

"We Beg the Government": Native People and Game Regulation in Northern Saskatchewan, 1900–1940

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ABSTRACT. A central focus of the dialogue in northern treaty negotiations (Treaties Eight, Nine, Ten, and Eleven) in Canada was the debate over continued Aboriginal access to fish and game resources. While Indians often received assurances during the treaty negotiations that their hunting and fishing activities would not be adversely affected by their entry into treaty, the provincial and federal governments often ignored those promises and went about the process of developing and implementing fish and game regulations that limited Aboriginal access to northern resources. Using Saskatchewan as a case study, this article examines the specific process by which, in direct contradiction of treaty promises made at the turn of the century, the federal and provincial governments went about the business of justifying the enforcement of fish and game regulations, while ignoring traditional cyclical patterns of resource use which had sustained Native people in the region before the arrival of non-Native, commercial, and sport interests.

SOMMAIRE. Un point central des négociations pour les traités du nord canadien (Traité huit, neuf, dix et onze) fut le débat sur la continuation de l'accès aux ressources en poisson et gibier pour les autochtones. Tandis que les Indiens étaient assurés au cours des négociations que leurs activités de chasse et de pêche ne seraient pas affectées par le processus de traité, les gouvernements provincial et fédéral ne tenaient souvent pas compte de ces promesses et entreprenaient de développer et de mettre en place des réglementations qui limitaient l'accès autochtone aux ressources du nord. Le présent article prend la Saskatchewan comme étude de cas et examine le processus spécifique par lequel les gouvernements fédéral et provincial, en contradiction directe avec les promesses faites au début du vingtième siècle, justifiaient l'application des réglementations sur la chasse et la pêche en ne tenant aucun compte des cycles traditionnels d'utilisation des ressources, qui avaient assuré la survie des autochtones de la région avant l'arrivée des intérêts commerciaux et sportifs des non-autochtones.

Chief William Apisis was worried. "We beg the government," Apisis pleaded with treaty commissioner Thomas Borthwick during the 1908 annuity payment, "not to impose any laws upon us which would interfere with our hunting, fishing, and trapping. We are simply asking the privilege of hunting, fishing, and trapping as heretofore."¹ Just two years earlier Apisis had been assured during the Treaty Ten negotiations that the government would not interfere with the way of life of his people, the English River band.² Then, in 1907, Saskatchewan passed the first substantial revision to the territorial game act, and in doing so, signaled the beginning of provincial involvement in game regulation.³ Apisis' fears were consequently not ill-founded. Within a few years, Ottawa and the provincial government would actively interfere with the most central aspect of northern Aboriginal society—their relationship to the land and its myriad resources.

As the Cree and Dené so eloquently told the Treaty Ten commissioners, access to the fur, fish and game resources of Saskatchewan's north was of the utmost importance to their survival. In contrast to federal hopes that commercial agriculture could be maintained as far north as 60°, the Indians had a more realistic understanding of what would sustain them.⁴ For northern bands, access to resources was not merely a commercial, aesthetic, or economic concern; it was instead a challenge of life or death. They also knew what the resources could bear in terms of subsistence harvest. While in some cases they pushed resources, namely fur-bearing species, to the limits of extinction, more often they worked and planned carefully to protect the fish and game species upon which they relied.⁵ And Indians never relied on any single aspect of the area's natural resources, but rather balanced their existence on a variety of hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering activities.⁶ This is precisely why, when federal, provincial, and other non-Indian interests focused on Saskatchewan's north in the first decades of the twentieth century, Indians argued out of necessity that resources must be protected in their own interest, and whenever possible for their own use. After all, Saskatchewan's northern Cree and Dené population continued to make their living by traditional hunting and fishing pursuits. Sadly, however, provincial and federal governments went about regulating northern resources in their own interest with little regard for the Indian population.

New initiatives in game protection in western Canada were not purely a twentieth century design, but were rather the descendant of prior nineteenth century activity. As Saskatchewan was carved out of the North-West Territories, so too were its game laws. Manitoba took the lead in passing legislation limiting open seasons on many big game and game bird species in 1890. The legislation also restricted Indians to the same seasons and bag limits, allowing them to hunt for food in the closed seasons only within the boundaries of their limited reserves. Section nineteen of the Manitoba game bill established that the act shall not apply to Indians within the limits of their reserve with regard to any animals or birds killed at any period of the year for their own use only and not for purposes of sale or traffic.⁷ Four years later, the federal government passed the Unorganized Territories' Game Preservation Act. The specific parts of the legislation which excluded Indians from many of the act's provisions were hotly contested.⁸ During the bill's first reading, one member charged that Indians living in the boreal forest and more distant barren grounds killed large numbers of animals through sheer love of slaughter. The belief persisted that "[t]he most destructive element ... in that country is the Indians themselves."⁹ This attitude was supported by individuals and organizations interested in protecting wildlife populations for sport-hunting purposes. After all, sport hunters viewed the Indians as engaging in a wholesale and senseless destruction of our best and most valuable game.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Indians were exempt from most of the act's restrictions since the specific intent of the legislation remained to protect game populations as a food supply for the Indian population of the unorganized portions of the North-West Territories.

The 1894 Game Preservation Act did not represent a comprehensive change in attitude concerning western game populations, but rather sought to protect certain, otherwise threatened, species like bison and other big game animals.¹¹ Even so, the first conviction under the act came against the very people it purported to protect when two Indians were brought to court in Fort Smith for killing a wood

buffalo.¹² This was an omen of things to come as the new province of Saskatchewan took over the business of enacting, administering, and enforcing game laws. But deciding whether or not to apply game laws to Indians, regardless of treaty provisions or the terminology of legislation, remained the business of the Indian office.¹³

Hayter Reed, assistant Indian commissioner for the North-West Territories, was concerned with balancing the needs of Indian peoples in the West with the danger of dwindling game populations. But instead of pointing to subsistence hunting as the cause of dwindling game herds, he saw another problem. In keeping with his overwhelming desire to save money, Reed suggested that Indians and the North-West Mounted Police be employed to keep "American zeal hunters" out of the Territories altogether.¹⁴ In his estimation, the decline of fish and game was the result of sport, not subsistence hunting. He also was worried about the cost of supporting northern Indians should they not be able to hunt and fish for a living. Even though his comments focused on the southern portion of the territories, he saw the necessity of game regulation for all parts of the region. He worried that government regulation might not recognize the difference between subsistence and sport hunting in northern Canada. If laws were universally applied, Reed feared that restricting Indians to their reserves during the closed seasons, as was often suggested, would spell disaster. The size and location of reserves, if they existed at all, were not sufficient to sustain Indians in their hunting and fishing pursuits. The region's inspector of Indian agencies supported Reed. When several Indians were charged with violations of the 1894 game legislation, the inspector wrote to G. Powell, under-secretary of state, indicating that it was pointless to confine Indians to their reserves during the closed seasons. They continued to hunt off-reserve and complained bitterly whenever they were prohibited from hunting.¹⁵

The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) actually helped the government reach some consensus on when and where fish and game laws should be enforced on Indian bands. The 1894 game preservation bill was submitted to the HBC for suggestions on the regulation of certain species and on closed seasons. The HBC was, the Cree and Dené excepted, the closest thing to an expert on fur-bearing and big game animals in the north. In an attempt to reduce the impact of the legislation on the Indian population in the region, the HBC supported the provision that allowed Indians to hunt for food in the closed seasons.¹⁶ Like the Indian agents further south, the HBC understood the financial implications of poor or restricted hunts. The HBC would have to supply costly relief in the event of adverse hunting restrictions. By the 1890s, the federal government was facing increased costs of supplying relief to Indians in regions where the buffalo had been destroyed and commercial agriculture was not successful.¹⁷ The government was also concerned with the expense of supporting Indians who were prevented from hunting for food. Nothing was said about a way of life; the government viewed the protected animals as little more than cost-savings on the hoof, wing, or fin.

