown totalled 59.5 and the yield was 7,675 bushels or approximately 129 bushels per acre. Not only was

Table 11: Approximate number of acres sown and harvested of root crops grown in the Onion Lake Agency, 1881-1920 (n/g = not given)

Season	Potatoes acres	bush.	yield	Turnips acres	bush.	Carrots acres	bush.	Gardens acres	Other root bush
1881	42	1540	36.7	3	330	n/g	60		
1882	65	5160	79.38	19.25	1900	8.75	60		
1883	59.5	7675	129.0	12.75	1510	4.75	250	3	
1884	53.5	2300	43	7.5	1325	2.75	250	3.75	
1885	No root crop returns								
1886	24.25	1112	45.86	17.5	280	2.25	5	4.75	
1887	27	2465	91.3	14.5	1680	n/g	125		
1888	26	1750	67.3	19.5	800	.5	10	3	
1889	25.5	0	0	11.5	0				
1890	20.25	1064	52.54	14	1087	1.25	100	5.25	
1891	30	3030	101	11	1270	.25	50		
1892	26	2776	106.76	10.75	1200			1.25	
1893	23.25	422	18.15	11	125	5.5	n/g		
1894	18.75	1230	65.6	10.75	400	n/g	71	5.25	40
1895	23.5	1411	60	12.25	20	.25	10	.25	n/g
1896									
1897	26	1500	57.7	12	450				
1898	20	1000	50	11	50	5			
1899	14	1380	98.57	13	1186	n/g	194	4	20
1900	11.5	2100	182.6	n/g	550	n/g	35	8	60
1901	15	2000	133.33	n/g	105	7	69	n/g	40
1902	15	2200	183.33	n/g	140	6.5	75	n/g	47
1903	14	1790	127.86			6	n/g	6	n/g
1904	7	400	57.14			4	n/g		
1905	6	690	115					4	n/g
1906	6.5	707	108.77	n/g	97	4	34	n/g	28
1907	6	1070	178.33	n/g	117	4	51	n/g	38
1908	8	1666	208.25	n/g	532	5	179	n/g	84
1909	9	1860	206.67	n/g	209	5	90	n/g	80
1910	23	1290	56.09	1	32	3	16		
1911	9.25	2279	246.38	n/g	50	3	13		
1912	22	1810	82.27	n/g	74	3	36		
1913	29	2572	88.69	1	154	1	38		
1914	21	1292	61.52	2	175				
1915	35	2001	57.17	5	292			1	5
1916	24	1061	44.21					5	697
1917	20	1526	76.3					4	794
1918	16	310	19.38					3	169
1919	11	311	28.27					.25	60
1920									

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report and Tabular Statements, 1882-1921.

there a good crop of potatoes in 1883 but there was also an average yield per acre of 52.6 bushels of carrots and 118 bushels of turnips.

In 1884 the potato crop yielded only 43 bushels per acre. This was about one-third the return for 1883 and resulted in a yield which was only slightly more than the seed planted. The failure was attributed to the variety of seed sown, known as "Lady Fingers" (SP3, 1885:143). Turnips and carrots produced well in 1884.

Yields were sometimes meagre, as in 1889, when no returns were recorded and in 1893 when the potato harvest yielded only 18 bushels to the acre. A prolonged drought following a winter of very little snow accounted for the 1889 crop failure, while in 1893 it was excessively hot and dry and the plants were scorched as soon as they reached the surface.

Yields tended to be higher after 1907 than during the previous years. In 1908 Inspector Chisholm reported that the crop of roots and vegetables was good and consisted of 1,666 bushels of potatoes, 532 bushels of turnips, 179 bushels of carrots and 84 bushels of onions in addition to small quantities of other garden products. The average potato yield for the 1908, 1909 and 1911 seasons were exceptional, resulting in approximately 208, 206 and 246 bushels per acre respectively. These were the highest yields during the study period.

Garden produce was grown for subsistence requirements and not for sale. Some produce was consumed during the growing season. Therefore, the returns given do not always reflect the total grown. Produce from the agency garden was bagged and stored in a root cellar for use during the

winter and some kept for seed potatoes the following spring.

The agency garden offered employment for the older women in the Onion Lake bands. In return for rations of food and cloth they cut the seed potatoes, helped in the spring planting and, in the fall, they picked, sorted and bagged the potatoes in preparation for winter storage.

### 5.1.3 Grain Growing

The situation with regard to grain growing by the Indians in the study area is the concern of this section. The Chipewyan band and the Cree bands are discussed separately as the development and progress of agriculture in these two groups was somewhat different. A number of problems faced the Indians as they sought to adapt to grain growing. These problems tended to outweigh the positive benefits gained and discouraged the development of this industry among the Cree. Both the problems encountered in grain growing and the benefits gained from it, are discussed.

#### 5.1.3.1 The Chipewyan Band

The Chipewyan band devoted little effort to grain growing during the study period. In 1885 a farmer by the name of Fitzpatrick was sent to instruct them in the planting of grain but he stayed for only a few months. Other than annual or semi-annual visits by the agent, this band had no direct supervision until 1912.

Their first experiences with grain growing were disrupted by several movements of the band. They were the only band in the Treaty

Six area which showed a decrease of land under cultivation in 1882. This was accounted for by their removal from their location on the border of Cold Lake to a location just north of the Beaver River. By the following summer (1883) they had broken 19 acres, ten of which were in their new location. However, this area was abandoned in the spring as it was considered to be outside treaty limits, and the Chipewyan moved again, this time to the south side of the Beaver River, where they broke 87 acres and sowed 46 acres of barley, nine and one-half acres of potatoes, two and one-half acres of turnips and some carrots (SP3, 1885:149).

Upon his return to the district in 1885, Agent Mann reported that the Chipewyan showed a limited desire to farm and consequently received little assistance. The acreage cultivated before 1885 had been sown to barley which was probably used as feed for their stock. Even though they had sown 20 acres in 1886, their main interest lay in hunting, trapping and fishing. Because the Chipewyan were successful in these pursuits and, while fish and game were plentiful, they were encouraged to follow these industries rather than grain growing.

In 1900 Inspector Chisholm noted that the Chipewyan who occupied the settlement on Beaver River, about 65 miles north of the agency, had "mowers and rakes but few other agricultural implements, and consequently do but little farming, though the soil of that district is of the best quality" (SP27, 1901:195). The earnings these Indians gained through the fur trade generally went towards purchasing cattle rather than equipment for growing grain.



One of the problems encountered in early attempts at grain growing in the settlement at Beaver River was early frosts. The reserve (IR 149), which was surveyed in 1903, was well adapted for mixed farming as it contained extensive open tracts of good farm land with good soil which was free from stones, a good water source and plenty of wood. IR 149A was not as easily cultivated as the land was rolling and covered with poplar and spruce. It had some hay meadows.

In 1905 some of the Chipewyan expressed a desire to try farming. However, little developed in this area until 1908 when they ploughed a few patches of land. In March 1910 Agent Sibbald reported that the excuse given by the Chipewyan for not having more crop put in and more ploughing done was the uncertainty of reserve location. While Sibbald felt they were justified in their concern over the allotment of the reserve at the lake, he also felt that the real reason they had done little farming was that they had "been too well off this spring and some of them quite independent for the present" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-3, Sibbald to McLean, March 30, 1910). This suggests that, while a good living could be made from fishing, hunting and trapping, these Indians were not seriously concerned with agriculture.

Interest did develop though, and in the fall of 1910 the Chipewyan had 140 acres ploughed and ready to be seeded as compared to only 21 acres the previous year. Three new ploughs were supplied to the band by the department and the department binder and threshing machine were sent to cut and thrash their crop. By offering this assistance the agent sought to provide "every inducement" to the Chipewyan

band to become involved in agriculture (SP27, 1912:147, 148). Following this help and encouragement the band continued to increase their cultivated land and in 1912 they had more land sown than any of the neighbouring Cree bands (SP27, 1913:155). They made good use of the implements placed at their disposal by the department and, when money was available from hunting and grain sales, they purchased their own implements.

In 1912 the Chipewyan band came under the supervision of newly appointed farmer, A. Martineau. He was expected to increase their interest in agriculture. The next year they recorded their best season so far. Even so, the Inspector felt the results were unsatisfactory in that the single crop grown was oats which produced only 18 bushels to the acre. The Inspector felt that the land on IR 149 had the capability of yielding 100 bushels per acre, a very optimistic estimate as the highest recorded yield per acre for oats in Saskatchewan for the period from 1905 to 1918 inclusive, was only 45.9 bushels and the average 35.8 bushels (Kitto 1919:73).

In 1914 the yield was good owing to a favourable growing season. Nearly 9,000 bushels of oats were produced. The grain was "plump and heavy but darkened with the weather as owing to heavy rains during September there was difficulty in harvesting" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914). The crop was used as feed or sold in small quantities at about 35 cents per bushel. The oat crops throughout the prairie region were reported to be scanty that season, averaging only 23.8 bushels per acre. However, in comparison

to oats sold by the Chipewyan, farmers in the south sold oats for 45 to 60 cents per bushel more because of easier access to a market (*ibid.*).

The Chipewyan continued to expand their agricultural operations by increasing the land cultivated and by starting to grow wheat and barley besides oats. In 1914 they prepared a considerable area of new land which they planned to sow to wheat the next season. According to Inspector Chisholm, the incentive was economic in that they realized that grain could profitably be grown for feed, even if there was no market for grain (*ibid.*). The land cultivated increased from 75 acres in 1914 to 119 acres in 1915. In 1915, 45 acres of wheat yielded 893 bushels, or an average of 19.84 bushels per acre and 39½ acres of barley gave 493 bushels or an average yield of 12.48 bushels per acre. These yields were considerably lower than the average yield for Saskatchewan that year which were 25.2 for wheat and 33.2 for barley (Table 13). In 1920 the Chipewyan broke 34 acres of new land, ploughed 252 acres of summerfallow, sowed 179 acres of oats and fall-ploughed 102 acres.

The grain yields on IR 149 were never large during the study period. The Chipewyan were slow in becoming serious about agriculture, and the low returns may reflect a lack of consistent effort and interest rather than a lack of ability or potential as these Indians were often referred to as being enterprising. While the trade offered them an adequate living, supplemented by resources from their cattle, they did not see the necessity of growing grain as well. Nevertheless, when the Chipewyan did grow grain their enterprising attitude asserted itself and they

were successful to the extent that they had an excess of grain to sell to traders and settlers.

#### 5.1.3.2 The Cree Bands

The first agricultural returns available for the study area are for the 1881 growing season. The farm instructors and some of the Indians at Onion Lake and Frog Lake were able to break a good amount of land and had sowed approximately one-half of it to wheat, oats and barley. At Farm 14, sixty-five acres were broken and 23.5 acres were sown, while on IR 119, forty-six acres were broken and 33 acres sown. At Farm 15, Delaney broke 52.5 acres of which 27.5 were sown. Reed reported that the wheat grown that year at Farm 15 was some of the best ever grown in Canada (SP6, 1882:82). The yield for a total of 17 acres sown to wheat at the two farms was 400 bushels or an average of 23.5 bushels per acre. The average yield for the total of 26 acres sown to wheat in the district, including the home farms and the Indian crops was only 16.9 suggesting that, out of nine acres sown to wheat, the Indians obtained 40 bushels or only 4.4 bushels per acre. Much of the barley was destroyed by an early frost. Of 70.5 acres sown to barley, 1,290 bushels, or approximately 18.3 bushels to the acre were returned. More fall ploughing was done at Frog Lake in 1881 than on any other reserve in the treaty area. Fifty acres were ploughed using four ploughs managed by the Indians at an average of five acres per day.

The Indians on Seekaskootch IR 119 were recognized for their industry in the 1883 Superintendent's report. According to the report,

the raised large crops, cultivated their land well and surrounded their fields with admirable fences. The same, however, could not be said of the other hands in the district. The Superintendent reported that the Mahkayo, Ooneepowhayo and Puskeeahkeewein bands "appear to have made little or no progress" as they devoted most of their time "to wandering about the country" (SP14, 1884:1).

During the 1880's and 1890's, farming and stock raising were listed as the main occupations of the Onion Lake Indians. From 1885 to 1903, the Annual and Inspection Reports refer primarily to those Indians who moved to the Onion Lake reserves after the Rebellion and became "working" Indians. That is, those Indians who were willing to follow government policy by working for food and by attempting agriculture. The annual reports indicate that grain growing was far from extensive and that it was carried on to a very limited extent after 1896. Continuing low returns (Table 12) discouraged both the agent and the Indians, and in 1887 Agent Mann reported that "owing to the partial failure of the crop last year on account of the continuous dry weather," he had difficulty in getting the Indians to plough a larger area than they had sown in the previous year (SP15, 1888:93).

Where crops were successful, interest in agriculture increased. The Indian Commissioner noticed that "where circumstances have been more favorable, the Indians have evinced a marked increase of interest; and in some instances, seem to have taken pride in their agricultural pursuits,..." (SP6, 1887:107). In the study area the crops were generally unsuccessful during the 1880's and 1890's, and this resulted in a decreased

interest in grain growing.

In describing the condition of agriculture at Onion Lake during the 1890's the Inspector noted that "for some years past grain crops have been a partial failure here, and for the season of 1898 the acreage was small and the crop poor" (SP14, 1900:188). In his 1900 report of the agency Inspector Chisholm wrote:

Of recent years no grain has been grown except barley and a few acres of oats, and this with very indifferent results. As there is at hand, however, a well equipped grist-mill and a threshing-machine, besides all necessary minor implements in the hands of the Indians, an effort is now being put forth to revive interest in grain-growing and to make it a success. Flour laid down at this point costs from \$3 to \$4 a sack, and is too expensive an article to import when it can be produced on the spot. Besides, there is a small but increasing demand for coarse grains both to supply the local market and to feed the Indians' stock (SP27, 1901:194, 195).

The total number of acres sown did increase substantially in the next few years. However, in 1904 Inspector Chisholm felt that the Indians at Onion Lake had made absolutely no progress in the cultivation of grains, roots or vegetables. In fact, cultivation had diminished (SP27, 1905:194). The increased number of acres sown to grain recorded in the agency that year was not due to an increase on the Onion Lake reserves but rather due to an increase on the Frog Lake and Keeheewin reserves.

Agent Sibbald expressed the hope that those Indians returning to their own reserves from 1903 to 1905 would be successful in their

farming attempts:

The results of farming operations on the reserves close to the agency headquarters have never been very profitable, but there is always a little going on. It is probable that the Indians already referred to, who are going to settle on their own reserves may succeed in raising better crops, as the land there is better adapted thereto (SP27, 1906:137).

These Indians had received an issue of cattle and implements on loan from the department and went on the condition "that they were not to look for any assistance whatever in the form of provisions" from the department (SP27, 1906:180). They accepted the condition and lived up to it. The Inspector praised their efforts:

Three of the thriftiest Indians of the Onion Lake reserves have recently returned to this reserve, [IR 123] and the population now numbers seventy-two and includes sixteen working men. The facilities for cattle-raising here are excellent, as also for farming, except for the distance from mill and market. They have a good start in both these industries, and the prospects are encouraging (*ibid.*).

The Keeheewin reserve (IR 123) was situated in an area rich in wild game and fish resources, besides having good soil for farming. One of the families which moved back to the reserve in the fall of 1903 was the Dion family. They went with the determination to become independent farmers. According to Joseph Dion (1979:134) his family returned to IR 123 with the idea that they "could escape the unwelcome new restrictions of the Indian Department." It was their goal to work themselves free from direct government supervision - especially the permit system - by making a success of farming. They felt that department supervision would not be so overbearing on IR 123 which was some distance from agency headquarters. Dion notes that for the next few years they honestly felt

they were going to make it. Of those years he writes (1979:142, 143):

The majority of the settlers had built fairly good homes and we all had cattle and horses and farm plots. Every fall saw us reaping fair-sized crops of wheat and oats. The first machine owned by the band was a portable steam engine which did the work of threshing and also the sawing of wood in season. We took our wheat to the grist mill in Vermilion, 60 miles away, but these long trips were worthwhile since we would lay in a plentiful supply of good flour. In the spring of 1912 dad bought the first cream separator on the reserve and we took to milking many cows. There was no market for cream in the vicinity and we could only sell a small amount of butter, but we gave away a lot of it.

The progress made by the Indians who moved to the Keeheewin reserve was also noted in the Annual and Inspection Reports. It appears that interest in agriculture grew and more people on the reserve became involved as success was realized by those who first returned from Onion Lake.

In 1906 the Indians on IR 123 put in a small crop but did not cultivate much land until 1911 when the acreage cultivated more than doubled. Agent Sibbald expected it to increase as the Indians showed an interest for farming. The department, therefore, supplied them with three new ploughs in 1911. The following year they acquired a threshing outfit, and in 1915, the department furnished them with six yoke of oxen. With this help they were well equipped for agriculture.

In 1915, 182½ acres were cropped and 155 acres broken as compared to 92 acres cropped and 24 acres broken in 1914. The average yields were larger in 1914. In 1915, the average yield was 32.77 for oats, wheat 22.64 and barley 16.12, as against 37.18 for oats, 24.0



for wheat and 32.60 for barley in 1914 (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1916). These returns indicate a yield which was higher than the average yields for each of these grains in Saskatchewan in 1914, but lower than the average yields for each in 1915 (Table 13, p. 220).

Oats, grown for sale or green feed for cattle and horses, was the most profitable crop grown on IR 123. Barley was also grown for sale. However, while oats and barley were sold, the prices were low because the reserve was 40 to 60 miles away from any grain market. Wheat was grown to meet subsistence needs when ground into flour and not for market. In 1915 the Indians on Keeheewin reserve were able, for the first time, to take their wheat to the mills at St. Paul or Vermilion to be ground into flour. The agent reported that this gave them pride and that the "feeling of independence evinced by those who had been wise enough to raise wheat and have their own flour, has had a good effect upon others, ..." (SP27, 1917:65). About one-half the oat crop was sold to settlers in nearby settlements, approximately one-third was used for feed and the remainder was kept for seed. From the sales made the Indians were able to obtain considerable revenue. Most of the barley was used for feed.

The total crop acres on IR 123 increased in 1917 to 262 acres from 187½ in 1916. In 1917, 134½ acres were sown to wheat, 86½ acres to oats and 41 acres to barley. The yields were very low. In 1920 the yields were good and the wheat crop on the reserve produced an abundant yield of 41 bushels per acre, a yield much higher than the average yield in Saskatchewan for any of the years between 1905 and 1918 (Table 13).

The Indians on Keeheewin reserve did well in grain growing. The reserve contained some extensive tracts of good farm land and the soil was rich and free from scrub. This reserve was less subject to frost than the other reserves in the agency and the average yield for grain was usually the best in the agency.

Indians on the Onion Lake reserves continued to farm after the loss of some of their more successful farmers to Keeheewin reserve. Grain growing, however, was no longer listed as one of their main occupations. During the years 1906 to 1908 some of the younger men, mostly ex-students from the boarding schools, showed an interest in farming and began ploughing and seeding small fields. Because the soil was light they were encouraged to cultivate oats and barley rather than wheat because there was no market for wheat. Wheat was grown primarily for subsistence needs. By 1908 approximately 40 acres of new land had been broken and the yield realized was greater than any yield had been on these reserves for some years (SP27, 1910:145). The primary crop grown was oats which ranged from 40 to 48 lbs. to the bushel, was well matured and largely free from weeds. It was considered a very good crop. This season showed a "marked advance" according to the Inspector, as the total grain product was 40 percent larger than for 1906 which had been somewhat better than any other season in the preceding ten years.

Over the next three years, the average yields varied slightly but remained low on the Onion Lake reserves. The 1911 crop was unsuccessful, the average yield for 132 acres being only 18 bushels. In 1912 the yield

averaged 13 bushels per acre for 154 acres and in 1913 it increased to 31 bushels per acre for 150 acres. According to the Inspector, the small yield could not be accounted for merely by the condition of the soil which was generally light, or the climate which often brought drought. Rather, he felt that an attitude of indifference with regard to farming meant that the soil was quickly becoming exhausted. He urged the fertilizing of fields with manure, which was available on the reserve from the large number of livestock, and the summerfallowing of old fields.

In 1914 the yield was small with only ten bushels to the acre of wheat and 19 bushels per acre of oats. The Indians were able, however, to show a small profit as the prices for grain that year were quite high and the distance to a market was considerably lessened since the Canadian Northern Railway now extended to Lloydminster. Also, it was the first time in many years that the Indians from Onion Lake had ground wheat. Their own grist mill had fallen into disrepair through disuse, but they were able to take a load of wheat to the mill in Lloydminster, and received in return eight sacks of flour and a proportionate quantity of bran and shorts (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914).

In the enthusiasm which resulted from their 1914 success the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves broke 129 acres of new land. This was larger than the entire acreage under crop the previous season. In 1915 the acreage sown to wheat increased to 92 acres from four and one-half acres in 1914 and averaged 26.40 bushels to the acre. Oats

averaged 35.89 bushels per acre in 1915 as compared to 18.37 in 1914. The 1915 season was a record year for crops throughout the province of Saskatchewan and the returns from the Onion Lake reserves compared favourably with the average yield per acre of 25.2 bushels for wheat and 45.9 bushels for oats (Table 13). Some of the wheat was ground into flour for personal needs but the bulk of it was marketed in Lloydminster. Oats were sold to settlers and traders in the neighbourhood. The desire and enthusiasm for farming rose as a result of these outlets for grain.

Enthusiasm decreased as a result of the extremely dry 1917 season. The oat crop was almost a total failure while wheat was very light. These results were similar to the results obtained by surrounding settlers. In 1920, only 39 acres of new land was broken and eight acres were summerfallowed.

The Indians at Frog Lake did not take seriously to grain growing until the latter years of the study period. After some of them returned to their reserves - from 1903 to 1906 - they subsisted primarily by hunting, fishing and working for the surrounding settlers who were gradually increasing in number. Only one man by the name of John Horse is reported as farming, and he to a limited extent. In 1908 Agent Sibbald reported that the Indians at Frog Lake were "indolent with regard to farming, only one family makes any success of it, and then only in a small way" (SP27, 1909:139).

The lack of interest in farming was not due to a lack of implements or poor soil conditions. Every assistance was given "in the way of

helping them to get seed" (SP27, 1908:131), and they had a sufficient number of mowers and rakes. The soil towards the western portion of the reserve was a clay loam and had some good stretches of open farm land. On the eastern side the soil was lighter and in some places sandy. According to the Inspector, about 75 percent consisted of open farm land and hay meadows. The balance was covered with a growth of poplars and willows (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1920).

In 1906 they had 28 acres in crop which yielded 398 bushels of grain. One reason for their lack of effort in grain growing was their interest in the sawmill which operated on their reserve. As it operated throughout the seasons for seeding and breaking, the men were not available for farm work. Further, they preferred work at the sawmill, as the lumber they obtained could be sold for profit as well as used for building houses for themselves on the reserve.

In 1912 some of the Frog Lake Indians expressed an interest in farming. However, they were hampered through the lack of enough working teams of oxen or horses and through lack of direction and help from a resident farm instructor. There was no farmer resident on the Frog Lake reserves throughout the study period following the 1885 Rebellion. In 1915 interest increased and 17 acres were sown to oats which produced a fairly good yield of 31.3 bushels per acre. A large portion of land, 86 acres, was broken. By 1916 they had made a move towards farming and had more land ready for seeding than they had ever had before. In 1916,

Table 12: Approximate number of acres sown and harvested of grains grown in the Onion Lake Agency, 1881 to 1920

Season	Wheat			Oats			Barley		
	acres	bush.	yield	acres	bush.	yield	acres	bush.	yield
1881	26	440	16.9	3.5	400	114.28	70.5	1290	18.3
1882	54	505	9.35	20	275	13.75	134	2070	15.45
1883				15	230	15.33	231	3925	16.99
1884	15	295	19.66	12	150	12.5	312	4225	13.54
1885			no crops planted or harvested						
1886	14	63	4.5	49	100	2.04	218	153	0
1887	20	360	18				230	4495	19.54
1888	15	100	6.67	20	150	7.5	431	4340	10.07
1889	28	0	0	5	0	0	330	0	0
1890	50	176	3.58	10	60	6	318	2392	7.52
1891	21	186	8.85	10	75	7.5	481	2482	
1892	57	150	2.63				479	2620	5.46
1893	40	113	2.82	10			398	1477	3.71
1894	33	205	6.21	10	150	15	302.25	1591	5.26
1895	110	736	6.69	25	135	5.4	412	3875	9.40
1896									
1897	58	211	3.64				465	3795	
1898							90	470	
1899				6	57	9.5	50	289	5.78
1900				25	769	30.76	50	1610	32.2
1901	30	664	22.1	43.5	1114	25.6	46	747	16.23
1902	50	689	13.78	52	1376	26.46	20	355	17.75
1903	18	52	2.88	86	735	8.75	16	207	12.93
1904				16	262	16.37	8	115	14.37
1905	6	85	14.17	92	1733	18.84	18	173	9.61
1906	15	249	16.6	144	2790	19.37	10	281	28.1
1907				153	2607	17.03	5	107	21.4
1908	24	386	16.08	172	4372	25.41	27	435	16.1
1909	23	236	10.26	153	3673	24.0	53	1014	19.13
1910	5	71	14.2	188	2161	11.49	7	60	8.57
1911	19	111	5.84	335	5406	16.14	7	67	9.57
1912	24	146	6.08	503	4146	8.24			
1913	2.5	17	6.8	469.5	9067	19.31			
1914	7	89	12.71	463	13483	29.12	5	163	32.6
1915	178	4270	23.99	484	15894	32.84	101	1446	14.32
1916	457	5405	11.82	672	8942	13.30	65	267	4.10
1917	315	3555	11.27	643	5403	8.40	111	352	3.17
1918	424	1074	2.5	713	9866	13.83	38	132	3.47
1919	173	822	4.75	558	3991	7.15	7		
1920	25	672	26.9	613	19367	31.59	18	131	7.27

(Continued)

NOTE: The returns shown in Table 12 include all reserves and the agency crops. The major portion for the years 1884 to 1920 represents the crops sown and harvested by the Onion Lake band, while for the 1881-1883 seasons the major portion represents the crops grown by farm instructors on home farms 14 and 15. The returns from Cold Lake reserve are included in the total but represent an insignificant portion until the later years.

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports and Tabular Statements, 1905 to 1918.

Table 13: Average yield of grains grown in the Onion Lake Agency with a comparison to the same for Saskatchewan, 1905 to 1918

Year	Wheat		Oats		Barley	
	Onion Lake	Sask.	Onion Lake	Sask.	Onion Lake	Sask.
1905	14.17	23.0	18.84	42.7	9.61	27.1
1906	16.6	21.4	19.37	37.4	28.1	24.5
1907	-	13.5	17.03	29.0	21.4	17.9
1908	16.08	13.6	25.41	27.2	16.1	17.2
1909	10.26	22.1	24.0	47.1	19.13	32.1
1910	14.2	15.5	11.49	30.4	8.57	24.5
1911	5.84	18.5	16.14	45.0	9.57	28.0
1912	6.08	19.9	8.24	44.4		31.1
1913	6.8	19.5	19.31	41.7		30.2
1914	12.71	12.4	29.12	23.8	32.6	17.9
1915	23.99	25.2	32.84	45.9	14.32	33.2
1916	11.82	14.2	13.30	39.1	4.10	26.5
1917	11.27	14.2	8.40	27.2	3.17	21.0
1918	2.5	10.0	13.83	21.5	3.47	17.0

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports and Tabular Statements, 1906-1919; Kitto 1919:73.

114 acres were sown to oats and in 1917, 95½ acres were sown to oats, nine and one-half acres to barley and seven acres to wheat. At the end of the study period, 11 Indians had sown 85 acres of oats. However, 25 of these acres belonged to John Horse, who also did the only ploughing on the reserve that season. Other than this one individual, the Indians on the Frog Lake reserves had taken up farming only in a "very indifferent manner" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1920). Their interests lay in other activities such as hunting, trapping and fishing for subsistence needs, the sale of lumber, as well as clearing land for White settlers.

#### 5.1.3.3 Problems Encountered in Grain Growing

A number of factors worked against the successful development of grain growing on the reserves in the Onion Lake Agency. These included poor soil quality, frequent dry seasons, inadequate summerfallowing and fertilizing, the lack of markets and a mill, the lack of farming instruction and opportunities for employment outside the reserve. Working outside the reserve for wages as well as hunting and fishing took the Indians away from the reserve at seasons which were important for grain growing. Crops often suffered from a lack of soil preparation and proper attention at harvest.

Grain growing was not successful on the Onion Lake reserves primarily because of drought, the light loamy soil and poor farming practices. Before the 1885 Rebellion these problems had also affected the development of agriculture on the reserves at Frog Lake. Drought and dry weather



were a common occurrence (Table 14). Sub-Agent Quinn reported a drought in 1884 which was discouraging as the Frog Lake Indians had 417 acres, inclusive of Farm 15, ready for seeding. Agent Mann chronicled the lack of rain in his journal and Annual Reports for the Onion Lake reserve during his term as agent from 1885 to 1900. In 1889 there was no rain until August and the crops were a total failure that season. In 1891 the grain was scorched as soon as it came above ground resulting in an average yield of about five bushels to the acre saved that season (SP14, 1893:171). The 1893 crops were a failure due to a lack of rain in spring, excessively high temperatures and gophers. Grain that year was of a very inferior quality and not fit for seed (SP14, 1895:81). In 1897 the crops were a failure because of drought but the root crops and vegetable gardens were very good (SP14, 1899:158).

Although the agent and Indians were conscientious in their attempts at agriculture during the 1880's and 1890's, the problem of consistently poor returns due to dry weather had a discouraging effect and minimized the effort put into grain growing. This was one reason that Indians turned more to cattle raising.

The soil on the Onion Lake reserves was not the best type for continuous grain growing without practices which would restore some of the fertility to the soil. By the early 1900's the soil in those fields which had been steadily used was worn out. In 1904 the Inspector attributed the lack of progress in agriculture at Onion Lake to the worn out condition of a number of the old fields which meant that they could not now be used profitably (SP27, 1905:194). Another

Table 14: Condition of Crops and Weather recorded for the Onion Lake Reserves, 1881-1900

Year	Crops	Weather Conditions
1881	wheat excellent, much of barley destroyed	early frost
1882		
1883	poor	drought
1884	oats poor, barley fair wheat frozen	early frost, drought
1885	no crops	
1886	partial failure	drought, frost
1887	barley good, wheat a failure	frost
1888	barley not as good as in 1887, wheat light due to inferior seed	
1889	poor, total failure	prolonged drought
1890	barley poor, wheat almost a total failure	drought, early frost
1891	disastrous	drought
1892	below average	drought
1893	poor, inferior quality	dry, excessively hot
1894	poor	dry
1895	favourable returns	early frosts
1896	fair	late spring, dry
1897	failure	drought
1898	failure	extreme drought during spring
1899	failure	
1900	unusually successful	

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports; PAC RG10 FOR, Daily Journals; Glenbow, AB Mann File.

problem mentioned was that of poor quality seed. The older fields were now "infested with noxious weeds, including wild oats and ball mustard, which are said to have been introduced several years ago along with seed grain" (SP27, 1904:202).

New and improved farming methods do not appear to have been used at the Onion Lake reserves during the early years of the study period. The Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, James Smart, noted in 1899 that the problem of poor and outdated farm methods was common to many of the Indian reserves. The Indians followed a pattern set by the early settlers who broke up fresh lands rather than leaving the older land fallow and fertilizing them. However, certain methods had now been adopted by the White farmers by which they attempted to combat early frost and droughts as well as maintain the fertility of the soil. Smart (SP14, 1900:xxiv) laments that it was a very difficult matter to get the Indians to abandon their first acquired impressions as to what constituted agriculture and adopt what to them were entirely new, as well as harder, methods. Inspector Chisholm (SP27, 1905:194) is more concise in his appraisal of grain growing practices at Onion Lake:

The Indians fully believe in discarding old fields, but not in renewing them, nor do they seem anxious to replace them with new ones. The methods in vogue among good farmers of cropping only one-third or one-half of a farm each season and cultivating and fertilizing the rest preparatory to seeding the following spring, has never been adopted here, nor has any attempt been made to adopt it.

If grain growing was going to improve on these reserves, more land would need to be cultivated and the old fields fallowed, cleansed of weeds and

fertilized.

There is some indication that during the latter part of the study period the Indians did adopt some advanced farming techniques. While new land was broken and some land cropped in 1920, eight acres were summerfallowed on the Onion Lake reserves that season. The Cold Lake and the Frog Lake bands also had some land summerfallowed during that season.

Closely associated with the problems of farming practices and worn-out soil was the problem of lack of farm instruction. While it appears that Agent Mann had a good knowledge of farming and did have the agency fields fertilized with cattle manure, this knowledge and practice did not seem to be adopted by many of the Indians. The problem seems to stem from the department's policy of hiring Indians to work on the reserves instead of White men who had good farming experience. At Onion Lake the person hired as farm instructor was a half-breed who knew little about farming. Agent Sibbald had little influence in the area of farming.

In criticizing the lack of agricultural progress on the Onion Lake reserves in 1914, the Inspector felt that the agency crop, which yielded only green feed in 1912 and eleven bushels per acre in 1913, was a poor example to the Indians and that grain growing ought to have been of more concern to the farm instructor. Farmer Bangs was criticized for spending most of his time with the agency cattle and not helping the Indians with their farms. The Frog Lake Indians did not have a farm instructor resident on their reserves after

the Rebellion so received little instruction in the area of agriculture. The farm instructors sent to Keeheewin reserve were half-breed men who apparently knew very little about farming. The most knowledgeable farmer appears to have been A. Martineau who was sent to the Cold Lake reserve in 1912.

The marketing and milling of grain was an important aspect in the development of agriculture. As long as there was no means of selling or milling grain, there was little incentive or purpose in getting the Indians to cultivate the land.

Indian Agent and Assistant Commissioner, Hayter Reed was concerned about the hardship which having neither a market or a mill placed upon those Indians in the Fort Pitt District who were anxious to progress and had reaped good crops in 1883. A mill was about to be erected in Battleford, making this the closest mill for the Indians in the Fort Pitt District. However, to ship grain to Battleford to be ground would, according to Reed, be only 67½¢ less than the contract price (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3668 F.10,644, December 28, 1883). Reed felt it was important that the Indians realize some material gain from their work and, if a mill for the district was impossible, then an alternative would need to be found. He suggested the sending in of a number of pigs and the purchasing of grain from the Indians to feed the pigs. This would also help with the bacon contract needed for that district. He went on to write:

The thing is in my mind to give the Indian a ready market, so that he can see a quick return for his labours. Otherwise, even though well advanced he will be discouraged

and seek to earn a living by hunting exclusively (*ibid.*).

A mill was granted to the Fort Pitt District following Reed's suggestion and was in the process of being erected when the Rebellion broke out. It was subsequently destroyed by the "rebel" Indians. Upon Agent Mann's arrival the problem of a mill once again surfaced. It was necessary if the Indians were to progress in agriculture.

Reed, who was now Indian Commissioner, wrote to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs expressing the view that he considered a mill at Onion Lake to be an "absolute necessity" (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3806 F.51,700, October 27, 1888). The Indians there had ploughed during the fall with at least ten yoke of oxen, had worked well during seeding and had harvested a good crop in 1888. Yet, as Inspector Wadsworth suggested, the work was more or less for nothing as there could be no profit unless there was some means of marketing or milling the grain. He expressed himself "at a loss to find any opening for the Department to make a direct gain unless a market can be found for the grain...[or] unless the Barley can be ground and dressed into wholesome flour" (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3785 F.41,783-6, Inspection Report, 1888).

In 1890 the agency finally obtained a grist and saw mill. Agent Mann looked forward to its operation with enthusiasm.

Since the Engine and driving machinery has been put up and the threshing having been done by it, The Indians are beginning to understand the benefits they will derive from paying more attention to their crops in future. And there is no doubt when the grist and saw mill is completed and the benefit to be derived from them is known amongst them the spirit of competition

already discernable will be increased and I have little doubt but the crop returns of this Band will steadily increase in years to come (Glenbow, AB Mann, Montly Report, October, 1890).

The following July, Mann reported on the success of the mill in the following words:

The Indians are fully alive to the benefit they will derive from the grist and saw mill which has been erected on the Onion Lake Reserve by the Department. Four families saved sufficient barley to make flour enough for their own use for twelve months, and, in addition to this quantity, sold 120 bushels to the Department. I will not particularize any further cases, but would respectfully point out that the contract for flour was reduced from 1,070 sacks in 1889-90 to 600 sacks in 1890-91. There would have been a much greater reduction had the crops been better.

