and other changes were ratified at the next general convention. The tradition of attending Saskatchewan Indian conferences was ended, and during the early forties there was no official contact between the Indian Association of Alberta and Tootoosis' League. The reorganization, however, came at an inopportune time. The IAA held a general convention in 1942, but no significant initiatives were taken and, like many organizations, it suspended activities until after the war.

Even Norris believed that the "little problems" within Canada would have to wait until the war was over. During his Calgary duty from 1942-43 Norris kept an eye on domestic issues. A letter from Brady helped convince him that "There [was] no further hope of betterment on these [Metis] settlements..." As for the Metis themselves, Norris claimed: "they cannot be relied upon because most of them are strong Catholics and will do whatever the priest tells them."[17] Norris was not as pessimistic about the Indians' future and was clearly preparing for action on the Indian issue. In June 1943 Norris wrote and sent Callihoo a brief on: "Objectives desirable for post-war rehabilitation of Indian and Metis minorities within the Dominion of Canada."[18] Norris' six-page brief suggested policies and strategies for the Indian movement regarding education, conscription, extension of reserves, the hiring of Indian staff, and the removal of "absolute powers" of white administrators, and recommended a Royal Commission to study the Indians' situation.

During this period Norris also established links with the League of Nations of North American Indians (LNNAI), an American-based international organization with branches in Eastern Canada and Mexico. Norris had established first contact with the LNNAI in 1940, and he and Callihoo were secretary and leader, respectively, of the Alberta branch. The branch, however, probably existed more in name than in action and represented a loose affiliation between the IAA and LNNAI.

Norris' links with the LNNAI can be traced to his high regard for the League's leader, Lawrence Twoaxe, and for the League's political stance. In line with Norris' convictions, the League was a federation of independent, locally organized, democratic Indian associations. It worked with progressive whites to pressure the U.S. government to change legislation affecting Indians. In general its leaders had a sophisticated grasp of the American political system and were an effective lobby in the U.S. Congress.[19] Jim Brady showed some interest in Indian politics as well, most likely at the urging of Norris, but in 1942-43 he was preoccupied with the day to day struggle on the Wolf Lake colony.

Much of Norris' thinking, and his optimism, concerning Indian issues came from his study of the U.S. Indian situation. Under John

Collier, secretary of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indians had made great strides (for which, Norris told Callihoo, Collier was branded a "communist"). Legislative changes in the U.S. helped convince Norris that only through the action of Indians, their friends and a progressive government would Indians in Canada make progress. In line with this conviction, and his hopes for a CCF victory in the next federal election, Norris sent his brief to CCF leader M.J. Coldwell and other "sympathetic MPs."[20]

Norris' attention to the Indian situation was largely geared to the future, post-war period. The time was still not ripe. Developments in Alberta were, however, to change his mind. The conjunction of events and political opportunities dictated immediate action.

The Indian movement in Alberta had always been dominated by the Cree and for that reason was based almost exclusively in the northern two-thirds of the province. While the Stonies (traditional allies of the Cree) had shown some interest, other southern tribes—Blackfoot, Blood, Sarcees and Piegans—had taken no part in the League of Indians of Alberta or the Indian Association. Norris knew all the major chiefs and prominent figures among the northern Cree. His chance stationing in Calgary gave him the opportunity to acquaint himself with southern tribes and their leaders.

Norris usually kept his CCF and his native politics separate, but in Calgary the two overlapped. Although Norris was prevented by active duty from working for the CCF he made contacts with party members. One acquaintance recalls that Norris joined a left-wing theatre group, called Theatre of Action, and that he acted in two of the more popular left-wing plays of the day, "Waiting for Lefty" and "Bury the Dead."[21]

Among the CCF'ers Norris met in Calgary was a school teacher, John Laurie. Laurie had a long association with the Indians of southern Alberta and had been adopted in an ancient ceremony by Enos Hunter, of the Stony Indian Band. Laurie also had connections with the Blood Indians through Gerald Tailfeathers, a young Blood Indian who was staying with Laurie while studying art in Calgary. Laurie was instrumental in organizing an "Indian Rights Association," consisting of prominent Calgary citizens who were, according to Norris, dedicated to securing for Indians "their full rights as Canadians without loss of Indian rights."[22] Norris was impressed by Laurie's humanitarianism and by his tenacity in promoting Indian rights among prominent Calgarians.

Norris' experience in the Metis association convinced him that to succeed the Indian movement required two things: a strong, sympathetic lobby among progressive, influential whites and someone who could provide the calibre of executive secretary services Jim Brady

had given the Metis association. In Laurie, Norris believed he had found both.

Laurie's trusted position among the Stony tribe and his connections with the Blood Indians also provided the key to one of the most difficult problems facing a province-wide Indian association—the distrust and lack of communication between the northern and southern Indian tribes. Different social conditions and cultural traditions as well as age-old hostilities between tribes, in particular between the Cree and the Blackfoot, had long prevented communication between north and south.

The potential for building Indian unity in Alberta was there. It needed a single issue on which it could focus. The Indian Affairs Branch provided that issue. In the early forties the Branch began a systematic search of Indian birth records and other documents in a concerted effort to force Indians out of treaty. By reinterpreting an old section of the Indian Act regarding Indian families who had received Metis scrip, they forced over 500 Indians in the Lesser Slave Lake and other northern areas off their reserves in 1942. In early 1944 Fred Hodgson of the Ermineskin Band and James Ward of the Samson Band near Hobbema, south of Edmonton, were expelled from treaty. These expulsions brought northern and southern tribes together for their first meeting.[23]

In February 1944 Norris began efforts to rejuvenate the Indian association. He informed Callihoo that Chris Shade, an influential Blood Indian, had approached him about the association. He described John Laurie as a sincere supporter of the Indian cause and a man influential among the Stonies, and he expressed the conviction that the "time was ripe."

Callihoo's response was unexpected. He informed Norris that he wanted to resign in favor of a "better-educated" man. Norris immediately countered that it was not necessary for the president to "write letters and take notes, etc." What is needed is a "man of vision who can plan for the future."[24] Callihoo agreed to stay on.