Even though the 1894 Game Preservation Act was designed to ensure that Indians could engage in subsistence activity in the north, the legislation included some implicit restrictions on Indian hunting.¹⁸ While section eight of the act allowed Indians to hunt most big game animals for subsistence purposes in closed seasons, section twelve effectively prohibited them (and others as well) from engaging in market hunting or selling for profit the animal products of their hunting efforts. The Indian Department also chose to apply game laws to all Indians in the

Saskatchewan and Assiniboia districts, beginning 1 January 1894.¹⁹ Less than ten years later, the Department of Indian Affairs moved the boundary of applicability further north. Canada was developing a clear pattern of applying game laws to Indians.²⁰ The Cold Lake band, signatories to Treaty Eight in 1899, were brought under the game act in 1903.²¹ The James Smith and Cumberland bands near Fort à la Corne were also to be regulated as so many sport hunters, even though they hunted for food. Members of the Nut Lake and Fishing Lake bands were also challenged in their subsistence activities when they were reported to be killing game out of season, even though nothing more than hearsay or the slightest circumstantial evidence could be found.²²

When Saskatchewan became a province in 1905, jurisdiction over the wealth of natural resources was retained by the federal government for the purposes of Canada until 1930.²³ The primary intention of the federal government in the retention of natural resources was to make it easier for the Crown to facilitate settlement in the West.²⁴ Control of fur-bearing and game animals was consequently transferred to provincial authority in 1905. In short, the federal government retained control over that which it believed was valuable, and turned the rest over to provincial control. The provincial government quickly realized the value of fur and game resources and amended the earlier federal Game Ordinance of the North-West Territories to suit its own needs in 1907.²⁵

Whereas earlier versions of territorial game laws, most notably the 1894 act, exempted Indians, subsequent modifications to game legislation left the application of game laws to Indians to the discretion of the Department of Indian Affairs. The result was a two-tiered system of law to be applied as the department saw fit.²⁶ What the government sought with this two-tiered strategy was to create a system whereby Indians could be prohibited from hunting in the southern parts of the province, while those in the north would be allowed to continue to hunt.²⁷ But this multi-layered administration of fish and game laws was confusing for both Indians and governments. Not only did governments involved do a poor job of articulating laws and responsibilities to their own resource-managing agencies, but the fish and game guardians often viewed Indian hunting and fishing methods as a wanton slaughter and pursued them vigorously. Indians in the north, meanwhile, often did not know when they might be arrested for hunting or fishing outside of government-approved seasons.

Few policy makers in Ottawa or Regina took Native concerns seriously, even though all involved knew what the Cree and Dené of northern Saskatchewan wanted and needed. Interested in calculating the dollar values of Native hunting and fishing, W.J. Chisholm, inspector of Indian agencies, pointed out in 1902 that most northern Indians "engage in these pursuits to [the] extent that the aggregate result is considerable, and for the year represented a value of \$139,366, an advance of \$27,482 over last year's total."²⁸ Chisholm explained that the Cree and Dené were "hardy hunters" and made their living by fishing and trapping as well. He added that "the deep, clear lakes and their connecting streams abound in fish of the best quality."²⁹ Instead of protecting these resources in the Indians' interest, however, both Ottawa and Regina favoured schemes which ultimately compromised Indian subsistence patterns. Expanding commercial access, often while compromising Native access to the northern fishery was of the utmost importance for Ottawa, at least in the years prior to the transfer of natural resources.³⁰

Encouraging direct non-Indian commercial involvement in the rapidly developing commercial fishery was justified on the grounds that the Indians were hunters and trappers, and were not interested in the fishery. In a report from the RCMP detachment at Stony Rapids, in the northernmost region of the province, Corporal H.W. Stallworthy claimed that since the Indians were "caribou eaters" and only ate fish when "absolutely necessary," it was acceptable for commercial industry to continue unfettered in the area.³¹ But in reality, Stallworthy did not understand the cyclical harvesting activities of the Denesuliné.³² All Stallworthy saw and reported on from his post at Stony Rapids were the activities of local bands when they traveled through his district. While the caribou migrations were certainly important to the Denesuliné, and hunting was their most visible activity, they still relied on the fishery each spring and fall. In essence, Stallworthy tried to consign the needs of the northern Indians to a single-source subsistence economy. This ignored the traditional patterns of existence in the north. The Fond du Lac Denesuliné band often traveled back and forth on both sides of the sixtieth parallel while fishing and hunting the caribou. In those travels, fish formed a substantial part of their diet in all seasons.³³ Nonetheless, it was only the odd lake here and there that would be protected in favour of the Indians and their subsistence fishing; the majority of lakes, especially where abundant fish populations existed, were reserved for commercial purposes.³⁴

Supervisor of Fisheries, R.T. Rodd, agreed with Stallworthy. The problem, as Rodd saw it, was that the Indians were "too lazy to fish more than what is absolutely necessary at a time." As well, Rodd complained that Indians "do not look ahead."³⁵ Evidently, Rodd had forgotten that since 1917, Indians had been prevented from legally drying and storing fish for the winter.³⁶ Nonetheless, the racist concept of Indian laziness was used to criticize Indians who were not taking full advantage of the fishery, even though the law prevented them from doing so.³⁷

When the Indians openly complained of being restricted as to where they could and could not fish throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Rodd proclaimed that they were not so restricted. Deputy minister of Fisheries W.J.E. Casey corrected Rodd, adding that restriction did take place "for commercial purposes."³⁸ The fishery supervisor further suggested that missionary reports and accounts of Indian agents were often exaggerated: "They don't know the conditions," Rodd complained in defence of the policies related to fish management. Better twine and tighter nets were what the Indians needed from Rodd's perspective.³⁹

By the 1930s, northern fish stocks in many lakes were showing grave signs of decline. The commercial catch on Churchill Lake dropped by more than half from just two years earlier, even though more and more men worked the lake each year. It further declined from 500,000 pounds in 1937 to under 200,000 pounds two years later. This followed a relatively steady increase in harvest weight since 1932.⁴⁰ On the other side of the province, the lakes around Pelican Narrows were also suffering. Even relative outsiders realized the troubles caused by the commercial fishery. P.G. Downes, one of the many gentlemen-explorers who ventured north in the late 1930s in search of wilderness and adventure, mused that "it had always seemed strange that, with the thousands of lakes available, destructive commercial fishing should be allowed upon lakes where large bands of Indians by custom and necessity congregate."⁴¹