The flour made from the barley is of a dark colour. The Indians at first did not like it chiefly because they did not understand properly how to cook it; however, after a few lessons they overcame this difficulty and they now like it very well. Only a few days ago one of the Indians told me he liked the barley bread equally as well as the wheat flour bread. It is certainly a good wholesome article. The grist mill will, I trust, soon repay the sum which was expended on it by the Department (SP14, 1892:72).

Barley was the primary crop grown at Onion Lake in the 1890's as it could be used for cattle feed without being ground. By 1892 the grist mill was in full operation and the Indians were able to grist grain for their own use. The flour made from barley was reported as good, although dark in colour, due to having become discoloured from wet weather after being stacked. The flour was reported to "make sweet wholesome bannocks" (SP14, 1894:192). Some of the Indians were able to grind enough flour for a year while the majority had enough flour for about six months.

The establishment of mills was recognized by the department as an important asset to the Indians. Indian Commissioner Reed noted that by establishing mills the Indians were able to "get the full benefit of their industry," were "saved the loss of time consumed in going to the mills and hanging about them waiting for their grists, and a feeling of pride and independence" was engendered (SP14, 1892: 198) and in 1895 he wrote that "the knowledge that they (the Indians) thus get full returns for the grain they raise is a strong incentive to interest in agriculture,..." (SP14, 1896:xxix).

In 1902 the Indians grew wheat from which they obtained 72 sacks of flour (SP27, 1904:175). They were able to grind about 200 sacks of flour altogether, besides selling some and retaining a good supply for seed.

Sometime between 1902 and 1914 the mill on the Onion Lake reserve was no longer used and the Indians were no longer grinding their own grain.

For the first time in many years an Indian of the Reserve took a small load of wheat to the mill at Lloydminster and received in return eight sacks of flour and a proportionate quantity of bran and shorts" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915).

In 1908 the Inspector reported that the reserves remote from agency headquarters were badly handicapped through the lack of threshing facilities. This meant that the grain they grew was used primarily for cattle feed. In 1915 some of the Indians on Keeheewin reserve took their grain to Vermilion to be ground into flour. This was a round trip of approximately 120 miles.



In 1900 it was reported that there was "a small but increasing demand for coarse grain to supply the local market and to feed the Indian's stock" (SP27, 1901:194). With increased settlement the Indians found a market for some of the grain they raised. This market was not large, but it was available and it did offer the Indians an incentive to grow grain. The money the Onion Lake Indians obtained from the sale of grains amounted to \$300.00 in 1902 and was spent on flour, other provisions and clothing (SP27, 1903:155). In 1905-06 the Canadian Northern Railway was extended to Lloydminster thus creating a market for grain which was within a reasonably short travelling distance from Onion Lake. By the late 1910's some of the Indians on the Onion Lake reserve were marketing their grain regularly at Lloydminster.

One further problem associated with the establishment and progress of agriculture on the reserves was government policy on the use and purchase of "labour-saving" implements.

By 1881 it was recognized by Indian Superintendent Dewdney, that the two yoke of cattle for each band and one plough for every three families promised by treaty was not enough for the bands to make a good start in agriculture. He reported in January 1882 that "the want of more teams and implements is felt by the Indians from one end of the territory to the other," and that, during 1881 "a few cattle and more tools than were provided by Treaty were handed to the Indians, and were a great help in getting in their crops" (SP6, 1882:53). He suggested that it would be a great inducement to the Indians to settle down and become independent if agents could give a plough to those

families who were seriously progressing in the direction of agriculture. However, the expense this would entail was larger than the government would agree to, and it was largely left up to the individual bands or Indians to purchase many of the farm implements which they needed with the money they could earn through sales of produce or wage earning endeavours.

The department policy on the purchase and use of farm implements appears somewhat contradictory. The policy adopted was to encourage the "industrious" Indians to earn and invest their money. They were encouraged to purchase implements with money obtained through the sale of grain, hay and cattle. The policy adopted was outlined by Dewdney.

The policy to be adopted is, generally speaking, that of letting the industrious invest a fair share of the results of their labor, in what they will appreciate as constituting private property; at the same time exercising all possible care to insure such purchases being of a nature to tend toward the ultimate independence of the individual (SP15, 1888:192).

Proceeds from sales were to be directed towards the purchase of wagons, agricultural machinery and other useful articles. What appears contradictory to this policy was the departments discouragement of Indians using "labour-saving" implements. The Indians were to be "taught to handle such comparatively simple implements as cradles, scythes, hoes, etc., which will be readily obtainable by them when thrown upon their own resources" rather than desiring larger implements (SP12, 1890: 162). The Indians were not to be encouraged even to contemplate the

performance of their work by labour-saving machinery as such would not be easily obtained or kept in repair if the Indians had to rely entirely on their own resources. In Reed's words:

Although it would seem that the policy here outlined should at once commend itself to common sense, no small amount of difficulty is encountered in having it carried into effect, for it is only natural that Indians should infinitely prefer to have their work done for them by machinery, and that their overseers should be disposed to give way to this desire, rather than subject themselves to the labour of overcoming it.

However, despite all obstacles, and without straining the policy too far, it is being carried out, although there are individual Indians who have arrived at the stage of being so far independent of the Government's assistance, that they can not well be restrained from purchasing machinery out of their own earnings (SP14, 1892:193).

It was felt that such machinery would be beyond the possible acquisition of the majority of Indians for some time after being left without department aid (SP14, 1893:48). It was therefore important that they learn to use those articles and tools which were possible for them to purchase or manufacture.

The Cold Lake Indians were most independent of all the bands in the agency and some were able to earn a considerable amount of cash through the sale of furs, the proceeds of which went primarily towards cattle, but in some cases, towards farm implements as well. The agents were generally very willing to move the larger agency implements such as the threshing machine and reaper around the reserves in the agency when possible so that the harvesting and threshing of grain could be done more

efficiently. The Indians are often referred to as having enough implements for the amount of farm work they were involved in. However, as Table 15 indicates, there never appears to have been an excess of farm implements available, although the numbers did gradually increase. Indeed, only one threshing machine is listed for the years 1891 to 1899, and one reaper for the years 1909 to 1916. The lack of "labour-saving" implements was probably one of the major factors in limiting the growth of agriculture.

Table 15: Implements belonging to the Indians in the Onion Lake Agency, 1881-1920

Year	Tool Chest	Ploughs	Harrows	Seed Drills	Mowers	Horse Rakes	Fanning Mill
1891	1	47	16				1
1892	1	39	17				1
1893	1	39	17				2
1894	1	44	15		3		2
1895	1	44	15		3		2
1896	1	47	15		5		2
1897	1	47	15		5	6	2
1898	1	36	14		5	6	2
1899	1	38	14		5	6	2
1900	1	38	15		9	8	2
1901	1	38	15		15	13	2
1902	1	38	15		20	17	2
1903	1	26	15		33	26	2
1904	1	23	14		34	27	
1905	1	23	14		40	34	
1906	1	26	16		41	35	
1907	1	27	15		43	38	
1908	1	28	15		43	38	
1909	1	31	16		46	41	
1910	1	23	20		45	40	
1911	1	24	20		45	40	
1912	2	25	22	1	45	43	
1913	2	27	23	1	46	44	
1914	7	26	22	1	59	56	
1915	7	29	23	1	64	61	
1916	7	30	25	1	67	63	
1917	n/g	56 <sup>2</sup>			134 <sup>3</sup>		
1918	n/g	57			71		
1919	n/g	58			72		
1920	n/g	58			74		

(Continued)

Table 15 (Continued)

Year	Threshing Machine (a) Reapers & Binders (b)	Wagons & Democrat Wagons	Carts Buggies & Road Carts	Sleighs	Other Implements	Value
1891	1a	27 <sup>1</sup>			920	
1892	1a	24 <sup>1</sup>			1048	
1893	1a	24 <sup>1</sup>			1048	
1894	1a	16	13		814	
1895	1a	16	15		941	
1896	1a	20	15		1008	
1897	1a	20	15		1062	\$5691.60
1898	1a	20	15		735	5688.00
1899	1a	20	15		735	5800.00
1900		20	11	24	650	3011.00
1901		24	11	24	650	3575.00
1902		28	15	25	600	3775.00
1903		53	29	47	600	5895.00
1904		54	28	46	600	5800.00
1905		61	31	58	600	6715.00
1906		69	42	63	520	7565.00
1907		69	39	81	650	8234.00
1908		76	36	33	670	8083.00
1909		75	40	85	670	8426.00
1910	1b	96	41	86	800	10244.00
1911	1b	96	45	91	800	11405.00
1912	1b	97	53	94	800	12939.00
1913	1b	108	65	97	1000	13667.00
1914	1b	160	45	148	815	16295.00
1915	1b	168	29	149	825	16750.00
1916	1b	170	28	150	865	17155.00
1917		347 <sup>4</sup>			902	17535.00
1918		351			1125	19600.00
1919		351			1125	19800.00
1920		341			1500	20200.00

NOTES: 1. includes wagons and carts; 2. includes ploughs, harrows and seed drill; 3. includes mowers, horse rakes and reaper; 4. includes wagons, carts and sleighs.

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports, 1892-1922.

## 5.2 Stock Raising

The reserve Indians became involved in cattle raising in the 1890's and it continued to be an important subsistence and economic activity throughout the remainder of the study period. This activity is the primary concern of this section. The raising of other livestock, including horses, sheep, pigs and poultry are also discussed briefly.

### 5.2.1 Cattle Raising by the Cree

The Cree made good progress in the number and quantity of their cattle through their involvement in the cattle loan program and the provision of thoroughbred bulls from the department. The care given to cattle was an important factor in the building up of herds. Several problems were encountered in this area such as the lack of fenced-in pastures and poor wintering quarters. Care given varied with the individual Indian owners, some of whom were praised by the agent and inspector for their ability as stockmen. Cattle were important to the subsistence needs of the Indians in that they provided beef, milk and income through the sale of beef and livestock. The selling of cattle was sometimes indiscriminate and the department attempted to control such sales through the imposition of a permit system.

#### 5.2.1.1 The Number and Quality of the Herds

Through the cattle loan program, which was discussed previously, the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves were introduced to cattle raising. The program worked well among these Indians and a number of

them were able to build up sizeable herds.

In 1882 there were a total of 26 oxen among the Cree and agency personnel in the district, 12 oxen were on Farm 14, two oxen on Farm 15 and four oxen were on loan to each of bands 120, 122 and 123. In 1883 and 1884 the number increased with eight oxen now being owned privately by the Indians. During the 1885 Rebellion many cattle were taken by the "rebel" Indians. In the fall of 1885 only seven oxen were available to the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves. Agent Mann's initial concern upon his arrival at Onion Lake was to rebuild the agency farm, to start the Indians building houses and stables and to prepare land for grain growing. His emphasis during the late 1880's was on grain growing. However, because of repeated crop failures and the absence of a grain market and grist mill during this time, interest of the Indians turned more to stock raising. This interest was reflected in the gradual increase in the number of cattle on the reserves, including those on loan to and those privately owned by the Indians. Table 16 indicates the number of oxen on loan to the Indians and the number of oxen which were the private property of the Indians. The latter were the progeny of oxen loaned previously. After 1893 the number of oxen loaned decreased considerably while the number of oxen privately owned increased.

In 1888 Agent Mann reported that "the Indians take pride in their cattle, and at the present rate of increase will soon be able to raise enough beef for their own consumption" (SP12, 1890:70). The cattle had done "exceedingly well," the offspring were large and the animals were



Table 16: Livestock on loan to and privately owned by the Indians, 1882-1895

Year	Oxen on Loan	Oxen - Private Property of Indians
1882	26	
1883	57	
1884	52	8
1885	-	-
1886	54	3
1887	51	3
1888	53	5
1889	62	5
1890	79	12
1891	87	18
1892	52	65
1893	98	12
1894	19	81
1895	11	69

in a healthy condition (*ibid.*). At this time, 18 of the 45 separate family holdings on IR 119 had stables and stockyards for their cattle.

The first detailed livestock returns located were for 1891. At this time there were 248 cattle on the Onion Lake reserves. In the agency as a whole, including both the Onion Lake reserves and the Chipewyan band, there were 137 cows, 108 oxen and 200 young cattle making a total of 445 (SP14, 1892:xxxix). The number of cattle in the hands of the Indians on the reserves in the agency for the period from 1893 to 1920 are shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Livestock and poultry returns for the Onion Lake Agency, 1893-1920

Year	Milk Cows	Bulls	Oxen	Young Stock	Steers	Total Cattle	Horses	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry
1893	165	4	111	305		585	119	105	14	
1894	161	3	101	414		679	119	100	14	
1895	193	2	80	462		737	113	162	6	
1896	196	2	97	582		877	116	88	6	
1897	206	2	102	406	228	944	151	145	7	110
1898	259		97	377	166	899	114	93	6	150
1899	520	8	105	684	447	1764	247	116	2	190
1900	256	2	73	313	172	816	269			60
1901	285	7	73	287	182	834	240			55
1902	284	6	72	288	153	803	234			20
1903	280	12	78	344	104	818	223		3	18
1904	395	5	77	412	124	1013	195			
1905	430	5	78	581	79	1173	223			
1906	492	7	69	619	182	1369	293			
1907	318	4	147	631	99	1199	352			
1908	322	3	42	599	82	1048	339			
1909	338	1	39	585	87	1050	344			
1910	296	3	33	632	58	1022	406			
1911	614	1	53	363	220	1251	416			
1912	590	2	46	349	208	1195	381			
1913	378	4	51	407	195	1035	420			
1914	348	4	48	342	52	794	440			
1915	314	3	57	299	81	754	459		39	110
1916	314	1	69*	306	85	775	437		106	370
1917	263			258	138	659	435		81	646
1918	246			396	66	708	437			825
1919	251	1		232	119	602	467			970
1920	266	1		321	65	653	505			1150

239

Note: \* Oxen are included in column for steers from 1917 to 1920 inclusive.

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports and Tabular Statements, 1894-1922.

In 1897 the Inspector reported that the number of Indian cattle on the Onion Lake reserves had steadily increased and reached a point at which the supply of available hay became a limiting factor. Hay was reported to be scarce on the reserve in dry seasons and in the immediate vicinity of the reserves. If the herds were to increase, the Indians would need to cut hay some distance from the reserves or grow feed. Both alternatives presented problems. As settlers moved into the district and began competing for valuable hay lands these became less available to the Indians. Secondly, grain growing did not prosper on the Onion Lake reserves, as was shown in the previous section.

By 1900 the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves were successfully adapting to the cattle industry. Individual cattle herds had increased to such an extent that not only could the Indians use their own cattle for beef, but surplus cattle were available for sale without detriment to the herds. In 1903 Inspector Chisholm noted:

In connection with the maintenance of their herds these Indians display much industry and thrift. They comply readily with all directions of the agent and farmer regarding the management and care of their cattle (SP27, 1904:203).

In the fall of 1903 all breeding cows, heifers and calves were issued on a loan basis to Indians who were interested in building up a herd or increasing their herd. The cattle issued had come through the preceeding winter rather thin, were very wild, having been on the range during the summer, and had suffered severely from several roundups during the summer and in the fall, when they were divided

into various herds for wintering. Because these cattle began the winter in poor condition they needed special care. Up to eight percent of the cattle were lost during the following winter due to carelessness in handling feed and housing stock (SP27, 1905:194). This may have been the result of a number of individuals engaging in stock raising for the first time, and therefore, a lack of experience.

The cattle industry was well established on the Frog Lake reserves by 1904 and, although the band did not have a resident farmer, some members did very well. Agent Sibbald listed cattle raising as the principal occupation of this band in 1906. One problem faced by those raising stock at Frog Lake was the large amount of time spent hay making because hay patches were small and scattered. The success with which this band began stock raising did not continue. The agent reported in 1908:

Cattle-raising is, with difficulty, followed to a small extent, the hindrance being lack of hay; the Indians generally manage to get enough to bring the cattle through the winter, but have to cover a large area of ground and travel far in order to do so (SP27, 1909:139).

Although hay was difficult to obtain, the number of cattle increased. They were considered "first class stock" and were well cared for.

An outbreak of blackleg (which recurred in 1916), the beefing of 46 head (a rate comparable to that at Onion Lake with its larger herds and larger population), sales and straylings contributed to a heavy decrease in the Frog Lake herds in 1914. The losses, some as high as 50 percent, were a severe blow to the cattle industry on these

reserves. The following year there was a slight increase in the cattle herd, losses were light, and the number beefed and sold was moderate. The cattle industry experienced a slight increase during the remainder of the study period.

The facilities for raising cattle and for farming were excellent on Keeheewin reserve No. 123. The Indians who returned to this reserve in 1903 made a good start in the cattle industry (SP27, 1906:180). In 1912 Agent Sibbald maintained that it was partly due to the convenience of feed and water that the cattle on this reserve were "attended to better than on other reserves" in the agency (SP27, 1913:154). In 1914, a 50 percent decrease in cattle occurred. This was partly due to the unusually high number of cattle beefed which numbered 51 over the six months prior to the inspection. This high percentage of decrease was not so large during the remainder of the study period.

The quality of cattle belonging to the Cree was praised highly by the inspectors who maintained that these cattle were some of the finest stock in the country. The agent reported in 1910 that the cattle on the Frog Lake reserve were "of unusually good breed, and this last year the calves, in size, surpass any year since I have been in charge" (SP27, 1911:149). He had been in charge since 1900. In 1912 Agent Sibbald asserted that the cattle on Keeheewin reserve "cannot be surpassed in the surrounding neighbourhood" (SP27, 1913:154).

The exceptional quality of stock was due to the use of thoroughbred bulls made available through the department and circulated among the reserves. When an individual Indian sold or beefed an animal,

he was required to pay a tax to the bull fund which was used to purchase well-bred bulls. At Onion Lake the amount was \$2.00 in 1906 for each animal sold or beefed. It was later raised to \$5.00.

...the quality of cattle on these reserves is noticeably fine, due to the selection of bulls, purchased from time to time, an expense which is well subscribed to by the Indians, although the choice of the animal is left to the department (SP27, 1913:152).

J. Smart, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, reported on the success of the bull fund:

Not only has the stock increased in quantity but the quality has been greatly improved by the importation of well bred bulls, and it is worthy of mention that in pursuance of the long established policy of not assisting Indians in any direction beyond the point of placing them in a position to help themselves, a fund has been formed at every agency by the retention of a percentage of the money derived from the sale of animals for the purpose of purchasing such bulls (SP14, 1900:xxvi).

The number of bulls in the agency increased in 1903-04 when a total of five bulls were purchased. At that time a number of Indians were moving back to their former reserves and bulls were needed to be placed in each locality. The department continued to provide bulls for the Indians from the bull fund and from other sources for the encouragement of the Indians and so that good breeding would continue.

Several types of bulls, including Shorthorn, Herford and Angus were used in the agency. The initial stock was Shorthorn but through the introduction of sires of other breeds the cattle depreciated in size and quality. Nevertheless, the cattle in the agency were noted for being of an exceptionally good quality.

The bulls were generally well cared for and sheltered during the winter by individual Indians or at the agency. Because there was no agency farm at Frog Lake the bulls were allowed to run free with the other cattle. This resulted in many winter calves and some losses.

#### 5.2.1.2 The Care of Cattle

Cattle were cared for and wintered by their individual owners. This was encouraged by the department to promote individual enterprise and discourage communal activity. In a few instances several Indians joined together in putting up hay and wintering their cattle together. It was Inspector Chisholm's opinion, that this system did not work as satisfactorily as when individuals cared for their own cattle (SP27, 1901:195).

The Indians at Onion Lake were industrious and quick to learn how to care for their animals. Agent Mann was an excellent instructor, and he was praised by the inspector for his understanding in matters concerning cattle. Throughout most of the study period the cattle belonging to the Indians were reported to be in "excellent" or "spendid" condition. This was due, in part, to the care given them.

Stables and hay were important factors in the good care of cattle, and under the direction of Agent Mann the Indians received instruction in both. Mann reported in 1892:

The Indians always procure a good supply of hay during the summer months, which goes to show that they take an interest in their stock, by seeing that they are properly fed

and cared for during the winter months, which accounts for the steady increase that has been brought under your notice from year to year (SP14, 1893:171).

Inspector Wadsworth mentioned specially in his 1894 report that there had been a general improvement in stables with many being enlarged and new doors added on IR 119. The stables had strong corrals with a stack of hay in each (SP14, 1896:244). In 1899 the stables and corrals owned by these Indians were praised again by the inspector, who wrote:

The stable and hay corrals were properly fitted up, and with respect to the condition in which they are kept and the comfort and feeding of animals, they are not surpassed by any I have seen elsewhere (SP27, 1901:195).

The wintering quarters provided for cattle during the 1900's were not always adequate. Apparently, some stables and corrals were left unrepaired or were abandoned for a time. This meant that there was little shelter for the cattle during winter. In 1906 there was considerable loss of Indian cattle because of their wintering quarters. The winter was long and severe and the hay supply was barely adequate for an average winter only. It was Inspector Chisholm's opinion that the cattle might have made it through the winter with the feed available except that most of the stock were without shelter. He attributed the loss, therefore, to "exposure to the severity of the winter" (SP27, 1908:151). Where adequate protection was provided, cattle ate less and calves were larger. Better winter quarters were therefore important.

Usually cattle were kept in corrals during the winter and



calves were stabled during severely cold weather. Early in spring, cattle were allowed to wander farther from their corrals and then gradually herded together into larger bunches. The loss of calves was frequently attributed to wolves which preyed upon them early in the spring. The owners gave little attention to the herds between spring and the fall roundup except for branding, which took place during May or June.

Hay was particularly important during cold, long winters and during the latter part of the winter before the early grasses appeared in spring. By 1889, the Indians had become proficient in hay making. The Inspector observed, during his inspection in 1889, that 65 men were engaged at hay making. As there was only one mower, 26 men were mowing with scythes and sickles, 23 were cocking and 16 were carting with eight wagons and eight yoke of oxen. They worked in three separate gangs in a "systematic manner" and required little supervision (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F.53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1889). Stacks of hay were fenced and fireguards were ploughed around them.

Dion commented on the gathering of hay, individual ownership and the social aspect of hay making bees on Keeheewin reserve:

Big hay making bees were organized where whoever wanted to work was insured a good supply of feed for his stock. The hay was not community owned; every man had his hay sloughs and meadows. His share was the amount they produced. These bees were interesting affairs, for everyone in camp took part. Some did nothing but hunt for meat - ducks, rabbits, deer and moose. The elderly women and children picked berries, Saskatoons mostly (Dion 1979:143).

Most of the reserves had a good supply of hay available. When the department herd was in operation the hay swamps on and near Keeheewin reserve were used extensively. As the herds increased, it was necessary to cut more hay (Table 18, p. 248). No cultivated hay was grown on the reserves until 1900. It was encouraged by one inspector if the herds were to expand and as hay reserves off the reserve were being taken up through settlement. The entire amount of hay made was not always used for the cattle. After an adequate amount of hay was put up for winter use, the extra hay was sold to settlers in return for cash. The more conscientious Indians sold hay to those who were less diligent in making hay and who ran out of hay during the winter. After 1910 the amount of grain grown for fodder increased while the amount of hay made continued at approximately the same amount (Table 18).

By 1899, some individuals had been in the cattle industry for nearly 20 years and were described by Inspector Chisholm as "very creditable stockmen," who required "little direction, making provision of both feed and shelter for the winter in a thorough-going fashion and attending to their stock well in every respect" (SP27, 1905:193). There were some individuals who were still careless about stabling and caring for their cattle. These individuals required continuous attention from the agent and farm instructor.

Individual initiative was recognized and praised. In 1902 Agent Sibbald stated that most of the Indians on IR 119 desired to become self-supporting, some were making a success of cattle raising, and there were a few who were doing exceptionally well. Sibbald singled out

Table 18: Wild Hay and other fodder cut (tons) in the Onion Lake Agency, 1886-1920

Year	Hay	Other Fodder	Year	Hay	Other Fodder	Year	Hay	Other Fodder
1886	600		1898	3940		1910	3157	250
1887	700		1899	2200		1911	3534	532
1888	850		1900	2300	175	1912	3131	382
1889	1065		1901	2400	250	1913	2627	508
1890	1700		1902	2400	200	1914	2710	320
1891	1800		1903	1850	100	1915	2609	430
1892	2468		1904	1887	10	1916	2398	1281
1893	3300		1905	2302	125	1917	2818	476
1894	3400		1906	2446	220	1918	3193	406
1895	3800		1907	2725	180	1919	3641	435
1896	2000		1908	2688	250	1920		
1897	2000		1909	3110	275			

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports and Tabular Statements, 1887-1921.

Sam Waskawitch as one of the most industrious and promising men. He had built new stables, put up a strong fence around his grain field, had lumber to improve his house and was a good influence on his fellow Indians. He would soon be able to purchase a mower and rake of his own and, according to Sibbald, was on the way to becoming independent of department assistance (SP27, 1903:156).

Others were praised by the agent and inspectors for their initiative and success in the cattle industry. In 1904, Inspector Chisholm recognized Alexis Crossarms, Sam Waskawitch, Young Chief, Albert, Pathagan, Meeseehayo

and Kaneepahtatayo as deserving of praise in connection with wintering their cattle. Some of these men had been able to furnish hay that spring to less thrifty Indians at \$5 a load (SP27, 1905:194).

At Frog Lake two of the older men were considered to be especially successful in cattle raising. While most of the men wintered cattle outside, these men always stabled their calves and thinner cattle and provided some kind of shelter for their other cattle.

#### 5.2.1.3 Dairying

In 1897 Inspector Chisholm listed dairying, agriculture and stock raising as the main industries of the Onion Lake Indians. Milk and butter were important nutritional by-products of making milk cows available to the Indians through the cattle loan program. Agent Mann stated in 1889, that through "this plan almost every Indian family was given a milk cow" (Glenbow, AB Mann). Mann encouraged dairying, and Inspector Wadsworth reported in 1889 that most of the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves were milking their cows (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F.53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1889). As there was no market for milk the Indians made use of it themselves.

The women were commended for being very good butter makers and made a great deal of butter for home consumption (SP14, 1899:83). Some women derived a small income through the sale of butter to police who were stationed at Onion Lake (SP14, 1892:86). Joseph Dion's father bought the first cream separator on the Keeheewin reserve in 1906. They began to milk their cows and make butter, much of which was given

away as it could not be sold.

Because there was little or no market for dairy products these were produced primarily for subsistence needs. Dairying is seldom mentioned during the second half of the study period and it might be assumed that it was no longer as popular and extensively practiced as it had once been, or that it was so common as not to be noteworthy.

#### 5.2.1.4 The Beefing and Sale of Cattle

One benefit derived from cattle raising was that the Indians could raise their own beef rather than depending upon beef rations from the agency. By 1893 some individuals had herds of sufficient size to allow for beefing or sales of cattle. In 1894 there were 17 cattle killed for beef by the Indians on IR 119 and 11 head sold to the Saddle Lake agency. On IR 124 ten were beefed. The total number of cattle beefed in the agency from December 1893 to December 1894 was 59 head. This produced 41,822 pounds of beef and 1,698 pounds of offal. The beef was of "choice quality" and "well butchered" (SP14, 1896:245).

Those Indians who successfully increased their herds through constant care were occasionally allowed to sell an animal. This was allowed "as an encouragement to themselves and to stimulate their fellows" (SP14, 1892:194), but was to be done only with the agent's knowledge and permission. In the fall of 1895 some of the Onion Lake Indians were allowed by Agent Mann to beef a few cattle for sale (SP14, 1896:84). The Deputy Superintendent General noted in 1896 that the cattle loan system had been so successful that many individuals had

"managed to collect about them herds of sufficient size as permit, without detriment, sales to be made," and thus bring in ready cash (SP14, 1897:xxiii).

The Indians on the Onion Lake reserves had several markets for beef and cattle. Surplus stock was sold locally to the Hudson's Bay Company, the missions, settlers and traders. After the department herd was disbanded most of the beef required for the agency was supplied by the Onion Lake Indians.

The proceeds from cattle and beef sales were directed primarily toward the purchase of farm implements such as mowers, rakes, wagons and harrows as well as other necessities (Table 27, p. 340). In 1897, Agent Mann reported that the "mowers, rakes, and harness, are mostly the private property of Indians, being procured with the proceeds of cattle sold for beef" (SP14, 1898:166), and in 1902 Agent Sibbald reported:

Most of the Indians who have implements of their own are careful with them, and they are kept in good repair by the department employees, at which work the owners generally assist. One mower, one horse-rake and two bob-sleighs have been purchased out of Indian earnings during the year (SP27, 1903:156).

Agents were to act as a central agent in charge of the sale of Indian cattle. The permit system, put in effect by the department, was an attempt to safeguard the continuance of the herds and to ensure that Indians would not be cheated out of good prices for their cattle. Traders and settlers sometimes attempted to take advantage of the Indians by purchasing cattle or beef at prices below their true market

value.

In 1913 Agent Sibbald reported that Indians of the Frog Lake and Keeheewin bands were beefing cattle for sale without permission and that their herds were decreasing (SP27, 1914:149, 150). This decrease was severely criticized by Inspector Chisholm who maintained that the Indians on these reserves had become "prey to certain unscrupulous dealers, whose operations require to be more closely watched" (SP27, 1915:65). The same year Inspector Swinford reported a heavy decrease in Indian herds on all of the reserves in the agency (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914). The decrease on IR 119 amounted to 176 head for the two year period from April 1912 to March 1914. Of these, 22 were transferred to other reserves, 152 were beefed and 70 were sold. The number beefed was considered by Swinford to be unnecessarily high, even though some were sold to the mission schools and agency. The number sold was not high but many of these were cows, two year olds and yearlings. The department urged the Indians not to sell useful cows and young cattle as these were considered essential to the continuance of the herds.

The decrease in cattle from April 1912 to March 1914 was also large on the Frog Lake reserve. The number beefed totalled 46 head over two years. The inspector considered this excessive and suggested that, by availing themselves of the good supply of fish in Little Fishing Lake, the Frog Lake Indians could reduce the number of cattle needed for food. It is not clear what the Indians' dietary preferences were at this time or whether the number beefed for food could actually

be reduced without falling below their subsistence requirements if they increased their supply of fish and game. The number sold amounted to 52 and included a large number of cows, heifers and yearlings. This number was considered by Inspector Swinford to be far out of proportion to the strength of the herd.

The number of cattle beefed and sold by members of Keeheewin band during the same period of time was also considered by the Inspector to be "unreasonably large." Here, as on the other reserves, and contrary to the department policy, cows and young stock were frequently sold. In the six months prior to Swinford's inspection of the agency in March 1914, the number of cattle beefed by members of Keeheewin band totalled 51 and the number sold totalled 23. The types of cattle disposed of were as follows:

	Beefed	Sold	Total
Cows	15	8	23
Steers - 3 yr. old	1	4	5
2 yr. old	12	3	15
Heifers - 2 yr. old	7	4	11
Steers - yearlings	11	2	13
Heifers - yearlings	5	2	7
	<u>51</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>74</u>

Swinford believed that the reason for the large number of cattle beefed and sold was to be sought in loss of control by the agent:

For a time after these Indians moved from Onion Lake, and before they had a farmer over them, such things did not occur, but they obeyed the Agent's instructions except occasionally when under the influence of hunger they beefed a cow or young animal without permission.



But the beefing and sale of their young and breeding stock in the manner [shown] above indicates a very serious loss of control over the industry, which is attributable, in my opinion, to the effect upon the minds of the Indians and of the Farmer of the Agent's recent uncertain health, and occasional prolonged absence (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914).

Swinford also observed that unscrupulous traders and cattle dealers and even neighbouring settlers had occasionally got hold of the Indians' cattle in an underhand way, sometimes by making advances of cash or goods and later taking cattle in payment of the debt and without consultation with the agent (*ibid.*).

Problems with the permit system at the Keeheewin reserve were not only a result of the absence of the agent. Inspector Chisholm suggested in 1914, and later inspectors agreed, that the agent received little or no assistance in this matter from the resident farmer. The first farmer on this reserve, F.T. Slater, was neither a good farmer nor an effective person in managing the Indians. In 1914, F.D.J. Dresser took charge. He was supposed to be an experienced farmer from Ontario but was not enthusiastic about obtaining and keeping track of information regarding cattle sales. Following Dresser, a Metis by the name of W. Slater became farmer. He was reported to be a poor influence on the Indians and was soon dismissed.

Enforcement of the permit system was also hindered by the Indians' perception of the policy and their resentment of it. It was precisely this permit system and the restrictions inherent in it which those Indians who moved from Onion Lake to Keeheewin reserve in 1903 sought

to escape. According to Dion, whose father was one of the farmers to move, a drastic change took place after the transfer of Agent Mann to Saddle Lake in that a permit system was introduced "which made us feel that what we raised did not belong to us" (Dion 1979:132). Dion writes:

We had to get a written permit for everything we wanted to sell or trade and we had to give a strict account of our cattle. A tax of \$5.00 on every beef we sold was imposed, also 50 cents on every ton of hay. All white people except employees of the Department of Indian Affairs, the police, and the clergy were forbidden to come and visit with us, as were our friends the Metis... Buyers of stock and grain were warned that all transactions with a treaty Indian had to be done by an agent of the Department, in some cases even to the handling of our money for us (*ibid.*).

Dion maintained that the restrictions placed on them by the agent and the permit system led to the demise of the cattle industry.

After a few years on our reserve, the representatives of the government began to remind us that we were only wards, that the agent was chief ruler of our lives. Small wonder that the best men in our ranks eventually got discouraged and simply gave up trying because even the most humble wage earner will resent a domineering employer when his direct supervision gets to be a hindrance rather than an asset. The cattle business on the reserves died on that account (Dion 1979:145).

The Indians resented the permit system because it interfered with the disposal of their cattle and beef. It made them feel that the cattle they raised were not their own.

Complaints about the permit system, withholding of treaty money, and the bull fund were voiced at a meeting held by the agent with the Indians of the agency and Reverend E.J. Cunningham in August 1910.

Thunder, speaking for the Cree, addressed Sibbald with the following words<sup>1</sup>:

Another thing we don't like the holding of our treaty money to pay for repairs to implements etc. nor do we like the holding of beef money to purchase heifers and to subscribe to the bull fund. I don't like it and the other Indians don't like it. All the bands are represented here. In the past we were not treated in this manner. It looks as if we do not own anything. When we Indians give anything, we give it and ask no more about it. It is long since I loaned cattle and I was told the offspring would be mine, and that after three years I was to make good the cattle loaned. We are told that it is the Department that is doing this, and if we cannot do what we like with the offspring it looks as if the department wishes to hold on to what they have given us (PAC RG10 Black Vol. 4052 F.369,540).

Sibbald's reply, as he records it, is an explanation of his actions in the areas criticized. His attitude is paternalistic. He clearly disagrees with the views of the Indians present, and does not question the right of his control over their earnings. It is all done for what he perceives is their benefit.

Sibbald replied:

...with regard to withholding treaty and other money for repairs, bull fund and heifer account, I told them that in taking this step with them, I was not only doing what the department expected me to do, but that in it I would be supported by any intelligent Indian, if he would only take the trouble to think out the advantage. I told them they had only to look at the fine band of cattle to be found on our reserves, to see the benefit of the small contribution to the bull fund. I also told them that frequently I am told by people passing

---

1. These are Thunder's words as recorded by Sibbald in his report of the meeting.

through, that in no part of the country do they come across finer looking cattle than at Onion Lake and that was only due to the pure bred bulls sent in and partly paid for by the department. I explained with regard to the heifer account, that it would be only in cases where the number of cattle in the hands of the Indian did not reach ten, that the purchase of an heifer would be demanded.

With regards to paying for repairs I told them that I got the repairs as a matter of accommodation to them, and that it was the duty of honourable people to pay their just and lawful debts, when they had the money to pay them with, that it was only on condition that they would pay when they were able that I got the repairs for them.

What was important to Sibbald - the quality of cattle, the continuance of the cattle herds and the proper payment by individuals for repairs to their implements - was not important to the Indians who were questioning department control over what they perceived as their privilege and property. The Indians desired control of their own money and over their private cattle and were resentful of the department's interference in these areas.

