

**Summary of "As long as this land shall last"**

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Summary of:

René Fumoleau -

As Long as This Land Shall Last

Introduction:

In As Long as This Land Shall Last René Fumoleau discusses the background and after effects of Treaties 8 and 11. The westward migration of Canadian settlers in the early part of the nineteenth century led to the negotiating of treaties, adhesions to treaties, and land surrenders in attempts at mutual agreement between the white settlers and the Indian people.

Chapter I

The Old Northwest Territories, 1870-1895

In 1870, the Hudson Bay Company surrendered its rights to the Northwest in return for compensation in land and money. This comprised a large area including all of Alberta and Saskatchewan, most of Manitoba, two-thirds of present-day Ontario and Quebec, mainland Newfoundland and the area known today as the Northwest Territories.

Parliament designated the Lieutenant-Governor of the new Province of Manitoba to administer the Northwest Territories, and in 1876 David Laird was appointed. The territorial capital was established at Swan River Barracks; however, in 1877 the capital was changed to Battleford and again in 1883 it was moved to Regina, where it stayed until 1905.

Canada followed essentially the same procedure used earlier in the eastern part of Canada to "extinguish Indian title" to this land by signing treaties. Between 1871 and 1877 the following treaties were signed. Treaties 1 and 2 - 1871, Southern Manitoba; Treaty 3 - 1873, Western Ontario; Treaty 4 - 1874, Southern Saskatchewan; Treaty 5 - 1875, Central and Western Manitoba; Treaty 6 - 1876, Central Saskatchewan and Alberta; Treaty 7 - 1877, Southern Alberta. It should be noted here also that the northern half of Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories were dealt with by the Government under separate treaties; Treaty 8 (1899-1900), Treaty 10 (1906-1907), and Treaty 11 (1921).

Changes in transportation between 1869 and 1894 influenced the timing of the signing of Treaty 8. Water transportation improved and over-land travel began to emerge as an alternative to the waterways, the immediate result being an influx of white trappers and settlers.

Three groups influenced peaceful development of the Canadian Northwest. The North West Mounted Police, formed in 1873, the Hudson Bay Co. and missionaries. The North West Mounted Police were much respected by the Indians. They prevented the kind of battles and massacres which took place south of the border, as exemplified by the battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876 and the massacre of Wounded Knee in 1890. Crowfoot, Chief of the Blackfoot nation, acknowledged the value of the Police presence: "If the Police had not come to the country, where would we all be now? Bad men and whiskey were killing us so fast that very few, indeed of us would have been left today." (P.25)

Before 1870 the Hudson Bay Company had always helped the Indians in time of famine; they now argued the Canadian Government should assume the responsibility. The Canadian Government did not feel it had any obligation

towards those natives with whom it did not have a formal agreement. Two Chief Factors of the Hudson Bay Company, Roderick Macfarlane and Lawrence Clarke, supplied the Indian Department with information and statistics on the Unceded Territories north of Treaty 6. With the census report Macfarlane included the advice to assist the Indians with liberal supplies of twine for nets, ammunition and other necessities to aid them in eking out a living and prevent starvation in lean years. It was after the hard winter of 1877-1888 that the Government began using the Hudson's Bay Company as an intermediary for distributing some scanty relief. Furthermore a Government census and a list of trading posts was prepared with the 63rd parallel as the northern boundary by Robert G. McConnell, a member of the Geological Survey staff on December 15, 1890.

The Anglican and Catholic missionaries were also concerned with the hardships of the Indians. During the years 1870 to 1890, the Bishop of St. Albert, Vital Grandin, OMI, wrote many times to the Prime Minister and to the Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest Territories "respecting the poor Indians ... not yet looked after by the Government".

The next five years brought unstable Government caused by a succession of five Prime Ministers and the money to make Treaties was never voted. It was the Klondike gold rush in 1897 which again focused attention on treaty negotiations.

## Chapter II

Since Treaty 8 covered a large area, it took 2 years to obtain the adhesions of all Indians concerned. At the same time the Half-breed commission was formed to settle with the Métis thus dividing the two groups into Treaty and non-Treaty Indians.

Increased mining on the shores of Great Slave Lake was an important reason for including that area in Treaty 8. Father Breynat noted in his diary in 1899,

"worrying about the news of rich gold mines having been discovered on Great Slave Lake, and desiring to assure its rights to the greatest part of the Government prudently hurried to send a treaty commission to deal with the Indians and to purchase from them a complete surrender of their lands in exchange for a perpetual yearly rent and other gifts."