Management, or rather mismanagement, of the fishery changed little from its

federal heritage during the 1920s.⁴² For Regina, the most important aspect in the fishery was the economic value of the resource. Indians in northern Saskatchewan were generally ignored when it came to commercial interests in one of their most valuable natural resources. In a review of Saskatchewan's fishery shortly after World War II, provincial investigators found that until recently "those administering the fisheries failed to adopt a policy which would guarantee a sound and practical basis for the future."⁴³ Even though they were speaking to a commercial future, the absence of management seriously affected Indian interests as well. The concept of sustained yield had little or no place in the fishery until the postwar years. Commercial interests were the driving force in the fishery, and Indians were not allowed to compete with such interests during the 1930s.⁴⁴

The growing non-Indian population also worked to shape the nature of the fishery during the 1930s. The gradual increase of sport-fishing during the summers in some regions had a negative impact on Indian interests. In the areas near Cold and Canoe lakes in the southwest portion of the Treaty Ten area, straddling the Saskatchewan-Alberta border, a growing tourist industry took precedence over the Indian need for food. Since the mid-1920s, Cold Lake was favoured by anglers for its lake trout. Almost 100,000 pounds of lake trout were taken by sport anglers during a single season. By the late 1930s, hundreds of anglers tried the lake during the summers, some from as far away as California, in search of sport.⁴⁵ In the interest of the sport anglers, one provincial game guardian even suggested that the Indians be forbidden to fish certain lakes during the "tourist season." It was better, the game guardian suggested, if the Indians were "compelled" to go further than was their custom in search of food.⁴⁶ The growing non-Indian population in the region consequently had a tremendous impact on both the Indian people and resources of the north.

During the same period, Regina was concerned with increasing the fur royalties trapping produced, as well as "protecting" game animals in the interest of sport hunters. And the provincial government actively worked to regulate and limit hunting activity. Even so, the main difference between hunting and fishing was not only the location of the regulating authority, but the specific nature of that regulation. Federal fishing regulations were aimed more at establishing a commercial market, with no real concern for the future quality of the resource. To the contrary, provincial hunting regulations were aimed at preserving the various game species of the region. This included a concerted attempt to eliminate what many non-Indians believed to be the "wholesale slaughter" of game resources by Indian people, even though evidence of that slaughter could never be found.⁴⁷ Game regulations never fully addressed the possibility that the marked decline of game resources in the north was directly attributable to changing demographic patterns in the region.

Game guardians, a relatively new feature in the north, instilled fear in many Indians. In 1914, Samuel Wolf of the Muskeg Lake band wrote the Indian Affairs office stating that

we can not do any hunting for the fear of the game guards. They forbid us to do any trapping on the rat heeps and do any kind of hunting for our own use. We are told that if we are caught trapping on the rat heeps that we are to pay a fine of \$50.00 or be imprisoned.⁴⁸

J.D. McLean in the Indian office responded that

it was the intention when [Wolf's] Treaty was entered into that the Indians should be subject to the game laws that would from time to time be enacted; and it has always been held that those laws which protect the game and prevent its extermination are of special benefit to the Indians to whom its preservation is of such vital importance.⁴⁹

The situation for northern Indians took a turn for the worse after World War I when the Indian office introduced a new regulation in 1919

that, in view of the destruction of game illegally by Indians of the various western provinces, the Dominion Government be urged to co-operate in the enforcement of game laws in this particular respect, and more especially in the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, by means of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police or other special officers in districts where damage to game by Indians most frequently occurs.⁵⁰

The Saskatchewan game branch was wholeheartedly behind this initiative. Game guardians like Fred Bradshaw openly contested the Indian office's previously sympathetic view of the issue.⁵¹ Within a few years, the northern regions had more provincial game guardians and police officers than any other part of the province.⁵² Seventeen provincial police constables were posted in the Prince Albert district, while cities like Regina and Saskatoon kept only ten and twelve, respectively. Detachments reporting to Prince Albert included northern posts in Île à la Crosse, Big River, Fond du Lac, Lac La Ronge, Onion Lake, and Meadow Lake.⁵³ This rigorous provincial approach to fish, fur, and game law enforcement during the 1920s had the support of Clifford Sifton, former minister of the Interior and superintendent general of Indian Affairs in Wilfrid Laurier's cabinet. Although many thought current laws too harsh, Sifton warned against relaxing laws

at this critical time when the proper effect of the laws was just being felt. The chief cause of the depletion of wildlife has been the absence of game laws or the laxity of their enforcement. The struggle has been uphill work, but owing to the attitude of the real sportsmen, as opposed to the market hunters and "game hogs," and of the public generally, progress has been made.⁵⁴

That "progress" often came at the expense of subsistence activity, and the Cree and Dené of the Treaty Ten area were not to be exempted from the dragnet of game laws enforced in northern Saskatchewan. Beginning in 1919, Indian people in the Treaty Ten area became fully subject to provincial game laws, seasons, and bag limits. In 1919, the Department of Indian Affairs issued a public notice stating that

the laws respecting the protection of game in force in the Provinces of Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan shall apply respectively to all Indians and Indian Reserves within the said Provinces, except to the Indians and reserves situated in those portions of the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan comprised within what is known as Treaty No. 8.⁵⁵

Since the territorial era, there had been a steady northward progression of the general application of fish and game laws to Treaty Indians and their activities (Figure 1). The problem was that the game branch cared little about Indians' concerns with this interference in their way of life.