During the remainder of the study period there continued to be difficulties in enforcing the permit system with regard to the sale and slaughter of cattle. Inspector Crombie reported in 1917 that the number of animals shown as missing from IR 119 was exceedingly large and it was suspected that cattle were "being sold clandestinely by the Indians without permits to ranchers in the neighbourhood" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1917). It was suspected that a large percentage of the animals shown as dead were beefed for sale by their owners. A large number of young stock were sold on

the Keeheewin and Cold Lake reserves in 1917. For the year ended March 31, 1917, sales other than those made between bands numbered 161, or approximately four percent of the cattle owned by the Indians and included the following:

Reserve	Matured Stock	Young Stock	Total
IR 119	13	12	25
IR 121	9	9	18
IR 123	9	13	22
IR 149	30	66	96
	<u>61</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>161</u>

Cattle returns during the 1910's reported a large number of cattle as missing. It was suspected by department officials that some of these cattle had actually been beefed or sold by the Indians. Also contributing to the loss of cattle was straying. As settlers moved into the area it became easier for their cattle and cattle from the Indian herds to become mixed. Around 1910-11, a number of settlers from south of the North Saskatchewan River moved their herds to the north side in the area between Onion Lake and Frog Lake to graze for the summer. When Indian cattle were not rounded up early, some were driven off with the settlers' herds when these were taken to the south side of the river for winter.

Swinford reported 95 head missing from the Onion Lake reserve in 1914 and suggested that some had been driven off by outsiders from south of the river. To safeguard against problems arising through

the herding of Indian cattle with those of settlers, he recommended that more attention be given to the branding of calves, there be an earlier fall roundup of the entire stock and that more secure pasture fences be constructed. An earlier roundup would help solve the problem of settlers searching for strays among Indian cattle. Also, if calves were branded before being sent to the larger herds and before being weaned they could be more easily identified at roundup time.

With more settlers moving into the area, it became necessary to consider establishing private band pastures. The agency had a fenced pasture of about 100 acres on IR 119, but there was no band pasture for Indian cattle which were generally allowed to run at large. There were two private pastures in which five Indians took care of 54 head of cattle, but this was a small portion of the total number of 330 cattle on the reserve. In 1917, Crombie recommended that fenced communal pastures be set up on the Onion Lake and Frog Lake reserves. By creating a general pasture of about four sections adjacent to Long Lake in IR 119, ample pasturage could be provided for the band cattle. The necessary wire and staples would cost approximately \$500.00. The band on Keeheewin reserve had a suitable pasture which was well fenced and had an ample supply of water. The estimated cost for an adequate pasture on the Cold Lake reserve was about \$450.00

### 5.2.2 Cattle Raising by the Chipewyan

During the 1880's the Chipewyan had a keen interest in cattle raising and after receiving their allotment of treaty cattle, supplemented

the offspring of these cattle through purchases of their own. According to Indian Agent Reed, the Chipewyan had become "possessed of cattle" so that whenever they had sufficient means at their disposal a purchase of young stock was made (SP6, 1882:76). By 1883 they were considered rich in stock. Besides the treaty cattle and their offspring (which numbered 21 head) they had 16 horses, 16 oxen, 10 cows, six bulls, nine heifers, two steers and 10 calves, for a total of 74 cattle (SP4, 1884:124). By 1884 the herd had increased to 129 head and 47 milk cows.

The Chipewyan engaged in stock raising through their own efforts, with little guidance from the agency and largely through their own finances. While they received treaty cattle with which to begin their herds, and the department provided them with thoroughbred bulls, most of their cattle were procured through their own finances.

What began as an independent determination to make a success of cattle raising by these Indians ran into problems by the late 1890's. At least three factors were involved. These included the quality of cattle, the care given to them, and the independent attitude of the Indians which was opposed to department guidance and policy.

While their cattle herds increased during the 1880's and 1890's, the quality of animals decreased. In 1898, the Inspector described the cattle as being of "a poor class and badly inbred" (SP14, 1900:188), and in 1899 they were described as being of "a very inferior class" (SP27, 1901:195). In 1907 the cattle were still of a "low grade" and were not increasing in numbers (SP27, 1909:141).

The reason for the inferior quality of stock was that the bulls owned by the Chipewyan had all been reared from their own stock. Agent Sibbald suggested to the Chipewyan in 1903 that they get rid of these bulls and accept thoroughbred bulls from the department. They refused this suggestion at first but the following year they accepted three thoroughbred bulls from the department and did away with some of their inferior bulls (SP27, 1906:138). In 1910 the department placed two more bulls on the reserve but, because the herds were scattered on both reserves, the five thoroughbred bulls were not enough. Therefore, some of the Indians on IR 149B insisted on keeping their own bulls. Some of the inferior bulls were still around in 1913 and in 1915 several yearling scrub bulls were found. They were later castrated when the agent agreed to increase the number of thoroughbred bulls. In 1916 arrangements were made to exchange the four thoroughbred bulls on IR 149 with bulls on IR 123.

The introduction of better standard bulls affected the quality of the cattle. By 1910 the younger cattle showed a marked improvement, and in 1915 Inspector Chisholm reported that the cattle had shown "a great improvement in quality within the last few years, the shorthorn and herford strains now becoming quite prominent" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915).

Because the Chipewyan were semi-sedentary, following a subsistence cycle which consisted primarily of hunting, trapping and fishing, their cattle often suffered through lack of care and attention. Some individuals built houses and stables near the Beaver River during the 1880's but



since their reserve was not surveyed until 1904, their permanent location was still somewhat tenuous until then. Except for a few months in 1885, the Chipewyan did not have a farm instructor until the 1910's. They received little, if any, guidance in animal husbandry and care except for an occasional visit from the agent.

Many cattle owners had little to do with their animals. With the first signs of spring the men went on the spring hunt. During the winter many of the men were away hunting, trapping or fishing and cattle were cared for by the women or some family member who remained on the reserve. The Chipewyan were diligent in putting up an adequate supply of hay for winter feed so that their cattle seldom suffered for want of food during the winter. Problems with the care of cattle arose in the areas of inadequate stabling and allowing cattle to roam. Inspector Chisholm reported in 1915 that practically none of the cattle were stabled and the sheds which were available were in a very neglected condition. At the first sign of spring the cattle were left to fend for themselves. Inspector Swinford was critical of this practice:

This may account for the loss of some weak cows or heifers; and it is such carelessness that may account for the fact that the calf crops for the past two seasons seems smaller than on the other reserves of the agency. Calves born on the open prairie during April storms would be very liable to perish from exposure or to be devoured by wolves (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.271/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914).

In discussions with others who kept cattle in the vicinity of the reserve Swinford learned that wolves were common predators of cattle. The Chipewyan, by leaving their cattle to fend for themselves from early April until roundup time in the fall, exposed their young cattle

to this danger.

According to Sibbald, the Chipewyan were very independent and a "hard people to persuade to do anything contrary to their own ideas;..." (SP27, 1913:155). They preferred to manage their cattle without interference from the agency. They were able to maintain a measure of independence from the agency because they were self-sufficient and relatively wealthy as a result of the fur trade. This attitude was strengthened by their early successes in cattle raising as well as their general independence from the agency in terms of provisions and lifestyle. Hunting, trapping and fishing provided an adequate subsistence base so that rations were necessary only during times of stress such as illness or when animals and fish were scarce.

Contributing to their independence was their distance from the agency headquarters at Onion Lake and the absence of a farm instructor among them for most of the study period. Before they had a resident farmer, they disposed of their cattle as they saw fit. This was opposed to the permit system and, in 1912, Martineau was sent to IR 149 with the expectation that he would help the agent gain control over the Indians with regard to the management of their herds.

There was a slight decrease in the cattle owned by the Chipewyan the following year. The number beefed was moderate as the Chipewyan derived most of their meat by hunting moose and fishing. The feed supply was adequate, so few animals starved. A problem arose in that many cattle were sold, and of these, almost all were cows, heifers or steers of two years and under. Further, animals were being beefed and

sold without the agent's knowledge or permission and "under influences from outside" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914). Inspector Chisholm also reported a heavy decrease in the herds due to the "smallness of the natural increase" (*ibid.*).

In 1916 Inspector Crombie felt that the permit system was working better as the decrease in herd size was less. His view changed during the next inspection, and he concluded:

Judging by the condition of the cattle industry on these reserves it would seem that Mr. Martineau is losing control of these Indians by granting cattle permits too freely. While these bands of Chipewyan Indians are hard to get along with, especially after suffering reverses, yet I see no reason why the serious decreases in their stock should not be arrested (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1917).

During the six months prior to September 30, 1917, the Chipewyan sold two oxen, eight cows and 19 cattle, 17 of which were under three years and eight of which were heifers. In the half yearly return for March 1917 the Chipewyan were reported to have sold six oxen, 26 cows, 38 steers, 30 heifers and 15 calves for a total of 109 cattle. These numbers greatly exceeded the numbers sold by other bands in the agency.

Crombie described problems arising with regard to the enforcement of the permit system among the Chipewyan. The issuing of permits had been left up to Martineau who apparently issued permits to everyone who asked for them, irrespective of whether the animal to be sold or beefed was young or old (*ibid.*). It was Martineau's contention that the cattle were privately owned by the Indians and therefore, the department had no claim on them, and could not monitor or forbid

transactions for their sale between Indians and traders, even though among the latter there might be those known who were unscrupulous.

A specific transaction came to Crombie's notice, between a member of the Chipewyan band, Alexier Janvier, and Rahall Bros., traders at Beaver Crossing, Alberta. Janvier sold two aged cows, two three year old steers, two oxen and one yearling steer for \$15.00 in cash or trade and a team of horses. Crombie considered the horses not worth more than \$300.00 and the cattle sold to be worth about \$575.00. This came to \$260.00 more than what Janvier received. The agent and farmer tried to persuade Janvier to keep his animals but finally gave in and issued a permit as "they figured he would sell whether he got a permit or not" (*ibid.*).

It was this type of transaction, which was profitable to the traders but unprofitable to the Indians, that the department sought to check. Crombie contended that Rahall Bros. were "working this game for all it's worth," and that Martineau was unwittingly assisting them in their business. Crombie held that the department had an interest in preserving the stock on these reserves as they supplied the thoroughbred bulls, and therefore, suggested that Martineau discontinue issuing permits except for three year old steers and aged cows.

By September 1920 the Chipewyan had 175 head of cattle. Most were "a fairly good type of mixed shorthorns and herfords" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1920). Cattle were still being purchased with money earned through the sale of furs. In 1919-20 the Chipewyan earned between \$1,600.00 and \$4,000.00 each by

trapping, a considerable amount of which was invested in cattle, horses, harness, implements and furniture (*ibid.*).

### 5.2.3 Other Livestock and Poultry (Table 17)

Through Agent Mann the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves were introduced to sheep, pigs and poultry. During the 1890's an attempt was made to raise both sheep and pigs. Agent Mann reported in 1896 that "a number of families keep poultry and pigs, and are very successful in raising these kinds of stock" (SP14, 1897:192). The first mention of poultry being raised by Indians in the agency is the Annual Report of 1895. During the latter part of the study period pigs and poultry raising became more popular among the Indians.

The raising of pigs was introduced to the Indians of the agency during the early 1880's. The livestock return for the Fort Pitt District in September 1883 shows two pigs as property of the agency Farm 15 and one as the private property of the Chipewyan band. In 1889 Agent Mann reported that pigs had done "exceedingly well" on the reserve (SP12, 1890:70). The pigs in the hands of the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves numbered only 11 in 1890 but increased to 41 in 1892. This appears to be the peak for pigs at Onion Lake and they steadily decreased after 1892 so that in 1897, Agent Mann reported that there were "very few hogs on the reserve, notwithstanding the abundance of suitable feed afforded annually in the barley crop" (SP14, 1898:181), and in 1899 there are only two listed in the stock return.

There are few references to the raising of pigs after 1899 until 1915, when Inspector Chisholm reported that the Indians at Frog Lake

and Long Lake were raising a few (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915). The Frog Lake Indians wished to obtain more but were unable to because of the scarcity of feed on the reserve. On Keeheewin reserve there were 12 pigs which were fed on oats and barley which the Indians had not been able to sell. Chisholm also noted that the Chipewyan at Cold Lake were interested in raising pigs and a few individuals had purchased the necessary stock to make a beginning. He reported that "the department is supplying six brood sows, by the progeny of which is expected that all who should be encouraged at the present stage to engage in hog raising will receive a start in the industry" (*ibid.*). The six brood sows were placed in the hands of two Indians who already had their own pigs, as it was felt they would be better able to raise the initial stock for later distribution. Besides oats, the pigs were fed a small amount of roots. A portable grain crusher on the reserve in 1915 meant that grain could be crushed for pig feed (*ibid.*).

In 1916 the number of pigs totalled 32 on IR 123 and 74 on IR 149. In 1917 several persons on IR 119 began to raise pigs. There were, in 1917, five pigs on IR 119, 34 on IR 123 and 42 on IR 149, giving a total of 81. There was no mention in the research material of the Indians raising pigs for bacon although this was the primary reason at first for obtaining the pigs. It seems that a preference for beef over pork meant a limited development of hog raising.

Sheep were introduced to the Indians at Onion Lake and had some success. Mann reported in 1893 that the sheep in the hands of

the Indians were doing very well, "but the increase of lambs has not been great, owing to the lack of knowledge on the part of the Indians of the great care to be taken of the ewes at the lambing season" (SP14, 1894:75). In 1895 they numbered 162. In 1898 Inspector Chisholm reported that sheep raising had been carried on with "some success" (SP14, 1899:181) and there were approximately 100 sheep in the hands of the Indians. There was a good increase in the flock during the 1890's but sheep are not mentioned in the Annual Reports after 1900.

One benefit derived from raising sheep was the production of wool. Some of the Indian women learned to knit socks from wool obtained from their own sheep.

Interest in raising poultry appears to have followed a pattern similar to that of hog raising (Table 17). Poultry were raised to a limited extent on IR 119 during the 1890's, but after 1903 are not mentioned again in the reports until around 1915. Agent Mann first mentioned poultry in his 1895 report when he wrote that a few families kept poultry "to a limited extent and take a great deal of interest in them" (SP14, 1896:83).

During the latter part of the study period the Indians became interested in raising poultry and fowl. In 1915, the Indians on the Frog Lake and Keeheewin reserves were raising hens. A number of the Chipewyan also kept hens. Inspector Chisholm observed that egg production was low and suggested that with some "simple improvements in the methods of housing and feeding" the poultry production would

increase. He also mentioned that Indians from IR 149B and IR 123 made some profit from raising poultry and suggested that if pigs and poultry "could be introduced generally it would be a help in putting a check upon the slaughter of cattle" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915). This suggestion was also made by Inspector Swinford after his inspection in 1914. He maintained that the production of farm, garden and livestock produce would help curb the strong reliance on beef. During his inspection in March 1916, Crombie noted that many of the Indians on IR 149 kept chickens while some also kept geese and turkeys (*ibid.*, Inspection Report, 1916).

Horses were raised by both the Cree and Chipewyan in the agency. They were valued for pleasure as well as work. The ceremonial riding of horses into the Onion Lake community at the time of treaty payments and the horse dance were reminders of the ceremony and prestige surrounding the horse in the days of the buffalo hunts and large Cree gatherings on the plains. At the Dominion Day celebrations on July 1st, racing of horses was a major event. Horses were raced immediately after the mid-day meal on a piece of straight, level road through the settlement (Dion 1979:138, 139).

Horses were valued gift items. Dion wrote that the horse "our most valued friend and servant, often changed hands as a gift to someone more in need of his services" (*ibid.*, 144). Horses were used for farm work such as ploughing when ox teams were not available, and for hauling hay and lumber. But generally, the horse in this



agency was considered too light or small for this type of work. During the study period the wagon and sleigh took the place of the travois as a means for transporting people and goods. Horses were needed to pull these. Horses were important for economic value. Inspector Chisholm reported on this:

Horses, which are coming to be much valued by the Indians everywhere, on account of the need for their use in connection with their industries, and especially on account of the high prices they now command and the consequent difficulty of obtaining them, are now handled with greater care and used to better advantage than formerly (SP27, 1904:203).

The number of horses owned by the Indians in the Onion Lake Agency increased steadily throughout the study period (Table 17). Immediately following the 1885 Rebellion a number of horses which belonged to refugee Indians or Indians who had died during the uprising were confiscated by Agent Mann. These were mostly mares, reported to be in excellent condition and worth, at that time, about \$60.00 each. For several years, before being returned to the Indians, they were used by the agency for freighting and for hauling logs.

Because of the desire and need for good work horses, the department endeavoured to improve the quality of stock owned by the Indians by making available to them various well-bred stallions which were alternated among the reserves. This was of considerable expense to the department and, therefore, an effort was made to keep a record of the increase and decrease of horses and to control their sale through the permit system. However, many of the horses were left to run on the prairie and to fend for themselves, so were not easily accounted for

by the Indians or agents.

The natural increase among the Indian horses was not always satisfactory to the inspectors who reported the number of colts born as "disappointing." Swinford noted that, while the stallions were properly fed and generally well cared for, the small increase was accounted for "by injudicious handling of the mares and carelessness on the part of the owners as to breeding them" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1914). The farmers seemed neglectful in the raising of horses.

### 5.3 Other Industries

The subsistence and material needs of the Indians were met not only through their attempts at grain growing and cattle raising, but also through various "other industries" which became a part of their adaptive strategy in living on the reserves. Indians were encouraged to find employment off the reserve whenever possible. This would enable them to earn cash which could be used to purchase provisions and material goods and thereby decrease their dependence upon rations supplied by the department. Employment for wages as well as the sale of produce, hay, lumber and other items was encouraged as a part of the department's policy to make the Indians self-sufficient. Deputy Superintendent General, H. Reed, wrote in 1895 that, it was essential that the Indians be successful in providing for themselves through agricultural pursuits, and it was also important "to encourage the pursuit of every other honest industry and form of employment which would contribute to make

them self-supporting" (SP14, 1896:xxiii).

During the 1800's there was very little outside labour in which the Indians of the Onion Lake Agency could be employed as settlement had not yet reached the area. Agent Mann reported in 1892:

Owing to the isolated position of the reserve, and that no white settlers are in the vicinity, there is no labour for the Indians, consequently they find it very hard when they are not able to earn a little money sometimes to meet the expense of a few luxuries dear to an Indian, such as tea and tobacco (SP14, 1893:171).

With the arrival of the Barr Colonists, a group of English settlers, in 1903, and other settlers in the early 1900's, employment opportunities increased for Indians in the agency. The need for lumber was important to the Barr Colonists who settled south of Onion Lake in the settlement of Lloydminster. The Indians had whipsawn lumber for their own houses but in the early 1890's they obtained a saw mill.

The following year Agent Mann reported that the Indians satisfactorily did all the work required around the agency in connection with the saw and grist mill (SP14, 1894:76). By 1903 the Indians were able to provide the lumber necessary for the Barr Colonists as well as some of the labour in helping these new settlers build their houses. During the winter of 1903 the Indians hauled logs to the agency saw mill, some from the agency timber limit and some from other Dominion lands and by May and June, they had cut 75 to 80 thousand feet of timber. A portion of this, about 20 thousand feet, was sold to the Barr Colonists at \$18.00 to \$20.00 per thousand. The income derived from this went towards provisions, clothing and other necessities and in this way

helped to decrease their ration requirements (SP27, 1904:237).

The Indians also sold firewood to the mission schools and later to settlers. They found employment in cutting and hauling logs and rails for settlers (SP27, 1909:138). In 1905, a shingle-mill and planer were added to the sawmill equipment at Onion Lake. Joseph Taylor managed the steam engine which furnished the power for these machines as well as the grist and threshing mill.

A portion of the lumber which was cut at Onion Lake and later at Keeheewin reserve was used to build houses on the reserve while a larger portion of it was sold. A permit from the agent was required for the selling of lumber. A portable saw and shingle mill and planer operated on Keeheewin reserve during the spring of 1911 and in 1912. The Indians sold this lumber without permits in quantities of 200 feet or more to settlers in the area. According to Inspector Chisholm:

This might have been approved by the Department under special circumstances, as for instance, if the settlers were dependent upon this supply to afford them material to provide themselves a shelter, as was the case with the English settlers arriving in 1903...but in the present instance there are local mills operating at no great distance both east and west of the Reserve. This Reserve had formerly a good supply of spruce timber and it is by no means destitute as yet, but it is being frittered away and apparently to little purpose (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17 Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915).

It appears that the interests of the Indians and the protectionist attitude of the department came into conflict in this instance. While the Indians were encouraged to be involved in such enterprise, where their involvement appeared unwise to the department officials, it was severely criticized and controls were set. In this case, the control

was a permit system which required that a permit to sell lumber be obtained before such a sale could be made. The Indians sought to provide for themselves with the resources they had available while the department sought to preserve and protect these resources.

The Indians on Keeheewin reserve were selling both cattle and lumber without permits. The Inspector felt it was necessary to discourage this sale by curtailing the number of permits allowed, and setting the prices. He concluded:

At the present time these Indians are very hard-up and as they have cut this lumber on the expectation, if not distinct understanding that they should be able to dispose of it in order to supply themselves and their families with provisions, it will be a hardship to cut off this privilege absolutely. However, they will henceforth be required to obtain a permit for any lumber sold. Such permits will be issued sparingly and the prices at which the lumber is to be disposed of will be specified (*ibid.*).

The latter requirement, that the prices be specified, was put into effect to protect the Indian from unscrupulous persons who attempted to buy items very cheaply from the Indians rather than pay a price which would be acceptable to others.

Indians were encouraged to take hay and wood contracts and to work for settlers. Through such contracts, as well as the sale of furs, lime and other items, together with earnings from freighting, working for settlers and doing a large proportion of the work at the agencies, the Indians increased their earnings. They were able to earn money at the missions which preferred to hire local Indians rather than outside help. Opportunities for employment increased during the

early 1900's. It was reported that the Indians were "not slow to take hold of any opportunity that presents itself of earning money by working for traders and others, resident or passing through the country;..." (SP27, 1903:155, 156).

Women earned money through the seasonal sale of wild fruit and seneca root. These were sometimes traded for food and clothing. Those women who were known as good house workers were able to obtain daily employment doing washing, scrubbing and other household cleaning jobs for the white settlers.

Once seeding and fencing was over in the spring, and before hay making began, many of the men found work freighting and bringing scows with supplies down the river from Edmonton for the missions and Hudson's Bay Company. This began as early as 1900. Freighting for traders, surveyors and the department provided frequent employment for men during the early 1900's. The agent reported in 1901 that the Onion Lake Indians:

earned a considerable amount transporting supplies for the Hudson's Bay Company, the respective missions and other residents, also for the department. They are very willing to work when they can earn a reasonable remuneration (SP27, 1902:163, 164).

After the railway came to Lloydminster a number of the men from the Onion Lake reserves were involved in freighting goods to and from Lloydminster for the department. The inspector reported in 1904 that, even though the farm and garden products were meagre and cattle insufficient for them to live by, these Indians were

making a very comfortable living, supplementing

the product of these industries by profits derived mainly from trips overland or by river to Edmonton, bringing back supplies for the agency, Hudson's Bay Company, the merchants of Lloydminster, or the missions on the reserve (SP27, 1905:194).

Work on survey gangs increased in the 1910's and was especially important when fishing and hunting were poor. The younger men generally took advantage of this work. Agent Sibbald reported that the younger men of IR 119 "earn good wages working on survey gangs, while others are frequently employed freighting and assisting settlers in building operations" (SP27, 1914:148, 149). Helping white settlers with harvesting was encouraged by the agent and brought a fair wage. The inspector commented on this in 1917:

A considerable revenue was got by individual Indians this last fall from working during harvest and threshing. Mr. Sibbald has encouraged the Indians to get out and help in the white settlements south of the Agency and many of them are availing themselves of this opportunity to get some ready cash for the winter. Wages paid were \$3.00 per day and \$6.00 per day for man and team (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17; Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1917).

In encouraging the Indians to be involved in labour off the reserve, the department was working against its original attempts to make the Indian self-sufficient through agriculture and stock raising. Initially, such employment was encouraged only during times which would not conflict with agricultural activities, but it is clear that by 1917, outside labour was taking precedence over work on the reserve for some of the Indians. Because of increased employment available off the reserves, agriculture and stock raising suffered.

"Other industries," the availability of wage earning opportunities

off the reserve, opened up a new subsistence strategy for the Indian. During the early years there were few such opportunities, but with increased settlement more wage earning opportunities became available. In the early years attention was directed to agriculture and stock raising. Difficulties with agriculture probably contributed to a decline in interest in this area and an interest in other industries which would provide some income. It seems that the Indians preferred wage labour to working on the reserve in agriculture and stock raising. In a subtle way, decreased interest in these industries and an increased interest and opportunity in other areas appears to have undermined the reserve agricultural program which aimed to substitute home produce, such as flour, garden produce and beef, for wages. In this way, the Indians were brought more definitely into the cash economy of the world outside of the reservations.

Joseph Dion lived through this period of time on the reservation at Onion Lake and then Keeheewin reserve at Long Lake. He notes that there was a tremendous difference in the activities and attitudes of the Indians in the agency from the beginning of the study period to the end.

When Mr. Mann, our Indian Agent, was transferred to Saddle Lake, this brought about a drastic change in our way of life. A permit system was introduced which made us to feel that what we raised did not belong to us. We had to get a written permit for everything we wanted to sell or trade and we had to give a strict account of our cattle...

The large herds of band cattle and horses soon disappeared. Our own stock were reduced in numbers to practically nil and for the second time the Crees saw their meat supply vanish into



thin air...

Everywhere on all the Indian reserves from Battleford to Hobbema, the Crees were making an honest attempt at the turn of the century to adapt themselves to the white man's way of making a living. There were families in every settlement who were taking a lively interest in bettering their living conditions. No one was afraid to go in the woods to fell trees and subsequently to build himself a habitable house...

Then there came a time when we were in demand by white settlers, chopping brush and clearing land. Glowing accounts were brought back to the reserve by those who had gone to work outside; they told of big money quickly made and of the grand times enjoyed throughout the summer months. More and more of our people took to drifting out; it mattered little to them if their own holdings on the reserves were being neglected. Some did not even bother to put in a garden, but struck out first thing in the spring. There was ready cash to be made elsewhere.

Men worked hard from morning till night trying to complete a brushing contract, ever looking forward to the pay day...The grand result of this chasing after the rainbow was a waste of strength and time, while our own farm lands were gradually growing back to bush... Our whole summer's outing netted us exactly nil, for we landed back on the reserve broke in the fall...The folks who had stayed with the land had almost everything but the cash with which to pay us if we would help them wind up their fall work, but what was the sense of it. We knew that their stores of vegetables, fruit, grain and feed could be ours through the simple method of borrowing. We thought of them only as handy neighbours who could not refuse us, and so the following spring they, too, fed up with their lot, decided to strike out for ready cash and worldly wisdom.

As time went by some of our people thought of their homes on the reserve only as a place to spend the winter. Farming was discontinued entirely by many and privately-owned cattle were practically non-existent. The houses which our fathers had built gradually deteriorated with age and we were

incapable of giving them the repair they required, much less replacing them with new buildings (Dion 1979:132, 146, 147).

Dion suggests strongly that wage labour off the reserves took a large number of persons away from the reserve and contributed to the neglect of housing, gardening, grain growing and cattle raising. As indicated in the previous two sections, this appears to be true. By the late 1910's, the Indians in the agency were spending much less time on agricultural activities than they had in the late 1800's. There were fewer gardens planted, housing was very poor, grain growing was difficult and cattle raising was made difficult through excessive sales and the permit system. Wage labour off the reserves was a way out of the situation on the reserve for many of the Indians.

#### 5.4 Fishing

The Plains Cree ate fish as a change from their regular diet of meat when hunting was poor and when an ample supply of fish was necessary to help feed larger gatherings (Mandelbaum 1979:71). In general, they did not fish in lakes but rather in streams and rivers. In spring they used weirs which were operated at night while during the winter, fish were speared at open places in the river ice caused by springs flowing into the river. Fish were cleaned, cut into strips and dried in the sun. Some was dried, pounded, mixed with berries and fat and made into pemmican.

The Wood Cree fished extensively twice a year. As soon as the ice broke up in the spring people made their way to streams and rivers to

take advantage of the spawning habit of a variety of fish including jackfish, pickerel, dore, suckers and perch. Fishing was done by means of a trap in the form of a log and pole chute with a basket (Dion 1979: 24). Fish caught in the spring were cleaned, cut in strips and dried on racks over a low fire. Some of the dried fish was placed in large rawhide basins and pounded with a stone or flail and later eaten with oil or grease.

The Wood Cree also fished during the late fall just before freeze-up when fish, such as lake trout and whitefish, congregate close to the shores of lakes before moving into deeper waters. The Indians built rafts which at night were poled out a short way into the lake and anchored. Flares of birch bark and pitch or spruce gum were lit to lure the fish to the rafts where they were speared or scooped up with baskets of pine root nets attached to long poles (Dion 1979:25). Fish were either smoke dried or stored in a cache for winter use. Curtis (1928:62) writes that the Wood Cree did not fish under the ice but in winter sometimes used a rawhide dip net at the base of small waterfalls.

All bands in the Onion Lake Agency fished for food. Some also fished for trade. The Onion Lake band appears to have spent less time fishing than the other bands. This may have been due to two factors. First, the members of this band were Plains Cree and, while the Plains Cree did fish, it was a secondary food source. Secondly, this is the only band in the agency which did not have a reservation bordering on a lake and, therefore, access to good fishing was not as available to them as it was to the other bands. The inspector noted in

1909 that the Indians of IR's 119 and 120 fished "to no small extent, but in the immediate neighbourhood there were no fishing lakes" (SP27, 1910:146).

The Cree of the Onion Lake Agency did not fish extensively during mid-winter. From the Hudson's Bay Company diaries and reports the Island Lake Indians were reported fishing in the spring once the lakes began to thaw and the rivers and streams were open. This occurred in either April or May. Fishing is not mentioned during the summer months. In fall and winter the Island Lake Indians fished during September, October, December, and sometimes January, although the latter was unusual. Indians at Frog Lake and the Little Fishery were reported fishing in the spring as well as in fall during October and November. While fishing in order to procure supplies for the winter, the Island Lake Indians did not generally hunt or trap for furs. Once they had procured enough fish supplies for the next few months, their attention once again turned to hunting.

Fish was the usual staple food of the Chipewyan at Cold Lake and was especially important when game animals were scarce. Agent Sibbald reported in 1905 that the lake was their "main source of support" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-3), and in 1908 he reported that the Chipewyan "draw a large portion of their food-supply from Cold Lake, in the way of trout, whitefish, and jackfish (SP27, 1908:133). Inspector Crombie reported in 1916 that fish were plentiful early that winter and that "sufficient was secured by the Indians for their own use" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.71/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1916). Curtis visited these Indians in the mid-1920's and noted that they

fished for provisions during both the summer and winter.

During the winter, fish such as jackfish, lake trout and whitefish were caught through the ice, and during the summers they were caught in lakes, rivers and streams. Bone-pointed spears, antler hooks and gill nets made of babiche (caribou rawhide cord) were used both winter and summer. Fish to be used for winter supplies were hung on pole frames to freeze without drying or smoking. In the summer fish were dried in the sun and wind. The late fall and early winter fishing provided winter provisions for many of the Indians in the study area. In 1883 the Indians were reported to have obtained from Long and Moose Lakes 12,000 fish averaging five pounds each.

This food source was threatened as early as 1884 when Acting Sub-Agent Quinn reported that "the fisheries are failing fast, owing to outside parties fishing on a very large scale, and robbing the Indians of every fish they catch, and I have no power to prevent this" (SP3, 1885:86). The fear that fish resources would be depleted due to overfishing by Whites was again expressed in 1908 when Agent Sibbald wrote to Department Secretary McLean on behalf of the Island Lake Indians who depended on the lake for their winter food supply of fish. They were "much concerned about the possibility of fishing companies coming in and depleting the lake" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-6) and requested that licenses be issued only to Indians to fish in Island Lake.

Another matter which affected the opportunity for Indians to fish for their winter food supply was the conservation methods adopted by the

provinces. Regulations limited fishing to specific seasons and a close season was created to protect fish during spawning time. The fall close season occurred at a time when many Indians obtained their winter's catch and, therefore, conflicted with their subsistence activities.

In 1906 Agent Sibbald questioned McLean about the fishing laws and asked what privileges were allowed Indians during the close season. Sibbald noted that it was "hard on the Indians who depend much on fishing to be prevented at anytime, but the close season is hardest of all because it is then that they lay in their winter supply, the fish being assembled in the shallow water;..." (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27115-3, Sibbald to McLean, September 18, 1906). McLean replied:

...the Department is not aware of Indians being allowed to fish during the close season, except in some cases where for very special reasons special permission has been granted by the Department of Marine and Fisheries, and it seems obvious that consistent with the changing conditions of the province and ultimately with the interests of the Indians themselves, only very urgent reasons would justify such improvident fishing as you refer to (*ibid.*, McLean to Sibbald, October 15, 1906).

Obviously the subsistence activities of the Indians and the policy of the government with regard to fishing were not in agreement.

Fishing did not always ensure that the Indians had an ample supply of food for the winter. Fishing was unsuccessful in some years. In November 1893, the Island Lake Indians were hard up, not having killed many fish while there were "lots of fish" at Moose and Long Lakes. In January of 1894, fishing was a failure at Island and Loon Lakes. In November 1907, the Indians at the Little Fishery were reported as

not killing many fish. There appear to have been fluctuations in the fish populations, which affected the ability of the Indians to provide sufficient provisions for themselves.

Fishing was sometimes done for trade. It is difficult to determine the exact amount of fish caught for sale, as the reports and amounts are scattered. The department records and journals make few direct references to the amount of fish caught. There is one detailed report on fishing in the Fort Pitt District by the Hudson's Bay Company officer dated July 1886 (HBC B.165/b/1, fo. 80, 81). McKay reported that fish caught by Whites, half-breeds and Indians in the district for food and for sale to local traders included 80 tons of whitefish (averaging three pounds), 10 tons of pike and 500 trout, sturgeon and perch. Tullibees and suckers were also caught, but to a lesser extent. McKay estimated the 1885-86 catch of various kinds of fish at 347,000 pounds. The run for that year commenced on October 20th and ended December 31st, with most fish being caught between November 10th and 30th. The water froze about November 10th, so approximately one-third of the catch was made through the ice. The principal means of fishing was by canoe with the gill net. Sixty canoes and 200 gill nets were used but no dip nets or weirs. The lakes in the district reported on included Turtle, Little Muskeg, Candle, Loon, Island, Angling, Cold, Little Fishing, Frog and Moose Lakes, and the North Saskatchewan River.

The Chipewyan fished for traders at Cold Lake and merchants in Lloydminster. In November 1909, the Hudson's Bay Company journal recorded that H.B. Hall of Lloydminster requested about one and one-

half tons of whitefish and trout. Whitefish sold, at that time, for six cents per pound and trout for seven cents per pound (HBC B.323/c/1, Hall to Garson, November 15, 1909).

The Chipewyan spent much of the time from mid-December to the end of January at Cold Lake fishing for subsistence needs as well as for trade. By mid-January fishing was finished and the catch could be transported either to Fort Pitt or, in later years, to Lloydminster for sale. In 1907-08 fishing was completed by the beginning of January but the catch was not transported out until Cold Lake was frozen over. Some of the fish freighters passed through Onion Lake on their way to Lloydminster on January 11th (HBC B.323/a/9, January 11, 1908).

By 1917, northern Saskatchewan was exporting a large quantity of fish. Kitto (1919:133) wrote that the area was a "field offering great possibilities in the matter of fish supply" as its numerous lakes and rivers made an ideal region for the exploitation of inland fresh water fisheries. Whitefish were the most commonly caught fish and were shipped out frozen during the winter months. Carloads of frozen fish were shipped by train from Lloydminster to various points in Canada and the United States. In a table compiled from reports of the Fisheries Branch, Department of the Naval Service, Kitto indicates the value of fish taken from the major lakes and rivers in northern Saskatchewan in 1917 (*ibid.*). This included some of the lakes in the study area which were exploited by the Indians for food. From Cold Lake and Primrose Lake fish to the value of \$25,397.00 were taken, while the value for Frog,



Fishing and Prairie Lakes was \$956.00 and for Makwa, Waterhen and Flotten Lakes it was \$9,340.00. Taken together, these values represent only about 5.3 percent of the total value of \$187,779.00. Cold Lake and Primrose Lake provided the third largest amount, larger fish values being taken from the Churchill River area.

### 5.5 Hunting, Trapping and Gathering

Hunting, trapping and gathering activities were important to the subsistence activities of many of the Indians in the agency. While some Indians turned more to agriculture and stock raising, the majority appear to have continued their traditional subsistence pattern.

Because the Chipewyan were relatively well off while continuing the hunting, trapping and fishing activities which they were accustomed to before signing treaty, they were encouraged to follow these pursuits throughout most of the study period. After the influx of settlers into their area in the early 1900's, the Chipewyan became more concerned about a sedentary lifestyle based on agriculture and stock raising.

