

Report 13
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The Forks : Post 1870

Storyline

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Preface: Report 13

This report is the final draft of a storyline to be used by Environment Canada, Parks, Visitor Activities Division in the development of interpretive displays for The Forks National Historic Site. The storyline is an extrapolation of historical research, as presented in a draft manuscript dated September 1986 to meet requirements of Parks contract No. 501/84-61. Also included in this report is a selection of maps and photos (with drafts of captions) which represent approximately one-third of the iconographic material that will be used in the final manuscript. Please note that the items included in this report have been selected predominantly for their illustrative value.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1870 only a small agricultural and fur trading settlement existed near the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and Upper Fort Garry. During the next fifty years, as the City of Winnipeg became a major transportation center in the West, the Forks was transformed by urban and industrial developments that significantly changed the Canadian landscape in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The changes to the Forks between 1870 and 1923 occurred as Canada was transformed from a British colony to a modern industrial nation. This rise to nationhood derived from the demise of a fur-trading economy and the emergence of large scale agricultural, industrial and manufacturing activity. Settlement and industrial growth in the West were critical to Canadian economic development that began around the Forks after Confederation. While the national significance of the site waned as the City of Winnipeg expanded after the 1880s, the Forks was a microcosm which reflected the widespread socio-economic changes affecting all Canadian regions and localities at the turn of the century.

Background - In two decades preceding Confederation, the Canadian economy underwent an uneven period of development. New towns and villages sprang up everywhere in the Atlantic region, along the St. Lawrence basin, and on the agricultural frontier around the Great Lakes. Linked by canals and railways, and encroaching on the countryside with their shipyards and factories, the established cities were ample evidence of the emergence of a new urban and industrial order. The process of economic growth gathered momentum in the 1870s, when Confederation stimulated the spread of urban and industrial growth west of the Canadian Shield. By 1886 the prairies were fully integrated into a national political economy that would soon experience the dynamic impact of the industrial revolution.

Many interrelated forces contributed to the incorporation of the West into the political and economic sphere of central Canada, but among the most significant were the campaigns of Ontario commercial and industrial leaders. Their efforts resulted in the formation of a blueprint for urban and

industrial development that would later become known as the 'national policy' - "collectively that group of policies and instruments which were designed to transform the British North American territories of the mid-nineteenth century into a political and economic unit."¹ Motivated by the economic potential of the West, and fearing the pull of this undeveloped frontier into the American orbit, the fathers of Confederation began to construct the national policy plans in the Confederation debates of the 1860s.

The national policy was "imperialistic in economic design," and "imperialistic towards the West specifically."² Its creators envisioned the development of "a new frontier, an area where commercial and financial activity could readily expand and where labour and capital might find profitable employment."³ The fulfillment of the national dream depended on a federal union which would transform policy into action using the instruments of tariff protection, railroad construction, and settlement. Tariffs would protect home industry, railways would promote development by stimulating trade and immigration, and settlement would furnish the labour and capital that were essential to economic growth.

Confederation and the national policy had a direct and dramatic effect on the growth of cities in the West. The transfer of Hudson's Bay Company territory to Canada, the entry of Manitoba into Confederation, the arrival of settlers throughout the 1870s and 1880s, and the construction of the CPR line all contributed to the transformation of the townsite near the Forks into a metropolis. Control of this western locality by the federal government created a political economy in which trade between Winnipeg and other regional centers became more pronounced, and in which Winnipeg became dominant over its immediate hinterland. The application of new technologies to transportation enlarged the capacity for trade and commerce. Consequently, rail and waterway traffic increased dramatically. Cities such as Winnipeg were able to develop their own local and regional markets and to expand their own local consumer markets due to several spurts of population growth between 1870 and 1923.

Urbanization and industrialization were the twin motors of change that transformed the Forks and thousands of other small settlements across Canada. In the 1870s, the Forks was one focal point of early stages of urbanization in Winnipeg. From its beginnings in the fur trade the Forks soon became part of a city that functioned as the principal distribution and transportation centre in the West. Its role in transporting prairie-bound immigrants to farms and towns established the site as an important place in western Canadian settlement. Winnipeg became the focus of national attention when the Manitoba Government successfully challenged the CPR monopoly and chartered the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway to establish its yards and offices at the Forks. The struggle between the federal and provincial authorities in the 1880s was symbolic of the regional disparities that grew out of Confederation. Subsequently, the Forks emerged from successive periods of urban growth into a railway yard, thus becoming a symbol of the maturation of the modern industrial economy when a series of railway companies merged to form the Canadian National (CN) system in 1923.