The Klondike gold rush forced the Government to come to terms with the Athabasca-Mackenzie District and bring the area into Treaty 8. It was to this district in 1897, the North-West Mounted Police sent a patrol to secure Canadian sovereignty over the vast area. The North-West Mounted Police introduced various forms of Governmental Institutions to the Indian people, giving them some semblance of protection against intruders and security in troubled times. Moreover, with the presence of the police force, Government did not seem so remote or assistance so far away.

The arrival of the white people brought the use of poison bait and Inspector Jarvis of the North-West Mounted Police took a few whites and half-breeds to court. By the end of 1898 the use of the poison bait was pretty well stamped out.

Protection of buffalo and other game was a major concern. On July 23, 1894 royal assent was given to "An Act for the Preservation of Game in the Unorganized Portions of the Northwest Territories of Canada." The Act came into force on January 1, 1896. The regulations concerning the killing of buffalo were the most seriously enforced.

In preparing for the signing of the treaty the Privy Council report of June 27, 1898 described at length all previous discussion and reasons for a treaty. The Honourable Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior and Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs gave a similar summary with the conclusion that "the time has come when the Indian and Half-breed population of these tracts of territory ... should be treated with for the relinquishment of their claims to territorial ownership ..."

In the past many Métis had been permitted to join Treaties 1 to 6. of prime importance was that "their acquiescence in the relinquishment of the aboriginal title should be secured." Finally, it was considered more conducive to the welfare and more in the public interest for the Métis to take them into treaty, if they so desired, on the judgment of the Commissioners who would decide which Métis would be dealt with as Indians. Those who were unwilling or not allowed would be given scrip - either \$240 or 240 acres of land.

David Laird, Indian Commissioner for the Northwest Territories, gave the best description of the boundaries of Treaty 8. He described the territory as that watered by the Lesser Slave Lake, the Peace and Athabasca Rivers, the Athabasca Lake, the south of Great Slave Lake, and their tributaries.

Treaty Commissioner James A.J. McKenna and James Ansdell MacCrae, Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, favoured payment of the land in the treaty area by one large payment rather than by small annuities. The Honourable Clifford Sifton disregarded their advice. On May 12, 1899 he gave the Treaty Commissioners their instructions: the Indian people could either select reserves for their bands or hold land "in severalty", and that "the Government has concluded that it is best to proceed upon the usual lines of providing for the payment of annuities to the Indians".

The missionaries encouraged the Indians to take advantage of the Treaty. They also recognized it was the end of an era - the end of "Fur and Mission" days. Reverend Father Lacombe had been in the country for a long time, he knew the Indians and Half-breeds intimately and had gained their confidence. Sifton asked him to go not as a member of the Commission but in an advisory capacity. Father Lacombe accepted this role more out of a sense of duty than of personal inclination.

The treaty party left Athabasca Landing on June 2, 1899. The first post the treaty was signed at, was Lesser Slave Lake. James K. Cornall, otherwise known as Peace River Jim signed an affidavit of his recollection of treaty negotiations at Lesser Slave Lake. He states the commissioners said they had no authority to write the Indians demands into treaty but they made these promises to the Indians (a) nothing would be allowed to interfere with their way of making a living, as they were accustomed to and as their forefathers had done. (b) The old and destitute would always be taken care of, their future existence would be carefully studied and provided for, and every effort would be made to improve their living conditions. (c) They were guaranteed protection in their way of living as hunters and trappers, from white competition; they would not be prevented from hunting and fishing as they had always done, so as to enable them to earn their living and maintain their existence.

The Indians at other treaty posts basically asked for the same guarantees as at Lesser Slave Lake. Essentially, they were seeking the freedom to hunt, trap and fish for a living as this was the most important right of all.

The Indians were satisfied with the Treaty believing it would protect their freedom to hunt, fish and move freely through the country. Pierre Mercredi the interpreter for the Chipewyan later gave this statement of that precious freedom to hunt:

"I interpreted the words of Queen Victoria to Alexandre Laviolette, Chief of the Chipewyans and his band ... I know because I read the Treaty to them and there was no clause in it which said they might have to obey regulations about hunting. They left us no copy of the Treaty we signed, when the copy came back, the second clause (that they shall promise to obey whatever hunting regulations the Dominion Government shall set) was in it".

This was only the beginning of a gradual but steady erosion of the Treaty promises made in 1899.