Norris' praise of Callihoo was sincere. He had witnessed Callihoo's intelligence, political "savvy" and understanding of economic issues. Callihoo was willing to make personal sacrifices for the cause and was independent. Laurie later recalled, "He would never accept a chieftainship or even a councillorship...To have accepted either... [would] bind him...to government policy...He was determined to be free to think and act."[25]

Callihoo's abilities and influence were soon demonstrated at two meetings in the spring of 1944. Prompted by the expulsion of Hodgson and Ward, Alberta Indians from seventeen bands met at the Hobbema reserve, on March 20.[26] The Hodgson and Ward case was thoroughly

discussed and their reinstatement demanded. Both men had been unanimously accepted into their bands by democratic vote, and the conference drew attention to the principles of British natural justice.

But Callihoo and Norris intended to use this unifying issue to focus on the general problems facing Indians. Callihoo and the Cree group he led concentrated on four major issues which were discussed and formulated into resolutions. They demanded that all social services available to Canadians be extended to Indians, that the sorry record of inadequate education budgets, lack of day schools and lack of modern teaching methods be corrected. They underlined the seriousness of the situation by referring to Branch statistics: 6,240 Alberta Indian children registered in grade one, 1,000 in grade six and 131 in grade nine. Another resolution demanded the government recognize the legitimacy of the Indian association and that all replies to association briefs be sent to the association's secretary. Resolutions aimed at democratizing the reserves, inspired by American Indians' progress under the Reorganization Act, called for Indian Act amendments to permit the hiring of Indians to fill "administrative," teaching and medical positions and generally to remove the arbitrary powers of the Indian agent.[27]

The March meeting was designed to persuade southern tribes to join the Indian association and was kept deliberately informal. As Norris and Callihoo may have expected, there was mixed reaction among southern representatives. Only the Stonies appreciated the seriousness of the expulsion issue, and a long debate took place over the question of a united, provincial organization. The doubts aside, the conference agreed to "adjourn," inform the various tribes of developments and reassemble at the association's Fifth General Convention on May 25-26.

Fifty-six accredited delegates representing seventeen bands with a population of 7,500 Indians attended the May Convention. The Stonies were well represented at the convention, but the anticipated Blackfoot, Piegan and Blood delegations did not attend. Some Blackfoot delegates showed up, but none from the other tribes.[28]

Norris was, nevertheless, pleased by the results of the meeting. The significant Stony delegation represented a breakthrough in the south and an end to the Crees' total dominantion of the Indian struggle. As well, all the resolutions discussed and passed at the March meeting were confirmed as association policy and formed the basis for a "memorial" to be presented to the Dominion government.

The newly elected executive council was a tribute to Norris' persuasive skill. He had lined up for executive positions leaders who represented both elders and modern leaders, Stony and Cree, north and south, political sophistication and symbolic prestige. Callihoo was

chosen president or head chief by acclamation, Joe House and Norris' old colleague and rival, Joe Dion, were elected vice-presidents and Norris was chosen provincial organizer by acclamation.* Perhaps most importantly, and in line with Norris' plans for the association, John Laurie was chosen, in his absence, to be secretary of the organization,[29] a move which left Laurie "very much surprised."[30]

Norris had been preparing a number of CCF MPs on Indian issues for over a year. Instead of sending the association's "Memorial on Indian Affairs" only to the minister, the executive forwarded it to a dozen sympathetic MPs and to various newspapers and sympathizers across the country.[31]

The preamble to the "Memorial" pointed out that prairie Indians were being treated differently from other Indians in Canada, in at least one respect: the B.C. Indians' organization was recognized by the Indian Affairs Branch. Focussing on parliament's concern for post-war "Reconstruction" and the extension of human rights throughout the world, the Memorial urged that the aboriginal people of Canada be considered in "any discussion on Reconstruction."[32]

As a result of the IAA Memorial, Indian issues were discussed for two days in the Commons committee on reconstruction; at one session senior Branch bureaucrats were questioned. In August 1944 the issue of amending the Indian Act was discussed in the House and the minister of mines and resources, responsible for Indian Affairs, promised changes. In October the association received its most satisfying results—the Branch responded directly to the association on matters detailed in the Memorial and promised to "try to have a senior official" attend the next IAA convention. For the first time the Branch's stone wall showed a crack.[33]

Laurie dealt with the Branch bureaucrats, built support among sympathetic whites and white organizations, and generally administered the affairs of the association. Norris saw his task as helping Callihoo build unity in the Alberta Indian movement. By the second half of 1944 more bands of Cree and Stony, and the Blackfood tribe—some 900 strong—had joined the association. But at the same time Laurie described the Blood Indians as "not sympathetic," the Sarcee as "not very interested"[34] and the Blackfoot, despite their membership, as prejudiced because the association had started in the north. More serious than the continuing disunity, however, was the growing threat of Indian nationalism.

*The others elected to the executive council, all but three of them Cree, were influential, determined leaders in their own right and most had been active for many years. They were: Sam Minde, treasurer; Rueben Bull, Peter Burnstick, Enos Hunter (Stony), Harry Janvier (Chipewyan), Dan Wildman (Stony), directors; and James Crane, Albert Lighting and John Rabbit, honorary directors.

That threat was first revealed at the IAA's May convention. John Tootoosis arrived at the meeting, most likely uninvited, and addressed the delegates. His nationalist sentiment had taken on a new fervor and now had an organizational focus. He viewed Indians as a separate nation and asked the convention to send delegates to an upcoming June meeting of a new national Indian group, the North American Indian League (NAIL). In addition to his nationalist appeal, Tootoosis also used the occasion to launch a vigorous attack on socialism, thus ensuring even deeper conflict with the IAA.[35]

Tootoosis had little influence with the delegates. Callihoo took the floor and denounced Tootoosis' attack on socialism, and the convention turned down the request to send delegates to the NAIL convention. Despite the rebuff, Tootoosis was nonetheless determined to press his cause, and Norris remained extremely concerned about Tootoosis and the NAIL.

