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The Indian Commissioners: Agents of the State and Indian Policy in Canada's Prairie West, 1873-1932. By Brian Titley.

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the early battles it waged, it certainly had scored some success by 1950 and brought national attention to Indian concerns. Most important, it was the NCAI, and not the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA), as she implies, that took the lead in slowing or stopping termination and relocation (17). From the late 1940s until the official end of the termination movement, NCAI stood steadfast in stopping the devastating policy. In 1954, NCAI held an emergency conference in Washington, D.C., that aggressively and successfully led to an end to the termination policy. The AAIA participated in the conference but took its direction from NCAI leaders. Ironically, it was then NCAI Executive Director Helen Peterson, a Northern Cheyenne, but enrolled Oglala Lakota, who directed the campaign from the basement of her home. Given Sandoz's close affinity with the Northern Cheyenne and Lakota, it is quite surprising that there would not be correspondence between Sandoz and Peterson. Certainly, both were strong-willed individuals who would have been powerful allies. If those letters are not part of the Sandoz Collection, I strongly suspect that there is correspondence between the two contained in the Helen Peterson Papers at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Moreover, much of NCAI's leadership during the 1940s and 1950s hailed from the northern plains, and surely Sandoz corresponded with some of them.

Regardless, this is a minor quibble and only intended to make a fine book an even better one. The book offers a nice introduction to the valuable letters and correspondence that Sandoz generously left behind for scholars to probe. Lee's edited work and Sandoz's writings stand at the crossroads of the history of the plains and American West, American Indian and women's history, and literature.

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**The Indian Commissioners: Agents of the State and Indian Policy in Canada's Prairie West, 1873–1932.** By Brian Titley. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2009. 288 pages. \$39.95 paper.

Few books on Canadian Indian policy deal with or focus primarily on the individual actors involved either in the formulation of the policy or in its implementation. Ian Getty and Antoine Lussier's *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows* (1983) is an edited collection of readings containing several articles that focus, to some extent, on the individual personalities and backgrounds of some key public servants who shaped Canada's early Indian administration. Brian Titley authored an earlier work (*A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell*

Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada, 1986) about D. C. Scott, who from 1913 to 1932 was Canada's deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, which then was the highest nonpolitical public office responsible for Indian policy in Canada. Perhaps Canada's cultural aversion to celebrating individualism has limited the academic treatment of these significant personalities. Or perhaps the policies and their representation of the state role in Canadian society so overshadow the individuals that most academic effort has focused on those policies and the relentless efforts of the federal government to implement them.

Titley seems aware of this when he states in the preface to *The Indian Commissioners* that in "employing the biographical essay as the organizing principle, I am influenced by Lawrence Stone's claim that Le Roy Ladurie's notion of 'history without people' has gone out of favour and that 'the narration of a very detailed story of a single incident or personality can make both good reading and good sense'" (x). With this in mind, Titley sets out to explore the development and implementation of Canadian Indian policy as it applied to Manitoba and the Northwest Territories (modern-day Saskatchewan and Alberta) in Canada's immediate post-Confederation period. To do this, he focuses not only on the individuals who assumed primary responsibility for the execution of Indian policy in the west—the Indian commissioners—but also on the policy's principal objectives to civilize and prepare Indians for assimilation into the dominant Canadian society. Titley further identifies three strategic elements on which the ultimate—though never realized—success of these objectives rested: schooling, agriculture, and cultural repression. Each chapter, more or less, is thus constructed around the individual commissioner in question and his ability to implement programs that reflected these elements and supported the overall objectives. Finally, Titley attempts to examine all this within what might loosely be described as the debate between agency and structure, "the confluence of the personal and the political—that elusive space in which individuals and structures intersect and the course of events is shaped" (x).

Drawing on archival and secondary sources, Titley examines six individual commissioners in turn: J. A. N. Provencher, David Laird (who held the post twice), Edgar Dewdney, Hayter Reed, Amédée Emmanuel Forget, and William Morris Graham. He first introduces the broad parameters of Canadian Indian policy by identifying its roots in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, subsequent British colonial policy, and its gradual adaptation and corruption by the United Canadas that existed just prior to 1867, the year of Canadian Confederation. By 1867, the Indians of eastern Canada—that is, those who occupied lands east of Manitoba and in the southern, settled portions—were largely confined to reserves and of no worry to the federal government. The major project lay to the west. In the west, the Indians still formed the great majority of the

population, and it was imperative for the government to establish a dominant presence in order to resist American incursion and to secure the land as a continental pathway for the continued expansion of British interests through to the Pacific and beyond. To do this, the government had to make a treaty with the Indians, establish reserves for them, and control and plan their futures. In short, the Indians had to be subjugated, appeased, and managed.

Because opening up the west was such a unique enterprise, it was not seen as immediately possible to implement the same organization of Indian administration in the field—based on Indian agencies—that was prevalent in eastern Canada. Thus, besides those men whose principal job it was to negotiate the several treaties that were required, it also fell upon the Indian commissioner and his newly established office to bear the responsibility in assuring that these broad policy objectives were accomplished. Besides being a member of a special, three-man Board of Indian Commissioners, the Indian commissioner was responsible for the daily administration of Indian policy in the field. Each chapter is thus a discrete exploration of Indian policy in the west under the guidance of each Indian commissioner, the impact each commissioner had on the policy, and its success and the inevitable tensions that existed between the central administration in Ottawa and the work of the commissioners in the field.