The Cree and Dené were often caught in the middle between virtually

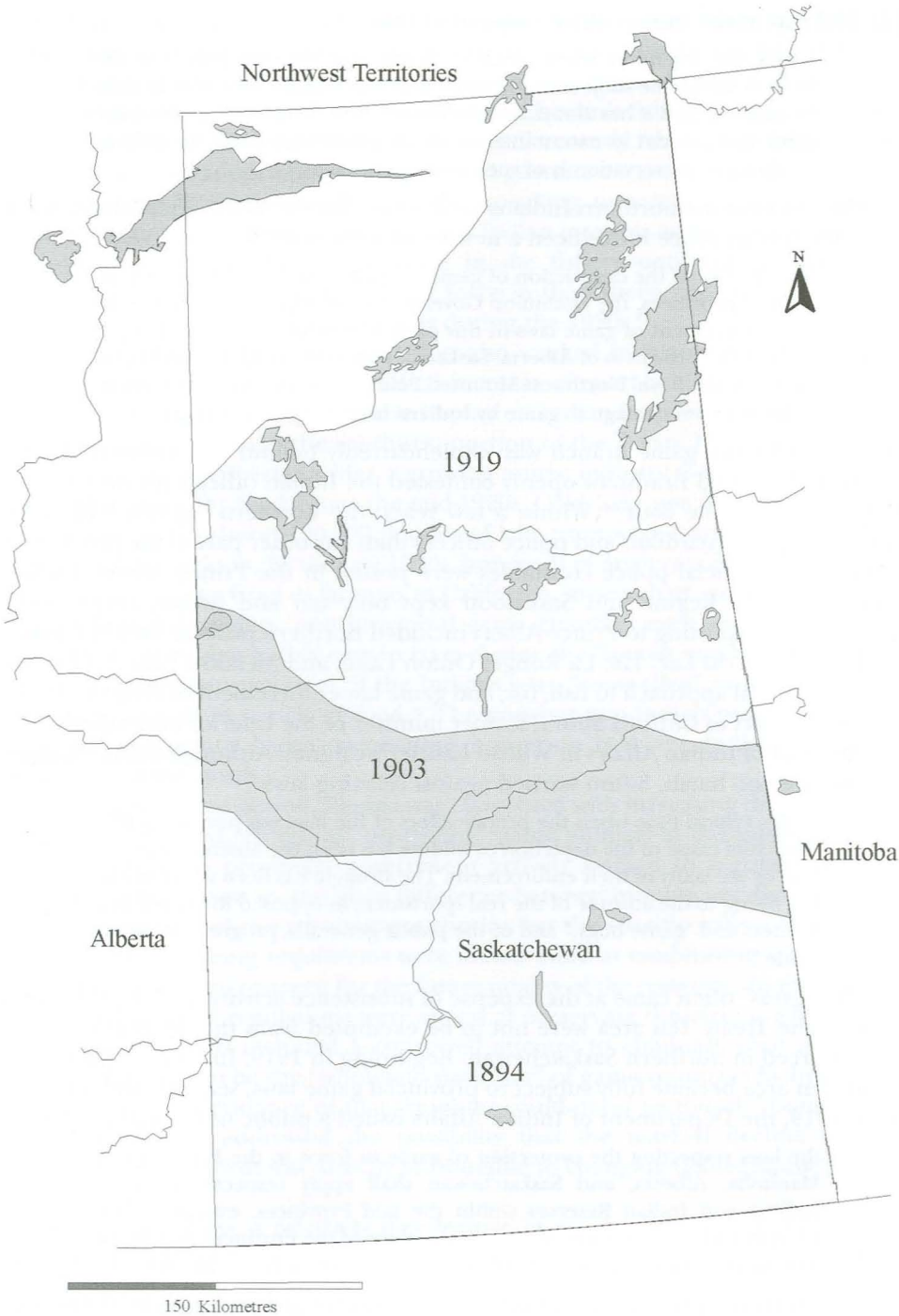


Figure 1. Regions and Timeline in the Application of Game Laws to Indian People in Saskatchewan (Current Provincial Boundaries).

untrained, and often overzealous, game guardians and a growing local population who hunted for sport and subsistence. Both blamed Indians for declining game stocks. Andrew Holmes, a game branch supervisor, sided with the sport hunters who complained of the injustice done to game animals by Indians. In his report, Holmes justified his investigations into Indian activities by stating that

as the law stands, the Indian has no more rights than the white man, only that he does not need to buy a licence, all he requires is to have his Treaty Ticket with him and the agent's certificate. A great deal of illegal slaughter of big game has been done in the past by the Indian, and numerous complaints were received by big game hunters, who found ample evidence of such violations in the bush when hunting during the open season. It was very aggravating to the hunter to find the head of a fine bull moose or elk, as the case might be, and sometimes several heads of both sexes have been found together, showing that a considerable number of animals had been killed by the same party.⁵⁶

This drove the game branch mad, as they believed the only use of big game animals should be for sport hunting.⁵⁷

What Holmes overlooked, however, was that Indians were hunting for subsistence, not profit or trophies. Heads and antlers meant little to the Indians. While Holmes could sympathize with the sport hunters' tears over a rotting trophy rack, he could not bring himself to understand the Indian need for food, although he did confess that "in the more northern part of the province where the Indian has little else than hunting, trapping and fishing to depend upon for a living, the Game Branch does not interfere with him so long as he does not wantonly destroy game, and makes good use of that secured."⁵⁸ Still, that same year Holmes happily attended the trial of several northern Indians who were convicted of violating provincial game laws and was pleased to see them convicted. He was thankful, however, that they were fined only costs.⁵⁹ He argued that

the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, at Regina, is in full sympathy with the Game Department in its efforts to control the Indian in regard to game protection, and has done much to prevent their hunting in the fall when so much damage was done in the past, recognizing that the department is anxious to educate the Indian to the fact that game preservation is as much in his as in the white man's interest. There is a certain amount of sympathy for the Indian among our best sportsmen, and they are the last to wish him to be harshly dealt with, but at the same time they recognize the fact that he must be controlled if game is to be preserved.⁶⁰

Unfortunately, the sympathies Holmes or sport hunters harboured for Indians were lost by the time game guardians or police enforced laws in the north.

The year after Holmes' report condemning Indians for their hunting activity, I.O. Newton, one of his charges, added that

Indians appear to be respecting the game laws very well this season. I have had many of them come to me and ask for a permit to hunt and trap in open season. There was only one case where I had to check up on an Indian for trapping rats out of season. I pointed out to him that he was doing wrong and he promised that he would never trap again in close [*sic*] season. I believe my pointing out to the Indian that it is wrong to take fur of unprime quality they will get to understand and that we will have very little trouble with them in the future.⁶¹

Newton was pleased with himself for “educating” the Indians. What neither Holmes nor Newton realized was that the Indians knew well what answers to give when hassled by game guardians about their activities in the north. Simple agreement was easier and safer than arguing about treaty rights, for whenever they did argue with the game branch, the response was the same—more charges and more arrests. Holmes believed that if Indians were not punished from time to time, “all control” would be lost over them.⁶² Sport hunters in the region felt the same way.⁶³

What was most confusing to the Indian population was that the most basic intent of the game branch’s conservation efforts—to protect game stocks—was not incongruent with their own interest. The Cree and Dené believed in the need for conservation; they just could not understand how their activities violated provincial conservation efforts. After all, there were well-established customs for dealing with individuals who did not obey the traditional conservation laws. Looking back on his own hunting experience in the 1960s, Isidore Toby Campbell, grandson of Raphael Bedshidekkge, who was the chief representing the Clear Lake band in Treaty Ten, was publicly admonished for shooting some baby ducks after he killed a moose earlier in the day. For 26 years after killing the ducks, Campbell faced unsuccessful moose hunts and was forced to get moose meat from other hunters in his community. Campbell believed that his lack of success was directly related to his lack of respect for the ducks.⁶⁴

The nature of the Indian self-regulation model included access in times of need and restraint in times of plenty. Joe McCallum from Pelican Narrows explained that “many times I have killed a moose. Many times, over in the Reindeer River, it was very good. When we were fishing over there, we used to see a moose every day, but we didn’t kill them all the time.”⁶⁵ This restraint was based on the fact that the land provided a certain sense of security “in knowing that the land, the river, and its beauty and resources are there.”⁶⁶ The land thus provided security, then as now, in difficult times.⁶⁷ Northern Saskatchewan’s Cree and Dené people clearly and powerfully articulated their concern that government interference in their way of life would lead to a reduced standard of living. As well, they knew resources in the north were fragile, valuable, and often scarce.