The Métis insisted their scrip be made out to the bearer and transferable rather than previous occasions when scrip was non-transferrable. This decision cost the Métis dearly. Scrip buyers made a fortune. However, the Government had dealt with the Métis. Their account was settled and the books closed.

The following summer (1900) a new commissioner, MacCrae, visited four posts and secured the adhesion of 1200 Indians to the treaty.

### Chapter III

#### The years between the Treaties, 1900-1920

During the years 1913-1920 treaty parties and Indian people experienced problems with delays, sickness, land surveys, and game regulations. Ernest Thomas Seton travelled through Fort Smith and Fort Resolution in 1907 and was deeply touched by this complaint of Pierre Squirrel at Fort Smith.

"You see how unhappy we are, how miserable and sick. When I made this treaty with your government, I stipulated that we should have a policeman and a doctor, instead of that you sent nothing but missionaries."

Missionaries came to run mission schools following Treaty 8. The Indian Affairs Department granted \$72. annually to each Indian child whose parents had signed Treaty. There was serious consequences for Métis children however, as the majority of the Métis chose scrip and sold it, and therefore were responsible for the education of their children. Bishop Breynot was the best known missionary and his name became synonymous with the Catholic Church in the North. By 1920 there were Catholic missions at every main trading post in the Mackenzie with the exception of Fort McPherson.

Although no article in Treaty 8 made any reference to medical assistance, the Treaty Commissioners had promised medicines and care to the Indians, however pitifully little was provided in the years that followed. The doctors accompanied the treaty parties once a year, however, this yearly visit could not improve health conditions very much. Traditional Indian medicines were no defence against diseases unknown before the white man's arrival. The native people dropped before the epidemics and in the absence of doctors, the Indian Agents could only count the dead.

In the summer of 1913 a land survey of the Mackenzie District trading posts was begun by Chief Surveyor Fawcett. The Indians along the Mackenzie River had not signed Treaty, yet neither the Government nor the surveyor distinguished between Treaty and non-treaty land. Lands reserved for Indians were allocated, with or without benefit of Treaty.

Determining the land needs for Indians in the Fort Simpson area for Chief Surveyor Fawcett was simple as they were non-treaty Indians and there was no reserve for them, they were entitled to the land on which their houses were built. The reserve was laid out 4 miles up the Liard River from Fort Simpson and contained about 495 acres, where there was an Indian Settlement.

Surveyor General, Henry J. Bury inspected the Indian reserves in the summer of 1915. His report was sharply critical of the survey conducted by Fawcett: In every instance where Mr. Fawcett had laid off a reserve for the Indians the area thus set aside was not calculated on the number of families or members of the band, and consequently the size of each reserve varies to a considerable degree. His report also included the following: As far as the reserves surveyed were concerned, I do not think that he (Fawcett) consulted with the Indians in any manner whatever except possibly at Fort Good Hope and Fort Simpson. It would seem therefore desirable to refrain from having the present reserves confirmed by Order-in-Council.

The land allocation resulting from the survey of 1913-1915 cannot be called a "reserve" as the term is defined in the Indian Act, i.e. land "held by her Majesty for the use and benefit of the respective bands for which they were set apart." Evidently this is not the kind of land settlement called for by Treaty 8. Allocation of land to Northern Indians continued on a piecemeal basis, compounding the confusion caused by Fawcett's survey.

By 1919 Treaty money was due to many Indians who had missed payments over the years. When John McLean, Assistant Deputy and Secretary, became aware that the Government owed so much money to the Indians, he instructed Agent Card in Fort Smith: to treat the list of Indians not receiving their payments as confidential, and to pay 2 years arrears in addition to the current year's annuity, only.

The problems arising from unaccustomed game laws was the most serious problem to the Indians. On April 1, 1902 Henry Anthony Conroy was appointed Inspector of Treaty 8. He told the Indians "you can hunt anywhere, and we won't tell you anything what to do". It wasn't until later that anything came (Game Laws). The way the Indian Agent told the people, "it wasn't a problem until the fifth time the treaty is coming in".

The convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds in Canada and the U.S.A. was signed in 1916 with the intention being to preserve the migratory birds from wanton slaughter not to deprive the native people of their customary substance. In 1917 the "Act respecting Game in the Northwest Territories of Canada was passed establishing closed seasons on moose, caribou, etc. In addition, the proviso was added; game may be lawfully taken or killed and eggs of birds taken by Indians, Eskimos, explorers, surveyors etc. When such persons are actually in need to prevent starvation.