The Chipewyan band hunted to the north and northeast of Cold Lake towards Ile-a-la-Crosse. Jaco, the Chipewyan trader, did much of his trade with the Chipewyan who hunted in this area (HBC B.323/b/1, Garson to Livock, February 26, 1894).

Even though fur bearing animals were decreasing in the 1890's there still remained a good supply of fish and game to meet the subsistence needs of the Chipewyan. This allowed them to be relatively independent of the rations available through the Indian Department.

Agent Mann reported in 1895, that the Chipewyan band "maintained themselves by fishing, hunting, and stock raising" (SP14, 1896:84), and in 1903 that they procured "a good living by hunting, trapping, fishing and working for the Hudson's Bay Company and other traders" (SP27, 1904:176). In almost every Annual Report of the agency for the years 1890 to 1917, the Chipewyan are recognized as being relatively independent of the department and successful in their hunting and trapping activities. They were making a profitable living from the hunt in 1916 "when the improvement in the price of furs...enabled some of them to be quite independent" (SP27, 1917:65). Curtis noted in the late 1920's that the Chipewyan at Cold Lake "have the reputation of being skillful and industrious trappers" (1928:19).

Some Indians on the Onion Lake reserves continued to hunt and trap for subsistence needs while becoming involved in farming and cattle raising. The Hudson's Bay Company officer recorded some of the hunting activities of these Indians. In mid-April he noted that a lot of the Onion Lake and Frog Lake Indians went off to hunt muskrat. They reported that muskrat were plentiful and the hunters were killing from 20 to 30 per day. In January, 1904, he noted that most of reserve Indians were off hunting muskrat for a couple of weeks and in March of 1905 a lot of Onion Lake Indians were going across the river to hunt muskrat (HBC B.323/a/5).

From 1885 to 1903, many of the Frog Lake and Keeheewin band members living at Onion Lake followed a subsistence pattern similar to that of the Seekaskootch and Mahkayo bands. Other members of these bands remained,

during this time, in their former areas and followed a hunting, trapping and fishing subsistence pattern. Resources were not always abundant and, when scarce, these "hunting" Indians would come to the agency to work or beg for rations. In his report for 1894-95, Agent Mann noted that the "hunting" Indians of the district made a good living hunting and trapping but as they were rather hard up "a few are anxious to assist in hay making for the government herd at Long Lake" (SP14, 1896:84). Obviously, they preferred the independence associated with the hunt but when the need arose, they were willing to follow the department policy of working for rations.

Members of the Frog Lake and Keeheewin bands eventually returned to their respective reserves to take up farming activities and where they hunted and fished in season. In 1910 the Frog Lake band was still referred to as a band whose principal source of support was from hunting and fishing (SP27, 1910:145). They had some good hunters among them who devoted most of their time to hunting. In 1914 it was noted that the Keeheewin band did not follow the hunt as closely as the other bands. By 1915, the Onion Lake, Frog Lake and Keeheewin bands were reported as earning "comparatively little" by hunting. Most of their income came from other sources including their herds, freighting and day labour (SP27, 1916:70).

The subsistence pattern for the "working" Cree and the "hunting" Cree were different in certain aspects. The "hunting" Cree participated in the hunt the year round as they obtained their food from this source. The "working" Indians were involved in agriculture and stock

raising from which they obtained garden produce, beef and grain. They hunted, trapped and fished primarily to supplement their diet with luxury items such as tea and tobacco. Only a few individuals in the Onion Lake bands hunted and trapped consistently. For most, it was a part-time activity.

Agricultural activities curtailed the amount of time the "working" Indians could spend hunting and fishing. They took advantage of the hunt when it did not interfere with their farm work and while family members not occupied with hunting and trapping were able to attend to the livestock. When possible, these Indians derived a good income from trapping. In 1904, Agent Sibbald reported that most of their income came from cattle raising, but a "considerable income was also derived from the sale of furs, not only by the hunting Indians, but by those termed 'working Indians', as muskrats were plentiful and the latter could trap them without seriously interfering" with their farming and stock raising activities (SP27, 1905:166). When fur bearing animals were scarce there was a greater disposition on the part of these Indians to spend more time farming.

The "working" Indians who trapped muskrat did so during the fall and early spring. Occasionally, trapping muskrat and wolves was done during the winter. Fishing in creeks and rivers during early spring provided them with additional food as well as an item for sale to the mission personnel and settlers.

The Cree at Island Lake, Loon Lake and Big Island Lake were "hunting" Indians. Except for a few members of the Island Lake band, who lived on

the northern reserve, this band never took up farming or stock raising. They were generally reported to be dependent for their subsistence needs upon hunting and fishing alone. They trapped and traded their furs with the Hudson's Bay Company but were never described as skillful and industrious in these pursuits as were the Chipewyan. When resources were scarce they were in a difficult position and usually relied on rations from the agency stores.

The "hunting" Cree fished during the fall and early winter in lakes and during spring in creeks and streams. The late fall fishing was an important subsistence activity as the fish obtained then were used for provisions during winter. At this time very little hunting was done. Hunting and trapping fur bearers such as muskrat, mink, skunk, badgers, lynx and wolves took place during the fall. Hunting moose was important as this animal provided a large amount of food for these Indians. By the late 1890's the area around Island Lake was reported to be cleaned out of fur bearers and the hunters were required to travel some distance for their furs.

There are a few scattered references in the Hudson's Bay Company records to the hunting of ducks and geeze. It appears that hunting for subsistence needs involved primarily the hunting of large and small game animals rather than birds and waterfowl.

Gathering was an activity which involved the women and children. Seneca root was usually gathered during the summer after the Thirst Dance or in late July through August and was sold to the Hudson's Bay Company. All of the Indians in the study area appear to have gathered

berries for food and sale in late summer. In late July and in August, berry picking took place. These berries were dried and stored for winter use. Sometimes berries were gathered in the early spring as well. The Hudson's Bay Company officer reported in April 1902 that "a lot of Indians are all started off to pick berries and hunt fish in the mouth of creeks" (HBC B.323/a/5). Curtis (1928) noted that the fruit of the several species of blueberries available in the area remained on the plants throughout the winter and that the Indians were of the opinion that this exposure improved the berries. Berries were sometimes sold to the Hudson's Bay Company as well as to settlers and the missions.

## 5.6 The Fur Trade

The Chipewyan and those Cree referred to as "hunting" Indians were involved in trapping as an economic activity during the study period. The "working" Indians participated to a limited extent. In this section, the history and involvement of the Hudson's Bay Company in the study area is outlined and the fur returns of the Indians are discussed.

### 5.6.1 The Hudson's Bay Company

Fort Pitt was established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1829 as an intermediate point between Fort Edmonton and Fort Carlton

...for the accommodation of the Middle and Beaver Hills Cree, who would otherwise idle away their time in the Plain - but who will now confine themselves to

the thick woods during the winter season, where they will collect a few skins; it is also a good Situation for Leather & Provisions, and altho' it has yet barely had time to be known its returns were this last Spring very respectable (HBC D.4/97, Governor George Simpson to H.B.C. London, August 26, 1830).

Fort Pitt was an important halfway house or rest spot for traders, travellers and freighters moving through the Saskatchewan District. Like the company posts at Forts Edmonton and Carlton, in the early years of its trade Fort Pitt was noted for the quantity of pemmican traded from the Plains Indians. Some trade in furs from the Woodland Indians was also transacted. Hector wrote that Fort Pitt was "one of the best posts for trading quantities of provisions in the whole Saskatchewan district" (Palliser 1863:70). At the time of his visit, in December of 1858, the Hudson's Bay Company store was full of provisions, consisting of dried buffalo meat, pemmican and buffalo grease. These, along with buffalo robes and wolf skins, comprised the principal returns from this post in the 1850's and 1860's. Milton and Cheadle (1865:173) reported that Fort Pitt furnished the "largest quantity of pemmican and dry meat for the posts more distant from the plains."

The principal value of the fort to the company was that it purchased dried meat and pemmican from the Plains Indians to be used as provisions for voyageurs who travelled from Le Pas, Cumberland House and Norway House to the northern posts where enough food was not readily available. Fort Pitt's trade in provisions continued into the early 1870's and then dropped considerably in the second

half of the decade. During the 1880's the trade at Fort Pitt was not as profitable as it had been due to the disappearance of the prairie trade.

Fort Pitt was referred to by the Cree as Waskahikanis or "The Small House." It stood on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River at a recognized crossing and favorite camping spot of the Cree, about 100 miles upstream from Battleford. Situated in the war country of the Cree and Blackfoot, the fort was exposed to hazards arising from the conflicts between these two Indian nations.

Patrick Small, the first clerk for the company at Fort Pitt stayed only for the 1829-32 trading seasons. In 1830, there was a battle between the lower Cree and the Blackfoot near Eagle Hills, southwest of the fort. Small recorded that in 1831 eight Blackfoot families had tented all winter with the Cree near the post but the following summer a series of disputes over horses arose between the two groups and they parted on unfriendly terms.

During the spring of 1832 there were large camps of both Cree and Blackfoot within a day or two of the fort. On April 25, 1832 it was abandoned because it was "a place of so much danger" (HBC D.4/99, fo.42d, Governor George Simpson to H.B.C. London, August 10, 1832).

The fort was re-established in the autumn of 1833 with Henry Fisher as clerk and 14 men under his charge. Conflicts between the Cree and Blackfoot continued in the vicinity of the fort. Warre and Vavasour visited the fort in July of 1845 and reported:

Last spring a War Party of Blackfeet were hovering



about the Fort and met a party of Cree Indians coming in to Trade for their peltries fell upon them immediately [sic]...in sight of the Fort. They killed 2 before the party could reach the Fort...War parties are constantly on the move attacking all who are too weak to assist or oppose them. They care little for the Hudson's Bay Company as they are within reach of the American Posts who supply them with ammunition (PAC MG 24 F71, Warre, Journal Red River to the Columbia, 1845).

Fort Pitt was situated in the transitional zone between the grasslands and the boreal forest. The soil north of the fort was a rich black loam. Perhaps the most valuable natural feature of the area was the abundance of grass which grew from four to six feet high in the marshes and swamps. On the prairies the grasses were relatively short. Here, they were taller and interspersed with vetches which provided excellent feed and winter pasturage for cattle, horses and game animals (Palliser 1860:25).

Clumps of trees gave shelter to animals, while the scrub brush kept the snow in a loose state enabling buffalo and livestock to fend for themselves during most of the winter season. Grant (1873:161) noted in 1872 that it was because of the soil and luxuriant growth of grasses that the Hudson's Bay Company kept more horses at their guard north of Fort Pitt than at any other post in the Saskatchewan district. At that time they had 300 horses.

In 1885 the company's premises at Fort Pitt, which consisted of six buildings within a stockade, were pillaged and burned. After the Rebellion only two small buildings remained. In September, 1885, Angus McKay arrived at Fort Pitt to take charge of the trade. James

Simpson was sent as clerk to winter at Moose Lake where the Cold Lake Indians were wintering due to extensive fires having burned the area around Cold Lake.

By 1887-88 it was clear that the trade at Fort Pitt was suffering from its location. The greater part of the local trade was being done at Onion Lake. This was a result of two factors. First, after the 1885 Rebellion and establishment of the Indian Agency at Onion Lake, the department concentrated its efforts at this one location, and many of the Indians from the outlying reserves moved to the Onion Lake reserves. Thus, while the population of Indian hunters in the outlying districts decreased, that of Onion Lake increased (HBC B.165/b/1, fo.170, Report of Trade, 1886-87, June 1, 1887).

The second factor was that the Indian Agency, Mounted Police, Roman Catholic Mission and the trading firm of Gibson and Ballendine were located at Onion Lake. It was, therefore, the centre of social and economic activity for the area. The bulk of the winter catch of furs was beginning to go to Gibson and Ballendine. This firm was also in a position to deprive the Hudson's Bay Company of their service to the Indian Department and its employees, the Police and reserve Indians, while the Hudson's Bay Company store, located some 12 to 14 miles away, was inconvenient for trade. The main asset of Fort Pitt was that it was convenient for receiving goods brought by steamer or via the river, but this mode of transport was becoming less feasible as freighting increased and railways were built.

An outpost was established at Onion Lake during the winter of

1887-88, but was closed in March as the trader in charge "displayed gross carelessness and had shown utter lack of interest in the business and is not disposed to learn" (HBC B.165/b/1, fo.255, McKay to Clarke, March 9, 1888). During the previous four months the company had lost \$306.88 at Onion Lake.

The company rented an Indian house near the agency at Onion Lake for its first season. This proved inadequate as the building was in very poor condition. During the 1888-89 season a small building was rented from the Roman Catholic Mission. The Indian Department did not recognize the right of the company to trade on reserve land, and in early September, 1889, the Indian Agent notified the company to discontinue trading on the reserve. By late September, the men's house at Fort Pitt had been moved to Onion Lake and was being converted into a shop and dwelling house. It was located near the reserve boundary and close to the trail to Cold Lake (Figure 4, p. 299 ).

William McKay took charge as Junior Chief Trader in the late summer of 1889. Although the removal of buildings from Fort Pitt to Onion Lake delayed his work that seas, he reported that the change was expected to result in the reduction of expenses and the centralizing of the trade at Onion Lake which now became the company headquarters for the Fort Pitt District.

#### 5.6.2 Outposts and Opposition

When the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Pitt was reopened after the 1885 Rebellion, Angus McKay was placed in charge as clerk

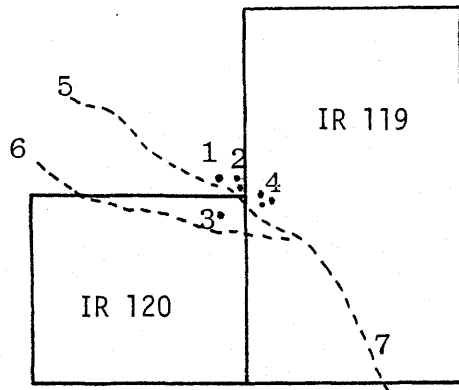
along with a number of other personnel. McKay had 12 years previous experience with the company, was well liked by Indians and half-breeds, and could speak English, French and Cree. In the summer of 1889 he was assigned to Fort-a-la-Corne and William McKay replaced him as clerk at Fort Pitt. In July 1893, William McKay was replaced by C.N. Garson. Other personnel with the company at Fort Pitt included James Simpson, a 65 year old company man who was sent to continue the trade with the Chipewyan near Cold Lake; Francois Dufrense, postmaster at Fort Pitt and a good trader; and, 84 year old Edward Dufrense who served the company as cook.

Temporary servants were hired to work for the company during the winter trading season. During the 1886-87 season these included three tripmen, Louis Patenaude, Pay-chow and Mooseahpaye, and one labourer Malcolm MacDonald. Various local persons were also hired as labourers.

During the winter hunting, trapping and trading seasons, the Hudson's Bay Company ran a number of outposts from which its principal trade was derived. Personnel travelled with their supplies to the outposts either to stay for one or two weeks or for the winter. Regular tripping was made difficult by deep snow and cold weather. In March of 1904 the Hudson's Bay Company clerk reported that there were few furs brought in as it had been a month of storms and the snow was "deeper than it has been in 30 years" (HBC B.323/a/5, fo.121, March 31, 1904), and in April the snow still made hunting difficult.

Cold Lake, situated some 80 miles to the northwest of Fort Pitt,

Figure 4: Onion Lake Settlement and IR's 119 and 120, 1889



1. Building in course of erection for the Company.
2. North West Mounted Police Buildings.
3. Roman Catholic Mission building lately occupied by the Company.
4. Indian Department, Agents' and other buildings.
5. Trail to Cold Lake.
6. Trail to Victoria.
7. Trail to Fort Pitt.

Source: HBC B.165/e/2, fo.6.

was the most profitable outpost operated by the company. It was exclusively a fur trading post and traded primarily with the Chipewyan Indians. Because the bulk of furs came from this point, it was established as a permanent outpost. During the 1880's J. Simpson was in charge of the post and in 1890 Francois Dufresne wintered there.

The outpost at Onion Lake, 14 miles to the northwest of Fort Pitt showed little profit in its early years of operation due to competition, poor management and inadequate facilities. The trade here improved considerably after the company moved their facilities from Fort Pitt to Onion Lake. Small outposts at Loon Lake, 60 miles northeast, and Island Lake, 45 miles northwest of Fort Pitt were visited by tripmen in 1886-87. Every three weeks, Francois Dufresne and one other man visited these outposts for one week to ten days. In 1887-88 Dufresne went to these outposts in November and stayed until spring. James Crookedneck was hired during the 1889-90 season to winter at Island Lake.

Moose Lake and Long Lake outposts were 80 and 70 miles northwest of Fort Pitt respectively. They were visited by L. Patneade who was hired on a commission basis. He received 25 percent of the company's selling price and furnished his own transportation. During the 1886-87 season, Alexis Crossarms was hired for the winter trade at the Little Fishery and Frog Lake.

From 1890 to 1910, the company operated outposts at Cold Lake, Frog Lake and the Little Fishery, Moose Lake, Long Lake, Island Lake, Horse Lake and Loon Lake. Trade at outposts was less frequent during the

latter part of the study period. In 1916 the company established Cold Lake as a separate post. It continued to serve the Chipewyan. These Indians were considered the most skilled group of hunters in the Onion Lake trading area.

Trips to the outpost were made from September through June. The early hunt began in September, a time when supplies were needed in order for the hunters to move to their hunting areas, and the spring hunt ended at the end of May or in mid-June. Throughout these months trips were frequent, taking anywhere from three or four days to two weeks. During the winter of 1894, the Island Lake and Loon Lake Indians were visited three times each month because of previous pressure from opposition traders (HBC B.323/b/1, Garson to Dickieson, April 10, 1894). Garson found that he needed to keep his men on the road all the time in order to compete successfully with the opposition (HBC B.323/b/2, Garson to Livock, December 16, 1895).

Indian hunters made trips to the Hudson's Bay Company store at Onion Lake to bring in furs to exchange for hunting outfits and supplies such as tea, tobacco and flour. Many of the Cree hunters came to Onion Lake for holiday celebrations at Christmas and New Year's, Easter, the July 1st holiday and for treaty payments. In late August and early September, the "hunting" Indians came in for supplies and rations for the fall hunt. The Chipewyan hunters were less frequent visitors at Onion Lake took their furs to Battleford during the 1800's.

In 1870, the Hudson's Bay Company charter giving the company a monopoly on trade ended and the company was reduced to the status of an

ordinary commercial concern. The company posts still extended through northern Saskatchewan, but the company now encountered undeterred competition and rivalry from a number of opposition traders. With the beginning of settlement in the west this competition increased.

By the mid-1880's there was considerable opposition to the company in the Fort Pitt District. In February of 1886, McKay reported that the Loon Lake Indians were visited by a trader from the Green Lake district from October until the end of December. That same winter, a trader for A.M. McDonald and Co. of Battleford stationed himself at Cold Lake and also sought to establish trade with the Fort Pitt Indians. It was rumoured that traders from Lac la Biche were coming in "to run among our Indians at Moose and Long Lakes" (HBC B.165/b/1, McKay to Davison, February 12, 1886).

The company faced considerable competition at Onion Lake. Because the Indian agency, Mounted Police and missions were located here, there was a greater concentration of people as well as a larger cash flow. The trading firm of Gibson and Ballendine were stationed at Onion Lake during the 1887-88 season and secured the bulk of the winter catch of furs (HBC B.165/b/1, Winter Trade Report, McKay to Clarke, June 1, 1887). During the 1889-90 season, Ross from Saskatoon and Tupper from Victoria were also active at Onion Lake. They paid higher prices for furs and sold their goods more cheaply than the company.

There was no opposition at Fort Pitt itself while the company was located there, but at the smaller outposts the company had to



contend with opposition traders. In the Winter Report of Trade for 1886-87 season, McKay reported that the opposition traders were "well equipped and more numerous in the field than in former years" (*ibid.*). Local prices for furs rose as other traders came in and it was difficult for the company to obtain furs unless the highest prices were paid. This was also difficult for the company because their goods were often more expensive than those of the opposition traders. In 1888, when there was a great decline in fur prices on the European market, the company was forced by opposition traders to maintain high prices in the Saskatchewan District.

McKay faced competition from the Hudson's Bay Company trader in Battleford in the early 1890's. Louis Sayers, a trader for company clerk Dickieson in Battleford, was trading at Loon Lake where he paid "exorbitant prices" for red fox, fisher and marten. Competition between the two company posts caused confusion among the Indians and dissatisfaction among those Indians who traded regularly at Onion Lake. Although McKay reported the conflict to company authorities in Winnipeg, the problem arose again in the winter of 1894-85 when one of Dickieson's traders at Loon Lake raised the price of red fox from \$1.00 to \$1.25 and sold liquor cheaply. In January 1895, another trader moved in amongst the Loon Lake Indians. Garson countered this by hiring another man to make more frequent visits to the outpost. Whitford was sent to Loon Lake in November, 1895 where he reported on competition from a trader representing the firm of Mahaffey and Clinkskill of Battleford who was offering \$2.00 for red fox. The

opposition took most of the furs and the Indians complained that the company could not pay as well for furs as other traders (HBC B.323/b/2, Garson to Livock, November 19, 1895). Competition from the company officer at Battleford appears to have stopped after the arrival of a new clerk at that place in 1896.

In the winter of 1894-95 Garson faced competition at Moose Lake. He sent McDonald there to stay "as they [the opposition traders] are running me there from both headquarters" (HBC B.323/b/1 January, 1895). In December the trader Labrocan went to Moose Lake where he sold flour for \$3.00 a sack and paid \$25.00 for large bear and \$75.00 for silver fox. Even though the tariff was altered and Garson had to pay lower prices for furs, he reported that the December 1895 return, which amounted to \$1,500.00, was ahead of the previous year's return at Moose Lake and Island Lake (HBC B.323/b/2, Garson to Livock, December 31, 1895). In September 1896, McKay hired Peter Linklater, at \$20.00 per month and rations, to set up shop at Moose Lake for the winter. The winter of 1896-97 was difficult at Moose Lake as there were reported to be no furs. This may have been due to Metis hunters who had used poison around the lake the previous year and cleaned out a lot of the animals as well as the fires which had swept through the area in the fall of 1896. In March 1897, the company clerk reported that the Indians at Moose Lake were "starving and killing no furs" (HBC B.323/a/2, March 1897).

Traders came to Onion Lake during the summer to take advantage of the cash available from the Indians after Treaty payments. The

company was accustomed to receiving most of the cash in the earlier years. However, as settlement increased, the competition increased. In 1901, six traders besides the company were at Onion Lake for the treaty payments on July 17th. Some were from Edmonton. Garson took in about \$1,000.00 on the 18th and reported that a lot of money was still in the hands of the Indians. In 1904 traders at Onion Lake during treaty payments included Millar Bros., Hall Scott and Co., and another trader from the new settlement of Lloydminster. In July 1905, Garson reported that there were "more traders than ever" at treaty payments (HBC B.323/a/5, July 17, 1905). In most instances, when confronted with opposition traders, the company clerk conceded in his journal that he did fairly well in the trade.

During the winter season of 1887-88, Wm. Lewis of Swift Current and several Chipewyan traders added to the opposition pressure at Cold Lake. It was about this time that Jaco, a Chipewyan trader became the principal trader in the Cold Lake area. Jaco took the bulk of the trade at Cold Lake during the 1888, 1889 and 1890 seasons and was gaining in the trade while the company was losing. Jaco took his furs to Battleford where he received higher prices and bought goods at lower prices than those available at Fort Pitt (HBC B.165/b/2, McKay to Clarke, August 14, 1890). In 1891 he took out from \$3,000.00 to \$4,000.00 in furs to sell or trade at Battleford. In the winter of 1893-94, Jaco's returns were down due to sickness amongst the Chipewyan which caused them to do less hunting and trapping. That winter he offered to deal exclusively with the company at Onion Lake

and in 1897 he began to trade at Onion Lake. From then on his trade was closely linked to the company man who traded at Cold Lake.

Other Chipewyan from Cold Lake took furs to Battleford in 1891 but, rather than deal with the company, as was their usual custom, they sold their furs to Mahaffey and Clinkskill for \$1,750.00. The company's price for them, founded upon the average tariff, was \$1,350.00. In this way good furs were lost to the competition (HBC D.25/18, Inspection Report, 1892).

In the 1890's and thereafter, the keenest competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and other traders occurred among the Chipewyan. The Chipewyan trade in Battleford slowed down after 1893 when they did not receive the prices they had expected. The Chipewyan were keen traders, seeking the best prices available and desiring the best goods. Competition enabled them to take advantage of higher prices. Usually the company found it difficult to match the prices offered by other traders. In some instances McKay reported that with the high prices offered by the opposition traders he was unable to get any of the furs at the company price. Because of the competition the Chipewyan received prices for their furs from the company which were higher than at other outposts in the Onion Lake District. Garson noted that "Indians at other places always takes [sic] what we offer them" (HBC B.323/b/2, Garson to Livock, July 16, 1895).

The Chipewyan had alternatives if they did not feel the prices offered by the company were high enough. Besides the company and Jaco there were a number of other traders at Cold Lake during the 1895-86

season. That spring medium bears reached a high price of \$15.00. The following season furs were scarce and many of the best hunters did very little hunting at all. However, Cold Lake was reported to be overrun with traders which meant that the Chipewyan were holding out for high prices. Garson reported that he could not trade for fisher or marten as a Jewish trader from Edmonton was paying \$8.00 to \$8.50 for fisher and \$3.50 to \$4.00 for marten. This trader had made a big haul from the Chipewyan the previous Christmas paying as high as \$70.00 for silver fox. He was expected back in the spring, but Garson did not expect him to do well as "the dry goods he sold do not take the fancy of the Chipewyan" (HBC B.323/b/2, Garson to Livock, February 23, 1897). This proved correct, and in January of 1898, Garson reported that he received the majority of furs because the traders had very little flour and bacon and had "very inferior dry goods" (*ibid.*, Garson to Livock, January 4, 1898). The company's advantage in the trade at Cold Lake was its ability to provide goods which were superior to the other traders and acceptable to the Indians.

Competition continued in the Cold Lake area and in the Saskatchewan District in general. The Fur Trade Report for Outfit 1914 reported that the district was "overrun with petty traders" (HBC D.FTR/2, Fur Trade Report for Outfit 1914, year ending May 31, 1915). In order for the company to hold its own in the trade in the district it was necessary to adopt more aggressive measures and offer competitive prices. By 1916, the outposts had closed down and trade was carried on only at Onion Lake and at Cold Lake, which became a post during

the 1915-16 season.

### 5.6.3 Fur Returns

This section discusses the trade returns in the study area and the seasonal and annual availability of resources based on the archival resources available.

The quantity and value of items traded by the Indians in the study area are given in the Hudson's Bay Company "Returns for Trade." These tables indicate the preferred trade items and the seasonal and annual availability of resources. The record obtained for the study area was incomplete. Returns for the Fort Pitt trade were available for Outfits 1872, 1873, 1874 (Table 19, p.309 and Table 20, p. 311), and Outfits 1885 through 1890 (Table 21, p. 314). Returns for the Lower Saskatchewan District trade, which included the Fort Pitt trade, were available for Outfits 1872, 1873, 1876, 1881 and 1883 through 1889 (Table 22, p. 317). Saskatchewan District Reports showing the fur return totals for the posts in the district were found for Outfits 1916 through 1919 (Table 23, p. 324). District Reports indicated which furs were being traded and gave total sales for the Onion Lake and Cold Lake posts. While they do not identify what furs were being traded at the specific posts, they do discuss fluctuations in the annual availability of various fur bearing animals. Other sources include the journals of the Hudson's Bay Company Officer at Fort Pitt and Onion Lake and the Department of Indian Affairs Annual Agency and Inspection Reports.

Fort Pitt was pillaged in the spring of 1885. Therefore, there are no returns for Outfit 1884. An indication of the value of the goods at the post in 1885 can be found in the claim the post put forward to the government for goods lost at that time. The claim amounted to \$34,705.80 for merchandise and \$6,422.12 for furs, making a total of \$41,127.92. This total was the largest amount claimed by any of the posts pillaged during the Rebellion (HBC D.30/151).

The returns indicate that the hunting of buffalo for robes, skins and provisions declined during the second half of the 1870's. In the Fort Pitt returns for 1872 through 1874, these items made up a large portion of the total returns (Table 19). Prime buffalo robes and whole dressed buffalo skins were traded consistently. By 1874, the trade in furs at Fort Pitt was beginning to increase significantly.

In the Lower Saskatchewan District the trade in buffalo robes, skins and provisions decreased with Outfit 1876. At that time, only 1,066 buffalo robes were traded, as compared to 4,016 in Outfit 1874. The price for robes dropped from \$5.00 to \$3.28. No returns were made for buffalo skins or provisions during this outfit.

Table 19 shows the returns for trade in these items. Of the Lower Saskatchewan District posts, Fort Pitt supplied a good portion of the returns in buffalo robes, but a lower percentage of the pemmican at that time. For district Outfit 1872, all the common buffalo robes and approximately 46 percent of the prime robes appear to have come from Fort Pitt. This percentage decreased for the

Table 19: Fort Pitt and Saskatchewan District Returns for Outfits 1872, 1873 and 1874

Items	Outfit 1872			Outfit 1873			Outfit 1874		
	¢	Inventory	Value	¢	Inventory	Value	¢	Inventory	Value
FORT PITT									
Buffalo Robes									
Prime	2.43	1140	2770.20	5.00	670	3350.00	5.00	1226	6130.00
Common	1.22	160	195.20	1.20	-	-	1.25	-	-
Pemmican (lbs.)									
Common	.12	-	-	.12	4216	505.92	.12	4892	587.04
Fine	.14	-	-	.14	-	-	.14	-	-
Tongues									
Cured	.36	40	14.40	.36	-	-	.36	100	36.00
-----									
SASKATCHEWAN DISTRICT									
Buffalo Robes									
Prime	2.43	2470	6002.10	5.00	2269	11345.00	5.00	4016	20070.00
Common	1.22	160	195.20	1.25	-	-	1.25	-	-
Pemmican (lbs.)									
Common	.12	57660	6199.20	.12	39865	4783.80	.12	52201	6264.12
Fine	.14	342	47.88	.14	-	-	.14	-	-
Tongues									
Cured	.36	-	-	.36	-	-	.36	-	-

Source: HBC D.30/15, Accounts Received at Commissioner's Office.



following two years to around 30 percent of the prime buffalo robes. The returns for pemmican show that Fort Pitt supplied approximately 71 and nine percent for Outfits 1873 and 1874 respectively.

The Fort Pitt returns for Outfits 1872, 1873 and 1874 (Table 20) indicate that the largest fur traded in terms of quantity was muskrat. This pelt totalled 5,708, 8,090 and 8,343 for the three years respectively. Valued at only 12 cents per skin in 1872, and 16 cents per skin in 1873 and 1874, the muskrat was not the most valuable item traded nor did the large quantity traded make it the most lucrative trade item.

In the Lower Saskatchewan District the quantity of muskrats traded far outnumbered any other fur bearing animal. This volume increased throughout the 1880's, but dropped significantly according to the returns for Outfits 1883 and 1885 to 1887. The price for muskrat dropped for Outfit 1883 to 10 cents and for Outfits 1884 to six cents. Outfit 1889 paid 15 cents for muskrat.

At Fort Pitt the volume of trade in muskrat during the 1880's was similar to the number traded in the 1870's. Muskrat was a consistently high volume trade item at Fort Pitt except for Outfits 1885 through 1887. An increase of volume from 1,439 to 9,346, or approximately 6.4 percent occurred from Outfit 1886 to Outfit 1890. The value of muskrat skins more than doubled from six cents during Outfit 1886 to 15 cents for 1889. This made the pelt more valuable to the trappers and possibly was the reason for more being trapped. However, it appears that, while many furs were

Table 20: Fort Pitt Returns for furs traded in Outfits 1872, 1873 and 1874

ITEM	Outfit 1872			Outfit 1873		
	Price	Quantity	Value	Price	Quantity	Value
Badger-Prime	.38	142	53.96	.32	201	64.32
Common	.19	-	-	.16	-	-
Bear						
Black-Prime	7.91	15	118.65	7.90	57	450.32
Common/Cub	3.96	9	35.64	3.95	12	47.40
Brown-Prime	7.91	4	31.64	7.90	15	118.50
Common/Cub	3.96	1	3.96	3.95	-	-
Grizzly-Prime	7.91	13	102.83	7.90	11	86.90
Common/Cub	3.96	6	23.76	3.95	1	3.95
Beaver-Large	1.70	126	214.20	2.56	178	455.68
Small	1.70	123	209.10	2.56	140	358.40
Common & Coating	.85	-	-	1.28	-	-
Castorum (lbs.)	6.09	40	243.60	1.34	-	-
Fishers-Prime	4.38	9	39.42	8.76	16	140.16
Common	2.19	-	-	4.38	-	-
Foxes						
Cross-Prime	10.22	10	102.22	4.86	3	14.58
Common	5.11	1	5.11	2.43	-	-
Kitt-Prime	1.46	1154	1684.84	.60	624	374.40
Common	.73	-	-	-	-	-
Red-Prime	1.46	202	294.92	1.82	46	83.72
Common	.73	-	-	-	-	-
Silver-Prime	53.53	3	166.54	31.64	1	31.64
Common	-	-	-	-	-	-
Isinglass (lbs.)	.97	-	-	1.10	-	-
Lynx-Prime	2.31	4	9.24	2.38	54	128.52
Common	1.16	-	-	1.19	-	-
Martens-Prime	3.65	2	7.30	4.50	24	108.00
Common	1.83	1	1.83	2.55	-	-

(continued)

Table 20 (continued)

ITEM	Outfit 1872			Outfit 1873		
	Price	Quantity	Value	Price	Quantity	Value
Mink-Prime	1.22	20	24.40	2.18	224	488.32
Common	.66	32	19.52	1.09	12	13.08
Musquash	.12	5708	684.96	.16	8090	1294.40
Otter-Prime	4.14	13	53.82	6.08	8	48.64
Common	2.07	-	-	3.04	1	3.04
Skunks-Prime	.95	-	-	.98	60	58.80
Swans	.61	3	1.83	.61	-	-
Wolverines-Prime	1.95	7	13.65	2.56	14	38.84
Common	.97	-	-	1.28	-	-
Wolves-Prime	1.34	358	479.72	2.44	121	295.24
Common	-	-	-	1.22	-	-
TOTAL			\$4621.54			\$5227.67

(continued)

Table 20 (continued)

ITEM	Outfit 1874		Value
	Price	Quantity	
Badger-Prime	.32	91	29.12
Common	.16	47	7.52
Bear			
Black-Prime	7.90	44	347.60
Common/Cub	3.95	17	67.15
Brown-Prime	7.90	15	118.50
Common/Cub	3.95	3	11.85
Grizzly-Prime	7.90	7	55.30
Common/Cub	3.95	1	3.95
Beaver-Large	2.56	211	540.16
Small	2.56	241	616.96
Common & Coating	1.28	2	2.56
Castorum (lbs.)	1.34	-	-
Fishers-Prime	8.76	15	131.40
Common	4.38	2	8.76
Foxes			
Cross-Prime	4.86	5	24.30
Common	2.43	-	-
Kitt-Prime	.60	350	210.00
Common	.30	-	-
Red-Prime	1.80	75	136.50
Common	.91	5	4.55
Silver-Prime	31.64	-	-
Common	15.82	1	15.82
Isinglass (lbs.)	1.10	-	-
Lynx-Prime	2.38	301	716.38
Common	1.19	4	4.76
Martens-Prime	4.50	24	108.00
Common	2.25	2	4.50
Mink-Prime	2.18	576	1255.68
Common	1.09	129	140.61
Musquash	.16	8343	1334.88
Otter-Prime	6.08	21	127.68
Common	3.04	4	12.16
Skunks-Prime	.98	37	36.26
Swans	.61	15	9.15
Wolverines-Prime	2.56	9	23.06
Common	1.28	-	-
Wolves-Prime	2.44	75	183.00
Common	1.22	3	3.66
TOTAL			\$12421.76

Table 21: Fort Pitt Returns for Outfits 1885-1890

ITEM	Outfit 1885			Outfit 1886		
	Price	Quantity	Value	Price	Quantity	Value
Badgers	.78	8	6.24	.93	33	30.69
Bears				15.18	107	1624.26
Black				19.46	15	291.90
Brown	11.48	95	1090.60	9.73	-	-
Grizzly				4.67	578	2699.26
Beaver	4.09	651	2662.59	.30	-	-
Ermine/40	.78	-	-	6.91	-	-
Castorum (lbs.)	5.16	-	-	4.09	118	482.62
Fishers	4.38	54	236.52	6.03	3	186.93
Foxes				.63	-	-
Cross	6.42	36	231.12	1.41	16	586.56
Kitt	.46	-	-	48.67	3	146.01
Red	1.30	231	300.30	.97	-	-
Silver	53.53	8	428.24	1.85	826	1528.10
Islinglass	.88	-	-	1.85	20	53.65
Lynx	3.41	1258	4289.78	.54	1543	833.22
Marten	2.24	28	62.72	.06	1439	86.34
Mink	.63	1033	650.79	6.03	21	126.63
Musquash	.07	2146	150.22	.73	636	464.28
Otter	5.45	17	92.65	.05	-	-
Skunk	.88	236	207.68	3.11	144	447.84
Weemusk	.05	-	-	5.84	40	233.60
Wolves	1.95	18	35.10			
Wolverines	5.26	19	99.94			
			\$10544.49			\$9821.89

314

(Continued)

Table 21 (Continued)

ITEM	Outfit 1887			Outfit 1888		
	Price	Quantity	Value	Price	Quantity	Value
Badgers	.93	9	8.37	.78	96	77.88
Bears Black	15.18	48	728.54			
Brown	19.46	14	272.44	11.68	138	1611.84
Grizzly	9.73	5	48.65			
Beaver	4.67	628	2932.76	4.28	347	1485.16
Ermine/40	-	-	-	.97	156	3.78
Castorum (lbs.)	6.91	26	79.66	6.82	13½	92.07
Fishers	4.09	91	372.19	3.90	116	452.40
Foxes Cross	6.03	44	265.32	4.67	43	200.81
Kitt	-	-	-	.58	-	-
Red	1.41	300	423.00	1.36	387	526.32
Silver	48.67	9	438.03	33.10	8	264.80
Islinglass	-	-	-	.78	-	-
Lynx	1.85	193	357.05	1.80	254	457.20
Marten	1.85	71	131.35	1.36	68	92.48
Mink	.54	363	196.02	.44	252	110.88
Musquash	.06	1449	86.94	.08	6718	537.44
Otter	6.03	42	253.26	5.84	24	140.16
Skunk	.73	232	169.36	.68	526	357.68
Weemusk	-	-	-	.05	-	-
Wolves	3.11	115	357.65	1.36	33	44.88
Wolverines	5.84	34	198.56	3.90	43	167.70
			\$7419.25			\$6620.48

(Continued)

Table 21 (Continued)

ITEM	Outfit 1889			Outfit 1890		
	Price	Quantity	Value	Price	Quantity	Value
Badgers	.68	104	70.72	.68	78	53.04
Bears Black	11.87	48	569.76	11.87	63	747.81
Brown	14.60	18	262.80	14.60	17	248.20
Grizzly	6.73	2	12.46	6.73	1	6.73
Beaver	4.67	72	336.24	4.67	53	247.51
Ermine/40	2.34	-	-	2.34	105	6.14
Castorum (lbs.)	1.62	-	-	1.62	3½	23.17
Fishers	4.77	64	305.28	4.77	33	157.41
Foxes Cross	6.71	12	80.52	6.71	18	120.78
Kitt	.58	-	-	.58	-	-
Red	1.46	254	370.84	1.46	149	217.54
Silver	45.74	2	91.48	45.74	2	91.48
Islinglass	.49	-	-	.49	-	-
Lynx	2.58	29	74.82	2.58	6	15.48
Marten	1.56	28	43.68	1.56	6	9.36
Mink	.74	232	171.16	.74	253	187.22
Musquash	.15	7571	1135.65	.15	9346	1401.90
Otter	5.54	22	121.88	5.54	5	27.70
Skunk	.68	538	365.84	.68	477	324.36
Weemusk	.03	-	-	.03	10	.30
Wolves	1.31	40	52.40	1.31	8	10.48
Wolverines	3.11	15	46.65	3.11	4	12.44
			\$41112.70			\$3908.55

Source: HBC D.30/15, Accounts Received at the Commissioner's Office.