By entering into treaty, Indian peoples in northern Saskatchewan hoped to decrease their dependence on specific fish and game species when nature required. Government support would help carry them through lean years. The rest of the time, they would continue to rely on the fur, fish, and game resources of the region. They sought the best possible situation, and for a very short time in the post-treaty years thought they had succeeded. They hoped the treaty would be an extension of their relationship to the land and its resources. Government assistance was incorporated into their traditional and adaptive pattern of land and resource use. Their relationship to the land remained unchanged from the pre-treaty years. But as Saskatchewan moved toward more complete control of its northern resource base, Indian people found themselves threatened by increased government involvement in the management of natural resources. This was precisely the case in the 1930s and 1940s.

“I have a very sympathetic attitude toward our aborigines,” George Spence claimed in 1929.⁶⁸ Spence, provincial minister of Railways, Labour, and Industries, was responding to a federal request to establish hunting preserves for Indians in northern Saskatchewan. The provincial minister was prepared to work with the

Indian Affairs office in order to "protect the interests of the Indians."⁶⁹ Those interests, Ottawa thought, might be best protected by setting up special hunting preserves for northern Saskatchewan's Cree and Dené population. But the province, while sympathetic to the Indians' hunting needs, was concerned that the establishment of any "special preserves" might reduce the land or resource base it could exploit in the future. Regina wanted assurances that any such lands, if set aside exclusively for Indians, came out of the federal responsibility. In fact, despite his apparent sympathy for the plight of the Indians, Spence was "primarily concerned in the conservation of wild life of the province."⁷⁰ The interests of the province came first, the wildlife second, and whenever they could be accommodated, the Indians a distant third.

The 1930 Natural Resource Transfer Act (NRTA) did little to guarantee the rights enumerated in earlier treaties, but merely assured the continuance of a fragile and worsening pattern of hand-to-mouth existence for Saskatchewan's northern Indians. The Indians' hunting privileges, in the north as elsewhere, were limited to the lands where they had a "right of access."⁷¹ Embodied in the legislation was the unfolding concept that Indians should not use resources for their commercial value. That value was to be protected for the province and other commercial interests. Section twelve of the 1930 Saskatchewan Natural Resources Act (NRTA) read:

In order to secure to the Indians of the Province the continuance of the supply of game and fish for their support and subsistence, Canada agrees that the laws respecting game in force in the Province from time to time shall apply to Indians within the boundaries thereof, provided, however, that the said Indians shall have the right, which the Province hereby assures them, of hunting, trapping and fishing game and fish for food at all seasons of the year on all unoccupied Crown lands and on any other lands to which the said Indians may have a right of access.⁷²

As a result, Indians in northern Saskatchewan enjoyed only the most limited licence-free hunting privileges, often only during the provincially sanctioned open seasons. At other times during the year, game guardians and the police enforced provincial game laws on both Treaty and Non-Treaty Indians whenever they ventured off their reserve. While the NRTA certainly mitigated some of the more restrictive regulations placed on Indians more than a decade earlier, the ability or freedom to hunt for food was meaningful only if there was enough fish and game available to satisfy the needs of northern Indians. And in the face of declining fish and game stocks throughout the 1930s, the legislation became an empty or powerless attempt to protect Indian access to fish and game.⁷³

After acquiring control of its own natural resources, the provincial government moved quickly to evaluate the northern situation with an eye on directing development of the region.⁷⁴ One of the first efforts included a substantial expansion of the provincial game branch.⁷⁵ Part of this increase had to do with the fact that provincial responsibilities were expanded from the pre-transfer era, but the increased number of game guardians undoubtedly outstripped otherwise expanded responsibilities. By 1933, the province retained the services of no fewer than 369 voluntary game guardians and at least 58 paid game guardians.⁷⁶ Many of the paid staff came from the ranks of prior fishery guardians and forest rangers. The game branch of the Department of Natural Resources also employed former dominion land surveyors and land inspectors.⁷⁷ The number of positions had increased

substantially from the late pre-transfer era when paid positions totaled seventeen, only thirteen of whom ever ventured into the field.⁷⁸ Many people supported more provincial involvement in the “protection” of fish and game. And it is clear that such involvement was needed, for reports throughout the decade clearly indicated the decline of northern fish and game stocks.⁷⁹ But a stronger, more professional force of game officers actually did little to protect the quality of fish and game resources. In fact, northern Indians were even worse off than they had been before, largely because of the regulations imposed by the province.

Instructions given to new game guardians and others charged with enforcing the Game Act did little to explain the relationship between the NRTA and Indian access to fish and game resources.⁸⁰ Most of the limited instructions provided to voluntary and paid game guardians, as well as others like the RCMP, dealt with conduct and image. They had little to do with understanding the north or its resources, and least of all its people. The rules of conduct were clear: game guardians were not to be “private detectives,” but were now to announce their presence at all times; undercover activity was certainly discouraged; and above all, a 1932 circular demanded that game guardians be polite and courteous, traits which had evidently eluded the force in earlier years.⁸¹ The instructions they did receive were thus a marked change from just a few years earlier when game guardians were sent into the bush with virtually no direction save a copy of the Game Act and a citation book.⁸² In short, it was expected that a courteous, polite, and well-groomed force would command the sober respect of people in the north by their sheer presence.⁸³ But image ultimately meant little in the north. An informal but effective network of information often protected those intent on violating game laws. In 1937, for example, game supervisor C.W. Ilsley, and local game guardian William Tunstead⁸⁴ flew to Besnard Lake on a tip that Butch Sanderson was trapping beaver out of the approved season. Although Sanderson was not present when the officers arrived, Sanderson’s wife invited the wardens to look around her home. Ilsley and Tunstead were unable to find any illegal activity. Sanderson’s wife then told the two that John McKay and G. Miller warned her of the complaint; she anticipated the arrival of the law and made sure the place was clean before they arrived. The patrol, wrote Ilsley, was “very discouraging.”⁸⁵ On the same patrol Tunstead went looking for a Dené trapper who was allegedly destroying beaver lodges in the Spear Lake area. Unable to find evidence of illegal activity while reviewing the situation from the air, he went home.⁸⁶

Perhaps the most creative, and saddest, example of Indians responding to provincial interference occurred in 1938 when an “Indian ... bent on illegally shooting a moose,” waited for a wolf to kill the moose before shooting the wolf. Since the Indian hunter did not kill the moose, he could not be charged with a violation of the Game Act. As well, he was able to claim the \$10 bounty on the wolf.⁸⁷ The story was recounted as local humor in the provincial legislature, but nobody seemed to realize its larger meaning. New restrictive laws, and the creation of game preserves astride traditional hunting grounds, relegated Indians to the status of carrion collectors. D.A. Hall, the member of Parliament for the Athabasca District, found the story especially funny: “and it was a good moose, for I tasted some of it,” he quipped to local reporters.⁸⁸

