

The economic discussion is persuasive, but several questions remain. Would there have been significant markets for other western agricultural products and manufactures in the 1920s if the events of 1914-18 had not taken place? If so, could the West exploit new markets effectively despite the historic disabilities of the West such as discriminatory freight rates, the tariff and federal resource policies? Is it not more accurate to say that while the war provided a period of prosperity for wheat farmers it did not significantly change the western economy?

The impact of the war on western social reform movements and on relations between various ethnic groups seems to have been similar. Old problems and aspirations were intensified but not resolved. "As dramatic as the four years of war had been," Thompson tells us, "they had not solved the West's long term problems. . . . As the prairie West looked ahead to 1919 it saw many of the same problems that had confronted it in the summer of 1914" (p. 170). The war, it seems, reaffirmed and intensified, but it did not transform or radically alter the salient features of prairie life.

Professor Thompson is aware, and stresses, that significant changes did occur in western Canada during the First World War. He stresses the heightened feelings of regional identity. Canada's agrarian hinterland remained a hinterland, but it became more aware of its problems and more vociferous in demanding changes in unpopular national policies. Thus, while Sir Robert Borden and members of his government sought to establish the nation's claim to international recognition, western Canadians launched renewed and more vigorous attacks against aspects of established national policies. The harvests of war clearly included not only an enhanced sense of nationalism but also a renewed sense of regionalism. Professor Thompson has ably and forcefully documented the latter, demonstrating that war did indeed leave an imprint on the West different from that on Canada as a whole.

T.D. Regehr  
 Department of History  
 University of Saskatchewan

**The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study**, by David G. Mandelbaum. Canadian Plains Studies, number 9. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1979. 400 pp. Illustrations. Index. \$14.50, paper.

By the middle of the last century the Cree had become the most widespread, and probably the most numerous, native group in Canada. Their westerly migration had begun in the early 1700s as their

trapping grounds in Eastern Canada became exhausted. Anxious for more furs to trade for the Europeans' ironware, many moved westward from the Eastern Woodlands, and the area immediately south of James and Hudson Bay. Armed with European firearms Cree warriors, allied with the Assiniboine and Ojibwa, gained control of much of the land area of today's three western provinces. Those Cree that expelled the Gros Ventres, Blackfoot and Sarcee from vast areas of the Canadian Prairies are the subject of Professor Mandelbaum's very useful book.

The American anthropologist first prepared his study of the Plains Cree in 1936 as his Ph.D. thesis for Yale University. As he explains in his preface to the new edition he spent two summers doing field research among the Cree in 1934 and 1935, and as his copious footnotes indicate, he undertook considerable library research on the tribe. In his investigations he concentrated on the old Plains Cree culture before the buffalo disappeared. He sought, he stresses in his new preface, "to assess why and how Cree culture was changed when some of the Cree changed their habitat, economy, and general environment" (p. xiii). Structurally, as in the thesis, he has divided the volume into three parts: "The Plains Cree: A Historical and Ethnographic Study," "A Comparative Study of the Plains Cree Culture," and "Conclusions."

Mandelbaum's approach is truly encyclopedic. In "Part One" he reviews every conceivable aspect of their culture. Having first carefully examined all the available historical sources, he then interviewed at length old warriors like Fine Day, then over 80, Maskwa (Bear), and a host of other elders, male and female. The book opens with a well-researched historical sketch, then examines the "mainstays of Plains Cree economy," their "manufactures and artifacts," "social life," "the individual life cycle," "religion and ceremonialism," and "warfare." Each chapter probes into the inner workings of their society. Often he points out aspects of Plains Indian society frequently ignored by other commentators (particularly historians). In his chapter on "Social Life," for example, the author explains that those warriors chosen as Chiefs did not necessarily benefit materially from their appointments. Instead he refers to the "burden of leadership," each leader being required "to give freely of his possessions to needy tribesmen," and "on the occasions for ceremonial gift giving" (p. 106).

The anthropologist has a fine eye for detail, recording, for instance, the names of the thirty-one species of birds eaten by the Cree, and the eleven that they did not (pp. 69-70). He notes all the uses of the buffalo, including that of keeping the rough side of a buffalo tongue as a comb (p. 85). A careful explanation is even provided of the weaving technique employed in the making of rabbitskin blankets (p. 93). This abundance of detail constitutes *The Plains Cree's* strength as an

ethnology, but, at the same time, its major weakness as a book. At times the "information" becomes overwhelming. The general reader simply cannot retain more than a tiny fraction of the data so generously supplied. Occasionally, too, the author does not appear to have rigorously separated the significant from that which is not. In the chapter on "Social Life," to cite one example, he does provide five excellent pages on the important topic of "Chieftainship" (pp. 106-110) but then proceeds to allot twice as many to a lengthy discussion of "games" (pp. 127-137). The author does not justify in his text what appears to the general reader to be a lengthy digression.