In the Fort Smith area a Wood Buffalo Reserve was planned for the area used traditionally by the Indians to hunt and trap. The task of dealing with the Indians fell to Treaty Pay Officer Bury in 1916 who persuaded the Indians their interests would be well looked after by the Department, and when they were ready to take up Reserves, such lands would be set aside for them provided of course, that they were not within the Buffalo Sanctuary.

In the House of Commons on June 6, 1920 the Honourable Arthur Meighen said:

"The Indian outside his reserve must comply with any provincial restrictions with respect to hunting or the preservation of game. The Indians have sometimes resisted the impositions of these restrictions by the provinces, but the policy of the department has been to get them to comply. I do not want to give that as a final opinion, but that is my impression".

That policy was to be tested the same year, during the Treaty boycott at Fort Resolution.

In 1920 when the Indian Agent came to Fort Resolution the Dogribs, Chipewyans, Slaveys and Yellowknives openly rebelled when game laws were imposed on them. Two days of negotiations took place. Bishop Breynat helped write up a new treaty which stated: the Indians will continue to do what he pleases on his land. There will be no regulations against hunting and the people, also new boundaries were drawn up. Suzie Drygeese, Chief of the Dogribs, told the Bishop and Indian Agent Card: "If you break this, the treaty is broken, no more treaty forever. Even the Whiteman and the Half-breeds got to sign (this paper). Four copies were made.

In 1928 there was a terrible outbreak of influenza and everything had to be burned. Johnny Beaulieu a witness at the time recorded "so two full days of talks ... treaty day went for nothing". Efforts to locate the other three copies of the Treaty of 1920 and the map have been to no avail.

The political, social and economic events which followed Treaty 8 to a large degree shaped Treaty 11. Conditions of distitution, sickness, and starvation was prevalent. The drama which had been acted out in 1899 was to be repeated in 1921, with new actors, in a new setting.

#### Chapter IV

##### Treaty 11

The expected solution to the Indian problem was the gradual disappearance of the Indians themselves. The decline in their numbers hardly put the Indians in a position of strength for negotiating a Treaty with the Government. There was no leadership amongst the Indians other than that shown by a man being superior in medicine or hunting.

The big strike in oil came at Fort Norman in 1920. It was an unsurrendered Indian land not covered by treaty. Unaccustomed importance fell abruptly on the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Neither the necessity for a treaty, nor the possibility that the Indians would refuse one, was ever considered by the Territorial administration. The fact that the Federal Government signed a treaty with the Indians a few months later did not affect territorial plans for development. The first step was to obtain ownership of this "vast domain of country, rich in natural resources and favorable for development."

Harry A. Conroy, pay officer and later in 1920, Commissioner, recommended in a memo to Ottawa dated 13 October 1920 - immediate action to be taken to extend treaty to the Indians along the Mackenzie listing reasons for this step:

1. The rapid and unexpected exploitation of the country.
2. The establishment of oil industries throughout the district.
3. The immigration of prospectors, trappers etc., and the rights of the Indians will have to be protected.

Bishop Breynot was in Ottawa in the spring of 1921. Doctor Scott, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, advised him the Government had decided to negotiate by Treaty with the Indians the surrender of their aboriginal rights. "We would be thankful to you", he added "if you would accept to join the Royal Commission which will negotiate this treaty with the indigenous people this summer." Bishop Breynot accepted.

Bishop Breynot and Commissioner Conroy joined forces in Ottawa to insure that the hunting and fishing rights of the Indian people would be respected and protected. The Department reminded Conroy of his limited authority by handing him a copy of the proposed treaty and told no outside promises should be made by you to the Indians.

Ottawa had selected the right man for the job, but tied his hands. Years later Breynot recorded; The Royal Commission arrived from Ottawa to negotiate with them (the Indians) the terms of a treaty, which terms were prepared in advance to be imposed upon rather than freely expressed in a spirit of reconciliation and mutual concessions as often happens in the negotiation of treaties.

The Treaty was signed at Fort Providence on 27 June 1921. All the witnesses stress the fact it was only after complete freedom to hunt, to trap, and to fish had been promised to the Indians, that they accepted the treaty.

Michel Landry a witness to the signing of the treaty states the treaty papers were signed and placed at the disposal of the missionaries in the name of Bishop Breynot. So when the restrictions (game laws) came up, the papers were asked for by the Indians, and there were no papers to speak of. So to this day there were no original treaty papers to go by.