The North American Indian League was founded in October 1943 by a small group of Indian chiefs from across the country. It was headed by Jules Sioui from Loretteville, Quebec, and its main objective was to establish a huge tract of land for all North American Indians and place it under a "National Indian Government" basing itself on a "Master National Law."[36]

The June conference of the NAIL attracted 123 delegates, most of them from the East. There were only three delegates from B.C. and seven from Saskatchewan; Alberta and Manitoba sent no representatives. The convention changed the name of the organization to the North American Indian Nation.[37]

Tootoosis was determined to ignore the IAA and recruit Alberta Indians into the NAIN. Through the second half of 1944 and well into 1945, Tootoosis made overtures to Alberta Indian chiefs. He sent letters to individual chiefs, asking for donations to the NAIN and promoting his ideas of Indian nationhood. By early 1945 he was openly encouraging Alberta Indians to leave the IAA and join his group.[38] He had even managed to persuade Joe Dion, the IAA's vice-president, to support his nationalist cause, and Dion helped raise funds for Tootoosis among the northern Cree.[39]

Tootoosis' nationalism held that provincial boundaries were irrelevant, liberal democratic principles were contrary to Indian tradition, and assistance from whites unacceptable. Economic and social issues were relegated to secondary importance. He ridiculed the IAA for its reliance on "outside help" and denounced the annual membership fees.[40] He justified his raiding of the IAA on the basis of treaty territorial boundaries which crossed the Alberta-Saskatchewan boundary.

His most controversial and dangerous charge against the IAA

involved the franchise. Tootoosis spread the story that the IAA supported the enfranchisement of Indians and used a phrase from the IAA's "Memorial" to support his claim. A majority of Indians opposed the vote because they feared the possible loss of treaty rights—a fear strengthened by the recent compulsory enfranchisement of hundreds of Alberta Indians. The IAA Memorial stated that "an Association was a step towards fuller responsibilities of citizenship," and Tootoosis claimed this as proof of IAA support for the vote. In fact the Memorial did not deal explicitly with the question of entranchisement at all. The IAA's official position—expressed by Norris to Callihoo in 1943—was rejection of the franchise until Indians enjoyed the same social, economic and educational standards of ordinary Canadians, until, that is, they could use the vote effectively as equals. Yet the IAA clearly did support eventual enfranchisement, and the Memorial implied that this was the case. The fear created by Tootoosis' claim obliged the IAA to spend much time and energy explaining its position to Alberta Indian leaders.

The IAA executive attempted to meet Tootoosis head-on by explaining to him its positions on the various issues. In July 1944 Callihoo sent Tootoosis a registered letter detailing the accomplishments of the IAA attained through the support of progressive MPs and other sympathetic whites. The letter levelled a strong attack on narrow Indian nationalism, arguing that nothing could be gained "by attempting to segregate ourselves, as an Indian race (not nation) within Canada."[41] Callihoo reminded Tootoosis that the IAA was affiliated to the League of Nations of North American Indians, whose objective was "the PRACTICAL betterment of the Indian race, to be achieved by closer co-operation with the governments of the various countries of North America." The letter drew attention to the relationship of fascism to the "segregating of small groups and the appeal to local spirit." While the letter was not explicit, the reference to fascism reflected Norris' conviction that the NAIN and particularly its leader, Jules Sioui, were unwitting victims of pro-fascist groups in Quebec.[42] Tootoosis did not reply to this or any IAA letters. The executive was left to defend itself, on the basis of IAA accomplishments, against the attacks of their Saskatchewan rival.

The IAA obtained family allowance for Indian mothers,[43] thus removing one of the temptations for Indians to give up their treaty rights. In another victory against the Branch the IAA had forced suspension of the compulsory enfranchisement case against Ward and Hodgson, pending an official re-examination of the case. No more such cases were likely until re-examination took place. The association was pressing the government to curtail Indian land sales, to hire Indians in the IAB, to guarantee Indian and Metis veterans' grants, and to define

reserve boundaries. It was flooding the Ottawa office of the Branch with resolutions aimed at improving conditions on the reserves and asking for the expansion of reserves to serve the expanding populations of many bands, a policy that hit at the heart of the government's objective of reducing the number of status Indians and size of reserves. The IAA was also researching Indian rights to oil, gas and precious metals on their land.

At about the time Norris was discharged from the service, the association held its Sixth General Convention. On June 29-30, 1945, 140 delegates, representing 27 bands and all but the Blood Indian tribe, gathered at Hobbema. Their unity testified to the association's successful pursuit of democratic rights, social services and parliamentary attention to Indian problems. In his address to the delegates, President Johnny Callihoo reiterated the association's opposition to a premature national organization and the necessity of individual membership dues to support the association's work.[44]

The most important development at the convention was the push for a Royal Commission to investigate the Indian Act. The executive felt that this objective superceded all others, for no matter how many piecemeal victories the IAA might win in the field of social services, no lobbying or negotiating could affect this major impediment to Indian advancement.

The convention produced another Memorial on Indian Affairs and this time it was sent to every Member of Parliament. By now the IAA had well over a dozen MPs who were well informed on Indian issues. Dozens of organizations and individuals across the country supported the Indian cause, largely through the work of John Laurie, and support for a Royal Commission was widespread. Laurie had also made contacts in the Alberta and Ottawa press galleries, and the Indians' agitation received favorable coverage.

The IAA was not the only Indian organization pressing for a Royal Commission. The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia (NBBC) and another group, the North American Indian Brotherhood (NAIB),* claiming national representation, were also seeking a Royal Commission.

With significant support among influential whites in and out of parliament, a sympathetic press and agitation by three Indian organizations, the IAA confidently awaited announcement of a Royal

*The NBBC was the only other Indian organization in Western Canada which was democratic in structure and was highly regarded by the IAA. The NAIB was similar to the NAIN and was headed by Andrew Paull, the former organizer and business manager of the B.C. organization. Paull had been dismissed by the NBBC, subsequently organized the NAIB and was joined in his efforts by John Tootoosis, who apparently left the declining NAIN led by Sioui.