The accumulation of detail in "Part One," admirable perhaps in the first (and still the only) ethnology of the Plains Cree, becomes oppressive in "Part Two," the comparison of the Woodlands and Plains people. Here, for nearly ninety pages the author laboriously compares the traits described in "Part One" with those of the Eastern Woodlands Indians. The reader is now introduced to the material culture, economic life, social organization, individual life cycle, religion and ceremonialism of Eastern Crees, Ojibwa, Menomini, Montagnais and Naskapi. His final conclusion, "the older Woodlands culture of the Cree quickly took on an overlay of Plains traits" (p. 355) seems an obvious point. By the late 1870s, and the disappearance of the buffalo, most of the Plains Cree had been on the prairies for two or three generations, and by necessity had learned from the Assiniboine who preceded them.

Rather than this lengthy (and unnecessary?) analysis it would have been far more interesting if Professor Mandelbaum (now a Professor of Anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley) had included the field notes that he made on the culture of the contemporary Plains Cree while he lived amongst them (p. xiii). The real comparison to be made is between the pre- and the post-Reserve periods. The inclusion of his notes on the 1930s, a balanced re-working of the original ethnographical information, as well as comments from the vantage point of his later anthropological work in India, might have made this volume an ethnographical classic.

The fact that Professor Mandelbaum's thesis is being published today, in roughly the same form as it first appeared in 1936, signals the neglect of the Cree in the last forty years. Despite Canada Council grants, and the multiplication of teaching posts in anthropology, Canadian history, and native studies, we still do not have a complete history of the tribe. This gap in our knowledge of the Plains Indian should be filled. A study of the entire historical experience of the Plains Cree is now possible, if one is willing to conduct extensive interviews with native elders, and consult the Hudson's Bay Company, Anglican and Oblate Archives, as well as the extensive Indian Affairs records in the Public Archives of Canada (R.G. 10). Perhaps a young Plains Cree

graduate of one of Western Canada's universities or colleges will attempt such a work, peopling it with more than just the shadows of his or her ancestors, providing a full, living, breathing life portrait of this important tribe. While a book like Mandelbaum's *The Plains Cree* points the way, nearly half-a-century after it was written, we need to advance beyond it.

Donald B. Smith  
Department of History  
University of Calgary

**Louis "David" Riel "Prophet of the New World,"** by Thomas Flanagan. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979. 216 pp. \$15.00.

This is one more book in a long list of scholarly and not so scholarly studies dealing with Louis Riel. Viewed by some as a rebel, regarded by others as a hero, described by still others as a lunatic, Louis Riel is pictured by Thomas Flanagan as a Prophet of the New World, a "millenarian leader."

Flanagan ignores to a very large extent the historical events associated with the two rebellions. He chooses to provide a detailed analysis of Riel's religious ideology from his early childhood to his eventual execution.

Using Riel's own writing, Flanagan illustrates the impact of his upbringing in an extremely religious home, the influence of ultramontanism and the flaws in his character which led Riel to regard himself as a prophet, the founder of a new religion, God's gift to his people, the Métis.

Raised in a devoutly religious home, the young Louis acquired a fierce pride in his Métis heritage from his father. While relating yarns of noble lineage, the mother inadvertently convinced her impressionable son that he was a direct descendant of Saint Louis IX and thus directly related to the Duc de Chambord, the heir to the French throne.

Selected by *Monseigneur* Taché to train for the priesthood, the youth from Red River ventured to Montreal to pursue his studies at the *Séminaire des Sulpiciens*. Riel neither completed his studies nor entered the priesthood, because of a broken love affair. Nevertheless, the ideology which prevailed within the diocese of Montreal under the tutelage of Bishop Bourget and which permeated the entire curriculum of the seminary became the cornerstone of Riel's political and religious ideas. "Riel's political ideas were an exaggerated form of ultramontane thought." "His new religion was an exaggerated version of the ultramontanism that he had learned from the French-Canadian clergy."

From 1869 to 1875, Riel's "chief concerns were political, not