Table 22: Saskatchewan District Returns for Outfits 1885-1890

ITEM	Outfit 1885			Outfit 1886		
	Price	Quantity	Value	Price	Quantity	Value
Badgers	.78	51	39.78	.93	134	124.62
Bears Black				15.18	175	2656.50
Brown	11.48	186	2135.28	19.46	35	681.10
Grizzly				9.73	1	9.73
Beaver	4.09	1910	7811.90	4.67	1238	5781.46
Ermine/40	.78	4	3.12	.30	30	.09
Castorum (lbs.)	5.16	4	20.64	6.91	-	-
Fishers	4.38	119	321.22	4.09	195	797.55
Foxes Cross	6.42	100	642.00	6.03	179	1079.37
Kitt	.46	5	2.30	.63	3	1.89
Red	1.30	1029	1337.76	1.41	2118	2986.38
Silver	53.53	15	802.95	48.67	17	827.39
Islinglass	.88	7	6.16	.97	-	-
Lynx	3.41	5310	18107.10	1.85	4497	8319.45
Marten	2.24	144	322.56	1.85	103	190.55
Mink	.63	2293	1444.59	.54	3450	1863.00
Musquash	.07	8831	618.17	.06	5318	319.08
Otter	5.45	42	228.90	6.03	49	295.47
Skunk	.88	1282	1128.16	.73	3009	2196.57
Weemusk	.05	8	.40	.05	11	.55
Wolves	1.95	47	91.65	3.11	477	1483.47
Wolverine	5.26	60	315.60	5.84	96	560.64
			<hr/>			<hr/>
			\$35577.14*			\$30174.86

Note: \* Total given is incorrect

(Continued)



Table 22 (Continued)

ITEM	Outfit 1887			Outfit 1888		
	Price	Quantity	Value	Price	Quantity	Value
Badger	.93	91	84.63	.78	294	229.32
Bears Black	15.18	193	2929.74			
Brown	19.46	65	1264.90	11.68	482	5629.76
Grizzly	9.73	8	77.84			
Beaver	4.67	1578	7369.26	4.28	1504	6437.12
Ermine /40	.30	-	-	.97	212	5.14*
Castorum (lbs.)	6.91	27½	190.02	6.82	15½	105.71
Fishers	4.09	252	1036.68	3.90	297	1158.30
Foxes Cross	6.03	140	844.20	4.67	118	551.06
Kitt	.63	13	8.19	.58	7	4.06
Red	1.41	1532	2160.12	1.36	1203	1636.08
Silver	48.67	21	1022.07	33.10	14	463.40
Islinglass	.97	16	15.52	.78	23	15.94
Lynx	1.85	52314	4280.90	1.80	907	1632.60
Marten	1.85	427	789.95	1.36	803	1092.08
Mink	.54	1917	1062.18	.44	706	310.64
Musquash	.06	2856	171.36		14304	1144.32
Otter	6.03	94	566.82	5.84	71	414.64
Skunk	.73	1445	1054.85	.68	1984	1349.12
Weemusk	.05	7	.35	.05	6	.30
Wolves	3.11	448	1393.28	1.36	107	145.52
Wolverine	5.84	103	601.52	3.90	134	522.60
			\$26918.38			\$22847.71

\*total given is incorrect. It should be \$35377.20.

(Continued)

Table 22 (Continued)

ITEM	Outfit 1889			Outfit 1890		
	Price	Quantity	Value	Price	Quantity	Value
Badgers	.68	411	279.48	.68	1146	779.28
Bears Black	11.87	267	3050.59	11.87	269	3193.03
Brown	14.60	95	1416.20	14.60	104	1518.40
Grizzly	6.73	5	31.15	6.73	3	18.69
Beaver	4.67	646	3016.82	4.67	435	2031.45
Ermine /40	2.34	107	6.26	2.34	150	8.91
Castorum (lbs.)	1.62	4½	29.79	1.62	8½	54.61
Fishers	4.77	207	987.39	4.77	111	529.47
Foxes Cross	6.71	59	395.89	6.71	84	563.64
Kitt	.58	24	13.92	.58	24	13.92
Red	1.46	1168	1705.28	1.46	1054	1538.84
Silver	45.74	4	182.96	45.74	11	503.14
Islinglass	.49	20	9.80	.49	61	30.01
Lynx	2.58	183	472.14	2.58	76	196.08
Marten	1.56	416	648.96	1.56	264	411.84
Mink	.74	696	515.04	.74	660	488.40
Musquash	.15	34889	5233.35	.15	42478	6371.70
Otter	5.54	61	337.94	5.54	40	221.60
Skunk	.68	2723	1851.64	.68	2275	1547.00
Weemusk	.03	14	.42	.03	15	.45
Wolves	1.31	236	309.16	1.31	69	9039.00
Wolverine	3.11	70	217.70	3.11	20	62.20
			\$20711.88			\$20173.05

Source: HBC D.30/15, Accounts Received at the Commissioner's Office.

decreasing, the muskrat population was increasing at this time. This would make them more accessible to trappers.

During the 1870's the kitt fox was the next largest fur, in terms of quantity, traded at Fort Pitt. However, it shows a considerable decline in volume from 1,154 in Outfit 1872 to 350 in Outfit 1874. Returns for Outfits 1885 through 1890 at Fort Pitt show that there were no kitt foxes traded. This decline in the kitt fox trade was evident throughout the district with the total trade of 1,972 kitt foxes in 1872 declining to one in 1883. By 1889, the number traded had only risen to 24 for the district with one of these coming from Fort Pitt.

Wolves were a significant trade item at Fort Pitt during the 1870's. The prairie wolf followed the buffalo herds and a decline in its population can be related to a decline in buffalo herds. The trade in wolf pelts at Fort Pitt dropped from 358 in 1872 to 75 in 1874, or approximately 4.7 percent. During Outfits 1886 and 1887, the number increased to 144 and 115 respectively, but it never stayed at this level, dropping to 40 or less during the following seasons.

The trade in beaver was not high at Fort Pitt during the 1870's. In Outfit 1872, 126 large beaver pelts were traded at Fort Pitt while 1,159 were traded in the district. This represents only nine percent. This percentage difference decreased in the mid-1880's when the trade in beaver more than doubled at Fort Pitt. A large decline in beaver was evident for Outfit 1890, dropping at Fort Pitt from the four and six hundreds to only 53 prime beaver pelts and in the district from

1,504 in Outfit 1888 to 646 in Outfit 1889. The decline in beaver reflects an overall decline in the beaver population throughout the North Saskatchewan area. At Lac la Biche post in the Edmonton District the "beaver are nearly gone" (HBC D.25/5, Inspection Report, 1888-89).

The trade in mink increased significantly in the 1870's and 1880's even though the price dropped. In Outfit 1872 only 20 prime and 32 common mink valued at \$1.22 and 66 cents each were traded at Fort Pitt. In Outfit 1873 the volume increased to 244 prime mink valued at \$2.18 each and 12 common mink valued at \$1.09 each. The trade in mink at Fort Pitt appears to have peaked in Outfit 1886 when 1,543 were traded at 54 cents each, the total value amounting to \$833.22. This amount was considerably less than the \$1,255.68 paid for 576 prime mink at \$2.18 each in Outfit 1874 twelve years earlier. Outfit 1877 traded only 363 mink. The total continued around the 250 mark for the next three seasons.

In the Lower Saskatchewan District, the trade in mink increased rapidly in the 1870's and 1880's. Outfit 1872 traded only 584 prime and 350 common mink, while Outfit 1873 traded 2,208 prime and 177 common mink. The mink trade was especially high in Outfit 1883 and 8,197 mink were traded. The trade decreased during the following years so that in the late 1880's, the trade in mink was generally in the 600's.

A significant trade in lynx was done in the Lower Saskatchewan District in the late 1870's and early 1880's. From a low of 57 prime

lynx traded in Outfit 1872, the number jumped to 3,446 for Outfit 1876, dropped to 12 for Outfit 1881, increased to 5,310 for Outfit 1884 and 4,497 for Outfit 1885, and thereafter dropped rapidly and steadily so that Outfit 1890 shows only 76 lynx traded. At Fort Pitt the pattern was similar. Outfit 1872 traded only two lynx while Outfit 1874 traded 301 and Outfit 1885 traded 1,258. Thereafter, the volume dropped rapidly so that only six were traded during Outfit 1890.

Other furs traded at Fort Pitt which are of special interest included various types of bear, which always made up a good percentage of the value of each outfit; the red fox, which picked up in volume in the mid-1800's; and skunks. Skunks were not a significant trade item in terms of volume in the 1870's but increased in volume during the 1880's.

References to the state of the fur trade in the Fort Pitt area were found in the letterbooks and Inspection Reports for the 1880's. McKay wrote Belanger at Prince Albert in November 1885 that lynx, fox and mink appeared numerous. The trade in furs at Fort Pitt was poor during the 1886 to 1890 seasons and the decline in returns for the 1886-87 winter trade was reportedly due to the company being too "poorly equipped" to conduct a successful trade against the well equipped opposition. A decrease of \$3,459.23 was reported for the 1887-88 season (HBC B.165/b/1, McKay to Clarke, July 9, 1888). The district catch was considerably less than the previous year due to scarcity of furs and the fall in prices for furs. Bear,

fox, lynx, mink and skunk were all said to be decreasing. In September of 1889, the prospects for the coming year were unknown, but it was thought that fox and muskrat would be numerous. However, in March 1890, there were reportedly no furs at all except at Island Lake. That season the fur trade returns were very low because of the "dying off and general decrease of fur bearing animals" (HBC B.165/b/2, McKay to Clarke, August 14, 1890). This was reflected in the low value of \$1,112.70 shown for Outfit 1889.

Records of furs traded at Onion Lake from 1890 to 1920 were not available. The furs most frequently mentioned by the Hudson's Bay Company clerk and in the Saskatchewan District Returns for Outfits 1916 through 1919 (Table 23, p. 324), identify the fur bearing animals which were hunted and trapped for trade in the Onion Lake District. These included muskrat, bear, mink, fox, lynx, skunk, beaver, marten, otter, badger and wolverine. During the study period, these fur bearers were being continuously depleted, a phenomenon which was acknowledged by the Indians, department officials and company personnel.

The volume of trade in muskrat increased over the previous years and muskrat was the largest fur item, in terms of quantity, to be traded at Onion Lake after 1890. This fur is mentioned continuously in the company journal. Because muskrats were abundant, relatively easy to trap and brought a fairly good price, many of the Indians, who did not hunt regularly for other furs, hunted muskrat in the early winter and spring. Muskrat were sometimes taken during

Table 23: Trade in furs for the Saskatchewan District, 1916-1919

ITEM	YEAR/QUANTITY			
	1916	1917	1918	1919
Badger	12	6	6	17
Bear -Black	439	458	446	391
Brown	80	99	93	64
Beaver	4836	4380	3646	3840
Castorum	331 lbs.	229½ lbs.	66 3/4 lbs.	81½ lbs.
Ermine	5822	5277	7179	11662
Fisher	138	36	40	49
Fox -Silver	1	1	33	24
Cross	291	150	161	138
Red	1226	527	507	463
White	65	30	393	326
Blue	171	170	5	2
Lynx	1594	394	338	420
Marten	1146	1277	1306	1529
Mink	1302	1266	2221	3800
Muskrat	90377	89737	109062	122995
Otter	250	223	205	273
Skunk	1110	610	584	1078
Wolf -Timber	161	134	222	270
Prairie	655	258	229	578
Wolverine	132	120	181	120

Source: HBC D.FTR/9, 11. Fur Trade Returns.

the summer, but this was discouraged by the company officer as the pelts were of little value at that time.

Muskrat were scarce in the study area during the 1893-94 season and from 1907 to 1911. One of the causes associated with the scarcity of many fur bearers during the 1894 season was the abundance of rabbits. In December of 1894, the company clerk reported that the

Indians "say animals won't go in traps" because there were too many rabbits around (HBC B.323/a/1, December 29, 1894). Muskrats were especially plentiful in 1902-03 when the company journal records that "every small lake is full and they are running all over the roads" (HBC B.323/a/5, October 17, 1902). In November, four of the reserve Indians brought in 1,000 rats in one day (HBC B.323/a/5, November 23, 1903).

Fox and mink were expected to be numerous during the winter of 1902-03. In January of 1903, the Cold Lake trader reported that lynx were increasing but that the muskrats were decreasing (HBC B.323/a/5, January 21, 1903). Even with the decline in muskrat the fur returns were good that season.

The volume of trade for black bear, beaver, ermine, cross fox, red fox, marten, muskrat, otter, skunk, wolves and wolverine increased in 1916-1919 over the 1880's. Both lynx and fox show a relatively high value for 1916, but drop sharply in the following three years (Table 23).

The fur trade experienced many fluctuations in the availability of fur bearers due to natural cycles, extensive fires, which left burned areas devoid of vegetation and consequently fur bearers for several years, and over exploitation. In February 1896 a heavy decline in furs was reported. Bears were especially noted for their absence. Around Island Lake the Indians killed nothing although they were out every day. They found it necessary to move farther from the lake to hunt as the lake area was "cleaned out" (HBC B.323/



a/2, February 22, 1896). In March 1896, fur prices dropped considerably, resulting in very careful buying and the reduction of fur prices in April. The spring was late. The river and lakes were still frozen at the end of April so that muskrat hunting had a slow start. No trade meant stringency for the Indians, especially since fish were also scarce. The fall in prices added to their discouragement.

Furs were again scarce during the fall of 1897. Because of this, Garson encouraged the Indians not to begin their fall hunting so early. The outlook was a bit more optimistic in the spring (1898). Rats were numerous and the spring returns were more than the returns for the previous year. Signs of other furs were good for the fall. During the winter of 1907-08, the trade was poor due to a smallpox epidemic among the Indians at Moose and Long Lake and the scarcity of furs.

Furs collected during Outfit 1917 revealed a decline in a number of fur bearing animals. The most marked decline was seen in foxes, lynx, skunk and prairie wolf. In 1918, the trade in beaver, red fox, lynx, otter, skunk and prairie wolf all declined while ermine, cross, silver and white fox, marten, mink, muskrat, timber wolf and wolverine increased.

During Outfit 250 in 1930 all fur bearers increased except for bear, fox and wolverine. Notable increases occurred in beaver, ermine, mink, muskrat, skunk and prairie wolf. The increase in beaver and muskrat was attributed to high prices given for them in the early

season which caused them to be vigorously hunted.

A limited form of conservation was encouraged by the Hudson's Bay Company trader. In the fall of 1897 furs were scarce and Garson urged the Indians not to begin their fall hunt so soon. In September 1901, he reported that there were a few muskrat around but that he was keeping the Indians from hunting them as much as possible. A close season for beaver was established by the provincial government of Alberta. In 1909 the act which prohibited the purchase and trade of beaver was suspended from January 1st to May 15th, allowing this fur to be trapped for a limited period of time.

A factor which seriously affected trapping and, therefore, the trade, was the weather. Snow was essential for the trapping of most fur bearers. The Hudson's Bay Company trader reported that the Indians "say they cannot touch animals until the snow falls" (HBC B.323/b/1, November 21, 1893). The abundance of snow also affected the hunt. In 1907 the winter and early spring were not conducive to good hunting or trapping. The company officer at Onion Lake reported that during the winter the Chipewyan had not been able to provide for themselves as usual because the winter had been "impropitious." The hunting season had not been good due to an unusually severe winter and the great depth of snow.

The annual Agency and Inspection Reports indicate that many of the Indians in the agency were involved in the fur trade throughout the study period. In 1909 it was reported that the majority of the Onion Lake band still took advantage of the hunt, although the number

of fur bearing animals was declining. An increase in the value of pelts helped to make up for the decrease in numbers (SP27, 1910: 145, 146). In 1910 the Onion Lake bands were still involved in trapping even though many of them were involved in farming and other industries. The agent reported that these bands "like all the other bands in this country have spent a great deal of time hunting muskrats" as the price had increased in the past six years from six cents per pelt to 60 cents (SP27, 1911:137). The subsequent decline in furs and in revenue from the fur trade in 1911 is credited with causing some of the Indians to have "a greater disposition to resort to farming" (SP27, 1912:145).

Because of the poor trapping season in 1910-11, the Chipewyan Indians were more inclined to begin farming. The agent reported that this band had 140 acres of land ploughed and "like other Indians, they are feeling loss of income through the falling off of the hunt, and are beginning to see that they must work or go under" (SP23, 1912:147). However, the fortunes of the trade increased the following season and the hunting Indians were able to continue to make a fairly comfortable living. Of the Island Lake Indians, Agent Sibbald reported that during the past year (1911-1912), "they have met with fortune above the average, and have been fairly comfortable in their way" (SP27, 1913:154, 155), while of the Chipewyan, he reported; "they are still excellent hunters and have derived a large amount of their income from that source during the past year;..." (*ibid.*).

It appears that the fur trade continued to be profitable in

the Saskatchewan area as late as 1919. In the Saskatchewan Report for 1919, it is recorded that "the hunting Indians had a very exceptional year and received very high prices for the catch of furs" (SP27, 1920:48). Throughout the study period there were a number of Indians in the Onion Lake agency who continued to be involved in hunting and trapping for trade. These included the majority of the Chipewyan band, the Loon Lake, Island Lake and Joseph Bighead bands, as well as some members of the Keeheewin, Frog Lake and Onion Lake bands who used activity to supplement their income from other sources.

#### 5.7 Adult Male Involvement in Various Occupations

It is difficult to ascertain precisely the number of individuals who comprised the categories "hunting" and "working" Indians, and the percentage of the total population who were resident on the reserves. The number of adult males involved in various activities in the agency for the years 1905 to 1916 and for 1917 are shown in Tables 24 and 25.

Both tables indicate that some men were involved in more than one activity. There was an abrupt drop in the number involved in stock raising in 1909-10. This may have been due to resentment by the Indians of the permit system and head tax on cattle which was enforced by Agent Sibbald. At a meeting held between Sibbald and the Indians in August 1910, Thunder noted that many stockmen preferred to sell off their stock rather than submit to these controls. The following year the number raising stock rose again to the level it was prior to 1909-

Table 24: Number of adult males involved in various activities in the Onion Lake Agency, 1905-1916

YEAR	Farming	Hunting & Trapping	INDUSTRY		Total Males 21-65	Males 21-65 years	
			Other Industries	Stock Raising		Cold Lake band	Onion Lake bands <sup>1</sup>
1905-06	43	148	25	122	209	58	93
1906-07	45	154	22	138	209	57	92
1907-08	40	164	22	134	207	58	87
1908-09	62	171	12	145	208	58	88
1909-10	62	156	13	82	216	60	90
1910-11	64	147	12	136	221	62	64
1911-12	59	159	11	149	219	57	66
1912-13	62	163	12	131	215	56	65
1913-14	55	140	33	120	218	53	66
1914-15	57	125	46	123	221	52	65
1915-16	66	133	43	122	212	50	47

1. includes Seekaskootch, Sweet Grass and Mahkayo bands

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports and Tabular Statements, 1906-1918.

Table 25: Able-bodied Male Indians above the age of 18 years and Occupations for 1917

Band	Total No. of Males over 18	Farming	Stock Raising	Hunting	Labouring
Onion Lake	41	22	33	3	23
Frog Lake	32	10	12	18	6
Keeheewin	35	16	16	10	11
Island Lake	25	2	6	23	2
Joseph Bighead	21	0	0	21	0
Chipewyan	58	26	33	51	7
TOTAL	154	76	100	126	49

Source: RG10 FOR Vol. 9084, BK16.

1910. There was a significant change in the number of men involved in "other industries." Approximately 12 percent of the men were involved in freighting, building, survey parties and other wage labour in 1905-06. From 1908-1913, this number decreased to only six percent but in 1913 the number involved in other industries increased to 33 out of a total of 218 men, or 15 percent. This number continued to rise from 1914 to 1917. The majority of men involved in other industries belonged to the Onion Lake band.

In 1905-06, approximately 12 percent of the male population was involved in "other industries," 20 percent in farming, 58 percent in stock raising, and 71 percent in hunting, trapping

and fishing. In 1917, farming involved approximately one-half of the men in each of the Onion Lake and Chipewyan bands; 80 percent of the men in the Onion Lake and 58 percent in the Chipewyan band were involved in stock raising; all but two men in the Island Lake band, all in Joseph Bighead band, and 87 percent of the Chipewyan adult males were considered hunters; and, 56 percent of the men in the Onion Lake band and 30 percent of those in Keeheewin band were involved in wage labour. The occupation which was most common among all of the men in the agency in 1917 was hunting, with 85 percent; 64 percent were involved in stock raising; 49 percent were farming; and, 29 percent participated in outside labour.

#### 5.8 Earnings of the Indians

During the study period the Indians in the agency moved from a trade economy to a market economy where cash transactions became more common than transactions based on barter. There were four sources from which the Indians obtained cash. These included annuity payments, trade in furs, the sale of produce and other items, and wage labour.

Prior to 1876 the Indians were involved in the European market economy through their participation in the fur trade. Transactions with the Hudson's Bay Company were based on credit sales and barter, the company paying in goods rather than cash for furs received. The 1888 district Inspection Report stated that very little cash was paid for furs as traders were not allowed to give cash except with permission from

district headquarters in Prince Albert (HBC B.165/c/1, Inspection Report, 1888). The 1889 Inspection Report noted that cash was paid for furs by opposition traders. Cash values were given for furs traded during the 1890's and 1900's and it is likely that cash payments for furs increased as money became a more common medium of exchange. After 1893 an estimated cash value is given for furs in the agency returns for Indian earnings (Table 26) and in 1897 a cash value is given for fish. The earlier returns are estimates which include the value of fish and game consumed by the Indians.

At the annual annuity payments the Indians each received a set amount of cash. This was used to pay off debts at the Hudson's Bay store and to purchase necessary or luxury items. Traders often arrived with a large amount of goods at this time and the primary medium of exchange was cash. During treaty payments in October 1884, there were an unusual number of traders from Battleford and elsewhere attending the payments and consequently, goods were cheap. It was reported that the Indians showed great discretion in their purchases, buying generally articles of clothing, blankets and household utensils (SP3, 1885:143). Treaty money was sometimes withheld by Agent Sibbald to pay individual debts at the agency. Treaty money was also used to purchase implements, oxen and seed grain. Of the transactions recorded by the agency clerk for the years 1915 to 1917, 40 persons out of 70 used treaty money for such purchases (Table 27).

The third and largest source of cash for the Indians was obtained from the sale of cattle, beef, grain, hay and lumber. Indians



were urged to sell their surplus hay and grain, and, in 1897, Agent Mann reported that the Indians were learning to support themselves in this way. Individual earnings from the sale of surplus grain and cattle amounted to \$2,618.43. This money was "judiciously expended in purchasing four mowing-machines, four horse-rakes, one wagon, three sets of work harness, clothing and other necessaries" (SP14, 1898:167). Many took advantage of the market for beef and cattle. Inspection Reports lament this, however, as many Indians were selling cattle and beef without the agent's knowledge. The returns given are likely incomplete as they include only those transactions that the agent was aware of.

Table 27 indicates that during the years 1915-1917, the primary source of income for the Onion Lake bands, and the secondary source for Keeheewin band was from the sale of cattle. Fifteen out of 21 persons used money from this source to purchase implements, oxen, seed grain and other items related to farming.

The earnings of the Indians in the Onion Lake Agency are given in Table 26. From 1890 to 1912, the totals are for Bands 119, 120, 121, 122, 123 and 149. From 1913 the Island Lake band is included. Earnings of the Indians increased over the 30 year period from a low of \$772.35 in 1890 to \$123,374.00 in 1920, but the total amount per capita and per males over the age of 21 did not increase substantially.

Year	Total Earnings	Total Population	Earnings per Capita	Total Males over 21	Earnings per Males over 21
1897	18,703.43	708	26.42	156	119.89
1907	43,128.00	967	44.60	61	707.01
1913	100,231.91	1036	96.75	243	412.48
1916	69,104.00	1058	63.31	235	294.06

Totals for the amount earned from the sale of furs is not given until 1893 and for fish until 1897. Beginning in 1897 the totals for furs and fish included the estimated value of fish and meat consumed. Total earnings for furs reflect the population fluctuations of fur bearing animals. Peak seasons for furs were 1903 to 1905, 1913 and 1914, and 1920. Earnings from furs was very low during the 1908-09 season. This was due to a scarcity of all fur bearing animals, especially muskrat, and because of much sickness from smallpox and influenza. Furs were abundant in 1912. This abundance continued for the next few years. In 1920 all fur bearers increased except fox, wolverine and bear.

From 1897 to 1905, the total values given for cattle and beef included earnings from farm produce and hay. From 1907 until 1920 the total given under "Farm Produce" included earnings from hay, while the earnings listed in the column titled "Wood and Hay" indicate earnings from land rents and timber. The total earnings from the

Table 26: Statement of Earnings of the Indians in the Onion Lake Agency, 1890-1920

For year ended -	Beef sold & used for food	Farm <sup>1</sup> products	Fish and game <sup>2</sup>	Furs <sup>2</sup>	Sale of wood & hay	Wages earned (Labour & Freighting)	Manufactures & Other Industries	Total
June 30, 1890					176.00 <sup>3</sup>	596.35		772.35
1891		90.00			80.00	75.00		245.00
1892		53.50			86.00	331.00		470.00
1893	62.12	24.00		5300.00			13.50	5399.62
1894	536.93			5900.00	44.00	375.00	1.65	6857.58
1895	24.00	213.03 <sup>4</sup>		6000.00	104.50	1254.99		8180.60
1896	959.22	305.18		5800.00	70.00	520.19	29.79	7684.38
1897		8885.00 <sup>5</sup>	1800.00	5200.00		2818.43		18703.43
1898		8074.10	1750.00	4200.00		300.00	2842.00	17166.10
1899		9270.00	3150.00	4200.00		240.00	3300.49	20260.49
1900		9030.00	2500.00	3820.00		320.00	4273.00	19943.00
1901		11377.00	2600.00	9500.00		1530.00	6500.00	31507.00
1902		12100.00	2500.00	18450.00		1935.00	4350.00	39335.00
1903		12110.00	2500.00	24500.00		4670.00	8080.00	51860.00
1904		9080.00	2500.00	25000.00		6080.00	8600.00	51260.00
1905		8110.00	2500.00	33000.00		4100.00	3800.00	51510.00
1906	3797.00	10660.00	2720.00	18567.00		740.00	6232.00	42716.00

(Continued)

Table 26 (continued)

For year ended -	Beef sold & used for food	Farm <sup>1</sup> products	Fish and game <sup>2</sup>	Furs <sup>2</sup>	Sale of wood & hay	Wages earned (Labour & Freighting)	Manufactures & Other Industries	Total
1907	7104.00	12970.00	2314.00	13914.00		4638.00	2188.00	43128.00
March 31, 1908	4517.00	13519.00	3900.00	8441.00		7575.00	2275.00	45227.00
March 31, 1909	10945.00	17053.00	6340.00	9280.00		5970.00	3460.00	53048.00
1910	10725.00	16152.00	8581.00	29067.00		8506.00	4055.00	77086.00
1911	11292.00	16343.00	8660.00	37330.00		10240.00	2975.00	86840.00
1912	14836.68	20936.00	7354.95	33141.75		12549.27	4771.36	93590.01
1913 <sup>6</sup>	15272.26	17086.00	6826.00	42069.00		11355.90	7622.75 <sup>7</sup>	100231.91
1914	18172.48	16045.00	7546.00	41686.50		10760.02	5578.40 <sup>8</sup>	99788.40
1915	15305.00	18046.00	9350.00	17634.00		9680.00	6410.00	76425.00
1916	10032.00	18988.00	8200.00	19055.00	3232.00 <sup>9</sup>	5593.00	4004.00	69104.00
1917	17360.00	24694.00	7355.00	19345.00	1759.00	6638.00	4685.00	81836.00
1918	17900.00	32100.00	8350.00	18600.00	2320.00	7500.00	5390.00	92160.00
1919	17450.00	27742.00	9000.00	19000.00		9650.00	5500.00	88342.00
1920	12650.00	36764.00	9300.00	42750.00	2870.00	12240.00	6800.00	123374.00

(Continued)

1. includes grain and roots; from 1897 on it also includes hay; 2. includes the estimated value of fish and meat used for food; 3. wood \$61.00, hay \$115.00; 4. includes seneca root, berries, grain and roots; 5. beef sold and used for food is included in this column for the years 1897 to 1905 inclusive; 6. now includes Island Lake band; 7. includes \$1248.75 for seneca root and \$7622.00 for other industries; 8. includes \$1303.40 for seneca root and \$4675.00 for other industries; 9. the remaining figures in this column represent income from land rental and timber sales.

---

Source: Canada, Sessional Papers. Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports and Tabular Statements, 1891-1922.

sale of beef appears to peak in 1914 at \$18,172.61 and does not decline much thereafter except in 1916 and 1920. The inspector reported a heavy decrease in Indian herds in 1914 (c.f. section 5.2.1.4).

The total value of fish sold and used for food increased over the years. This may reflect involvement of the Chipewyan in marketing of fish at Lloydminster.

Indian earnings from other industries included the sale of seneca root, lumber and various manufactures. The total peaks around 1903 and 1904 and reflects the large amount of lumber sold to the Barr Colonists who arrived in 1903 and settled south of Onion Lake. These years mark the beginning of increased settlement in the area, and consequently an increased availability of outside labour. This is noted in the wages earned for labour and freighting which jumps from \$320.00 in 1900 to \$1,530.00 in 1901. It slightly more than doubles from 1902 to 1903, again, a result of the availability of work for the new settlers at Lloydminster. Earnings in this column show wages earned from freighting, which decreased as the railway was extended to Lloydminster.

The fourth source of income was from wage labour. Agent Sibbald reported that the Indians at Onion Lake were very willing to work when they earned a reasonable remuneration (SP27, 1902:164). The Indians earned a considerable amount of money transporting supplies for the Hudson's Bay Company, department, missions and other residents at Onion Lake.

The women were noted for being industrious, and besides their

Table 27: Source of Funds and Purchases for the Years 1915 to 1917 by Band

SOURCE OF FUNDS					
Band	Sale of Cattle	Sale of Firewood	Sale of Ice	Treaty Money	Number of Persons Represented
119	15	1	1	4	21
121	8	0	0	16	24
123	12	0	0	18	30
161	0	0	0	1	1
129	0	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	35	1	1	40	77

## PURCHASES/EXPENDITURES

Band	Number of Persons Represented	Repairs \$/persons	Oxen & Imple-ments/\$ persons	Seed grain \$/persons	Provisions \$/persons	Binder Twine \$/persons
119	20	20.24/7	164.31/4	114.50/8	29.40/4	31.48/11
121	16	25.00/9	591.24/9	164.50/12	40.20/4	4.70/2
123	27	4.43/3	988.85/13	307.25/15	52.43/15	61.09/19
161	1	0	0	14.03/1	0	2.20/1
129	1	0	0	0	6.40/1	0
TOTAL	65	49.67/19	1744.40/26	600.28/36	128.43/23	99.47/33

Source: PAC RG10 FOR, Vol. 9084, Book 16

ordinary house or camp work they tanned hides, made moccasins, sold wild fruit in season and received employment washing and scrubbing for Whites in the Onion Lake settlement (*ibid.*).

Income from wage labour increased from 1903 to 1905. During this time, a large number of men from the Onion Lake bands worked for the Barr Colonists at Lloydminster. The Hudson's Bay Company clerk recorded that on October 24, 1903, a number of the Indians who had been working at the English Colony came in to spend their pay, and that on October 31st most of the Indians were off to the English Colony to sell grain (HBC B.323/a/5). The arrival of these settlers was a boost to the financial resources of the Indians at Onion Lake.

The returns given in the Annual Reports combine the earnings of individual bands in one total given for the agency. It is, therefore, impossible to determine from these returns the exact input of any one band to the total earnings. However, from other reports and returns<sup>1</sup>, it is possible to suggest the main sources of income for each band. In 1916, Inspector Chisholm reported on this:

The sources from which the Indians of this reserve<sup>2</sup> [sic] derive their income vary according to the location of the reserve. The Indians at Frog Lake, Onion Lake and Long Lake earn comparatively little by hunting, but derive a large profit from their herds and can earn considerable by freighting and day labour. The Indians of Cold Lake, while they are beginning to do a

- 
1. c.f. Table 24 which identifies the number of adult males involved in various activities, according to bands, for the years 1905 to 1915, and Table 25 for the year 1917 (pp. 330 and 331).
  2. This reserve should be read agency.



fair amount of farming and have considerable revenue from their live stock still support themselves mainly by hunting and fishing... the members of the Ministiquan band [Island Lake] are dependent upon hunting and fishing alone and are at present in the hardest condition in which I have found them at any time (SP27, 1916:170).