Commission. They were stunned by the Liberal government's announcement that it was going to establish a Joint Committee of the House of Commons and Senate to investigate the Indian Act.

The executive considered the government's move an effort to whitewash their dismal record on Indian policies.[45] The government could control the composition of the committee and its terms of reference. There was no chance of any Indians sitting on the investigative panel. Exposure of the issues to the press and public could be blocked if the joint committee chose to keep its proceedings secret. The IAA and its network of friends made a last-ditch effort to get a Royal Commission, but to no avail.

Positive developments on other fronts may have been some consolation to Norris and the IAA. The threat of nationalism within the Indian movement was waning. The NAIN led by Sioui was virtually dead, and Andrew Paull's North American Indian Brotherhood could claim no support in the West and little, if any, in the East.[46] John Tootoosis, after a short-lived alliance with Andrew Paull, confined his activity to Saskatchewan. He no longer claimed jurisdiction over Alberta Indians, and his attempts to undermine the IAA also began to fade.

In his absence from Saskatchewan Indian politics, Tootoosis' own League of Indians of Western Canada became dormant, and two other Saskatchewan Indian organizations—the Indian Association of Saskatchewan, led by Joe Dreaver of the Mistawasis Band, and the Protective Association for Indians and their Treaties, a small group of Indian chiefs from the south—had emerged as rivals to Tootoosis and his League.[47]

In late 1945 Saskatchewan's new CCF premier and self-styled "friend of the Indian," T.C. Douglas, initiated a move to unite the three organizations. Douglas' goal was to see Indians gain the social services and citizenship rights of ordinary Canadians and felt strongly that a united Indian voice was crucial to this goal. In January 1946 he convened a meeting of the three organizations and invited representatives of the IAA. The result was a new organization: the Union of Saskatchewan Indians (USI). Its first president was John Tootoosis.[48]

Norris viewed the formation of the USI as a positive development. The new organization had representatives from all parts of the province and had a democratic constitution. It joined the B.C. and Alberta groups as a full-fledged provincial organization.

While Norris vigorously opposed the narrow nationalism of the NAIN and the NAIB and the self-appointed leaders of those organizations, he had long supported the idea of a national federation of democratic provincial associations. In February 1946 developments

in Western Canada convinced him that a solid basis for a Western federation might exist. He wrote to Ed Thompson in Manitoba, a fellow member of the League of Nations of North American Indians, urging him to try, as he had attempted before, to establish a provincial association. He wrote as well to Dr. H.M. Speechly, a sympathizer in the Indian struggle, saying that the "ultimate aim of the IAA is to form a true national council" and expressing the view that Indians of B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan were "ready for such a council."[49] In the meantime Laurie wrote to the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia seeking more formal ties. Norris' eagerness was apparently not shared, as there was little interest in this call for a federation of Western Indian organizations.

In 1944 Norris told Lawrence Twoaxe: "As soon as I get out of the Armed Forces I intend to go to work among our people more than ever."[50] He revealed to Callihoo that he had "plans for the Metis on the settlements"[51] which would have to wait until he was discharged. He even thought, in 1944, that the Metis had "learned their lesson about Social Credit"[52] and gave his personal support to a short-lived effort by the Metis to rejuvenate the Metis association.

But by 1946 Norris had apparently lost his enthusiasm for the native struggles. He did not express any general frustration with the IAA, but it is clear Norris was troubled by the same problems which had plagued the Metis association. In December 1945 he wrote to Dion, despairing over the divisions created by Tootoosis and bemoaning the "notorious individualism"[53] of the Indian. In early 1946 he wrote to Callihoo reiterating the message he had repeated over and over again to the Metis:

> These IAA locals should be the centre of each Indian community. Their study groups are the place where they can come and argue and ask questions...We must train Indians to know the score...[otherwise] they will not progress very quickly.[54]

Norris was also discouraged by the failure of the CCF to make a major breakthrough in the 1945 federal election. His hopes for significant Indian progress rested on the CCF, for he still held to the conviction that such progress would only come through the co-operation of a progressive federal government.

In April 1946 Norris went prospecting to Gordon Lake, north of Yellowknife, with his eldest son, Willy. His other son, Russell, had died in the war, and Willy had just spent thirteen months in a German prisoner of war camp. The wilderness experience, camping "in the path of migrating...ducks, geese, swans...and caribou" was exhilarating for Willy after the deprivation of the prison camp.[55] For Norris, it may

have been a reminder that he had family as well as political responsibilities.

While Norris was up north prospecting, the IAA, at its summer general convention, had amended the constitution to allow only treaty Indians as members. An exception had been made for John Laurie and would probably have been extended to Norris as well, but Norris was ready to withdraw. When he returned in September, Norris helped draft the IAA's brief to the parliamentary joint committee which was planning hearings for 1947.[56] (The IAA brief was the most thorough and far-sighted of any presented to the committee.) This was Norris' last contribution to the Alberta Indian movement. He was soon to enter a new phase in his life, one which would take him out of Alberta, out of autonomous native politics and out of his prospecting career.

IV
The Saskatchewan Struggle 1947-1967

11

A New Political Arena: The CCF in Northern Saskatchewan

FOR THOUSANDS of Canadian soldiers and their allied comrades, the end of hostilities in Europe heralded not a triumphant homecoming, but the beginning of long months of occupation duty. Brady summed up his nine-month stint in his Journal:

> Occupation duty in Germany—the Red Army—Transfer to repatriation unit at Amersfoort, Holland—the Utrecht Lectures, a post-mortem on German fascism—a leave to The Hague—A superb L2 leave in Paris. . . The Gegou family of Faubourt St. Germain—Madeleine of Monteparnasse—students of the Boulevard St. Michel—Cafe de la Rotonde. . . Brussels interlude—Receiving honors from Brussels University*. . . leave to Glasgow and Yorkshire—I meet the Glasgow Irish—Christmas and New Years with cousin Bud at the Beaver Club in London.