What was worse than the provincial government’s intent in enforcing laws against Indians was that many field officers employed by the game branch had no

idea how to deal with the northern Cree and Dené people. Many of the new conservation force had only the foggiest sense of what Indians could and could not do under section twelve of the NRTA. "Would you kindly supply me with a copy of the Indian Act or treaty between the Indians & the Govt. & between the Indians & the Hudsons Bay Company," wrote Thomas Pugh, a district ranger who had been in the employ of the game branch for over ten years. Pugh continued with a litany of other questions regarding general hunting and trapping rights.⁸⁹ Three months later, he queried the game branch with the same questions and again received no reply.⁹⁰ Yet, he was responsible for enforcing game laws against Indians and non-Indians alike. It should come as no surprise, then, that laws were often enforced upon Indians in spite of the NRTA, since it is likely most game guardians were simply unaware of its provisions.⁹¹

Far from defending Indian access to fish and game for food, the game branch continued to entertain the concept that the Indians themselves were responsible for the decline of the game stocks. Reports were replete with complaints concerning Cree and Dené hunting. According to George Revell, one of the most active and prominent paid game guardians operating in the area between Meadow Lake and Ile à la Crosse,

one of the biggest needs of correction is among the breeds and Indians, treaty and non-treaty. Indians roaming the bush at will, summer and winter, without permit or licence, slaughtering big game in a wholesale manner for the hides and the flesh to trade or sell.⁹²

During his patrols, Revell had found the remains of several Indian hunting camps. The camps, littered with the debris of many successful hunts over several years, may very well have looked like a slaughterhouse to the game guardian. He believed more efficient enforcement was what the north needed. With that enforcement the region could be brought under control and such "slaughter" avoided. He also clearly believed Indians were the culprits, and poetically mourned the lost animals as he looked at the

bleached bones mute from the passing years, bits of hide, ill-tanned, ears of the later victims, even a frock from the hides of ground-hogs. Snares hanging in the camps, drying racks both for meat and hides by the dozen all silent evidence of where our game is going.⁹³

Others who spent time in the north shared Revell's concerns. Sydney Keighley, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company and resident of the region during the 1920s and 1930s, was especially put out by Dené hunting since he believed that "like wolves, [they] kill indiscriminately."⁹⁴

Upon receipt of Revell's report, the minister of Railways, Labour, and Industries⁹⁵ petitioned the Indian Affairs office for help in putting an end to the "slaughter" described. In the petition, the minister exaggerated the number of animals killed in the hopes of sparking the interest of Duncan Campbell Scott. Revell's most liberal estimate stood at twenty-five carcasses in one camp; in the minister's letter, the number was inflated into "twenty-five to seventy animals." "The Indians," he added, "always have some excuse."⁹⁶ Evidently, starvation and the maintenance of their standard of living were two of the most common "excuses." If only the Indians could be better supervised, argued Revell and his superiors, better protection could be afforded the fish and wildlife in the north.⁹⁷

This system of monitoring resource use and access to northern Saskatchewan meant little in the way of bona fide regulation in the north, except when it came to the Indian population. Game management strategies and practices failed miserably when they were applied to Indians and their cultural relationship to the land. In the north, although Indian peoples did make a living from the land, they also gained much more from the process. During the Churchill River Board of Inquiry hearings in 1978, Solomon Ballentyne of the Peter Ballentyne band stated that

the knowledge of how to live off the land, fishing, hunting and trapping, and the preparation and eating of northern wild game and fish delicacies are a major part of the Native culture in northern Saskatchewan. [Hunting], trapping and fishing are more than livelihoods. They are a way of life, which many people prefer and would not trade for anything. Although many people do take seasonal jobs when these are available, they do not want to permanently give up their way of life on the land.⁹⁸

Many non-Indians also recognized the historic relationship Ballentyne described. In some cases, even doctors advised the use of wild game to help cure illness among Indian peoples who felt more comfortable eating from the land. Thomas Borthwick, the agent who traveled north in 1907 with the second Treaty Ten commission, told the Indian department that "wild meat seems essential to [the] existence" of Indians in the north. This was especially true for "the aged, destitute, and sick."⁹⁹ The simple change of mind and attitude that the government sought among non-Indian hunters, and hoped for with Indian peoples, was simply short-sighted and impractical for the north, assuming as it did that the only method of managing fur, fish, and game was according to the new techniques of licences and seasons shaped around sporting activities.

The conflict was really one of value and relationship. The governments acted as custodians interested in economic gain, and the Indians acted as participants in the complex environment. Governments in both Ottawa and Regina assumed that the Indians treated the natural resources as nothing more than some large grocery market, and as supplies waned or different interests targeted the north, new, more progressive scientific management was in order. This view challenged the subsistence activities and cultural survival of the Indian peoples in northern regions. An inevitable casualty of these views, however, were often the people closest to the land and its resources.

Notes

1. National Archives of Canada [NA], Record Group [RG 10], vol. 8595, file 1/1-11-6, June 1908.
2. Anthony Gulig, "Yesterday's Promises: The Negotiation of Treaty Ten," *Saskatchewan History* 50 no. 1 (Spring 1998): 31-32.
3. Canada, *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, chapter 29, An Ordinance for the Protection of Game, (Regina: Government Printer, 1902), 128-34; Saskatchewan, *Statutes of the Province of Saskatchewan*, chapter 27, Game Act (Regina: Government Printer, 1907), 257-62.
4. Ken Coates and William Morrison, *The Forgotten North: A History of Canada's Provincial Norths* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1992), 13; Bill Waiser, *The New Northwest: The Photographs of the Crean Expeditions, 1908-1909* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1993), 12; Ronald J. Nash, *Archaeological Investigations in the Transitional Forest Zone: Northern Manitoba and Southern Keewatin, N.W.T.* (Winnipeg: The Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, 1975), 3.
5. A.J. Ray, *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 114.
6. Stephen Silwa, "Treaty Day for the Willow Cree," *Saskatchewan History* 47 no. 1 (Spring 1995): 3-4.
7. Manitoba, *Acts of the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba*, "A Bill for the Protection of Game and Fur Bearing Animals," 3rd sess., 7th legislature, (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer, 1890), 146-52.