Chisholm's statement, and other sources examined, suggest that the primary income for the Onion Lake bands was from the sale of beef, cattle and farm produce, wage labour, and lumber and hay contracts. The Frog Lake bands derived their income primarily through the sale of beef, cattle and lumber, and through labour for surrounding settlers. During the late 1800's and prior to 1910, they derived some income and a large amount of provisions from hunting and fishing. The Keeheewin band were primarily farmers and stockmen, their main income being from the sale of beef, cattle and farm produce, The Chipewyan band at Cold Lake obtained the major portion of their earnings through hunting and trapping. Their second, and quite substantial source of income, was from the sale of beef and cattle.

## 6. ANNUAL SUBSISTENCE CYCLE AND SETTLEMENT PATTERN

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates upon the annual subsistence cycle and settlement patterns of the Indians in the study area during the years 1885 to 1920. Information for the chapter comes primarily from the daily journals kept by department and Hudson's Bay Company personnel at Onion Lake, and from Dion's (1979) description of the Cree lifeway during the study period.

The annual cycle is organized according to seasons which can be correlated with the 12 months of the year. The cycle followed by the Indians in the agency appears to have been similar to that of the Cree of Red Earth area as presented by Meyer (1982). Meyer identifies six seasons which were common to the Cree, including summer, winter, spring and fall, with spring and fall further subdivided into two seasons each. In addition, Meyer suggests a system of "named points in the year" used by the Cree to refer to specific times, usually not longer than a week, and in some cases, a particular day (1982: 324). For the Red Earth Cree, he suggests the following cycle:

In the study region pipōn 'winter' begins in early December. In the third week of December, near the time of the equinox, makokisikaw 'Christmas' occurs - one of the named points of the year. Winter continued through to the spring equinox, during the third week of March. Early spring, which then extends from March 21-22 through to break-up, is known as sikwan...sikwan is a relatively short season - only about three weeks long. Break-up is known as macistan. The spring period after break-up is known as miyoskamiw and this extends through to late May, the time of the year known as macinipin 'beginning summer'

when the leaves emerge.

Nīpin 'summer' now begins and is soon punctured by another named point, apihtanipin 'half summer', the solstice. Summer ends with another named point, epinaskaw, when the leaves begin to change colour, about the second week of September. At this point fall begins and its first stage, takwākin, lasts until late October when the leaves have all fallen and snow is about to appear. In this region the first snow normally falls in late October or early November. This marks the beginning of freeze-up and the season known as mikiskāw. Mikiskaw lasts through November (Meyer 1982:324, 325).

Spring and fall were transitional periods between the two longer seasons of summer and winter. During these seasons the mode of transportation changed from wagons with wheels to sleighs in fall and from sleighs to wagons in spring. Periods of unusually warm weather in fall and a prolonged cold spell in the spring tended to make this change of transportation difficult and to disrupt subsistence activities which were crucial to the welfare of the "hunting" Indians. In October 1885, Agent Mann reported that the snow was bad for wheels. On October 28th he recorded that it was snowing hard, that carts with freight for Long Lake were snowed up at Frog Lake, and that he was required to send out horses and sleighs to meet the freighters (PAS CM315, Mann Diary, October 1885).

The "hunting" Indians often ran out of provisions by mid-March and, therefore, looked forward to when the snow began to disappear and they could hunt and trade muskrats in return for provisions. Once the creeks and rivers thawed, they obtained provisions through

fishing. The Hudson's Bay Company clerk noted in his journal in late March 1903, that the Indians were hard up as the snow was still too deep to hunt rats. The hardships of a late spring were aggravated when the Hudson's Bay Company ran out of goods, as they often did in late April and early May. This made it difficult to meet the needs of the Indians during a time when their subsistence base was somewhat tenuous. In May 1901, 1902 and 1904, the clerk recorded that there was "no grub" and the people were hard up for provisions. During the early 1900's the company depended upon scows to bring their supplies by the North Saskatchewan River. Such travel was not possible until the river opened up, which was usually during May. In 1904 there was a late spring which made it difficult for the scows to travel, due to shallow water.

A late fall affected both hunting and fishing. Without snow it was difficult, if not impossible, to track animals such as moose and deer. According to Curtis (1928:15) moose were difficult to hunt for the most skilled hunters, but when hampered by deep snow they were a more accessible quarry. Fishing slowed down when the fall weather was warm as whitefish spawn near the shores of lakes only once the cold weather sets in. Whitefish was a staple food for both the Chipewyan and "hunting" Cree, and was especially important as a winter provision. It was important, therefore, that the fall catch be adequate. Fishing during the early part of the winter could also be affected by a late fall and the slow freezing of the larger lakes. When fishing was late, the winter hunt was delayed.

A number of festive occasions, which occurred annually, broke the monotony of the subsistence cycle and allowed people to gather socially. As previously mentioned (Section 2.5), these included Christmas and New Year's, Easter, Dominion Day, Treaty Payments and the Thirst Dance. From the Hudson's Bay Company journals it appears that dances were held by the Indians on other occasions as well. Dion (1979) describes the traditional as well as the more recent dances held by the Indians during the study period. Agent Sibbald noted that the Indians frequently had tea dances and that the habit of give-aways was decreasing. It appears that the Indians were able to continue many of their traditional social customs and to incorporate festive occasions introduced by Euro-Canadians into their lifeway on the reservation.

Christmas and Easter were important religious occasions when the Indians on the reserves and from the outlying area would gather at the missions for services. A majority of the Indians were of the Roman Catholic faith and attended services at either the Onion Lake or Cold Lake missions. There was also a Church of England mission on the Onion Lake reserve which was attended by some of the Cree. The Hudson's Bay Company clerk reported that these services were generally well attended. New Year's was an occasion which, especially during the 1800's, emphasized the good relations between the Indians and Whites in the agency. It came to be known as "Kissing Day," a day when the Indians visited the Hudson's Bay Company factor and the agent (during Mann's term). Dion wrote

that this celebration began among the Hudson's Bay Company employees who visited the factor on New Year's Day and were treated to a drink and a generous helping of twist tobacco. "After a hearty smoke the men called at all the homes within the stockade where they kissed the women and children, thus spreading good cheer to all" (Dion 1979:64). During Mann's term as agent, the Indians at Onion Lake and those who came in from the woods for Christmas services at the missions visited the agent's home as well as homes of the Whites in the community to express good will. The day generally ended with a dance in the evening.

The Dominion Day, or July 1st, festivities were joined in by all of the Indians in the agency. Often "strange Indians" from Turtle and Green Lakes would join in these festivities and many of the White settlers became a part of the activities of the day. The July 1st holiday and sports day was first mentioned in the agent's report for 1897, but had been celebrated with a dance and races since 1891. Agent Mann gave the Indians five or six bags of flour, tea, sugar and tobacco to "spend on themselves and make merry" in 1894 (HBC B.323/a/2, July 2, 1894). Agent Mann reported in 1897 that the Indians commenced the year by celebrating July 1st with races and athletic sports, and that "the amusements of the day proved to be a success, and were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone" (SP14, 1898:167). Agent Sibbald noted in 1901 that "prizes amounting to over \$50 were given away, nearly all the competitors being members of the respective bands, including the Chipewyans" (SP27, 1902:165). This was a time of visiting

and feasting.

On the first of July the Indians were joined by pupils from the residential schools and a number of White settlers. Sports began immediately after the midday meal at the race track and included horse races, foot races, standing long jump, running broad jump, pole vaulting, hop, step and jump, and a tug-of-war which involved men picked from various settlements. Prize money was donated by the Whites from the Onion Lake settlement and was placed in the care of the Hudson's Bay Company factor as all prizes given away were in the form of orders on the store. The day was spent in feasting, racing horses and various competitions. The Hudson's Bay Company clerk noted in July 1903 that the day finished off with the Indian Horse Dance. Dion gives an account of the Dominion Day celebrations, those who attended, and some of the events which occurred (Appendix 3).

During the 1900's, treaty payments followed soon after Dominion Day celebrations. Prior to this they took place in the fall. They generally took several days; payments were sometimes very slow because of the vaccination program which was carried on at the same time. The money was usually spent at the Hudson's Bay store. According to Dion, the issue of treaty money meant a lot of feasting and dancing (1979:140). Treaty was paid separately for the Crees and Chipewyan, the Chipewyan payments taking place at Cold Lake several days after the payments at Onion Lake. After treaty payments, the Indians returned to their homes or moved on to camp at the hay meadows. Many went to pick berries and dig seneca root.

Many Indian dances were held throughout the study period in spite of department disapproval of what were considered pagan activities. The Thirst or Sun Dance was held annually in early June. It was discouraged and, in some instances, forbidden by department personnel. Reserve Indians were refused permission to attend the dance and the agent often reported that they had obeyed him in this regard. In June 1886, Agent Mann reported that a Sun Dance was held on the east side of the reserve and lasted for four days. He refused permission for the reserve Indians to attend. However, all but five families went, taking with them some of their ox carts. In 1888, the annual Thirst Dance was "attended by all Indians of the District and many from a distance including the Turtle Lake Indians and many non-treaty Indians (PAC RG10 Black Vol. 3763 F.32,369). It lasted for five days.

The "hunting" Indians continued to participate in the Thirst Dance. On June 13, 1892, Agent Mann recorded in his journal that the "hunting" Indians were holding a dance eight miles east of the agency and that four of the reserve Indians attended it (PAC RG10 FOR, Vol. 9083, Book 3). In 1896, the reserve Indians were forbidden to attend the Sun Dance. However, it appears to have been a time when a large number of Indians from the surrounding area gathered near the agency in preparation for the July 1st celebrations. The Hudson's Bay Company clerk notes that on June 13th there were "quite a number of strangers in from different quarters in the prospects of a Sun Dance which has been postponed by the Indian Agent until word comes from



Regina" (HBC B.323/a/2, June 13, 1896). More people gathered on the 18th, and on the 27th a "big Indian dance" took place. In June 1904, the Hudson's Bay Company clerk recorded a Thirst Dance was being held at Old Man's Creek and then at the Pipestone Creek. The first was attended by "Indians from all over the country..." and the second by "every Indian on the reserve..." (HBC B.323/a/5, June 1904).

## 6.2 The "Working" Cree

The annual subsistence cycle for these Indians was summarized by Agent Sibbald in his report of April 20, 1909. He wrote:

The industry from which these Indians derive most sustenance is cattle-raising. The putting up of hay for winter, which is rather a slow process with these people, occupies the greater part of the summer months and extends generally into the fall; a break in the work having to be made when harvest commences, which, no matter how small the acreage may be, has to be attended to. The interruption, however, is in many cases apt in the Indians to cause a reluctance to return to the work of haymaking, which has become wearisome, especially if the weather had been unfavourable, which was the case during the season of 1908. When haymaking is completed, attention is directed to getting their habitations and stables in order for the winter. Their winter occupation consists largely in giving the necessary attention to cattle, the hauling of hay from their stacks, which are often many miles distant from their stables, occupies no small part of the short winter days; it is true that some hay is hauled in the fall, but not much more than serves during the change from fall to winter, or until there is sufficient snow for sleighing. During the latter part of the winter those who pursue a little farming haul rails for new fences, and the most energetic of them get out house and saw-logs which they haul to the agency mill, where, generally, during the months of March and April, the mill is in operation; each owner of logs

providing his own gang of men from among his fellow Indians to do the necessary work, with the exception of handling the saw and superintending the engine, which is attended to by the agency engineer and blacksmith,...

Farming has so far been carried on only to a very limited extent, but, with the spring, those who follow the industry are engaged in their stubble ploughing and seeding...

...in view of the fact that they cannot support themselves from the proceeds of their cattle and grain, they are compelled, though not reluctantly, to take advantage of any work that they are fitted for, which they frequently find in freighting for traders, working for settlers, engaging themselves with survey parties and such like work, from which they derive no small proportion of their livelihood. The majority of the band still take advantage of what is left of the hunt,...Fishing is also indulged in to no small extent, but in the immediate neighbourhood there are no fishing lakes.

During the summer months the gathering of seneca-root is largely resorted to by some of the members of most of the families of the working Indians, and by some of those coming under the head of destitute; the bartering of this root to the traders is a considerable profit to the band (SP27, 1910:145, 146).

The cycle outlined by Agent Sibbald was followed, with certain modifications, by the "working" Indians throughout the study period. The number of persons involved in each activity changed over time as the emphasis on various activities also changed. For example, during the 1800's hunting and fishing were encouraged by the agent as a means of supplying the Indians with their subsistence requirements. However, by 1910, the number of Indians hunting and fishing decreased while the number of individuals involved in outside wage labour increased considerably. Farming was emphasized strongly in the 1800's

and individual families were encouraged to plant gardens and crops, milk one or more cows and raise a few cattle. Because of problems arising in grain growing, the emphasis shifted to cattle raising which also meant that activities such as hay making and the building of stables and cattle sheds increased.

Certain activities such as hay making and fishing affected settlement pattern. The Cree acquired early, in their adaptation to reserve life, the habit of changing residence each spring and early winter from houses to tent or teepee and vice versa. At the first sign of spring, when the weather was warm enough, the majority of Indians left their houses to live in their tents. In the early years, tents were in the style of the traditional teepee. When it became difficult to obtain hides for teepees, the Indians sometimes used blankets provided by the department - although not for this purpose. In 1902, Agent Sibbald noted that many of the new tents being made by the Indians were the "Wall A tents, such as are used by White people when camping, in preference to the old teepee, and most of them have camp stoves" (SP27, 1903:156).

This practice met with varied reactions from department officials. Inspector Wadsworth was opposed to the practice as he felt houses were neglected and fell into decay and it caused the Indians to neglect their work.

They group the lodges into villages and gossip, eat up each others provisions and neglect their work. The nights are spent relating old time stories which had better be forgotten or never heard by the children (PAC RG10 Black Vol. 3809 F.53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1888).

The move from houses to teepees in the spring was seen by other department officials as one way of dealing with unsanitary conditions. It was generally admitted that the Indians were healthier while living in their tents. Agent Sibbald reported in 1905, that when in tents the Indians "for cleanliness sake frequently shift from place to place" (SP27, 1906:136) and in 1914 as many of the Indians in the agency "occupy their houses only in the winter, going under canvas as soon as the weather permits, they are constantly moving away from unsanitary surroundings" (SP27, 1915:60).

While in tents, it was much easier to move from one location to another. Families moved according to their subsistence activities, which included fishing, hay making, visiting, berry picking, and when attending the annual Dominion Day celebrations, treaty days and Thirst Dance. This settlement pattern was sometimes exhibited in the movement from one house to another as the Cree would abandon houses in some instances after a death occurred there. Another reason for building a new house and moving from an older one was to situate ones family more conveniently to subsistence activities. It also enabled the Indians to remove themselves from unsanitary conditions if they had not been diligent in the spring cleanup around their houses. In 1901, Inspector Chisholm noted the following in regard to settlement pattern:

In several instances new houses, though of a very indifferent class, have been built by Indians who desired to change their location for convenience in the pursuit of their industries. The fact that such changes of

location are necessitated frequently, owing to the changed conditions brought about by the varying seasons, is a discouragement to the building of dwellings of an improved and permanent description; yet from a sanitary point of view at least, the abandonment by Indians of their old places of abode for new ones with fresh and healthy surroundings has a salutary effect even when no improvement is made in the size and structure of the dwellings (SP27, 1903:181).

During the 1800's many of the Indians on the Onion Lake reserves built houses for themselves. When the agency acquired a saw mill in 1890, log houses were replaced by houses built of sawn lumber. The mill was an encouragement to the Indians and there was a boom in the construction of new houses while old ones were abandoned. With the erection of a sawmill on Keeheewin reserve in 1910, Agent Sibbald hoped this would cause a similar building boom and write that since the Indians now had "a good supply of lumber at their disposal, the intention is to get them to take up new locations and build new houses and stables" (SP27, 1912:146). In certain instances, then, it appears that movement from one house to another on the reserves was encouraged by department personnel.

With an increased number of Indian cattle and the department herd, the need for hay increased and hay making became one of the most important activities during late summer and early fall. In the study area hay making commenced around July 22nd to 24th and continued for one or two months depending on weather conditions, interruptions due to machinery breakdowns and harvesting, all of which could have a discouraging effect on the Indians by slowing down the hay making

process. During this time the Indian families would move their tents to the area where hay making was taking place.

Hay making is the process of drying and curing grass or other herbage and storing it in stacks or sheds for future use. The principal stages include mowing, drying or "making," carrying and storage. During wet seasons hay making was difficult and much hay often spoiled. A good deal of labour was required to cock it and turn it over in an effort to dry it before being placed in stacks. During dry seasons it was possible to cut, carry and stack the hay without any special drying process as it was dry enough to stack when cut. On the other hand, dry seasons required a good deal of labour because the hay was sometimes scattered and therefore had to be hauled long distances. In 1911, Agent Sibbald reported that the slough hay on IR 122 was in good supply in dry seasons but that there were no large hay swamps. This meant that the Frog Lake Indians spent a good deal of time putting up hay as it was found only in small quantities scattered over a large area (SP27, 1912:146).

In 1889, labour was increased, not only because of the dry season, but also because the mower broke down and the threat of prairie fires meant that fireguards had to be ploughed around the stacks. The Inspector reported that during his inspection that year 65 men were engaged in hay making. As there was only one mower, 26 men were mowing with scythes and sickles, 23 were cocking or piling the hay in small cone shaped piles where the hay received a preliminary tempering before being moved to larger stacks, and 16 men were carting

the hay using eight wagons and eight yoke of oxen. According to the inspector, these men worked in three separate gangs, in a "systematic manner" and required little supervision. The hay stacks were fenced and fireguards ploughed around them (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809, F.53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1888).

The agent visited the hay camps regularly and the farmer was often on hand to supervise or to help with machine breakdowns when necessary. In the early years the mower was driven by department personnel, as the Indians did not have experience with such implements.

Stacking was an important part of hay making as it enabled the hay to cure. If the hay was piled before being adequately dried, it would heat to a combustible level and only the circulation of fresh air would prevent its destruction. The hay needed to be sufficiently dry to ensure that this heating point was not reached. Dion gives an account of one farmer who attempted to instruct the Indians at Keeheewin on how to stack hay, with disastrous results:

...a white man was sent to supervise the hay making on one of our reserves where a great many cattle were to be wintered. Stacking was done by ten men with five yokes of oxen. The instructor reasoned that all the hay could be piled into fewer but much larger stacks, thereby saving a lot of work. He staked out a circular area which he said would hold at least 100 tons.

Well, the boys had a great time dumping their loads helter skelter anywhere within the marked space. They kept this up as long as the oxen were able to climb onto the huge pile. Talk about packed hay! A heavy rain came which lasted practically all the next day, and the poor men were ordered to remove a great deal off the top and scatter the hay over a wide area to dry.

Well, in time, as the men used to describe their handiwork, they had what looked like a giant rat house. They disregarded the occasional shower and finally put some kind of a top to their immense stack,...Their troubles were not over, however, for the hay heated and a large portion of the pile froze solid in winter time. Axes had to be used to chop off blocks which resembled manure (Dion 1979:82).

Hay making was a group effort. In the 1890's a group of men were sent out by the agent to put up hay for the department herd at their wintering quarters at the Long Lake Ranches. Others worked in a group to procure hay for the reserve cattle. Hay was initially cut with scythes and then with the department mower which was moved from camp to camp. Some Indians were eventually able to purchase their own mowers (Table 15, p. 234).

Dion (1979) described hay making at Keeheewin reserve as a community effort which involved all members of the families. According to him, hay was not community owned, but every man had his own hay sloughs and meadows and his share was as much hay as these produced.

Dion writes:

Big hay making bees were organized where whoever wanted to work was insured a good supply of feed for his stock. The hay was not community owned; every man had his hay sloughs and meadows. His share was the amount they produced. These bees were interesting affairs, for everyone in camp took part. Some did nothing but hunt for meat - ducks, rabbits, deer and moose. The elderly women and children picked berries, Saskatoons mostly...

...Big heavy wagons drawn by horses or slow-moving oxen were used for hauling hay from the meadow or slough to the place of stacking. This was hard work but we always prided ourselves on the number of well made haycocks we could pack into



a 16 x 8 foot rack, later to be quickly unloaded by forksful onto the stack.

These fine stacks were always so uniform in size that they invariably measured three feet to the ton. We seldom had more than two stacks in one location. These were built about ten feet apart to allow for a driveway between them. All stacks were enclosed by a good stout rail fence (Dion 1979:140, 143).

Hay making is mentioned less frequently in the departmental journals after 1915 and perhaps this reflects a decrease in this activity among the Indians on the reserves. A decrease in the number of cattle, increased outside labour and the granting of hay permits to settlers would have been contributing factors.

The harvesting of grain crops interrupted hay making. Harvest commenced in mid-August with the cutting of barley, oats and wheat as they ripened and ended around the end of September. Threshing, cleaning and storing of the grain followed. Threshing continued throughout September, October and, sometimes, well into November. Owing to the limited number of threshing machines, threshing was slow. For many years the only one available was the department machine which was located at the agency mill, and the Indians hauled their grain to the agency to be threshed.

After being threshed, the grain was weighed and seed grain for the following year was set aside in the agency granary. Seed grain which had been received as an advance from the department in the spring was repaid. Indians received permits to sell grain to the missions and Hudson's Bay Company at this time. The agency journal

for 1905 gives some detail as to the activities at this season (PAC RG10 FOR, Vol. 9104, Book 2):

- | Date | October 1906   |
|------|--|
| 1    | Into Granary<br>64 bags oats from Sam Waskawitch - returned 13 bushels loaned last spring<br>5 bags oats from Paul Lameman - returned 4 bushels loaned last spring<br>6 bags oats from Opisinow<br>Sam Waskawitch retained 9 bushels; 4 for own use and 5 for the Sisters. Paul Lameman retained 2 bags; 190 lbs. Gave Abraham Chocan lime; gave Kamewaset 1 bag of flour; lent J.R. Matheson 3 hay forks. |
| 2.   | Into granary<br>from Kahmewaset 15 bags of oats<br>from Katamistawat 13 bags of oats<br>from Opisinow 21 bags of oats  |
| 3    | taking in grain  |
| 5    | Touissant Callingbull to Lloydminster for freight  |
| 6    | Into granary 18 bags of oats from Aug. Vivier  |
| 9    | threshers had breakdown  |
| 10   | Francis Chocan sold 6 bushels barley to Hudson's Bay Company   |
| 11   | Wm. Secoose took away 50 bushels of oats from granary  |
| 13   | lent Sisters at R.C. School 50 lbs. of beef  |
| 15   | Slater and party east haymaking; some Indians took oats for their own use  |
| 19   | took in beef from Waskahat   |
| 25   | Opisinow took 7 bushels of oats for own use  |
| 29   | Slater and Joe Taylor commenced threshing  |

In 1890, the agency obtained a grist mill and was then able to grind their own grain into flour. The grist mill was used at least until November 1903 when the last entry referring to the mill being used is made in the department journal. The agency received most of its flour from Battleford during the 1800's and until the railway advanced as far as Lloydminster. Freighters were sent to Lloydminster for flour once the river ice had frozen enough to cross. In November 1914, it is recorded that freighters with 35 teams were needed to transport

the flour contract from Lloydminster.

Following harvest and hay making, some Indians ploughed fields in preparation for spring seeding, or broke up new lands. This occurred most frequently during the late 1800's with few references to fall ploughing being made in the 1900's. In 1900, Sibbald wrote that most of the ploughing was done in the spring (SP27, 1901:177).

In the late summer and the fall, the women were directly involved in a number of activities besides helping with the harvest. These activities included berry picking, digging seneca root, working in the agency garden, mudding stables and mudding and whitewashing agency buildings in preparation for the winter season. Berries were picked in late July and during August, often in conjunction with haymaking. Besides those berries consumed in season, some were traded at the Hudson's Bay store and to other traders or sold to the mission personnel and settlers, and some were dried for winter use. Seneca root, which was sought for its medicinal value primarily in the treatment of chronic bronchitis, was plentiful on the reserve and was dug by the women for sale to the Hudson's Bay Company.

Throughout the study period the older women worked in the agency garden. In late September and early October, their work involved helping with the digging, sorting and bagging of potatoes for winter storage in the agency potato cellar. Turnips were dug after the first hard frost. Manure was often spread on the agency garden by the men at this time.

Preparations in the fall for winter included the annual repair and

whitewashing of Indian houses and agency buildings. Agent Mann recorded on October 12th, 1885, that the women were whitewashing the new storehouse for winter. Whitewashing was a common entry at this time of year in the journals which often indicated the date the activity commenced. The annual agent's reports consistently referred to this activity each year in the following manner: "In the fall the houses are repaired for the winter and are whitewashed with 'whitemud' or lime when procurable" (SP27, 1905:166).

Houses were built primarily of logs with pole roofs covered with sod. Chinks between the logs of the walls were filled up with a mud and hay mixture and then whitewashed. Because of weathering, they needed to be repaired annually to keep them wind proof. The building, rebuilding and mudding of cattle sheds and stables were also a part of winter preparations which continued throughout November and early December.

A number of other activities took place in the fall. Some of the reserve Indians went fishing and hunting in order to procure winter provisions or to trade their catch for a winter's supply of tea and tobacco. Stables were cleaned in preparation for the wintering of cattle which were rounded up and brought in from the summer pasture during December. Cattle were sorted, the range calves branded, and then all were turned over to their respective owners to be kept for the winter. Cattle were attended to by the women while men were away hunting or working. Hay was hauled to the stables and corrals as needed. The cattle were counted by the agent after being left with their

respective owners. Beef and pigs were butchered for winter provisions and some cattle were bought from the Indians and beefed for the agency ration requirements. Firewood was hauled in from the woods and timber limit for winter fuel. During December and January women chopped wood into stove lengths for the agency. Once the river had frozen over, freighters were sent to Lloydminster by the department and Hudson's Bay Company for winter supplies.

Because Agent Mann's primary concern during the 1880's was to rebuild the department farm and agency buildings, and to encourage the Indians to build houses and stables, a good deal of carpentry took place on the reserve during the late 1800's. Building began in the fall and continued throughout the winter. Agent Mann reported that during the fall and winter of 1885-86, the Indians had built for themselves 11 new houses of flatted spruce logs, each being a story and a half high with thatched roofs and floors of whipsawn lumber. This brought the total number of dwellings on the Onion Lake reserves to 32. The Indians were sometimes able to earn cash through building. They built the police stable in October of 1886, helped build the Roman Catholic School in 1891, helped build the police buildings in October 1895, and in October 1903, most of the men from Seekaskootch band went to Lloydminster to help the English Colonists build houses in preparation for winter (HBC B.323/a/5, October 1903).

During the 1880's annuity payments were made in October. With the money received, the Indians were able to purchase a few luxury items or necessary provisions for the winter season. The end of early winter

and just prior to the beginning of the coldest part of winter (January, February and March), was marked by the Christmas and New Year's celebrations.

Activities which continued throughout the winter season and which were continually practiced throughout the study period included the drawing and cutting of logs for houses, the hauling and cutting of rails for stables and fences, the repair of buildings and "choring" which was the cover term for a number of daily chores including the hauling of hay, care of cattle and other livestock, and the hauling and chopping of firewood. During the winter months, men manufactured sleighs, jumpers, ox yokes, ax and fork handles and other articles such as furniture for their houses (SP14, 1898:166). Implements were repaired for the spring planting season.

The Indians on the Onion Lake reserves were noted in the 1890's for being industrious. Certainly, as the above indicates, there were a large number of activities one could be involved in. Inspector McGibbon visited the agency in late November 1893 and was impressed that these Indians "were not lazy." They were busy hauling wood for themselves and the agency, doing repairs and fixing shelving in their houses. The women were making moccasins, mending clothes and knitting (SP14, 1895:107).

Spring brought with it changes in mode of travel, residence and settlement patterns, and subsistence activities. As soon as the weather allowed, horse-drawn wagons replaced sleighs and houses were abandoned for tents. Those Indians who participated in the spring hunt

started out as soon as travel was possible to hunt muskrat. The spring hunt usually began around mid-April. On April 13, 1902, it was recorded in the Hudson's Bay Company journal that all of the reserve Indians had started off to pick berries and hunt fish in the mouth of creeks (HBC B.323/a/1) and in April 1904, that muskrat hunting took precedence over farm work. Agent Sibbald reported in 1910, that the majority of Onion Lake bands still participated in the hunt to a certain extent. However, as a result of the decline in muskrat population the following year, and increased settlement in the area, Sibbald noted that there was a "greater disposition to resort to farming" by these Indians (SP27, 1912:145). In 1917, there were only three individuals, out of a total 56 males over the age of 18 on the Onion Lake reserves, who were considered hunters. Others likely continued to take part in the hunt when fur bearing animals, such as the muskrat, were abundant.

Building activity continued throughout the spring and summer during the 1800's. The Indians put a new shingle roof on the Protestant schoolhouse and built a "good substantial fence" around both the Protestant and Roman Catholic schoolhouses in 1889. Lumber was sawn after crops were sown. Rails were hauled early in the spring while the snow still allowed for the use of sleighs. One of the regular chores of spring and early summer was the building and repairing of fences.

Spring work on the fields consisted of ploughing, harrowing and seeding and began as soon as the ground soil could be tilled. Ploughing and harrowing began as early as April 4th and seeding as

early as April 8th. In the area of cattle raising, corrals and stables were cleaned and repaired, young stock was branded and the cattle were turned out to pasture as a herd through the summer.

Gardens were planted with seed obtained from the agent. The older women were again able to work in the agency garden where they sorted, cut and planted potatoes. During the summer they were sometimes employed in weeding the agency garden.

During the last 10 to 15 years of the study period, the Indians became involved in an increasingly wide variety of labour activities off the reserves. They continued to haul freight by wagon, and sometimes by scow down the North Saskatchewan River, for the agency and Hudson's Bay Company. With increased settlement they received work building, clearing land and helping settlers with farm work.

Summer was a time of relaxation, travel and socializing. The Thirst Dance and Dominion Day celebrations, the annuity payments and numerous dances provided the Indians with opportunities to socialize. The people were able to move easily and frequently as they lived in tents during this season. Those owning cattle were relieved of their duties as the cattle were allowed to graze as a herd. Subsistence activities consisted primarily of fishing and hunting. Gardens took little work and produced a limited amount of produce which was largely consumed during season. During the late summer, berry picking was an important subsistence activity.

June and July entries in the departmental journal for 1892 are typical for the 1880's and 1890's (Table 28), while, during



Table 28: Entries from the Onion Lake Agency Departmental Journal for June and July, 1892

---

June, 1892

Date

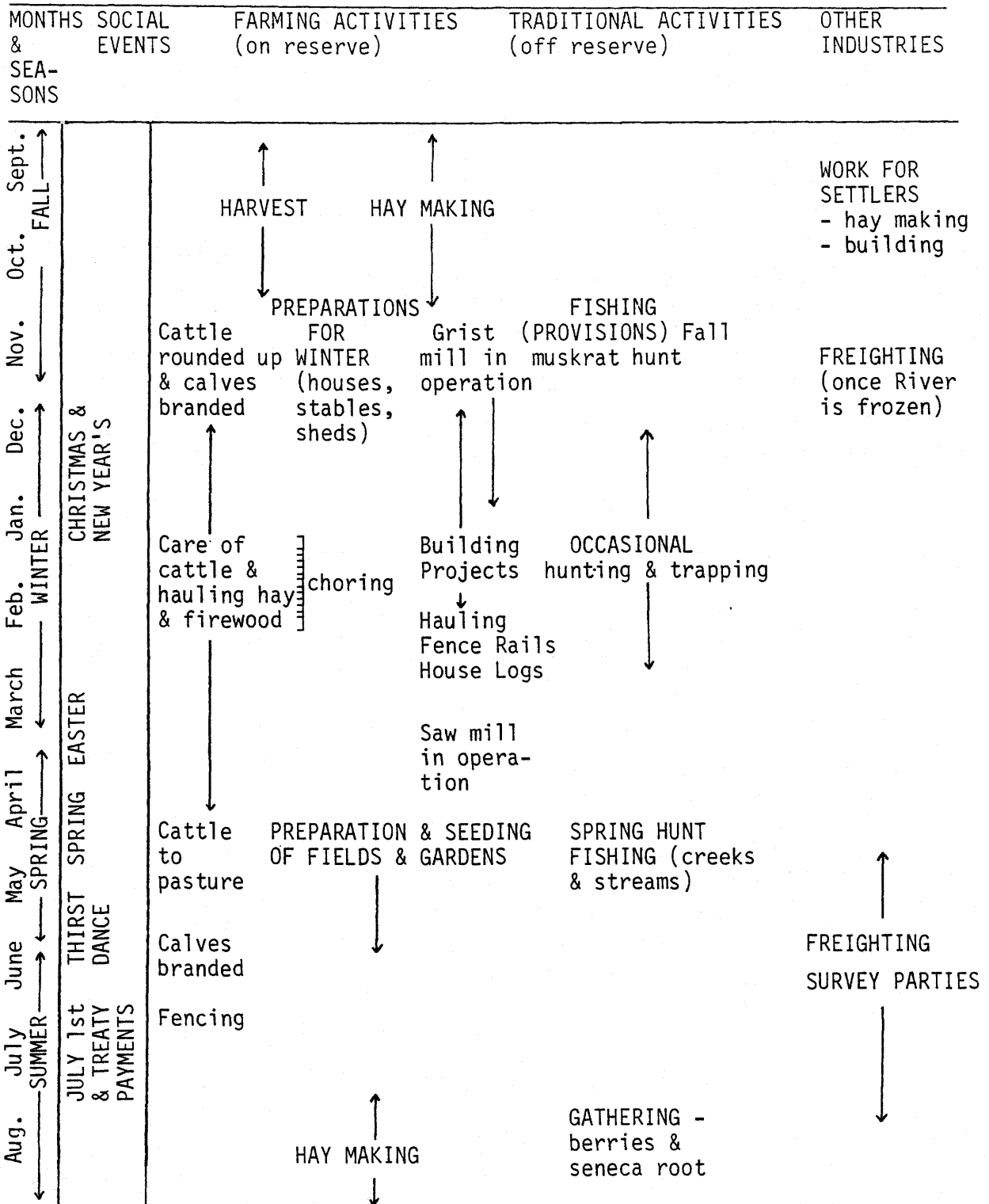
- 1 Indians fencing, some building a fence around agency pasture, agent gardening, planted cabbage and cauliflower
- 6 Indians fencing and making saw pit
- 7 burned charcoal today
- 8 crops on reserve look fine
- 9 Indians fencing and repairing roads and bridges on reserve; cutting lumber for ferry
- 10 Indians fencing and whipsawing lumber for scow
- 11 Indians fencing, whipsawing lumber for scow; had bridges properly repaired
- 13 Indians finished fencing and sawing. Hunting Indians holding a dance today some 8 miles east of here; four of our Indians attended it
- 14 several Indians plowing; agency premises cleaned up by some women
- 15 branded cattle, repairing plows
- 16 2 Indians at Pitt building scow
- 22 agent hunting for limestone
- 23 Indians plowing, 6 drawing out manure at agency, 5 gathering limestone
- 27 Indians gathering limestone, digging lime kiln, making hay racks, a few breaking
- 28 most of the Chipewyans are hunting

July, 1892

- 1 Picnic and sports
  - 4 6 at lime kiln, 6 drawing limestone, 3 carpentering, others hoeing potatoes
  - 8 breaking new land, finished lime kiln
  - 11 Indians filling lime kiln, 4 digging post holes, some plowing
  - 15 breaking stone, 2 painting roof of agent's house
  - 16 burning lime kiln
  - 18 Lattu and Aron painting, Indians hoeing, 2 burning kiln
  - 20 Lattu and Aron painting, Indians fencing
  - 22 agent started outfit to Long Lake to make hay
  - 25 Indians commenced haying
  - 25 Indians mowing and cocking hay
- 

the 1900's, the entries mention little more than freighting, branding and treaty payments. Figure 5 (p. 367) outlines the annual subsistence cycle for the "working" Indians.

Figure 5: Annual Cycle of the "working" Indians (Cree) in the Onion Lake Agency



### 6.3 The "Hunting" Cree

The Cree who resided at Island Lake, Loon Lake and Big Island Lake, as well as those who did not move to the Onion Lake reserves after the Rebellion but remained on or close to their reserves at Log Lake and Frog Lake, were referred to as "hunting" Indians. Their annual subsistence cycle revolved around the activities of hunting, trapping and fishing. Many of these Indians joined in the Christmas Day and New Year's, Easter, Dominion Day celebrations and treaty payments at Onion Lake, and attended regularly the annual Thirst Dance which was held in mid-June.