Far from Canada, Brady still thought often of the Metis and their struggles. Even at the height of hostilities he was corresponding with his Metis colleagues about the desirability of rejuvenating the MAA and lobbying the Alberta government to keep the Catholic clergy off the colonies. While on leave in Paris, Brady looked up Marcel Giraud, an acquaintance from 1936. In the intervening years Giraud had produced a massive social history of the French Metis, *Le Metis Canadien*. Brady described their encounter in a letter to Joe Dion:

> I spent five evenings with him. He has written a 1,200 page history tracing the economic and social decline of the French Metis in the North West. I read the proofs and found it interesting although I found a few argumentative points to which I

*Brady accepted a war medal on behalf of the 4th Medium Regiment from the Free University of Brussels.

> objected...He promised me a...copy.[1]

In March 1946 Brady was discharged, in Calgary. After a few days with Malcolm Norris, Brady headed for the Keg River Colony to assess the situation facing the Metis settlements and the plot of land he had reserved in 1943. The one positive development was the elimination of the influence of the Catholic Church on the colonies. During the war the Church had tried to gain a special tract of land on the colony. This attempt had prompted Brady's correspondence to health minister Cross. The government had little sympathy with the Church and had ruled against it not only on the issue of land grants but also on the question of denominational schooling. The government ordered that all instruction was to be carried on in English and that religious instruction be limited to a non-compulsory half-hour at the end of the day. Nuns were prohibited from teaching.[2]

Overall, prospects for the colonies were not encouraging. As Brady feared, they had become "a segregated form of destitution."[3] Nor were the fish co-operatives thriving. They had reverted to the old pattern of exploitation at the hands of private fish companies. Completing the picture of political deterioration, Brady discovered that the Metis association was dormant.

Brady did not wish to take up the uncultivated plot of land he found waiting for him. He had the opportunity to go back to work as a supervisor, but as he told Joe Dion:

> I have no real desire to go back to work for them. It seems one is always so tied down you never manage to accumulate anything and get your feet sprouted somewhere as Pete used to say.[4]

In the year following his discharge, Brady resumed his reading habits, divided his time between socializing and the hospital, where he was treated for a lung condition acquired in England, and drifted, not unhappily, in a state of indecision about his future. After a short stint as a "factory slave" Brady yearned once again for the wilderness. In the spring of 1947 he began planning a prospecting trip to the Yukon.

Just as his Yukon plans were being finalized, Brady received a letter from Malcolm Norris. Norris was working for Saskatchewan's CCF government in the northern bush and desperately wanted a transfer to the city of Prince Albert, where he could set up his family. The government would give him his transfer only if he could find his own replacement at the isolated Metis settlement of Deschambeault Lake. Out of loyalty to his comrade, Brady cancelled his Yukon plans.

That Norris was working for the CCF government was not surprising. It was the logical outcome of his frustrations with

autonomous native organizations and his subsequent conclusion that progress for native people would come only with the co-operation of progressive governments. But to take part in a progressive government he had to abandon his familiar Alberta territory. Indeed he was just one among dozens of radicals, socialists and social democrats who flocked to Saskatchewan after 1944 to be a part of the newly elected CCF social "experiment."

Norris found in northern Saskatchewan a situation dramatically different from that in Alberta. Though he would, by his own chance request, have Jim Brady as an ally, the conditions among the native people would prove to be a severe test for the political partnership that was almost legendary among Alberta Metis. The social structure of the north made the likelihood of democratic native politics remote. The CCF, in which Norris placed so much faith, had already come face to face with the dilemma of northern native people.

In Saskatchewan the CCF was principally a party of middle-class farmers, a party supported by socialists but never socialist. Its social reformism was based more on humanism, on moral indignation, than on a class analysis of Canadian society. That moral indignation was sparked by conditions in northern Saskatchewan. When the party set its sights on the rich natural and mineral resources of the north, it also applied itself to the severe problems of the native population. Living virtually as indentured labor to the Hudson's Bay Company and other private entrepreneurs, Indians and Metis in the north lacked education, medical facilities, decent housing, communication and social services.

Northern Saskatchewan*—comprising over half the province—was virtually unknown to the people of the southern plains. Rich in nearly untouched mineral and forest resources, the north consisted of a belt of commercial forest and, beyond, a vast sweep of Precambrian Shield, scrub trees, lakes and rock. The particular combination of geography and development priorities left the region unconnected with the south; unlike Alberta and Manitoba no roads penetrated Saskatchewan's bushland wilderness.

The Indian and mixed blood population engaged almost exclusively in trapping, hunting and domestic fishing. Their only social unit was the extended family; among the treaty Indians very loose, unstructured bands did little to alter this highly nomadic life pattern. Most mixed blood people did not refer to themselves as Metis or Half Breed, and

*By northern Saskatchewan I refer to the forested area north of the grain-farming boundary. In the late forties-early fifties the population there was something under 10,000—more or less equally divided between treaty Indians, mixed bloods and whites. Of the less than 3,000 whites, some 2,500 were concentrated in three "white" communities, the mining towns of Uranium City, Creighton and Island Falls, the site of a hydro-electric plant. The other 30 settlements were overwhelmingly native.

with the exception of a few settlements the native population had been largely unaffected by even the dramatic events of the Metis national struggles. The mixed bloods who had been trappers in the heyday of the fur trade were not an integral part of Metis national sentiment and lived no differently than their Indian cousins. Those who had been part of the Metis national unit—the LaLoche boatmen, for example—had been forced, after 1885, to revert back to nomadic bush life. By the middle of the twentieth century there was no sign of the dynamic political and social organization which had characterized the plains Metis. There was no class structure, no political leadership, no democratic institutions and no coherent communities, as such. There were only the highly individualistic Indian and Metis trappers widely dispersed over hundreds of thousands of acres.[5]

In effect the HBC had never given up its power over the native people.