The words "signatories" and "signed" do not imply that all the Indian Chiefs affixed their signatures to the official version of Treaty II. As in the case of Treaty 8, there is some question as to whether some chiefs did sign or not.

The treaty was signed at Fort Simpson July 11, 1921. Ted Trindel, 20 years old at the time of signing, says the Indians did not know they were signing their land rights away, they did not know anything about minerals, oil or gold. They didnot know what was going on.

The Indians adhered to Treaty II on July 15, 1921 at Fort Norman. An Account of Treaty negotiations has been pieced together from the testimonies of Indian witnesses to the event: John Blonden remembers - Commissioner Conroy said that this was a sort of gift from the Government "The Government will give you relief or rations when you are sick". He also told the Indians this is your land. "You can do whatever you want"

he said, we are not going to stop you, just do what you are doing. And also the birds and ducks and things like that, just continue on hunting as you used to before".

The treaty was signed at Fort MacPherson July 28, 1921. Johnny Kay, a witness to the signing of the treaty, recalls Commissioner Conroy said "I will give you rations and traps ... anything you want, the government will give it to you. So, that year we got rations, flour, bacon and sugar, tea, nets all kinds of twine. What he (Conroy) said ... and what the chief said, he wrote it down with the Chief, and gave the Chief a copy, and one for himself. The Chief lost that, and the government tells us, the paper is lost too. I do not believe that ...."

Treaty was signed at Fort Rae, August 22, 1921. The Treaty papers were given to Chief Monfwi. At his death it was reported they were taken by the Catholic priests. However there never was any trace of them found amongst the mission records. Many Indians believed the documents were burned along with those of Treaty 8, during the influenza epidemics of 1928. Others think they are still with the Chief at Fort Rae, or a priest, or the Indian Brotherhood.

Commissioner Conroy sent a summary of October 12, 1921 to Indian affairs he noted:

"The Indians seemed afraid, for one thing, that their liberty to hunt, trap and fish would be taken away or curtailed, but were assured by me that this would not be the case, and the Government will expect them to support themselves in their own way, and in fact, that more twine for nets and more ammunition were given under the terms of this treaty than under any of the proceeding ones; this went along way to calm their fears. They also seemed afraid that they would be liable for military service if the treaty was signed, that they would be confined on the reserves, but, when told that they were exempt from military services, and that the reserves mentioned in the treaty would be their own choosing, for their own use, and not for the white people, and they were free to come and go as they pleased, they were satisfied."

Commissioner Conroy died on April 27, 1922 and the Department of Indian Affairs hurriedly obtained an Order-in-Council which authorized Harris, the Indian agent at Fort Simpson, to negotiate with the Indians at Fort Liard and to complete the Treaty. The Treaty was ratified by an Order-in-Council on March 29, 1923.

The Eskimo territory from the Mackenzie River delta to the Coppermine River was shown as part of the Treaty area for the first time in 1920. However, the Eskimos were not asked to sign Treaty II in 1921. In 1921 they were invited and they refused.

Métis formed about 5% of the total population of the Mackenzie. Many held permanent positions with the trading or transportation companies. There were also some who worked for the missions. The majority, however followed the Indian way of life. As there was little future for farming in the Mackenzie land scrip would be useless. Conroy had this in mind when he formulated his Métis policy in 1920. He stated, "I shall, of course, use my best efforts to induce all people of Indian blood living the Indian mode of life to accept Treaty."

## Chapter V

### The Years after Treaty II, 1922-1927

It was on the north itself that the effects of Treaty II were most evident. The regular rhythm of the Indians quiet life was only slightly altered. The annual visit of the Indian Agent with money and rations brought the Indians together for a few days, and gradually became the focus of the summer social life. It did little, however, to improve the health, commerce, or economy of the Northern tribes. Disease and epidemics were not eliminated because a doctor passed by each year. Material well-being was not augmented because a few dollars changed hands on Treaty day.

Contrary to Treaty promises that the rights of the Indians to hunt and trap would be protected against the encroachment and competition of white trappers, these latter were permitted to exploit the game resources almost at will. Many trading posts were opened to handle the increased volume of pelts. It was only a matter of time before strict laws were necessary to save northern game animals from extinction.

Enforcement of these laws against Indians caused severe hardships, as they depended on game for their existence. The Indians were given some game preserves, but their exclusion from Government wildlife sanctuaries established on traditional hunting grounds was also carefully planned. Protection of animals took precedence over the protection of the Indian or his hunting rights.