Following the treaty payments in mid-July, the "hunting" Indians spent time picking berries and digging seneca root which they traded in the fall at the Hudson's Bay store in Onion Lake. Hunting moose and deer for food and sometimes fur bearing animals for trade continued throughout the summer. The latter was discouraged by the Hudson's Bay Company clerk who recorded in his diary entry for March 1895, that the previous summer "very few in prime skins were brought in and I have been trying to stop the Indians from killing them and also to get them to leave their hunting grounds during the summer months" (HBC B.323/b/2). Fishing also occurred when their stock of fish from the spring catch was depleted. Dried fish was sometimes traded at the Hudson's Bay store.

The "hunting" Cree lived in teepees or tents during the summer. Subsistence needs caused them to travel wherever resources were available. Sibbald reported as late as 1911, and again in 1913,

that the Island Lake band was very scattered, some living at Island Lake, some at Big Island Lake and others at Loon Lake (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 7769 F.27/15-6).

The "hunting" Indians participated in three seasonal hunts. The catch from a late summer-early fall hunt were traded at the Hudson's Bay store in September and October when these Indians came in for winter supplies. However, their most important activity during fall was fishing for winter provisions. If this catch was good, then they were well provided for during the winter and suffered little privation. They could also contribute more time to hunting for furs. If the fish catch was small, this would cause problems later on in the winter. In November 1886, Agent Mann reported that the Indians at Moose Lake and the Little Fishery had not made a good catch of fish during the fall and he expressed the concern that they would be hard up before winter was over. This proved correct, and in February he reported that small game was scarce and their fish resources were almost gone. Consequently, the hunting Indians were very short of food (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3763 F.32,369).

The major portion of the fishing was done in late fall, just before freeze-up, when fish congregated close to the shores of the lakes. The Cree preferred whitefish which spawned near lake shores at this time. If freeze-up was late, these Indians hunted for furs. On November 8, 1893, the Hudson's Bay Company trader went to Island Lake with goods for the winter trade and found that the Indians were hard up for provisions as they were not yet killing fish. However,

he was able to get quite a few furs from them. The Indians at Moose Lake and Long Lake were able to catch a lot of fish during that month.

In November 1896, it was reported that furs were scarce near Island Lake and the Indians were starving. In 1901 and 1902, these Indians did not begin fishing until December, and fishing continued until the people gathered for Christmas and New Year's celebrations at Onion Lake. The pattern of fall fishing interspersed with hunting for food is clearly seen from the Hudson's Bay Company journals. November was an important month for furs, while fishing was done almost steadily throughout the fall and well into winter.

Following Christmas, these Indians returned to the woods and were once again concerned with obtaining provisions. Inspector Chisholm, after he visited the agency in early March, 1915, reported that the Island Lake Indians made their living entirely from hunting and fishing. However, he stated that "a few had been thrifty enough to put in a supply of whitefish to last them through the winter" (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915). Chisholm was also critical of their hunting habits. He wrote:

Moose are plentiful throughout the region and a few of the more industrious killed much more than their own requirements and distributed to their neighbours. In this way a few of the best hunters appear to have kept the band from starvation or at least serious privation, for many of the more indolent killed none. Owing to the low price of furs for the most part they did no

fur hunting and had in consequence nothing wherewith to provide flour, tea, or clothing (*ibid.*).

Winter was sometimes a difficult season. Hunger was a problem if furs and fish were scarce. In 1894, the Hudson's Bay Company clerk reported that, during January, fishing was a failure at Island Lake and Loon Lake. In February, an epidemic of "La Grippe" kept the Indians from hunting, and in late February he recorded that the Island Lake Indians "were having a hard time of it for food and were killing no fish" (HBC B.323/a/1). In 1896, the Island Lake Indians were again hard up and not killing any fish. The winter of 1897 was poor for furs so the Indians made very little trade and in March they were starving at Moose Lake, not being able to kill any fish. In 1903 the Island Lake Indians came in to Onion Lake in January, returned to their own area in February to hunt moose - at which they were successful - but did little hunting in late February and March as the snow was too deep for them to hunt. In 1909 the hunt was poor due to illness among the Island Lake Indians. Often by late March a good number of winter furs had been traded by the "hunting" Indians, provisions were scarce and the Indians were looking forward to spring.

During Easter holidays at Onion Lake these Indians procured advances in the form of provisions to carry them through until the spring fish runs provided them with a good fish catch. Muskrat and bear were the most common furs caught at this time. The snow was usually gone by the end of April, but travel was often difficult

for several weeks during the spring thaw. At the end of May, the "hunting" Indians came into Onion Lake with their spring fur catch and to join together for the annual Thirst Dance which was the beginning of the generally relaxed summer season of socializing. The annual subsistence cycle of the "hunting" Cree is shown in Figure 6.

#### 6.4 The Chipewyan

The Chipewyan maintained themselves during the study period by fishing, hunting and stock raising. They followed a semi-sedentary lifestyle, moving from place to place as they exploited different resources. During the first half of the study period the Chipewyan established winter camps for hunting and trapping, camped by Cold Lake during the fishing season and maintained houses in a small hamlet which they resorted to in the spring to plant gardens and check on their cattle. Agent Mann often reported that, during the major part of the year, all but three or four families of this band were off hunting. During Christmas and Easter, the Chipewyan came in from their hunting camps for services at the mission, to socialize and to replenish their outfits.

The Chipewyan became involved in stock raising during the 1800's. Having cattle did not hinder their hunting and trapping patterns as those who remained in the hamlet during the winter cared for the cattle. The Chipewyan always provided hay for their cattle for

Figure 6: Annual Cycle of the "hunting" Indians (Cree) in the Onion Lake Agency

MONTHS & SEASONS	SOCIAL EVENTS	ACTIVITIES
Sept.		IN TO ONION LAKE FOR SUPPLIES
Oct.		
Nov.		FISHING, FREIGHTING (as soon as lakes & river froze)
Dec.		HUNTING
Jan.	CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S	TRADING FURS
Feb.		WINTER HUNTING & TRAPPING
March		
April	EASTER	
May		FISHING
June		SPRING HUNTING & TRAPPING
July	JULY 1st THIRST & TREATY DANCE PAYMENTS	Trading furs at end of season
Aug.		GATHERING BERRIES AND SENECA ROOT



winter and looked to the needs of their cattle while in for the winter celebrations and fishing season. In the early spring, cattle were turned loose to fend for themselves while the men went on a spring hunt. Because there was no new grass until late April or early May, these animals sometimes starved. They were also open to wolf attacks at this time.

During the latter part of the study period the Chipewyan became more interested in agriculture and livestock and consequently, more sedentary. They built large houses, which were praised by the Inspectors for their good construction and size. They were described as "larger and more substantially built than those of the Cree" (SP27, 1905:165). Having livestock other than cattle and horses meant more time spent in caring for the needs of their animals and, therefore, more time at their farm sites. The journals and reports seem to indicate that during this time the women and children tended to stay at the farm sites on the reserves during the major portion of the year while the men spent the winter hunting and trapping. In the 1920's, when Curtis visited the Chipewyan, this appears to have been the pattern. He wrote that the "winters are spent in localities remote from the summer camps, never more than two trappers being associated (Curtis, 1928:19), and "Their summers are devoted to fishing, their winters to fishing through the ice, trapping or patiently waiting for spring" (*ibid.*, 24).

Summer was, for these Indians, a time of relative relaxation and socializing, as they joined the Cree for the Dominion Day

celebrations and then gathered during annuity payments on their own reserve. They lived off their garden produce and berries and fished or hunted as needed. In early summer, they were usually in need of provisions and in order to receive rations became involved in some food-for-work projects. In June 1888, they built a new road from their settlement to Onion Lake which shortened the distance about 20 miles. They also made shingles in return for rations.

Hay making and berry picking were important activities during August and September. Berries were dried and stored for winter use. Garden produce and crops were harvested. In September, the Chipewyan made a trip to the Hudson's Bay Store at Battleford or Onion Lake for winter supplies. Preparations for winter were taken care of during the fall and included mudding and whitewashing houses and repairing stables. In October the Hudson's Bay Company trader travelled to Cold Lake to spend the winter and establish his trade. By late October the Chipewyan were usually reported to be off hunting and not expected back until Christmas.

The fall hunt began in late September or October (HBC B.323/c/1, October 2, 1909) and continued until mid-December. Moose was hunted at this time. It was used for food, clothing and other needs. Moose were plentiful in the area and the Chipewyan were usually able to kill a good supply for their needs. Muskrats were the most common fur bearing animals and were trapped at this time.

Winter subsistence needs were met through hunting moose and deer and through fishing. The Chipewyan were noted for their skill at

hunting and, while animals were available, they were able to make a good living. Inspector Crombie reported in March 1916, that he had not visited IR 149B as most of these Chipewyan were absent from their homes trapping. Of those on IR 149A, he reported that:

...considerable big game has been got this season and has helped to augment the Indians' supply of beef. Fish were plentiful early in the winter and sufficient was secured by the Indians for their own use. Furs are plentiful and prices good and many of the Band are taking advantage of the prices now prevailing (PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1916).

While the Chipewyan did raise cattle, many were sold rather than beefed for their own use. The provisions obtained through hunting and fishing were usually adequate for their subsistence needs.

January and February were the coldest months of the winter and most fur bearing animals do not move around as much during this time. Moose hunting continued but the primary activity of the Chipewyan, following their return to Cold Lake for Christmas and New Year's, was fishing. Fishing was done for both subsistence requirements and for trade. Fish was the staple food of the Chipewyan throughout the greater part of the winter.

Fishing was usually finished by the end of January. In January 1901, the Hudson's Bay Company clerk reported that some Chipewyan with a load of trout from Cold Lake passed through and that the Indians were then killing large quantities of fish at Cold Lake (HBC B.323/a/3). In 1907-08, fishing was completed by early January but was not transported out until Cold Lake was frozen over. The fish freighters passed through

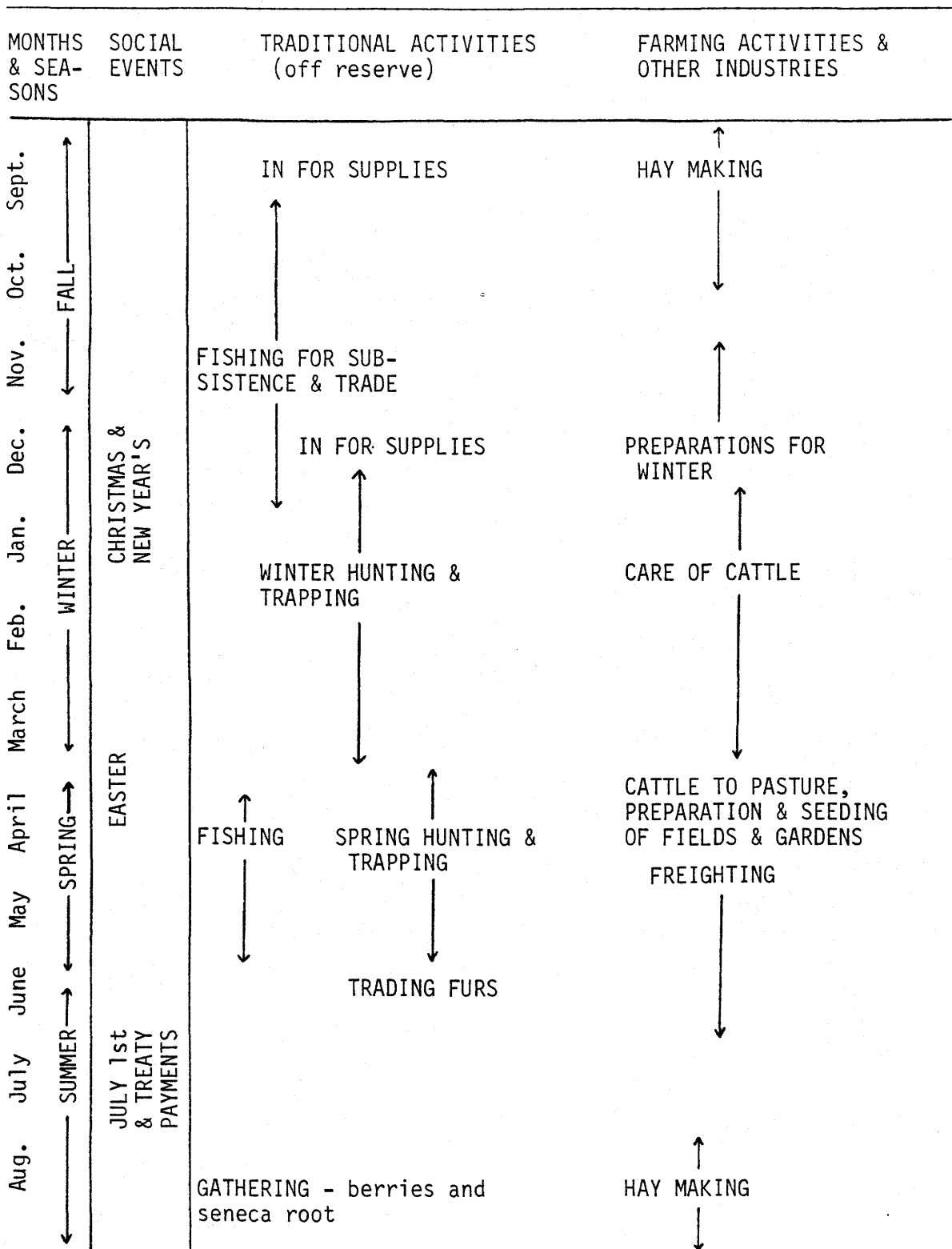
Onion Lake on their way to Lloydminster on January 11th (HBC B.323/a/5). The bulk of the fish trade was carried on in the winter, when the fish were easily frozen, and was transacted through the merchants in Lloydminster.

The winter hunt lasted through February and March until Easter. The Chipewyan concentrated on trapping fox, lynx, wolverine, mink and other fur bearers during this time. These furs were traded with traders who ventured into the trapping areas or were brought back to Cold Lake to be traded in early April when the trappers came in to replenish their supplies and for Eastern services at Father LeGoff's mission.

The early spring hunt began as soon as the snow allowed for easy movement in the muskrat marshes where "pushups" had been formed by the muskrats in the ice. The muskrat was the primary fur taken in the spring. By the end of April the hunt was finished and the Chipewyan hunters were on their way to Battleford, Onion Lake or Edmonton to trade their furs.

For those Chipewyan who resided year-around on the reserves and who became involved in agriculture, the spring activities were similar to those of the Cree Indians. A general cleanup around the houses took place, with all rubbish being burned; fields were prepared and seeded; gardens were planted; fence rails were hauled and cut; and, fences and stables were repaired. The annual cycle of activity for the Chipewyan are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Annual cycle of the Chipewyan of the Onion Lake Agency



## 7. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to give a history of the Onion Lake Agency and its residents, including an examination of Indian adaptation to reservation life in the areas of reserve settlement and subsistence activities. The major portion of the study was concerned with the period 1876-1920. This was a period of transition: autonomous bands were grouped into agencies under the management of government officials, a semi-sedentary settlement pattern developed, agriculture, stock raising and wage labour were adopted, and to some extent, replaced traditional subsistence activities, and barter was gradually replaced by a cash economy. Some of the environmental, political and social variables which brought about these changes were examined.

In order to establish the location, identity and subsistence pattern of the Cree and Chipewyan who signed Treaty Six a brief history of the hundred years prior to 1876 was given. The *Thilanottine* Chipewyan, who exploited the boreal forest near the upper Churchill River and Lake Athabasca, became involved in the fur trade during the second half of the 18th century and gradually moved southward to Cold Lake, Heart Lake and Lac La Biche. The Saskatchewan River Cree - a designation which includes both Plains and Wood Cree - experienced tremendous changes in population distribution and lifeway during the early 19th century as some left the forested areas to reside in the grasslands where they adopted a subsistence pattern based primarily on the buffalo. The Wood Cree followed a summer fishing, winter hunting and trapping subsistence pattern in the mixedwood region north of the North Saskatchewan

River and occasionally travelled to the northern plains in the fall to hunt buffalo.

By 1870, both the Cree and Chipewyan were experiencing a decline in their resource base. This decline was most evident among the Plains Cree who were confronted with the extermination of the buffalo. By the mid-1870's, many Plains Indians were in a desperate condition, being in need of food and material goods, and were willing to consider and accept the government's promise of aid in establishing agriculture on lands set aside for them. There was also a noticeable decline in the resources along the North Saskatchewan River and, by 1876, many of the Wood Cree and Chipewyan began looking to the new government for assistance to supplement their sometimes meagre hunting, trapping and fishing returns.

As resources were depleted, abruptly in the grasslands and gradually in the woodlands, and as a new political relationship was established between the Indians and the Dominion of Canada through the signing of treaties, the Indians of the North Saskatchewan River area were forced to make subsistence and socio-economic adjustments. These adjustments brought about a new cycle of subsistence activity and settlement pattern. From 1876 to 1885, the fulfillment of treaty obligations were carried out through the establishment of reservations, issuing of rations, the granting of cattle and implements, and the beginnings of the reserve agricultural program. These activities had only begun when they were disrupted by the North-West Rebellion of 1885. Following the Rebellion many of the Indians renewed their efforts to adapt to reservation life, the reserve agricultural program was put into effect, and department

policies and programs were more strictly applied.

The government established its presence in the study area through the formation of the Fort Pitt District under the management of an Indian Agent stationed at Battleford. In 1879, two farm instructors arrived in the district to establish home farms and to show the Indians, by example, how to cultivate the soil and raise crops and gardens. The home farm program was begun optimistically, with the hope that the Indians would become self-sufficient through agriculture in several years. However, by 1883, few bands could boast the reputation of Seekaskootch band which was recognized by the Superintendent in his 1883 report for industry in raising large crops, good cultivation of the land and admirable fences. The other bands in the agency tended to wander about during the summer and appeared to make little or no progress in farming during this time. It appears that some of the Indians in the district were intent upon making a good beginning in agricultural activities while others were uninterested in such activity. The latter were penalized for their wandering habits by having their rations withheld. By 1883 the government decided that home farms were too great an expense for the results achieved and they were closed. Farm instructors were now to reside on the reserves where, through direct guidance, they were to encourage the Indians to grow grain. This was the beginning of the reserve agricultural program. Its purpose was to make the Indians self-sufficient and independent of government aid through agriculture and stock raising.

During the initial period of Indian transition one of the government's purposes was to make the Indians sedentary, as "fixity of residence" was



considered to be the first step towards civilizing the Indians. In order to effect this, the government surveyed reservations for Bands 119, 120, 121 and 122 in 1879 and for Band 123 in 1884, and encouraged the Indians to settle on their reserves and adopt a settlement pattern based on individual farm sites. Again, this program was successful among the Indians of Seekaskootch band while members of other bands in the area continued to wander away from their reservations. Problems which prohibited reserve settlement at this time included the insufficient number of working cattle available for individual families, the unwillingness of the Indians to work unless under direct supervision and the unsettled state of the majority of the Indians. The Seekaskootch band was singled out by Inspector Wadsworth as probably the only band in the territory which had adopted the idea of individual farm sites. Heads of families had moved to distant parts of the reserve where they had broken land and seeded grain. According to the Minister, this action resulted in a competitive spirit among the band members who vied with each other for superiority of crops, buildings and fences. This spirit of individualism and of competition was seen by department officials as a sign of progress and was, therefore, highly praised.

By 1885, Indians in the study area had experienced much hardship and some starvation due to the extermination of the buffalo. The Plains Cree found it difficult to hunt in the woodlands where resources were already depleted as well. The primary means of survival for many of the Indians was dependency upon agents and farm instructors for rations. With the signing of Treaty Six, the government assumed responsibility for the welfare of the Indian people. This involved issuing of rations to

destitute Indians as an interim measure which would be discontinued once the Indians could again provide for themselves through new subsistence activities. The ration program brought many of the Indians into a state of dependency upon the government for food and material goods. In order to prevent the Indians from feeling that these rations were theirs by right, the government adopted a policy which required that the Indians work in return for the food they received. While, in some instances the food-for-work policy appears to have succeeded, such as the building of a road from Fort Pitt to Frog Lake, the Indians resented the policy and attempted to force their view by threatening their farm instructor. In 1881 Seekaskootch's band threatened Williams, informing him that they were to be fed without having to work or they would confiscate the department cattle. Agent Reed received a similar threat in Battleford, to which he reacted by withholding rations. Where their behaviour was not in line with department aims, the Indians were penalized through withholding of rations. This resulted in some Indians leaving their reservations to hunt and fish. However, here again they faced restrictions. In 1881, Reed ordered rations withheld from the Frog Lake Indians during their fishing season as he felt their catch was sufficient for their food requirements. Such actions made the Indians realize that in a land which they had once had complete control, they were now subject to another power. Growing resentment of the food-for-work policy and the reduction of rations by government officials were leading causes for the outbreak of violence at Frog Lake in 1885. Although the initiators of the uprising at Frog Lake were members of the Plains Cree band of Big Bear, the Frog

Lake bands, Keeheewin band and some of Seekaskootch band were brought into conflict.

The Rebellion had certain consequences for the Indians in terms of leadership, reserve settlement and subsistence activities. Following the Rebellion, management of the Indians was to be conducted according to recommendations suggested by Deputy Indian Commissioner Reed (p. 48). These policies were to demonstrate to all that the department disapproved of the actions of those who had participated in the Rebellion. Policies which had been in force prior to the Rebellion, such as the food-for-work policy and the desire for economy were to be continued and enforced to a greater extent. Incentives were given to increase Indian productivity and proper behaviour, and restraints were placed upon the Indians which tended to stifle advancement in certain activities.

One of the first consequences for the Indians was in the realm of management and leadership. Those Indians who participated in the Rebellion were labelled "rebels" and Chiefs Keeheewin and Ooneepowhayo were deposed. According to Reed, the tribal system was to be broken up so that Indians could be dealt with individually instead of through chiefs. In an attempt to increase agents' access to individual Indians, smaller agencies were organized. The Onion Lake Agency was established with G.G. Mann as Indian Agent. In a sense he replaced the Indian chiefs who were deposed and became the Indians' spokesman to the department. Agent Mann served at Onion Lake until he was transferred to Saddle Lake in 1900 and replaced by Wm. Sibbald. Mann established a good rapport with the Indians and was highly praised by the inspectors for his efficiency and good sense,

and by Dion (1979) for the personal attention he gave to the Indians and his concern for their advancement.

Rapport between Indians and agent appears to have broken down during the 1900's. According to Dion, it was during this period that the Indians learned to wait for action from the White man and came to feel that their well being was really of little concern to those in charge. A small office with a wicket through which the Indians and agent communicated replaced Agent Mann's office, and many times the Indians had to await the agent's convenience before being attended to. The Hudson's Bay Company clerk noted that there were problems in communication when he recorded in 1907 that Indians who had gathered for a meeting with Inspector Chisholm were allowed into the office one at a time instead of as a group. As a result, "they came away without saying what they wanted" (HBV B.323/a/7, April 2, 1907). Apparently this procedure discouraged the Indians who tended to express their views more strongly when in a group than as individuals. The strict enforcement of government policy by Agent Sibbald caused resentment towards department policy and personnel and contributed to a decline in rapport between agent and Indians.

Another consequence of the Rebellion was a polarization of the Cree into two groups which emphasized different adaptations to subsistence activities and settlement pattern. The "hunting" Indians, who made their living hunting, trapping and fishing, scattered into the wooded areas north of the reserves. These were primarily "rebel" Indians who rejected the department's suggestion that they move to the reserves at Onion Lake,

adhere to the food-for-work program and become involved in agriculture. Those Cree who joined Seekaskootch band on IR's 119 and 120 and became involved in agricultural and stock raising activities were referred to as "working" Indians. They adopted a sedentary settlement pattern on the reservations. It was reported by Agent Mann that by 1889 many of the "hunting" Indians had moved to Onion Lake because the obvious decline in fish and game during the 1887 and 1888 seasons produced a greater need for them to become involved in activities which would provide for their subsistence needs.

The division of Cree into two groups had consequences in terms of the amount of department aid each group received. The "working" Indians were under the direct supervision of the Indian Agent and farm instructor and received the benefits offered by the department of regular rations, cattle and implements for agricultural work. The "hunting" Indians were to receive rations only if they were "actually starving" and could not provide for themselves (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3584 F.1130, H. Reed to Dewdney, May 6, 1885). They also worked for food at the agency or making hay for the department herd at Long Lake during Agent Mann's term. The food-for-work program was strongly encouraged on the Onion Lake reserves during Mann's time and resulted in an extensive building program in which the agency and a large number of Indian homes were built. Agent Mann was adept at devising projects for the Indians at which they could work for rations they received. He was judicious in his regulation of rations and on ration days checked on the activities of Indians he felt had been lazy during that week, while at the same time encouraging those who were industrious. The food-for-work program was not

always well accepted by the Indians and in 1889 a number of the Onion Lake Indians complained to Inspector McGibbon that they were required to work for the rations they received. McGibbon felt that their criticism was unfounded as they received an adequate amount of rations as well as the benefits of work done on the reserves in return for their rations.

Although the ration and food-for-work programs continued throughout the period after the Rebellion, Indians were encouraged to become independent of rations through the production of garden produce, grain and stock. Yet, in a sense, people were penalized for being productive, through the department attitude that rations were a supplementary food source when other foods were not available. Indian Commissioner Dewdney reported that "in every instance where any root crops have been secured, a temporary reduction of the rations issued was made,..." (SP6, 1887:107). The department continued its policy of stringency which was combined with the idea that reductions, when possible, would encourage the Indians to see the benefits of producing for himself rather than relying on the government for food.

The ability to wean oneself from the ration house was seen by department officials as an important step towards independence and self-reliance. Through the department herd program and the increase in cattle among the Indians the meat ration was reduced. The arrival of a grist mill in 1890 helped with the flour ration for a time but the mill fell into disuse during the early 1900's. This was likely because wheat flour available through rations was preferred to the

coarse barley flour produced at the agency as well as the general lack of success of grain growing at Onion Lake. The Indians who did grind their own grain were proud of it and were encouraged by their endeavours. When work projects were not available, as among the Chipewyan, useable items, such as shingles and baskets, were manufactured and traded for rations. The experience gained on building projects proved useful to the Indians in building their own houses and stables and later, when paid employment in building projects for the missions, police and settlers was available. Many of the working Indians were able to work themselves free from their dependency upon rations - a practise strongly encouraged by Agent Sibbald who reported in 1910 that rations were issued to working Indians only when absolutely necessary.

In their adaptation to reservation life the Indians adopted certain values of the Euro-Canadian agrarian lifestyle while maintaining or modifying certain aspects of their former lifeway. Trapping had already brought them into the economic sphere of the larger society while it perpetuated aspects of their traditional culture. The traditional subsistence activities of hunting and fishing for provisions continued throughout the period. A change in the annual subsistence region tended to decrease involvement in these activities. The annual subsistence region, or the area of land exploited by the Indians for resources, was circumscribed through gradual confinement of the Indians to their reservations, the depletion of fish and game resources, and a decrease in land base as settlers moved into the area. This affected

Indian reliance on goods and services provided by the department and resulted in more Indians adopting Euro-Canadian introduced activities. Agrarian activities encouraged such practices as fencing fields, individual farm sites, the construction of grist and saw mills and stability of residence. Introduced agricultural and stock raising activities changed the socioeconomic situation of the Indians by encouraging a competitive spirit, individual enterprise and by bringing the Indians into the market economy through the sale of produce.

The majority of the Chipewyan continued to follow a subsistence cycle based on hunting, fishing and trapping throughout the study period. They derived a good income from this source, and by providing for themselves, maintained their independence from the agency. The Island Lake, Joseph Bighead and Loon Lake bands were "hunting" Indians and followed the traditional lifeway through the study period. The Frog Lake bands hunted, fished and trapped primarily to supplement their earnings from the sale of lumber and through wage labour. Keeheewin band successfully adopted agricultural and stock raising activities but continued to hunt and fish for subsistence needs. The Onion Lake band made a good effort to become agriculturalists and stock men during the early years on the reservation, but due to various factors few were successful. By the end of the study period their main income was derived from wage labour off the reserves. Hunting, trapping and fishing were supplementary activities and not followed to any large extent.

Reserve settlement was slow. Following the Rebellion many of the



Wood Cree scattered and some of the Plains Cree moved south to the plains. Because a large number of the members from Keeheewin and Frog Lake bands were on the Onion Lake reserves from 1886 to 1903 these reserves were not settled until after this time. In their settlement on the reserves the "working" Indians adopted a pattern of settlement which reflected their desire to follow agrarian activities. They generally settled on individual farm sites. The "hunting" Indians were more mobile as they changed location according to resource availability. They did maintain houses at certain locations, usually close to the lakes where they obtained their major fish catch. It appears that, while the "working" Indians maintained their individual farm sites, many of them were in a sense semi-sedentary. They resided in tents during the summer, moving as they were involved in activities such as fishing and haymaking and in order to socialize.

The new political relationship with the government introduced to the Indians a group of officials concerned about their advancement and, who instituted a number of policies and programs designed to make them self-sufficient and sedentary. The implementation of these programs was guided by certain incentives and restraints and the department policies were directed by a protectionist attitude and the desire for economy. In 1888, the Indian Commissioner wrote:

The end in view in the policy adopted for the treatment of our wards is to lead them, step by step, to provide for their own requirements, through their industry, and while doing so, to inculcate a spirit of self-reliance and independence which will fit them for enfranchisement, and the enjoyment of all the privileges, as well as the

responsibilities of citizenship (SP12, 1890:165).

With this aim in mind the department designed a number of programs which were implemented in the study area. These programs and the policies involved in their implementation affected the adaptation of the Indians to reservation life and their acceptance, rejection and modification of activities which became a part of their annual cycle.

The department's policy of encouraging individual farms and individual enterprise was emphasized immediately following the Rebellion. By promoting this policy, the department hoped to "foster self-reliance, to increase a spirit of emulation in their labours, and hasten the attainment of independence" in the Indians (SP6, 1887:108). Through its plan to subdivide reservations into individual holdings the department hoped to strike "at the heart of the tribal system and that of community lands" (*ibid.*), and replacing these with a spirit of individual responsibility (SP12, 1890:165). This policy was seen as an important preparation for enfranchisement. Although many of the Indians in Seekaskootch band had adopted individual farm sites prior to 1885 and were praised by Indian Commissioner Reed in 1888 for the tendency to settle on separate farm sites, the actual division of the reserve into 40 acre lots did not occur. The Frog Lake and Keeheewin band members adopted a similar pattern of settlement following the return to their reserves after 1903. When the Chipewyan settled south of the Beaver River, they too adopted a settlement pattern which included individual farm sites.

The Indians were encouraged to pursue activities which would enable

them to become self-sufficient. One practice, which was strongly encouraged by the department, was requiring Indians to make for themselves useable tools and articles such as axe and hay fork handles, ox collars, harness, sleighs and hay racks. By doing this, government expenditures could be decreased, and the Indians encouraged to use their time profitably and to provide for themselves in a practical manner.

The department practiced a spirit of economy in other matters concerning the Indians. Similar to the food-for-work program, their attitude towards farm activities was to aid those who worked but not to appear lavish in this aid. In referring to a shortage of seed due to crop failure, Deputy Superintendent General Reed expressed the opinion that "the department believes it to be in their best interests to leave them as far as possible to fight their own way out of such difficulties,..." (SP14, 1896:xx). He went on to report that the Indians had pulled through without receiving any extra aid from the department and without undue privation. Those Indians who returned to their own reserves, after having resided on the Onion Lake reserves, went expecting no rations from the agency. Apparently, they did well in spite of not receiving aid in terms of provisions. However, this attitude of practising economy may well have had a discouraging effect on those Indians who sought to get ahead. Rather than supplying these Indians with extra aid to make a good start, the department discontinued its aid as soon as any activity was expected to be productive in terms of food or cash.

The department did seek to encourage and give incentives to those who produced for their own needs by allowing them to dispose of a proportion of their produce and to take contracts for the supply of firewood and hay (SP12, 1890:161). Reed recognized as early as 1892 that the Indians needed more machinery. However, he felt that the Indians should use their own earnings to purchase implements and in this way relieve the department of such expenditures. At the same time he cautioned against too great a desire on the part of the Indians to obtain labour saving implements. He lamented that, as the Indians were brought into contact with Euro-Canadian society, an ambition was created to emulate the Whites.

The consequence is, that when the Indians see white men in possession of self-binders and other costly inventions for saving labour, which the condition of the white man renders highly necessary, they overlook the fact that the employment of such implements is only justifiable where manual labours are comparatively scarce. They think that they should have such implements, even should the possession of them leave them little more to do than sit by and smoke their pipes, while work is being done for them without exertion on their part. To counteract such views is one of my most constant endeavours; and I never relax my efforts to impress upon those employed to train the Indians that they must be taught to handle such comparatively simple implements as cradles, scythes, hoes, &., which will be readily obtainable by them when thrown upon their own resources, and afford employment to every hand which should be thus profitably occupied (SP12, 1890:162).

The department's policy here appears to confuse the desire for economic efficiency and the desire to make the Indians conscientious, hardworking and productive in their industries. Department officials felt large machinery would be beyond the possible acquisition of the majority of the

Indians for some time and stressed that the Indians use only what they could afford. At the same time, industrious Indians were encouraged to purchase such implements. Reed's concern was that the Indians were hard working at all times rather than being idle while work was done for them by machinery.

The reserve agricultural program was an important part of the department's effort to make Indians self-sufficient. Gardening, grain growing and stock raising were the major industries encouraged in this program. The adoption of these industries was seen by the department as the "initial step towards civilization" and a necessary pursuit if the Indian was to keep pace with the White man (SP14, 1899:xxi). Government personnel expected that these industries would teach Indians the "deliberate method" of providing for their wants and needs, the necessity for systematic seasonal work habits, attention to detail, patience in waiting for results, the idea of individual proprietorship, habits of thrift and a sense of the value and useful investment of money (*ibid.*). In short, these activities would prepare the Indian for enfranchisement by instilling in him values which were important to the Euro-Canadian agrarian lifeway.

The cattle loan system and the department herd programs were part of the reserve agricultural program. The cattle loan program worked well and a number of men became proficient in stock raising. This program emphasized proprietary rights in cattle and a sense of responsibility for them, and was encouraged so that the Indians could attain a measure of self-reliance and independence. The indiscriminate

disposal of cattle and beef was discouraged by agents through the permit system and was penalized through the withholding of assistance from guilty persons. The department herd, which was established in 1888, was to supply the beef ration for the agency. This purpose was accomplished by 1893. The Indians received the benefits of the herd in that it furnished beef rations as well as freed money with which the agency could purchase farm implements and farm supplies.

A number of factors hindered the successful development of grain growing on the Onion Lake reserves. These included repeated crop failures due to drought and frost, poor soil fertility, the lack of instruction in farming during the 1900's, outdated farming methods and poor seed. On Keeheewin reserve the soil was more fertile and the area less subject to frost. Crops grew well there, and once the Indians saw the benefits of their labour they progressed. The Chipewyan Indians were not interested in agriculture during the major portion of the study period as proceeds from hunting, trapping, fishing and stock raising provided them with a good living. Towards the end of the study period they became involved in grain growing when they realized that they could benefit economically through the sale of grain. The Frog Lake Indians preferred work at the sawmill and outside labour for wages to growing grain. Grain growing was not always successful simply because not all of the Indians were interested in that industry or saw the economic benefit of it.

The lack of a market and mill stifled early attempts at grain growing. During the later years of the study period an available market

for grain in Lloydminster and among settlers resulted in an increased interest in grain growing. The permit system, bull fund, and head tax were discouraging to those involved in stock raising. Although a number of men were able to build up good sized herds, a problem arose in the disposal of their cattle. Through the implementation of the permit system the department sought to protect the Indians from unscrupulous buyers, prevent the indiscriminate sale of beef and cattle, and ensure the building up of the herds. The cattle industry was begun with the purpose of developing a sense of individual ownership and responsibility for cattle. Through the imposition of the permit system and head tax the Indians came to feel that what they raised did not belong to them. This feeling was expressed by Thunder at a meeting between Agent Sibbald and the Indians in 1910 as well as by Dion (1979). Dion maintained that these restrictions led to the demise of the cattle industry.

Other industries became part of the adaptive strategy of the Indians in the agency. They were encouraged to obtain employment off the reserve so that they could earn cash which could be used to purchase provisions and material goods and thereby decrease dependency upon the department. The opportunity for employment off reserves increased after 1900 as the number of settlers increased. From 1903 to 1906 the Indians of the Onion Lake band were able to sell lumber and grain and work on building projects for the Barr Colonists at Lloydminster. In some instances the interests of the Indians and the department concerning such activities came into conflict. This was the case in 1914 when the Indians on Keeheewin reserve sold a large quantity

of lumber without a permit. While the Indians were encouraged to be involved in such enterprise, when their involvement appeared unwise to department officials it was severely criticized and controls were set. In this case, the control required that a permit to sell lumber be obtained before such a sale could be made. The conflict also arose because the Indians sought to provide for themselves with the resources they had available and which they perceived would bring them an income while the department sought to preserve and protect these resources.