> During the whole of the lengthy period from 1670 to 1930, administrative goals in northern Saskatchewan remained simple and uncomplicated, namely the preservation of peace and good order as a means of promoting the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company, the [religious] Missions and the private traders.[6]

After the turn of the century a single RCMP officer and an Indian agent made once yearly visits to each community. Between the two great wars a handful of provincial and federal civil servants became permanent residents in the north. The colonial character of the north—the economic domination of the HBC and the psychological domination of the churches—remained virtually unchanged through most of the Second World War.[7]

In sharp contrast to the Metis settlements of north-central Alberta, the settlements of northern Saskatchewan were little more than temporary gathering places. Norris and Brady found no middle-class, educated elite which had provided the Metis Association of Alberta with its leadership. The Metis of northern Saskatchewan had virtually no knowledge of Metis resistance on the plains and there was no sign of spontaneous resistance—only the passive resistance of a colonized people. Even with a strong Metis association the fate of Alberta Metis had been determined largely by the government. In the absence of any organization the future of native people in northern Saskatchewan would depend even more on the state.

Considering the chronic inadequacy of the CCF government's budget, its initial efforts in the north were laudable. By 1947 the government was involved in the building of schools, hospitals, nursing stations and a radio-telephone communications system, and it had

established Saskatchewan Government Airways, a Crown Corporation. The first road into the wilderness, while little more than a trail, had been pushed through to LaRonge, 150 miles north of Prince Albert.

The arrival of the CCF administration in the north coincided with an economic crisis facing native trappers. In many areas the staple furs—beaver and muskrat—were dangerously depleted. Over-trapping, immigration from the south, lack of conservation and decreased demand had already forced many native people onto relief roles. In co-operation with the federal government, which had jurisdiction over treaty Indians in the north, the CCF implemented a vigorous conservation program, using a block system of trap lines and introducing orderly marketing* to the fur trade. The government-run fur marketing service compelled trappers to sell beaver and muskrat to the service. In a further effort to broaden the economic base the government intervened in the commerical fishing industry, buying out some firms, and extending the season into the summer by building freezer and filleting plants.

The problems facing the government were enormous. Besides being handicapped by a small budget, it had difficulty attracting staff to the north. Southern civil servants spoke of the north as "Siberia" and often displayed hostility to the area and its inhabitants. Fur and fish markets were notoriously unstable, and the government had little influence over price. The fur marketing service failed to raise fur prices much above pre-war levels.

The government also encountered opposition from the Catholic Church and private business interests in the north. The Church, with its considerable influence over native people, denounced the CCF as "godless" and "communist," and the HBC, private traders and fish companies attempted to sabotage the government's fur and fish programs. Living among the people gave white entrepreneurs and clergymen an advantage over the handful of CCF employees in the field. Any native complaint about the government was richly exploited and used as ammunition against the CCF and its reforms.[8]

The most serious opposition came from the HBC. In reaction to the government's regulation that all muskrat and beaver be sold to the fur marketing service, the HBC refused to grant credit to native trappers and fishermen. The government responded by establishing its own string of stores under a Crown Corporation, Saskatchewan Government Trading.

Brady arrived at Deschambeault Lake, 150 miles northeast of Prince

*Orderly marketing involved a two-price system. Trappers received an initial payment at the time of sale and a final payment reflecting the actual price received by the Fur Marketing Service on the market.

Albert on April 4, 1947. Of the dozens of native settlements Brady had seen over the years, Deschambeault (named for George Deschambeault, HBC factor at Ile a la Crosse in 1857) struck him as the most impoverished: "their living conditions were the most appalling I had ever seen anywhere in Northern Canada."[9]

Brady's job for the Saskatchewan Fish Board—the government agency which was trying to bring some order to the commercial fishing industry—was to run the Saskatchewan Government Trading outlet and to supervise local fishermen. When Brady learned that the Prince Albert office was planning to send him an assistant and two Metis women from the south to do filleting, he explained to his boss that additional staff was unnecessary to such a small operation and that hiring them would take up most of the fishermen's profits.

Brady got his assistant anyway—the student son of a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) bureaucrat, who was told that he would not have to do any heavy work as there were natives to do that. Brady put up with his "beatnik" assistant until he discovered that the teenager's net pay was greater than his own. He immediately tendered his resignation, only to withdraw it a few days later. The only people to suffer from such an action, Brady concluded, would have been the native fishermen.

Brady was thoroughly disgusted with the Fish Board operations. Despite his love of the wilderness and his attraction to the people of Deschambeault Lake, Brady planned to stick it out only until the end of the summer fishing season. His planned resignation in September coincided with a return bout of lung infection, and he left for the Veteran's Hospital in Edmonton.

Norris undoubtedly experienced similar frustrations with the government's initiatives in the north, but he put up with them. His family responsibilities may have forced him to persist; but he also respected the man in charge of the DNR. Joe Phelps, described by Tommy Douglas as "a steam engine in pants,"[10] was a near match for the problems in the north. Phelps ran the department almost out of his back pocket, acting as his own deputy minister and disregarding bureaucratic procedures. Phelps would even write personal checks for projects and then have the DNR put the money in his account to cover them.[11] His unorthodox approach to administration won him the enmity of civil servants and fellow cabinet members and the respect and loyalty of the small group of socialists he had been able to attract to senior positions in the northern administration.

Phelps was not an orthodox socialist; he shared the farmers' suspicion of labor unions and the social democrats' mistrust of communists. He was content to allow certain, less hostile, private interests their place in the north. And he was, like all whites,

paternalistic in his attitude toward native people. But whatever his ideology, Phelps was more than willing to take on the reactionaries in the north. He tried to wrest control of a special fur lease from the HBC at Cumberland House and attempted to buy out the HBC's trading posts. His cabinet colleagues, however, feared the political consequences of confrontation.[12]

Phelps delegated considerable political authority to his senior staff, despite his suspicions of their Marxist perspective. Once hired, Norris, too, was entrusted with authority and independence, and he used it. Phelps had some reservations about hiring Norris because of Norris' radicalism, but gave the go-ahead when Norris' supervisor, northern administrator Allan Quandt, agreed to take responsibility for Norris' activities. Norris was hired as a special field officer to translate and promote the government's programs among the Cree-speaking Indian and Metis. In each of the thirty plus settlements he visited, he sought out the most respected members of the community, explaining the programs and hoping they would in turn promote them among the general population. However, while Norris was acting as Phelps' roving ambassador, he also began to act as the unofficial ombudsman for the native population, gathering complaints and concerns and reporting back to his minister.[13]