8. Canada, *Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada*, 4th sess., 7th Parliament (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1894), 336.
9. *Ibid.*, 286, 339.
10. NA, RG 10, vol. 3692, file 14069, Secretary and Treasurer of the Manitoba Game and Fish Protection Association Charles Boxer to Thomas Greenway, 18 March 1890.
11. Janet Foster, *Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 59.
12. *Ibid.*, 106–7.
13. Canada, *Statutes of Canada*, The Indian Act, section 133, ch. 29, 53, 1890.
14. NA, RG 10, vol. 3692, file 14069, Hayter Reed to A.M. Burgess, 18 March 1884. North-West Mounted Police officers were soon authorized to act as ex-officio game guardians, as they were frequently called in Canada. As the police force evolved, enforcing game laws remained a central aspect of their duties throughout the provincial and territorial north.
15. *Ibid.*, Inspector of Indian Agencies to G. Powell, 23 April 1885.
16. Canada, *Debates of the Senate of the Dominion of Canada*, 4th sess., 7th Parliament (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1894), 336.
17. J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 200–201; Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 235.
18. Canada, *Statutes of Canada*, The Unorganized Territories Game Act, 1894, quoted in Dave De Brou and Bill Waiser (eds.), *Documenting Canada: A History of Modern Canada in Documents* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1992), 163–64; Government of the North-West Territories, 2d Legislative Assembly, *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, No. 8, 1893. The act also eliminated more restrictive legislation passed by the Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories a year earlier.
19. NA, RG 10, vol. 6756, file 400-11 part 1.
20. *Ibid.*, T. Mayne Daly, 1 June 1893; *ibid.*, W. Mullock, 1 July 1903.
21. *Ibid.*, RG 10, vol. 6756, file 400-11, part 1, Public Notice, W. Mulock, Acting Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 1 May 1903.
22. *Ibid.*; *ibid.*, RG 10, vol. 6756, file 400-11, part 1, Indian Office to McCarthy, Caler, Hoskins & Harcourt, Barristers and Solicitors, 22 April 1914.
23. Canada, *Statutes of Canada*, The Saskatchewan Act, 4-5 Edward VII, Chap. 42, section 21.
24. Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook, *Canada, 1896–1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 75.
25. Saskatchewan, *Statutes of the Province of Saskatchewan*, 2d sess., An Act to Amend Chapter 29 of the Ordinances of 1903 (second session): An Ordinance for the Protection of Game (Regina: John Reid, Government Printer, 1907), 257–59.
26. The original *Unorganized Territories' Game Preservation Act*, 1894, exempted Indians from the general provisions of the Ordinance with the exception of buffalo and musk oxen. The 1903 version stated that the ordinance applied to Indians wherever the Indian office saw fit to make it apply. Compare, for example, the 1903 Ordinance for the Protection of Game, *Ordinances of the North West Territories* (Regina: John A. Reid, Government Printer, 1903), 128–33, with An Act for the Protection of Game, *Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan* (Regina: John Reid, Government Printer, 1909), 1824–31.
27. Ken S. Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840–1973* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 244.
28. Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended June 30 1902*, Sessional Paper no. 27 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1903), xxii.
29. *Ibid.*, Report of W.J. Chisholm, Inspector of Indian Agencies, 184.
30. Anthony Gulig, "Sizing Up the Catch: Native-Newcomer Resource Competition and the Early years of Saskatchewan's Northern Commercial Fishery" *Saskatchewan History* 47 no. 2 (Fall 1995): 3–12.
31. NA, RG 23, vol. 1003, file 721-4-37, pt. 41, H.W. Stallworthy to RCMP "G" Division, Edmonton, Alberta, 1 October 1929.
32. Denesuliné is the name used by members of the Fond du Lac, Black Lake, and Hatchet Lake peoples to refer to themselves. Politically, they now call themselves the Athabasca Denesuliné. See Canada, Indian Claims Commission, *Athabasca Denesuliné Inquiry: Report on [the] Claim of the Fond du Lac, Black Lake, and Hatchet Lake First Nations* (Ottawa: Indian Claims Commission, 1993), 1.
33. NA, RG 10 vol. 6921, file 779/28-3, pt. 3, H.W. Lewis to Department of Indian Affairs, n.d., 1935.
34. *Ibid.*, RG 23, vol. 1003, file 721-4-37, pt. 41, R.T. Rodd to W.J.E. Casey, 22 April 1930.
35. *Ibid.*, Rodd to W.J.E. Casey, 22 April 1930.
36. Gulig, "Sizing Up the Catch," 6.

37. H.L. Fraser, to Jas Ritchie, 14 July 1925, quoted in Indian Claims Commission, *Athabasca Denesuliné Inquiry*, 66–67. There was an occasional voice of reason concerning the Indian hunting and fishing in the north. RCMP officer H.L. Fraser did warn that restrictions on Indian hunting and fishing “contravenes the treaty.” The current Indian Claims Commission has suggested that the government of Canada “almost without exception, rose to defend [Indian] exercise of [treaty] rights.” This is simply not true. To the contrary, it was only the occasional voice of people like Fraser that urged the protection of treaty rights.
38. NA, RG 23, vol. 1003, file 721-4-37, pt. 41, R.T. Rodd to W.J.E. Casey, 22 April 1930.
39. Saskatchewan, *Department of Natural Resources, Annual Reports, 1930–31–1940*.
40. *Ibid.*
41. P.G. Downes, *Sleeping Island: The Story of One Man's Travels in the Great Barren Lands of the Canadian North* (Toronto: Longman, Green, and Company, 1943, reprint; Saskatoon: Western Prairie Producer Books, 1988), 34.
42. Saskatchewan, *New Deal for Saskatchewan Fisheries* (Regina: Kings Printer, 1948), 3; Gulig, “Sizing up the Catch,” 7.
43. Saskatchewan, *New Deal for Saskatchewan Fisheries*, 3.
44. NA, RG 23, vol. 1003, file 721-4-37, pt 41, W.A. Found to G.C. MacDonald, 6 March 1928.
45. Saskatchewan Archives Board [SAB], Department of Natural Resources [DNR], *Royal Commission on Saskatchewan Fisheries*, Records of Evidence of Findings, Meadow Lake Testimony (3 vols.), vol. 1, 8 July 1946, 1: 157.
46. NA, RG 23, vol. 1003, file 721-4-37, pt. 41, R.T. Rodd to W.J.E. Casey, 22 April 1930.
47. *Ibid.*, RG 10, file 420-11, part 1, Thomas Borthwick to Department of Indian Affairs, 20 November 1909.
48. *Ibid.*, RG 10, vol. 6756, file 400-11, part 1, Indian Office to McCarthy, Caler, Hoskins & Harcourt, Barristers and Solicitors, 22 April 1914; Samuel Wolf to J.D. McLean, 11 April 1914.
49. *Ibid.*, McLean to Wolf, 11 April 1914.
50. Canada, Commission of Conservation. *National Conference on Conservation of Game, Fur-Bearing Animals, and Other Wild Life* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1919), 146.
51. *Ibid.*, 28.
52. SAB, Department of the Attorney General [ATG], Saskatchewan Provincial Police, Annual Report of the Saskatchewan Provincial Police, 1923, file B, folder 5.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Clifford Sifton, quoted in Commission of Conservation. *Report of the Ninth Annual Meeting Held at Ottawa, November 27–28 1917* (Ottawa: Kings Printer, 1918), 134–35.
55. NA, RG 10, vol. 6731, file 420-1, “Public Notice,” Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 10 March 1919. The shaded regions in Figure 1 identify the areas in which game laws applied to Indians who were members of certain bands in southern, central, and northern Saskatchewan according to public notices issued by the Indian office in 1893 and 1903, and 1919.
56. Saskatchewan, *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Saskatchewan* (John Reid: King's Printer, 1922), 357.
57. SAB, DNR, file 21, Big Game, General, Frank A. Parks to F. Bradshaw 23 December 1918.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, 357.
60. *Ibid.*, 357–58.
61. Saskatchewan, *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Saskatchewan* (John Reid: King's Printer, 1923), 300–301.
62. Saskatchewan, *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Saskatchewan* (John Reid: King's Printer, 1924), 302.
63. SAB, DNR, file 21, Parks to Bradshaw, 23 December 1918.
64. Saskatchewan, *R. v. Harry Catarat and James Sylvestre*, Provincial Court of Saskatchewan, Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan, Testimony of Isidore Toby Campbell, 24 September 1996 [Trial Transcripts], TMs., 4: 655.
65. Churchill Committee, “Brief Presented to the Churchill River Board of Inquiry,” TMs, 1978, 152.
66. Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association, “Brief Presented to the Churchill River Board of Inquiry,” TMs, 1978, 4.
67. Peter Usher, “Fair Game?” *Nature Canada* 11, no. 1 (1982): 5–11.
68. NA, RG 10, vol. 6756, file 420-11, pt. 2, G. Spence to Charles Stewart, 12 February 1929. In 1929, Saskatchewan's game branch reported to the Ministry of Railways, Labour and Industries.
69. *Ibid.*

