

encouraged, but the fur trade certainly was. Scores of canoes plied the rivers throughout the territory.

In their quest for fur-bearing animals, however, the fur traders opened up much of Rupert's Land and paved the way for the settlers who eventually followed. Indeed, the origins of many of Manitoba's communities can be traced back to the forts established by the two fur-trading organizations, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company based in Montreal.

Competition for furs was fierce. Rivalry between the two firms became so bitter that they decided to merge rather than risk further bloodshed. Consequently, a "new" Hudson's Bay Company was organized in 1821.

As more and more men were recruited to trade for furs with the Indians and to transport skins to market, the operation began to require vast quantities of food-stuffs. Until the early nineteenth century, provisions had to be shipped by water from eastern Canada or from England. But in 1812, settlement was allowed in the southern parts of Manitoba. Lord Selkirk, who obtained a tract of land from the Hudson's Bay Company, brought many of his Scottish crofters to the Red River district where they grew garden crops and grain to feed the fur traders. The harsh winters and

floods were the worst of many natural hardships that the settlers had to endure. If frosts and flood waters did not ruin the crops, grasshoppers could be counted on to attack them.

The Indians and especially the *Métis* people (of mixed Indian and European blood) of the Red River Valley became alarmed when settlers started to trickle into the area. Indeed, until the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company the colony periodically found itself caught up in the fur trade war. The most notorious example occurred in 1816 when Governor Robert Semple and 19 colonists died in a clash with the *Métis*, afterwards called the Seven Oaks massacre.

Until the 1840s the Red River Colony grew at its own pace. Owing to the scarcity of new colonists, it was a slow pace. With the opening up of the American West, the colony was presented with new problems and new opportunities.

As the years passed, settlers came from the south and east rather than from the north. With the influx of people from Ontario into the Red River Colony in the 1860s, a struggle between old and new emerged. The *Métis* feared the buffalo would be exterminated, while the old settlers were concerned that they would be swept