According to Phelps, he and Norris spent "countless hours discussing hundreds of issues,"[14] most of which they apparently agreed upon. Backed by Phelps, Norris endeavored to inform and consult the Indians and Metis. He was probably instrumental in setting up the first conferences of trappers and fishermen. On his own initiative he conducted economic and social surveys of most of the northern settlements, filing hard economic data, political observations, sarcasm directed at white society, quotes from Indian chiefs and his own maxims.[15]

Norris' image in the department was not one of a pliant and obedient employee. His frequent criticism of government policy, public and internal, infuriated the hierarchy. He was not beyond publicly rebuking even the minister. In an incident clearly recalled by many in the north, Norris rebuked Phelps at a public meeting in Prince Albert. Phelps, a powerful and articulate speaker, had ridiculed a northern Indian who levelled a rather inarticulate criticism at government policy. The partisan white crowd was delighted. Norris jumped to his feet and denounced Phelps and the crowd for their cruelty and pointed out that the native people had complaints that deserved attention. Phelps apologized to the Indian. Later, Norris paced the floor, anticipating Phelps' anger over his outburst; Phelps never mentioned it.

Perhaps Phelps' most important contribution was his appreciation of the need for political education and struggle among the native people.

He recognized that Indians and Metis had to demand their own reforms. His task was to encourage a grass roots movement which would oppose reactionary elements, and out of self-interest, support the basic thrust of the CCF programs.

But as white radicals from an agrarian background, Phelps and his associates were ill-equipped to assist such a movement. They had no roots in the settlements, did not speak Cree, had few allies among the native population, and no Indian or Metis organizations with which they could negotiate. Despite many meetings, there was still a huge gulf between the native people and the government. With no responsibility for the programs being imposed on them, the native people felt little obligation to co-operate.

The objective was to foster self-determination, and as a first step towards responsible self-government at the settlement level, Phelps, Quandt and Norris and other DNR officials began to encourage the development of informal village councils. Norris' months of work building contacts and identifying the most respected individuals in the settlements played a major role in this long-term plan for self-determination.

Encouraged as he was by Phelps' appreciation of the political tasks ahead, Norris turned to Allan Quandt, a Marxist like himself. Quandt lived with his family next door to Norris in the Air Force row housing at the Prince Albert airport, and he spent hours with Norris discussing strategy. Their recognition that the DNR and the CCF's task was political and not administrative led to Norris' suggestion that Quandt hire Jim Brady and Pete Tomkins. Quandt agreed.[16]

Tomkins was unavailable at the time,* but Brady welcomed the opportunity to return to Saskatchewan. His lung condition had cleared up, and he had put in stints as a laborer with Swift's meat packing plant and the CPR. He yearned once more for the wilderness and was especially attracted to the historic site where he was to work. Brady was to be an assistant conservation officer at Cumberland House, the oldest continuous settlement in Saskatchewan, founded by Samuel Hearne in 1774 as the first of the HBC inland posts. As interesting as the settlement was, Brady was likely more interested in the description of his job. As well as regular conservation duties, Brady was to develop co-operative enterprises among the local population. He arrived at Cumberland House in May 1948.[17]

With Brady's return there seemed a good chance that the old political alliance might be rejuvenated. The political atmosphere seemed positive. Norris was already involved in Metis organizing by the time Brady reached Cumberland House. Upon his arrival in Saskatchewan

*He did join the government a year later.

in 1947 Norris took out a membership in the Green Lake* local of the Saskatchewan Metis Society (SMS).[18] Green Lake was the site, in 1940, of the then Liberal government's minor experiment in Metis colonies. Both Norris and Brady had corresponded with the SMS local president, Alex Bishop, in the early forties. Bishop had migrated from Batoche to the colony in 1940 and was instrumental in keeping the Green Lake local one of the few active SMS locals in the province.

The SMS had from the start been plagued by bitter personality conflicts and interference by Liberal politicians, often encouraged by southern Metis leaders. By the end of the war SMS activities were at a low point. The CCF government's 1946 attempt to reconcile dissident central and south factions had been unsuccessful.

Norris arranged a meeting of former leaders and members of the SMS to discuss the possibility of reactivating the society. On June 25-26, 1947, twelve people, representing eleven Metis settlements, showed up at the Saskatoon meeting. A cross-section of the former organization was represented, including north and south factions, and several past presidents.

All delegates reported various degrees of inactivity in their locals during the preceding year, or longer. Because of this, the delegates decided that they could not legitimately claim to represent anyone and instead constituted themselves a provisional council with the purpose of reorganizing the society. Norris was one of two men appointed to act as provincial organizers.

The old SMS had been an organization of south and central Metis with virtually no locals in the northern bush. Beauval, just north of Green Lake, was probably the northernmost local in the original society. Having initiated the rejuvenation of the SMS in its traditional area, Norris turned his attention to the far north. In November 1947 Norris convened a meeting of some twenty LaRonge Metis, who declared themselves a local and elected an executive. At about the same time Norris produced a new constitution for the SMS and distributed it to the members of the provisional council.

Brady became involved soon after his arrival, or so the recollection of local people suggests. He attempted to organize a local at Cumberland House and travelled with Norris to Metis meetings in other northern settlements.[19]

Since neither Brady nor Norris' papers contain any detailed reference to these organizing efforts, it is difficult to determine their objectives or their expectations of success. The southern rejuvenation effort was doomed as it was promoted by the very men who had led the SMS into

*Green Lake had long had a road connection with the south and although it was a northern Metis settlement it was not included in the DNR's Northern Administration District.

the hands of the Liberal Party. For whatever reasons the northern organizing efforts of Norris and Brady seem to have ceased by late 1948.