70. Ibid.
71. Canada, *Statutes of Canada*, The Saskatchewan Natural Resources Act, sec. 12, 30 May 1930.
72. Ibid.
73. NA, RG 10, vol. 6756, file 420-11, pt. 5, D.C. Scott to the premiers of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, 30 March 1931.
74. Coates and Morrison, *The Forgotten North*, 51. Coates and Morrison state that "There were in any case fewer dreams of northern empire in Manitoba and Saskatchewan than elsewhere in Canada." By comparison to northern Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, this may be true, but in contrast to the dearth of both federal and provincial interest, excepting fisheries, prior to 1930, the decade marks a pivotal phase in the worsening situation of Indian northerners.
75. Evelyn Eager, *The Departmental Organization of the Government of Saskatchewan to April 30, 1936* (n.p.: 1956), 63-64, 136.
76. The real draw for many "volunteer" game guardians was the free hunting licence that came along with the job. The courtesy was extended to the Saskatchewan provincial police force a decade earlier and continued as a "perk" for the RCMP as well.
77. SAB, DNR, box 2, folder 13, Game Branch, Miscellaneous Correspondence of the Game Commissioner, 1926-1942, Ayre to J.T.M. Anderson, 15 March 1933.
78. Ibid., folder 14, Game Branch, Miscellaneous Correspondence of the Game Commissioner, 1926-1942, April 1929; SAB, DNR, file 3, Game Branch, Correspondence with R.T. Cook, [Circular] To All Field Officers in the Prince Albert District, H.L. Agnew, August 1932.
79. Saskatchewan, *Department of Natural Resources, Annual Reports, 1930-31-1940*; Canada, Sessional Papers, *Annual Reports of the Department of Indian Affairs, 1930-1940*.
80. The game guardians were also part of a substantial effort undertaken in the 1930s to evaluate the condition of Saskatchewan's northern natural resources. Indian agents and treaty paying commissions sent north every year also collected a body of evidence clearly indicating that fish and game management was serving very few people, if anybody in the north. In fact, the reports did little but serve in documenting the decline of fish and game stocks.
81. SAB, DNR, box 2, folder 14, Game Branch, Miscellaneous Correspondence of the Game Commissioner, 1926-1942, April 1929; SAB, DNR, file 3, Game Branch, Correspondence with R.T. Cook, [Circular] To All Field Officers in the Prince Albert District, H.L. Agnew, August 1932.
82. See, for example R.D. Symons, *Many Patrols: Reminiscences of a Game Officer* (Regina: Coteau Books, 1994), 3.
83. SAB, DNR, Game Branch, Correspondence with Field Officers and District Superintendents, 1932-1941, A.E. Etter to G.H. Revell, 31 December 1932. During the previous year there were several allegations against game guardian George Revell. The investigation turned up an interesting mix of people who respected Revell and those who hated him. In the end, his superior supported him and he remained in the district. Later that year, the investigation against him having been concluded, he petitioned to be allowed to carry a handgun while on patrol. Revell wrote that he wanted the revolver for protection "while on duty in the north." After some debate, he was allowed to carry a .38 caliber revolver while on patrol.
84. William, or Bill Tunstead as he was known in the area, later became an Indian Agent. Later reports of Tunstead suggest that he was very concerned with documenting the activities of Indians in the area between Canoe and Cree lakes. See Indian Claims Commission, Canoe Lake [testimony, Testimony of] Marius Iron, 18 January 1993, 1: 25.
85. SAB, DNR, file 7, Game Branch, Prince Albert, C.W. Ilsley to J.R. Hill, 13 March 1937, re: Stanley.
86. Ibid., C.W. Ilsley to J.R. Hill, 13 March 1937, re: Île à la Crosse.
87. Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, 6 July 1938.
88. Regina *Leader-Post*, 7 July 1938.
89. NA, RG 10, vol. 6756, file 420-11, pt. 3, Thomas Pugh to Indian Affairs, 7 October 1932.
90. SAB, DNR, folder 5, box 1, Game Branch, Miscellaneous Correspondence of the Game Commissioner, 1926-1942, Pugh to A.E. Etter, 31 December 1932.
91. Incidentally, Pugh did not ask for a copy of the NRTA, nor was it explained to him.
92. SAB, DNR, Game Branch, folder 25, box 3, Miscellaneous Correspondence of the Game Commissioner, 1926-1942, G.H. Revell to Game Branch, n.d. (ca. 1932), 1.
93. Ibid., 2. Revell also put forth the "general complaint in the vicinity coming from a few upholders of law and order about gun toting, by *New Canadians*, Central Europeans, generally." Revell's complaint about the immigrants in the region was that they hunted with hand guns—not unlike the one he carried for protection (emphasis in original).

94. Sydney Augustus Keighley, *Trader, Tripper, Trapper: The Life of a Bay Man* (Winnipeg: Watson Dwyer, 1989), 143.
95. Game Branch reportage was frequently shifted to different ministries over time. For several years in the late 1920s and early 1930s, it reported to the Minister of Labour, Railways, and Industries.
96. SAB, DNR, Game Branch, folder 25, box 3, Miscellaneous Correspondence of the Game Commissioner, 1926–1942, Saskatchewan minister of railways, labour and industries to D.C. Scott, 11 March 1932.
97. *Ibid.*, DNR, Correspondence of the Game Branch, file 4, W. G. Tunstead to A.E. Etter, 4 June 1935. Revell was no exception in demanding more patrols and an increased guard against Indian hunting and fishing in the north. Virtually all the provincial game guardians operating in the area shared his views. They also called for regular patrols from airplanes that would allow them greater and faster access to the region.
98. Churchill Committee, *Brief Presented to the Churchill River Board of Inquiry Representing Pelican Narrows LAC; Stanley Mission LAC; Southend LAC; Deschambault Lake LAC; Sandy Bay LAC* (n.p., 1978), 6.
99. NA, RG 10, vol. 6756, file 400-11, part 1, Borthwick to Department of Indian Affairs, 21 June 1910.