The strength of the book lies, perhaps ironically, in how Titley traces the transformation of the Canadian west from the homelands of once proud, independent, self-sufficient peoples to the settler society of land-hungry Europeans bent on its division and exploitation. To be sure, once the Canadian west was opened for settlement, the First Nations—principally the Cree, Dakotas, and Blackfoot—were already in trouble, mainly because the expansion of the American West had led to the eradication of the buffalo and greatly disrupted traditional hunting and gathering patterns. The Indians by and large were ready to come to terms with the Canadian government that offered, in contrast to American policy, peace rather than warfare. Indians in Canada's west generally thought that peace and treaty making with the Canadian government meant some form of mutual accommodation and sharing of the land: this was not to be. Once confined to their reserves, Indians were soon subjected to a variety of programs meant to transform them into "civilized" peoples. At first, the emphasis was on agriculture—something to which most Indians did not object—and the encouragement of ranching and cultivation of the land. Very quickly, however, the education of Indian children became important as a means of separating them as a generation from their parents and of teaching them the ways of the white man. This was followed by more culturally repressive measures that included the banning of rites and practices such as the Sun Dance. None of these repressive measures went without First Nations

resistance and government reprisal. For example, Titley expertly explores the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 and the accompanying sympathetic uprisings among Indians. The introduction of industrial schools—forerunners to the notorious residential schools—based on reformatory school models met with mixed results, in large part because Indian parents withdrew their children from them due to the abuse they suffered. Titley demonstrates that the physical and sexual abuse of Indian children in these institutions was an early and well-known problem. Further resistance occurred when attempts to ban cultural practices were ignored by First Nations, practiced covertly, or—in a supreme irony—performed at the behest of white commercial interests at local fairs and exhibitions!

To what extent then were the individual commissioners active agents in the formulation and implementation of these policies and programs? We certainly learn that each of these men was a man of ambition, ambition that was satisfied mainly through political-party loyalty and patronage appointment. Each man had his individual differences and similarities. Provencher, Reed, and Forget had legal training. Reed had also been a career soldier before joining the Department of the Interior. Laird was a Presbyterian theologian, journalist, and politician (he had been minister of the Interior and superintendent general of Indian Affairs in Alexander Mackenzie's cabinet). Dewdney was a British engineer and, prior to being commissioner, had an important career in the colony of British Columbia. He was the only one not born in Canada. Graham, whose father was at one time the superintendent of Indian Affairs in Manitoba, had a high school education and followed his father into the Indian administration. Despite their various backgrounds, they were, to a man, surprisingly cut from the same cloth insofar as their attitudes toward, understanding of, and treatment of First Nations were concerned. None of them, with the exception of Graham, had ever shown any particular interest in Indians prior to their appointments; rather they accepted their appointments in the interest of their personal advancement and in the advancement of the interests of the state. Their individual agency was more a reflection of the level of their zealotry in implementing Ottawa's broad policies rather than in any fundamental disagreement with them. If they rose above structure, it was not in any Althusserian sense—these were men who did not reflect on the nature of liberal capitalism but accepted its premises as the way life was meant to be. Of the six men, Dewdney, Reed, and Graham were the most dynamic and, for better or worse, the most influential in how they quelled Native unrest, pressed assimilation policies upon the Natives, and urged Ottawa to provide more money to get the job done—even though they were parsimonious in their own spending on Indians, especially when destitution and relief were at issue. Laird, although responsible for bringing more Indians into

treaty, was largely ineffectual and never comfortable as Indian commissioner. Forget, a faithful liberal, did little to advance policy but did effect the complete reorganization of the western Indian administration, which resulted in greater centralization in Ottawa. The first commissioner, Provencher, turned out to be dissolute and corrupt. He was not alone—Reed and Graham also had odors of scandal around them. In sum, these men were, as the book's title implies, agents of the state: no more, no less. Though apparently active, forceful men, they were, in reality, passive agents ultimately guided by the structure and superstructure that enveloped and propelled them into the roles that they were assigned to perform.

Titley has made a fine contribution to our understanding of Canadian Indian policy and its crucial role in the settlement of the west. His attention to detail and allowing archival material to speak for itself are superb. His writing is accessible and entertaining. One minor point: a map of western Canada showing the Numbered Treaties would greatly aid a nonfamiliar reader. The book disappoints only in one major respect; Titley could have pressed his own analysis and assessment of these men more thoroughly and completely. In the end, he neglects to answer his own question directly—where do individuals and structure intersect?

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**Julius Seyler and the Blackfeet: An Impressionist at Glacier National Park.** By William E. Farr. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009. 259 pages. \$45.00 cloth.

*Julius Seyler and the Blackfeet* is a book that at once piqued my interest and caused me deep disgust, not because of anything that the German impressionist painter Julius Seyler from Munich painted about the Blackfeet during 1913 and 1914, nor was it over anything that is written about the Blackfeet or Seyler's relationship with them. To the contrary, I could not put the book down once I began to read its celebrated pages and marvel at the photographs of Blackfeet people that my father or grandfather assuredly knew as friends. However, because I have such deep-seated psychological revulsions centered on the time Seyler was living in East Glacier Park, Montana—when Seyler was in my hometown—I questioned whether I was the appropriate person to write this review. Let me explain.

During the late 1940s, I was growing up as a child on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, a scant three and a half decades after the time that Seyler was a