For a short time Norris was also involved with the Union of Saskatchewan Indians, led by John Tootoosis. He agreed to act as the organizer for the northern part of the province at the January 1948 USI convention.[20] But he soon quit out of frustration.[21]

Norris and Brady may have left native politics* because there were no "progressives"—in Brady's parlance—to provide local leadership, or they may have seen that they were ineffectual because they were outsiders. In northerners' eyes, their speech and sophistication linked them to whites. Their connection with the CCF government, highly suspected by native people, worked against them as well. While there is no explicit mention of it, Norris must have encountered some hostility in his organizing efforts. When Brady arrived at Cumberland House, he met with considerable hostility and suspicion. As he recalled years later, he was seen as "public enemy number one...I was an enemy of the people."[22]

Not long after Brady's arrival in Cumberland House, native hostility towards the CCF emerged. After four years in office, the CCF was seeking another mandate. The provincial election was scheduled for June, but balloting in the two northern constituencies was deferred until mid-July. The CCF expected to keep the Cumberland constituency they gained in 1944. No other party had ever taken the initiative on native issues. Conditions were improving and the CCF could take the credit. Their candidate was Joe Johnson, the out-going conservation officer in Cumberland House and a man well known by the local people.

The provincial election returned the CCF to power with a reduced majority, but the election and the deferred balloting in the north were disastrous for northern reformers. Joe Phelps went down to defeat in his southern riding of Saltcoats, a long-time Liberal stronghold. Cumberland, a seat which took in half of the northland, too, was lost to the Liberals, and in the settlement of Cumberland House the Liberal candidate humiliated the CCF's Johnson by 136 to 59.[23] The native people, masters of passive resistance, had finally spoken.

The morning after the election in Cumberland a group of very puzzled Indian and Metis stood outside the government trading post in Cumberland House. One of them announced: "Well, the big grub box is all closed up."[24] They had just been told by Jim Brady that the

*There is evidence that their withdrawal from organizing was met with considerable resentment among some of the Metis whom Brady and Norris had inspired to action. One of these was Maria Campbell's father. His bitterness and anger are described in her book *Halfbreed* (pp. 64-67).

government-operated saw mill, the Fish Board and Saskatchewan Government Airways were being closed down. Their vote against the government had made it known, Brady explained, that the people of Cumberland did not want these services.

Brady's decision, authorized by his supervisor, Allan Quandt, revealed a side of Brady not often seen. Known for his generosity and compassion, Brady was nonetheless capable of making tough political decisions. Criticized by a white radical acquaintance for being "cruel and hard as nails," Brady just laughed and retorted that this was the only way people would learn to distinguish between their friends and their enemies. Before long, local natives were approaching Brady and asking for the reinstatement of all the services. Services were back to normal in a couple of weeks.

The socialists in the DNR had obviously underestimated the hositility their reforms had engendered. While Church and business opposition played a role in the defeat, it was the CCF itself which had designed its setback. While it could not be denied that the HBC had held the natives in near economic slavery, the old credit system did not disrupt the nomadic way of life. The CCF's reforms aimed to do just that—they sought to gradually centralize the people, and the people resisted. Unyielding individualists, the trappers bitterly resented the compulsory aspects of the fur program. Trappers were now obliged to pay taxes, royalties on fur and fish, licence fees for trapping and fishing, which cut deeply into their paltry income. The new block system was equally irritating and confusing. Some trappers found their cabins on someone else's trap line and large chunks of trapping areas assigned to "outsiders." Under the new pooling system every pelt, regardless of quality, received the same price.[25]

The results of the election in the Cumberland constituency strengthened the DNR socialists' conviction that the task ahead was political, not administrative. Such a political initiative, however, required the authority and political protection of a cabinet minister. Phelps could no longer play that role but, perhaps hoping to retain the strength of his personal prestige, seven DNR program supervisors and managers sent a long submission to Premier T.C. Douglas asking that Phelps be appointed to some position within the DNR. Outlining the deficiencies of the northern development program, they hailed Phelps as "one who stood alone in his unwavering faith in the possibilities of northern development."[26] They got no response.

Phelps' unorthodox methods, his disdain for the bureaucracy and his political independence had created considerable tension in the cabinet. He had been highly effective in the CCF's struggle for power, but once there, he had become something of a liability. Some members of the cabinet and party quietly welcomed his defeat, and they had no

inclination to return him to a position of sensitive political responsibility.

The DNR progressives were determined to carry on even without Phelps. Brady worked at gaining the confidence of the people in in the settlement. He encouraged the formation of a village "council" that would discuss issues and form the basis for collective decision-making. Within six months of his arrival, an informal council was functioning enthusiastically, with the support of the community. Brady initiated and edited a community newsletter, and every Thursday evening at the community hall interested residents would gather for Brady's adult education classes. Topics ranged from local economic conditions and problems to stories of Indian and Metis history; the meetings were well attended and lively. Brady was a walking resource centre, encouraging people to ask him anything and promising that if he did not know the answer he would find out.[27] The initial hostility towards Brady gradually disappeared.

Brady was lucky to be working in Cumberland House. It was the most progressive native community in northern Saskatchewan and had a core of natural leaders. Among the proud and independent residents was a group of returned war veterans who had established the first all-native Legion in Canada. The Legion had raised money and built a hall and in its support of recreation and its assistance to needy members served some of the functions that the Metis association envisioned by Norris and Brady would have served.[28] Previous to this, the community had built the settlement's first hospital building.

While Brady was making progress at Cumberland House, developments in the larger DNR picture were discouraging. The contradictions in policy—between resource development and native rehabilitation—which had alienated the native voters were confirmed and strengthened by the passing of the Northern Administration Act. The act gave official legislative sanction to the Department of Natural Resource's control over government services and community and social planning. Its underlying assumption was that the north could be remade in the image of the south by simply providing the same type of services. There was no recognition of the colonial reality of the north, the radically different cultural values and social structure. The CCF's plan for the north—in education, health and social development—meant the people would have to adapt to the system; the system would not adapt itself to the people. Equally important was the act's failure to account for the most basic feature of the north: the lack of an economic base to support the services implied by the act itself.[29]

The act embodied the CCF's failure to comprehend the dilemma it faced in the north. It was precisely these contradictions that Phelps and the DNR socialists had begun to confront. Under the new minister