The Indians were generally willing to take employment off the reserve when it promised a good remuneration. Through hay and wood contracts, clearing land, freighting and the sale of furs, lime, berries, seneca root and fish, the Indians were able to increase their earnings. The availability of "other industries" opened up a new subsistence strategy for the Indian. Prior to these opportunities, their only contact with the market economy of Euro-Canadians was through the fur trade. As wage labour increased the market system became more accessible to the Indians, and they were drawn into a cash economy.

Increased wage labour off the reserves also contributed to a decline in grain growing and stock raising (Dion 1979:132, 133). Sibbald encouraged the Indians to get out and work. In this way the reserve agricultural program took a place of lesser importance and the Indians were drawn into the cash economy as wage earners rather than grain producers. They were now expected to pay for rations they received at the agency or to purchase their provisions elsewhere. Other industries appear to have taken precedence over the reserve agricultural program by



1910 when Sibbald reported the following:

The issue of government rations to working Indians is small, in fact, only when absolutely necessary, so that in view of the fact that they cannot support themselves from the proceeds of their cattle and grain, they are compelled, though not reluctantly, to take advantage of any work that they are fitted for, which they frequently find in freighting for traders, working for settlers, engaging themselves with survey parties and such like work, from which they derive no small proportion of their livelihood (SP27, 1910:145).

All bands provided for their subsistence needs through hunting fur bearing animals to some extent and through fishing for winter provisions. While these resources were available the Indians took less interest in grain growing.

Government introduced programs and policy met with varying degrees of success among the Indians in the agency. Progress in the sense of advancement in those values and characteristics the department sought to instill within the Indian people was made primarily among those referred to as "working" Indians. Among these Indians the rations, food-for-work, and reserve agricultural programs became a part of their subsistence pattern.

The Indians on the Onion Lake reserves reflected an enthusiasm for work which was praised as a sign of progress by department personnel. Reports on the progress and industry of these Indians were numerous during the 1800's and 1890's. Following his inspection in 1889, Inspector Wadsworth wrote:

[these Indians] are not willing to remain in a rut, but are of a progressive turn of mind. Their houses are of a superior class, story

and a half, with high thatched roofs, well plastered and whitewashed outside and inside, also good floors (PAC RG10 Black, Vol. 3809 F.53,828-3, Inspection Report, 1889).

Wadsworth goes on to list improvements made by individual Indians.

From 1885-1903 the most industrious Indians, in terms of involvement in Euro-Canadian subsistence activities, were resident on the Onion Lake reserves. The reports of Agent Mann are generally positive with regard to their progress. In 1897 he wrote:

The Indians are industrious, law-abiding and at all times anxious to improve their condition. The people are steadily advancing in civilized acquirements, and each year they are more able to support themselves (SP14, 1898:167).

In 1901, several years after his arrival at Onion Lake, Agent Sibbald wrote in his annual report that these Indians were continuing to progress.

There are but few indolent Indians to be found in this band: the majority are active and try to improve their condition and are gradually succeeding; none, I can say, are becoming poorer. They spend their treaty money judiciously and have almost entirely adopted the style of dress of white people, which, however, they sometimes decorate with bead-work and other trimmings of their own devices (SP27, 1902:164).

That these Indians were industrious and law-abiding is reported throughout the study period. However, their progress appears to slow down after 1905 and any significant progress reported by the agent relates only to a few individuals. In referring to those who are industrious Sibbald reported in 1904 that two families left the Onion Lake reserves to return to Keeheewin reserve. They desired to become self-supporting. In 1907 he reported that there were "several families" who formerly received government rations regularly but who now

seldom needed assistance and that all required less assistance than formerly, and in 1911 he reported that there were "a few progressive families" in the Onion Lake bands but it was difficult to get these Indians to save money and they were progressing slowly. In 1913 he reported that "progress is not noticeable, although they are law-abiding except with regards to acquiring liquor a habit which is increasing" (SP27, 1912:149). And finally, in 1914 he reported that

The Indians in the agency generally may be called peaceful and law-abiding; some are energetic and progressive, but few save anything for the future. There is an indication of progress in the fact that on some of the reserves better houses are being erected, and they are kept cleaner and in better order (SP27, 1915:60).

The Frog Lake Indians were generally reported to be "indolent" with regard to agriculture. Only five were considered to be progressing favourably and supporting themselves in 1907. In Keeheewin band, most were considered progressive and industrious. These were the Indians who had previously resided at Onion Lake and had there adopted agriculture and stock raising. The Chipewyan were generally reported to be industrious, particularly when this involved hunting, trapping and fishing. They were handy workmen and built houses praised by the inspectors, were capable of earning good wages by freighting or engaging in survey parties, were law-abiding, not altogether temperate, and considered to be fairly moral in their habits (SP27, 1908:133).

The department measured the progress of the Indians by their industrious habits, their independence from rations, law-abidingness, their ability to save money and to provide their own

living through wage labour, their houses, and their personal appearance. There appears to have been a core group of Cree Indians who gathered themselves at Onion Lake during the 1880's and 1890's and who seriously attempted to become self-reliant through industries encouraged by the department. Under the guidance and encouragement of Agent Mann, these Indians made a good start. This group did not represent the majority of Indians in the agency. The hunting Indians were seldom referred to in the agency and inspection reports so that the impression is sometimes created that most of the Cree Indians were adapting well to department policy. The hunting Indians are mentioned more frequently in the Hudson's Bay Company records. The Chipewyan band, although "hunting" Indians, were relatively well off and independent of department help. They adopted stock raising as a means to supplement their income from hunting, fishing and trapping, and near the end of the study period began seriously to become involved in grain growing. This band was keenly aware of the market system through their involvement in the fur trade and as they adopted other industries they did so with the clear motive of making a profit.

In their adaptation to reservation life the Indians adopted an annual cycle of repetitive activities and a settlement pattern which represented a continuity with some features of their former lifeway and which adopted certain Euro-Canadian introduced values and exploitative strategies. Throughout the study period change continued in this cycle as new practices and values were adopted, modified or rejected and a new lifeway worked out. The study shows that by the end of the study

period the Indians had chosen aspects from both lifeways which appealed to them and which were to their economic or material advantage, and that these were becoming a part of their annual subsistence and settlement cycle.

This thesis has been concerned with change as exhibited in the demographic, ecological, subsistence and economic adaptation of the Indians in the study area during the period 1876-1920. Although certain limitations are evident in the approach taken and material presented, the study compiles and makes available material which is valuable for further research in anthropology and in native studies.

Through the use of models a number of hypotheses can be set up and tested by data presented here. Such theoretical perspectives as acculturation, the cultural ecological approach and the processual and systems approaches would be useful in focussing on certain aspects of culture change and agents of change. The processual approach would concentrate on decisions made on the basis of incentives and restraints, the maximization principle, and the tendency of some individuals to modify constraints and incentives. A systems approach would emphasize the social relational systems between the Indians and various White persons in the study area. These would include, besides department and Hudson's Bay Company personnel: the mission and school personnel, the police, and settlers. In this way the Indians would be placed in a larger social context. The cultural ecological perspective might prove valuable in explaining the significant differences in Cree and Chipewyan adaptation to the new social, political and subsistence situation.

The concern of native studies is both historical and social. The material

presented in this study sheds light on events taking place during the early reservation period which are the source of certain concerns of native people today, including reservation surveys and allotments, land use, fatalities due to epidemic diseases, and the political relationship between the government and Indians. Explanations of these problems will be substantiated only through studies which give a detailed picture of the situation during this early period of reservation life.

Other areas for further research present themselves as a result of this study and include: demographic fluctuations in the years immediately following the signing of Treaty Six; Indian agriculture compared to that of White settlers in the study area during the study period; a detailed study of increased settlement and the availability of wage labour off the reserves as compared to opportunities available to and wages earned by Whites; and, an ethnographic study of the Indian perspective on this period of history through an examination of oral traditions.

## REFERENCES CITED

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

## 1. Public Archives of Canada (PAC)

## 1.1 Records of the Department of Indian Affairs (PAC RG10)

Information dealing with almost all aspects of the administration of Indian Affairs in western Canada, 1872-1959, are found in the Central Registry System files Record Group 10. Records of most value to this study were found in the Black Series (Black) and the Central Registry Files (CRF), 1833-1970). Daily journals for the Onion Lake Agency during the study period proved invaluable to the study and were located in the Field Office Records (FOR). Only those volumes most useful in the study and cited in the text are listed.

1.1.1 Black Series (RG10 Black)

Vol. 3570 F.102-2 Onion Lake Agency - timber limit and hay permits, 1898-1903; Long Swamp and the department herd.

Vol. 3576 F.292 Land added to the Frog Lake Reserve, 1884.

Vol. 3576 F.309-A Promises to Big Bear; Report of disturbances with Big Bear, Poundmaker and other Battle River Indians; general instructions regarding the giving of rations (1884).

Vol. 3576 F.311 Fort Pitt - assault by Indians upon instructors, 1884-1892.

Vol. 3584 F.1130, Pt. 1B Unrest and trouble among the half-breeds and Indians in the Saskatchewan District, 1885; memorandum to the Indian Commissioner from Hayter Reed (1885) regarding the future management of the Indians; disloyal Indian leaders.

Vol. 3585 F.1130 Pt. 10 Onion Lake Agency - rebellion of half-breeds and Indians.

Vol. 3640 F.7452-3 Report on farms and reserves in the Fort Pitt, Edmonton and MacLeod Districts by Inspector T.P. Wadsworth, 1884.

Vol. 3641 F.7570 General correspondence and statements of Indian operations in the North-West Territories for 1877.

- Vol. 3668 F.10,505 Onion Lake Agency - correspondence regarding the appointment of a chief at Cold Lake, 1883.
- Vol. 3668 F.10,644 General correspondence regarding matters in Carlton, Battleford and Fort Pitt Districts, including an extensive report by Hayter Reed dated December 1883.
- Vol. 3672 F.7,853, Pt. 1 North-West Superintendency - Superintendent G. Dickieson stating that there may be trouble among the Indians due to starvation (1878-79), and offering suggestions to be considered by the Minister.
- Vol. 3672 F.10,853, Pt. 1 North-West Superintendency - M.G. Dickieson's reports of expected trouble among the Indians 1878-1879.
- Vol. 3673 F.10,917 North-West Territories - quarterly returns of farms and agencies, 1884.
- Vol. 3685 F.12,932 North-West Territories - report of an inspection of reserves respecting farms, crops, equipment and supplies, 1884.
- Vol. 3701 F.12,169 P. Ballendine to Commissioner E. Dewdney reporting on the activities of the Indians in the North-West Territories.
- Vol. 3703 F.17,728 List of plans of reserves and field notes for various reserves including IR 121 and IR 123, 1884-1887.
- Vol. 3704 F.17,858 A detailed report of Commissioner Edgar Dewdney of his visit to all agencies, reserves and farms in the territory, 1880.
- Vol. 3706 F.18,745 Report of the inspection of reserves in the North-West Territories by Inspector T.P. Wadsworth, 1879-80, including an inspection of Fort Pitt.
- Vol. 3715 F.21,264 Diaries and reports from Acting Agent Thomas Quinn concerning the Frog Lake District, 1885.
- Vol. 3716 F.22,467 List of reserves in the North-West Territories.
- Vol. 3763 F.32,369 Monthly reports of Agent George Mann on the Onion Lake Agency, 1886-1890.
- Vol. 3785 F.41,783-6 Report of Onion Lake Agency by Inspector T.P. Wadsworth, 1887-1888.



- Vol. 3804 F.50,774-6 Report of Onion Lake Agency by Inspector Alexander McGibbon, 1888.
- Vol. 3806 F.52,332 H. Reed's Report on his visit to the agencies and reserves in the Saskatchewan District, 1888-1889.
- Vol. 3809 F.53,828-3 Reports of Onion Lake Agency by Inspector T.P. Wadsworth, 1888 and 1889.
- Vol. 3824 F.60,399 Personnel file for G.G. Mann.
- Vol. 4046 F.353,647 Indian lands in the North-West Territories; maps.
- Vol. 4052 F.369,540 Onion Lake Agency - Reports by Agent W. Sibbald and Reverend E.J. Cunningham on a meeting held with the Cree and Chipewyan of the agency, 1910.

#### 1.1.2 Central Registry Files (CRF)

- Vol. 6609 F.4115-3 RC Cold Lake reserve Roman Catholic Church request for land, 1884-1916.
- Vol. 7769 F.27115-3 Surveys - Cold Lake reserve, 1905-1933.
- Vol. 7769 F.27115-5 Surveys - Keeheewin reserve, 1886-1928.
- Vol. 7769 F.27115-6, Vol. 1 Surveys - Island Lake reserves, 1905-1916.
- Vol. 7769 F.27115-6, Vol. 2 Surveys - Makwa Lake reserve, 1917-1932; Joseph Bighead reserve.
- Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1 Onion Lake Agency - Inspection Reports, 1914-1923.

#### 1.1.3 Field Office Records (FOR)

- Vol. 9083 Books 1-3 Daily journals - 1889-1909.
- Vol. 9084 Books 14-26 Daily journals - 1910-1928.
- Vol. 9104 Books 1-4 Daily journals - 1899, 1906, 1913, 1914.
- Vol. 9105 Books 5-15 Daily journals - 1915-1930.
- Vol. 9107 Individual earnings of the Onion Lake Band, 1912-1916.

1.2 Manuscripts

MG24 F71 Warre, Henry James, Journal from the Red River to the Columbia, 1845.

2. Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (PAS)

CM 315 George Mann Diary

X26 Description of Plans of Certain Indian Reserves in the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 1889.

3. Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBC)

B.165/b/1, 2 Letterbooks - Fort Pitt (1885-1891)

Correspondence deals with conditions subsequent to the Rebellion of 1885, competition for furs and freighting, the purchasing of goods, fishery reports and fur potential in the district.

B.165/e/ 1, 2 Inspection Reports for Fort Pitt, (1888, 1889)

Administrative concerns, fur returns, personnel, outposts and stock are discussed in these reports.

B.323/a/1-12 Post Journals for Fort Pitt-Onion Lake (1893-1911)

These journals record daily events such as the amount of furs coming in, activities of individuals in the area, weather conditions and the seasonal exploitation of resources by the Indians.

B.323/b/1, 2 Correspondence Books - Onion Lake (1892-1895)

These include requests for goods and the paying of bills for goods shipped to Fort Pitt, changing fur prices and the fur potential in the district.

B.323/c/1 Correspondence inwards (1909-1911)

From the district officer to post clerks.

B.323/3/1 Onion Lake (1896)

Sketch plan of the Hudson's Bay Company property at Onion Lake.

D.4/97, 99 Correspondence outwards.

D.25/4, 5, 8, 18, 19 Inspection Reports.

D.31/15 Accounts received at the Commissioner's Office (1872-1890).

D.31/1-7 Balance Sheets and financial reports (1885-1889).

D.FTR/1-10 Fur Trade Annual Reports from the District Officers for Outfits 1911-1920.

The Annual Report shows by district the number of furs

purchased and bartered, the proportion of furs collected, transactions in merchandise, and a summary of the trade for each outfit.

4. Glenbow Alberta Foundation (Glenbow)

A.M281 and A.M281 A Mann, George, Gwynne - Journals and diaries. This includes Mann's correspondence and general papers while Indian Agent at Onion Lake, Saddle Lake and Hobbema, 1887-1946.

AB Mann Diary of farm instructor at Onion Lake Indian reserve, 1886-88.

M331 Dion, Joseph F. (1888-1960)

M539 Hougham, Robert H. Correspondence, manuscripts and maps regarding Fort Pitt and the Hudson's Bay Company.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Canada, Sessional Papers

Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Reports, 1880-1921.

Department of Interior, Indian Branch, Annual Reports, 1876-1879.

Department of the Secretary of State, Indian Branch, No. 22.

Crean, Frank J.P.

1909 Northland Exploration: Report of Exploration by Frank J.P. Crean C.E. in Saskatchewan: Between the Saskatchewan and Churchill Rivers. Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau.

Kitto, F.H.

1919 The Province of Saskatchewan: Its Development and Opportunities. Ottawa: Department of the Interior.

Selwyn, A.R.C.

1874 Observations in the North-West Territory on a journey across the Plains from Fort Gary to Rocky Mountain House, returning by the Saskatchewan River and Lake Winnipeg. Geological Survey of Canada Report of Progress for 1873-74, Montreal, pp. 17-62.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Ahenakew, Edward  
 1952 "Sixty Five Years Ago", *The Kinistino Post*, (May 14, 21 and 28), p. 5.
- 1973 *Voices of the Plains Cree*. Edited by Ruth M. Buck. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Andrews, Isobel  
 1972 "The Crooked Lakes Reserves: A Study of Indian Policy in Practice from the Qu'Appelle Treaty to 1900." Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Regina.
- Butler, William Francis  
 1872 *The Great Lone Land*. London: S. Low, Marston, Low and Seale.
- Carmack, Robert M.  
 1972 *Ethnohistory: A Review of its Developments, Definitions, Methods and Aims*. *Annual Review of Anthropology*.
- Coupland, R.T. and Brayshaw, T.C.  
 1953 The fescue grassland in Saskatchewan. *Ecology*, Vol. 34, pp. 386-405.
- Coupland, R.T. and Rowe, J.S.  
 1969 Natural vegetation of Saskatchewan. In, *Atlas of Saskatchewan*, edited by J.H. Richards and K.I. Fung. Saskatoon: Modern Press, pp. 73-77.
- Curtis, Edward S.  
 1928 *The North American Indian*. Vol. 18, Johnson Reprint Corporation, (1970).
- Denig, E.  
 1961 *Five Indian Tribes of the Upper Missouri*. Edited by J.C. Ewers. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Dion, Joseph F.  
 1979 *My Tribe the Crees*. Edited by H. Dempsey. Calgary: Glenbow.
- Dyck, N.E.  
 1970 "The Administration of Federal Indian Aid in the North-West Territories, 1879-1885." Unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Saskatchewan.

- Gillespie, Beryl C.  
1975 Territorial expansion of the Chipewyan in the 18th century. In, *Proceedings: Northern Athapaskan Conference, 1971*, National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No. 27, edited by Clark A. McFadyen, Ottawa, pp. 350-389.
- Grant, G.M.  
1873 *Ocean to Ocean - Sanford Fleming's Expedition Through Canada in 1872*. London: S. Low, Marston, Low and Searle.
- Hearne, Samuel  
1958 *A Journey From Prince of Wales' Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean in The Years 1769, 1770, 1771 and 1772*. Edited by R. Glover. Toronto: Macmillan.
- Hector, James and Vaux, W.S.W.  
1861 Notice of the Indians seen by the Exploring Expedition under the Command of Captain Palliser. *Transactions, Ethnological Society of London*, n.s. Vol. 1, pp. 245-261.
- Hickerson, Harold  
1970 *The Chippewa and Their Neighbours: A Study in Ethnohistory*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Hind, Henry Youle  
1860 *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1875, and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan expedition of 1858*. 2 Vols. London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts.
- Hlady, Walter M.  
1960 Indian migrations in Manitoba and the West. Papers of the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, Series III, Vol. 17, pp. 25-53.
- Jarvenpa, Robert  
1980 *The Trappers of Patuanak: Towards a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, Canadian Ethnography Series, Paper No. 67.
- Jenness, Diamond  
1932 *The Indians of Canada*. Ottawa: National Museum of Canada.
- Kane, Paul  
1859 *Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America from Canada to Vancouver's Island and Oregon Through The Hudson's Bay Company's Territory and Back Again*. London: Spottiswoode and Co.

- McKenzie, Alexander  
1927 *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Lawrence through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans; in the Years 1789 and 1793.* Toronto: Radisson Society of Canada.
- Maher, W.J.  
1969 *Mammals in Saskatchewan.* In, *Atlas of Saskatchewan*, edited by J.H. Richards and K.I. Fung. Saskatoon: Modern Press, pp. 80-82.
- Mandelbaum, David  
1979 *The Plains Cree.* Regina: University of Regina.
- Meyer, David  
1982 "The Red Earth Crees and the Marriage Isolate." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, McMaster University.
- Milloy, John S.  
1972 "The Plains Cree: A Preliminary Trade and Military Chronology 1670-1870." Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Carleton University.
- Milton, Viscount and Cheadle, W.B.  
1865 *The North-West Passage By Land.* London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin.
- Mitchell, J. and Moss, H.C.  
1948 *The soils of the Canadian section of the Great Plains.* *Soil Science Society of America Proceedings*, No. 13, pp. 431-437.
- Mitchell, J., Moss, H.C., and Clayton, J.S.  
1944 *Soil Survey of Southern Saskatchewan, From Township 1 to 48,* Saskatchewan Soil Survey Report 12, University of Saskatchewan.  
1950 *Soil Survey of Saskatchewan.* Saskatchewan Soil Survey Report 13, University of Saskatchewan.
- Morris, Alexander  
1971 *The Treaties of Canada with The Indians.* Toronto: Coles Publishing Co.
- Moss, H.C.  
1965 *A Guide to Understanding Saskatchewan Soils.* Saskatoon: Modern Press.

- Moss, H.C. and Clayton, J.S.  
1969 The Soils of Saskatchewan. In, *Atlas of Saskatchewan*, edited by J.H. Richards and K.I. Fung. Saskatoon: Modern Press, pp. 70-72.
- Palliser, John  
1859 *Papers relative to the expedition by Captain Palliser of that portion of British North America which lies between the northern branch of the river Saskatchewan and the frontier of the United States; and between the Red River and Rocky Mountains.* London: G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, 1859.
- 1860 *Further papers relative to the exploration by the expedition under Captain Palliser of that portion of British North America which lies between the northern branch of the river Saskatchewan and the frontier of the United States; and between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains, and thence to the Pacific Ocean.* London: G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, 1860.
- 1863 *The Journals, detailed reports, and observations relative to the exploration, by Captain Palliser, of that portion of British North America, which, in latitude, lies between the British boundary line and the height of land or watershed of the northern or frozen ocean respectively, and in longitude, between the western shore of Lake Superior and the Pacific Ocean during the years 1857, 1858, 1859 and 1860.* London: G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, 1863.
- Penard, J.M.  
1929 *Land Ownership and Chieftaincy Among the Chippewayan and Caribou-Eaters.* *Primitive Man*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 20-24.
- Petitot, Emile  
1883 *On the Athabasca District of the Canadian North-West Territory.* *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, Vol. V, No. XI, pp. 633-655.
- Ray, Arthur J.  
1974 *Indians In the Fur Trade.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- 1976 *Diffusion of diseases in the western Interior of Canada, 1830-1850.* *Geographical Review*, 66:141-157.

- Richards, J.H.  
1969 Physical Features of Saskatchewan. In, *Atlas of Saskatchewan*, edited by K.I. Fung. Saskatoon: Modern Press, pp. 40, 41.
- Richards, J.H. and Fung, K.I. (Eds.).  
1969 *Atlas of Saskatchewan*. Saskatoon: Modern Press.
- Roe, F.G.  
1970 *The North American Buffalo*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Schenstead-Smith, L.  
1982 Disease pattern and factors relating to the transmission of disease among the residents of the Onion Lake Agency. *Napao*, Vol. 13, pp. 1-10.
- Smith, James G.E.  
1975 On the territorial distribution of the Western Woods Cree. In, *Papers of the Seventh Algonquian Conference*, edited by William Cowan, Ottawa: Carleton University, pp. 414-435.
- 1976a Introduction: The historical and cultural position of the Chippewyan. *Arctic Anthropologist*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, pp. 1-5.
- 1976b Local band organization of the Caribou Eater Chipewyan. *Arctic Anthropologist*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, pp. 12-24.
- Spry, I. (Ed.).  
1968 *The Palliser Papers, 1857-1860*. Toronto: The Champlain Society.
- Stanley, G.F.G.  
1961 *The Birth of Western Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Thompson, David  
1916 *David Thompson's Narrative of His Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812*. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. 12.
- Turnor, Philip  
1934 *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*. Edited by J.B. Tyrrell. Toronto: Champlain Society, Vol. 21.
- Walker, James  
1971 The Indian in Canadian historical writing. *Canadian Historical Association Papers*.



## APPENDIX I

## EXCERPT FROM THE 1894 INSPECTION REPORT DESCRIBING THE AGENCY

## RANCHES AT LONG LAKE

In company with the agent I visited the various stables at Long Lake and counted the cattle. It took us a week to go and return. We camped first night at Frog Lake, which is 20 miles from the agency. We then proceeded to No. 1 stables, or ranch, which are 40 miles further on from Frog Lake. I found the stables comfortable and suitable in every way for the purpose. Most of the cows and all of the young heifers are kept here - over 200 head. Stanchions are provided for 150 cows, and loose stalls and shed room for double that number of cattle. The stables were clean, and everything around was in good shape. This was all the more satisfactory from the fact that our visit at the time was unexpected. Mr. Bangs and five Indians were in charge. Four of the men had their families. There are three houses for the men, and these were clean and comfortable. A house, stable, and store-house had been put up during the year. The store-house was for keeping the mowers, rakes, and other implements, and occasionally beef is stored in it. There are large hay corrals, and there is a splendid spring a quarter of a mile from the stables where cattle can go for a drink at any time. The hay is stacked in the vicinity, and it was choice, being as green as when growing. The cattle were looking healthy and strong.

We then proceeded about four miles further on, to No. 2 ranch, where all the stronger cattle, such as steers and the older heifers, are kept - about 230 head in all. The stables here were built during the past summer, and for convenience and comfort are unsurpassed in the Territories. The stable proper is in the shape of a semicircle. The outside is 360 feet, with racks all along, and the cattle feed through an opening in the wall. The stable inside is 15 feet wide and 10 feet high. A shed adjoins the whole length. Inside this shed is 16 feet wide and 10 feet high. There is stable room for 400 head and shed room for as many more. A large corral adjoins. The stables are nicely located, being protected from the north-west winds by bluffs and from the north-east by a high hill. There is a good creek near the place and a lake eight miles long and six wide within 400 yards of the stables, so that a plentiful supply of water can always be depended upon. Hay is stacked in the vicinity. A sleigh can be taken in at one end of the stable and driven along, clean up the manure, and go out at the other end. About 100 tons of hay were stacked alongside of the hay racks, but this is kept as a reserve, to be used in stormy weather, when hauling would be difficult. The loads of hay, as they come from the stacks, are driven along and the racks are filled in unloading. There is a neat little house for the men; wooden floor. Five men are in charge here, but all under the supervision of Mr. Bangs. The agent makes monthly visits, and oftener if required. One end of

the shed is boarded off for the work oxen. I have no hesitation in saying that these stables and sheds are the finest in the country, being strongly built and the arrangement perfect, reflecting much credit on the agent, who designed them, and on Mr. Bangs, who built them. I only wish that more of our agents and farmers had the same ideas of how cattle should be housed and cared for. It is a fact pretty well understood by most people that cattle warmly housed will consume about one-half the food than if left to shiver alongside of a rail fence, and it is also getting to be understood that the farmer who does not provide proper shelter for his cattle is no farmer. The hay was of choice quality.

We now proceeded to No. 3 ranch, 15 miles further on. The stables here are exclusively for calves. The stable is the shape of the letter L, and is situated on the shore of Little Long Lake. The stable is 200 feet frontage, with racks, same as at No. 2. Hay stacked all along in front of the racks; six good doors, and when these are closed at night the place is warm and comfortable, and perfectly dry, bedding being made of waste hay. The balance of hay was stacked within a mile of the stable. There is a large corral, but the calves were among the bluffs and many were feeding on the long grass which could be seen above the snow. A stall for the oxen, and a good house for the men. Two men are in charge, and occasionally three. Mr. Bangs made a new road from No. 1 ranch, and brush and timber had to be cleared for nearly 20 miles. There were nearly 200 calves here, 7 cows, and 2 oxen. The calves were a splendid lot and were in the best of condition.

Some of the hay here was not so good as the rest, as from want of another mower it had to be cut late. I may be asked why have so many stables so far apart? Why not have them all together? This, to my mind, is where Mr. Mann's good judgement came in. In the first place, in case of fire, if one stable were destroyed, the cattle could at once be taken to another stable. In the matter of hay, too, it is best not to depend on one locality. There are other reasons, but these two are sufficient to show the wisdom of the present arrangement.

Source: Canada, SP14, 1896:243, 244.

APPENDIX II: INDIVIDUAL HOLDERS OF LIVESTOCK BY BAND FOR 1914, 1915 AND 1917

1914 BAND	Total no. of indi- viduals	STOCK/HOLDERS									TOTAL CATTLE
		Horses	Oxen	Bulls	Cows	Steers 3 yrs.	Steers & Heifers 2 yrs.	Steers & Heifers 1 yr.	Calves		
119	48	138/40	19/12	2/2	119/41	29/18	66/30	74/35	0	309/48	
121	19	54/19	9/5	1/1	43/15	4/1	13/6	19/11	0	89/19	
123	30	71/25	8/4	0	70/25	2/2	33/17	34/18	0	147/30	
149	47	137/42	12/7	1/1	116/38	17/11	57/28	46/21	0	249/47	
TOTAL	144	400/126	48/28	4/4	348/119	52/32	169/81	173/85	0	794/144	

Source: PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1915.

1915										
119	48	140/40	20/10	2/2	112/43	1/1	21/15	60/33	81/35	279/48
121	19	51/19	8/4	0	34/15	3/3	6/5	46/16	0	97/19
123	32	83/29	6/3	0	53/23	0	18/9	26/15	43/21	145/32
149	45	196/43	15/7	2/2	122/33	0	22/9	43/19	85/27	291/45
TOTAL	144	470/131	49/24	4/4	311/114	4/4	67/47	174/84	209/83	830/144

Source: PAC RG10 FOR Vol. 9104 Book 4.

1917 (March 31)										
119	51	140/40	17/9	0	102/41	13/9	70/34	88/40	0	290/51
121	29	77/24	20/12	0	50/21	9/6	17/13	31/16	0	127/29
123	20	55/20	13/7	0	39/14	1/1	14/8	22/13	0	88/20
149	46	123/41	7/5	0	72/30	2/1	33/23	40/19	0	154/46
TOTAL	146	395/125	57/33		263/106	25/17	134/78	181/88		659/146

Source: PAC RG10 CRF, Vol. 8462 F.671/23-17, Vol. 1, Inspection Report, 1917.

APPENDIX III: The following is Dion's account of the July 1st festivities at Onion Lake as they were during the early 1900's

Onion Lake was now the headquarters for a very large area and its Dominion Day and treaty celebrations became well known. It was the annual get-together for a great many Cree-speaking natives. Here could be found people who had come from as far east as Battleford. There was always a fair representation from every one of the Indian reserves in that area and they usually brought good horses to put in the races. One of the fleetest foot runners of that time was a young man from Battleford, Alex Crooked Neck.

The Bush Crees from the two reserves at Little and Big Island lakes always stopped about a mile east of the settlement. Here the men would dress up in their finery, get each a mount and ride single file to the Hudson's Bay store on the hill. Upon their arrival they would all shake hands with the factor and staff, the head man usually making a short speech. If they had nothing to trade they would each get an advance of about \$5.00 on their treaty money. The chief would receive an extra pound of tea and tobacco, then all rode back to rejoin their folks. Their arrival at the main camp was marked with considerable ceremony. They were escorted to a site where they could set up their tents and tepees. The majority of the men were then invited to dine with friends and acquaintances, thus good fellowship always existed between the Bush Crees and the Plains people.

Saddle Lake from the west was always well represented. These people were given their own campsite as were the Long Lakers, Frog Lakers, etc. The Chipewyans from Cold Lake had their own allotment in the celebrations townsite. This arrangement enabled the visitors to readily find their way around the canvas town.

Dancing was the main pastime in these large camps. Everybody took part in the circle or tea dance called the *Pee-tchi-tchi*, and many presents were exchanged between dancing partners. The chicken dance always played a prominent part; then there were the lesser important lodges such as the *Wetigo* or cannibal dance, the bear dance, and of course the women usually had their fun in their own elk dance. An old gentleman from Little Island Lake who bore the name of Long Neck, was for many years the ladies' choice for their singer. He could beat the drum to the elk's taste. The horse dance was always a great drawing card, too, some of the horses being so well trained it was a pleasure to watch them perform.

These large gatherings at Onion Lake when 1900 was very young were a revival of the good old days when the Crees were able to lord it over an immense part of the Western plains. All cares were

set aside, food freely shared, and in general a festive air prevailed over the camp.

The young men, who had their own part to play in the entertainment, saw to it that no one was left out. They travelled in groups around the camp singing old ballads, at the same time ever on the alert to render assistance wherever they felt it was needed. If they saw or heard of a family that was down at the heels, they all got together and marched to the chief's tent where they put on a lively chicken dance. The chief of course responded by giving the boys presents and the young men resumed their march while they sang a thanksgiving song. This was a hint to the people that their charity was being solicited, so from time to time the marchers would be stopped by some donor at which time a lively dance again took place. This practice was never abused and it was usually a matter of a short time before the marchers received more than enough to satisfy their indirect request for donations.

There were times when some *okimaw* would stop the marchers and give them a smoke, or a number of ladies would get together and prepare a good lunch for the young men in appreciation for their work and their singing. Sometimes this singing would be carried on well into the short summer night, yet for us who understood its every meaning we never tired of listening to these "songs without words." Rendered by many fine voices, their rise and fall were accompanied by Nature's own chord, a gentle night breeze. Our elders were lulled to sleep, secure in the knowledge that no harm could come to them while their young men stood guard over the camp.

It has been said that an Indian camp never sleeps. The young men after their night out would lie down for a short nap, but the sun would barely be showing over the tree tops when the crier would be heard making his familiar call, "How, How, How, *waniskak wawayik*. Arise and make ready."

Finally, the long awaited day, the first of July, arrived; Dominion Day was always a joyful holiday for all. The pupils of the residential schools were allowed to join their parents at their homes for this one day only and this in itself was a big event. The elders seemed to vie with one another at playing host, so the crier was kept busy announcing invitations. Some of the old timers most sought after seldom ate in their own homes.

The teenaged boys' work was to take care of the horses; these had to be rounded up every morning and brought in to the vicinity of the camp. This was not an easy job, for the average camp of a hundred tents would have at least 300 horses and since there were no fences some of the animals were wont to wander afar. Even though the majority were hobbled they got so used to these restraining contraptions that

they could travel without difficulty. It is common knowledge that a horse can even swim with hobbles on, so if he takes a notion to stray he is sometimes hard to locate. Even so, the young fellows enjoyed their work, especially if they had good horses to ride. The race horses were generally tethered close to their owner's tent; they were never allowed to fill up on grass before the races.

The sports always started immediately after the midday meal. By this time everyone was on hand at the race track which was located on a piece of straight level road. A side hill formed a natural grandstand from whence everyone could watch all the events as they were being run off. Besides the many horse races, athletic sports of every description were keenly contested, each reserve and settlement having brought its best.

Eleven seconds on the 100 yard dash for men was considered good. We never ran long endurance races. Standing long jump on level ground was around nine feet. Running broad jump 18 to 20 feet. Running high jump, five feet 10 inches. Vaulting with a pole, eight to 10 feet high. Hop, step and jump, 40 feet. We have no record of the distance that some of our men could throw the weight, for the simple reason that the rocks we used were never weighed. The long afternoon of sports was always highlighted by a contest of strength, the tug-of-war, of picked men from various settlements. In this event the Onion Lakers were hard to beat but the Chipewyans could always give a fair account of themselves, for they also were strong men. Association football was the only sport then and some very lively games were played; we never tired of kicking the pigskin around.

There was no money in circulation, none in our pockets, hence there was no call for lunch counters or refreshment booths; there were no drinks on the grounds except water or tea.

The prize money, donated by the whites in the little settlement, was placed in care of the Hudson's Bay factor, all prizes being given us in the form of orders on the store. A ten-cent order looked just as good as a \$5.00 one. It received the same care and attention. As the store was closed on Dominion Day, the second of July was a day of real celebration, namely the trading in of our papers for goods.

The school children, who always won a fair share of prizes, went in a body to do their shopping. A paper bearing the mark of ten cents was well worth carrying up that long hill to the store, especially if presented to the kindly factor himself.

Dancing in front of the store building was sometimes indulged in during these shopping sprees. The Hudson's Bay factor did not roll out the traditional barrel as his predecessors used to do, but he gave the dancers enough grub for a good feast.