The idea of game preserves first came from Northwest Territories Agent McDougal in October, 1922. Breynot promoted the idea in a letter to Ottawa in March 1923.

"And it is the general opinion, among the old timers, traders or missionaries, that there is no time to be lost if the Indians are to be effectively protected, as they really need to be, if the Government does not want to have to feed and clothe them, in a near future ..."

When the Territorial Administration acted on September 22, 1923 to establish game preserves, it did so unilaterally. There is no record that the Indians were asked about the size or location. The treaty rights of Indians were offset by the interest of white trappers, resulting in these land allocations;

The Yellowknife Preserve	Area: 70,000 sq. miles
The Slave River Preserve	Area: 2,152 sq. miles
The Peel River Preserve	Area: 3,300 sq. miles

The benefit to the Indians protected by the Yellowknife and Slave River Preserves was soon apparent. White trappers moved out and trapping and hunting was restricted to Treaty Indians only.

On December 18, 1922 the Wood Buffalo Park was established covering 10,500 square miles. Shooting buffalo was strictly forbidden. Treaty Indians were allowed to hunt other game and to trap fur-bearing animals. The Métis were refused the privilege of hunting and trapping in this park.

It was the duty of the Indian Agent to pay Treaty, settle disputes, record complaints, collect statistics, file reports, and care for the sick. All this was accomplished in one yearly visit at each post. Dr. Bourget took up his post at Fort Resolution in 1923. He recognized that the future held little promise for the Indians and reported; "we seem to be in a period of readjustment which will show seriously on the Indians."

James K. Cornwall known as "Peace River Jim" was a promoter of Northern Development and was present during the signing of Treaty No. 8. In 1925 he sent this statement to the Department of Indians Affairs:

"At the time of the treaty a solemn compact was entered into whereby the Government undertook to take care of the Indians, both physically and materially, so long as the grass grew and the waters ran. This may not have been specifically stated in the Articles of Treaty, but was incorporated in the remarks of Treaty No. 8 was made ... the physical condition of the Indian is much lower today than it was at that time. Tuberculosis, Scrofula and numerous venereal and blood diseases are prevalent among several tribes of the north. It is physically impossible for two medical men, which is all the government provides, to take care of six or eight thousand Indians."

The effects of the white trappers on the Indian economy was soon apparent. The white trappers came northward in waves. When the fur trade became unsettled the Indians were the losers as their inexperience in cash transaction and lack of competitiveness put them at a disadvantage.

## Chapter VI

### A Decade of Desperation, 1928-1939

"It does not seem unjust to admit that the pre-1939 Canadian policy regarding Indians consisted of isolating them within a structure of forgetfulness." J.W. Pickersgill, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, stated in 1956. Breynot agonized over the miserable conditions of the Indians after hearing the promises that had been made at Treaty time, after witnessing the signing of Treaties 8 and 11, could not accept that the Indians should be so badly treated in their own country. As his fifty-one years in the north drew to an end, Breynat renewed his pressure on the Government.

Finally, in 1938, the Government took action that was long over due: trapping and hunting licenses were issued to those white people who held such licenses previously. The move was anti-climatic. The fur population was so depleted, and fur prices were so low, that many white trappers had already abandoned trapping for the more lucrative pursuits of prospecting and mining. No previous epidemics from influenza or tuberculosis could compare with the misery caused by the flu in 1928. When Dr. Bourget visited the Indians to make Treaty payments, he found that many of the Indian chiefs and headmen had died. He saw a "race attempting to survive but slowly dying from this white man's sickness."

In 1936, a new federal department was established. The Department of Mines and Resources replaced and combined under one operation the Department of the Interior (which included Indian Affairs), the Department of Colonization and Immigration, and the Department of Mines. In this shuffle, the Department of Indian Affairs lost its separate status and became a branch of the new Department. The Northwest Territories and

Yukon Branch became the Bureau of Northwest Territories and Yukon Affairs, part of a new branch including Lands, Parks and Forests.

The condition of the Métis people presented a continuing difficulty for the authorities in the Mackenzie District. A total of one hundred and sixty-four Métis were admitted to Indian Band lists in the Northwest Territories between the years 1930 and 1943. The practice was never well received by the Indian Affairs Branch, however, where the view was expressed that "the admission of this class of persons to band membership was a backward step and should be avoided except where special circumstances existed."

The years between 1928-1939 saw no more advance in the well-being of the Indians of the Northwest Territories than had the two previous decades.

June 1976.

Helen Ryan,  
Treaties and Historical  
Research Centre.