II. Winnipeg and the Junction: A Metropolis in the Making, 1870-1886.

In 1870 vestiges of the fur trade and rural life still dominated the landscape around the Forks. The stone walls and round turrets of Upper Fort Garry loomed above the flat horizon near the site, at the center of a small built environment that sustained the various agricultural and commercial activities of the fur trade. But, between these two separate settlements, the small wooden buildings of the village of Winnipeg comprised a newer built environment that was fashioned by the free traders for their own commercial and financial needs. In the 1870s and 1880s, under the auspices of the national policy and railway development, this village grew rapidly into a city that absorbed and redefined the role of the Forks in the local economy.

Before the Metropolis - Prior to Confederation the prairie West was a stark contrast to the populated, agriculturally developed and proto-industrial landscape of central and Atlantic Canada. The territory of the Hudson Bay river system was still the preserve of the fur trade economy. On the prairies, the Metis were reeling from the decline of the buffalo hunt, while a few small agricultural settlements provided supplies for the fur trade posts and church missions in the Red River basin.

The Canadian Shield isolated the North-West from eastern Canada and prevented trade from developing between the two regions. Consequently, the West moved closer to the economic sphere of the United States. Trade between Red River and American fur trade posts began as early as the 1820s when settlers and Indians started to ignore Hudson's Bay Company fur trading rights. By 1843 the American Fur Trading Company had "established a line of carts between Pembina and St. Paul on the Mississippi to handle the Red River Trade."⁴ Other U.S. companies sprang up at Pembina, and the North-South connection became stronger as American railway lines stretched further west across the continent. By the late 1850s more than 1500 wagons and Red River carts journeyed from Red River to St. Paul. Even the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) used this route to ship supplies to its forts and trading posts located in the North-Western interior. The increase of trade inspired St. Paul merchants to sponsor the construction of a steamboat to navigate the Red and

Assiniboine Rivers. The arrival of this boat, the Anson Northup, in May 1859, ushered in a new era of trade at Red River. Throughout the 1860s more goods were shipped to Red River by boat and cart, and with the growth of trade came a small influx of American free traders who settled amidst the majority of Canadians at the village of Winnipeg near Upper Fort Garry. Here they lived within a community of artisans and traders, numbering no more than 100, which had built a jail, a church, and some small wood frame buildings that were used as stores, houses and hotels. The saloonkeepers, general store owners and traders had established themselves as close as possible to the locus of trade in the area, the HBC store near the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.⁵

The Land Transfer and the Riel Resistance - In the 1860s, the domination of the HBC and of aboriginal land ownership was challenged as the national policy began to take shape in central Canada. Settlers who came to Red River instituted a new form of ownership based on private property held under squatter's rights rather than under common occupancy.⁶ The Nor'Wester, for example, described this form of land tenure as being "precisely the same with the newcomer as it was with the Hudson's Bay Company - you hold as you occupy and no more."⁷ Metis fears for their cultural and property rights were heightened by the appearance of survey parties in 1869, and by rumours circulated by the Canadians at Winnipeg that white settlers would turn the countryside into a frontier for trade and agriculture after the HBC territory of Rupert's Land was transferred to the Canadian government. The Metis, led by John Bruce and Louis Riel, formed a 'National Committee' that was intended to pressure the English government to guarantee Metis property rights. On October 30, 1869 the National Committee turned away the self-proclaimed Lieutenant Governor, William MacDougall, at Pembina. A few days later, on November 3, a party of approximately 200 Metis crossed the Assiniboine at the Forks and took control of Upper Fort Garry.

The dramatic events which led to Manitoba's entry into Confederation took place at the Forks in the winter of 1869-1870, when the Metis occupied Fort Garry and held custody of most of the provisions at Red River. Increasing tension between the Metis and the Canadians culminated in the execution of

Thomas Scott by Riel's party in March 1870. The act aroused bitterness between French and English in central Canada and forced John A. Macdonald, the Canadian Prime Minister, to appease Quebec by negotiating terms of Confederation with inhabitants of Red River, while Riel fled to the United States.

Federal and Provincial Government Presence Established - In 1870 the Forks was still at the heart of the Red River settlement, a fact emphasized by the Metis' decision to occupy Upper Fort Garry. In the aftermath of the HBC land transfer to Canada, Upper Fort Garry acquired a new function as the temporary seat of the provincial government. As well, the Fort served as a military headquarters for the troops sent by the federal government to Red River after the execution of Thomas Scott. As many as 300 men of the Wolseley Expedition were stationed at the Fort in the late summer of 1870; then they were replaced by Ontario militia until late 1872 when the Osborne barracks were built. These troops purchased their supplies from the Winnipeg traders. The HBC flats to the northeast of the Fort still functioned as a place where fur trading parties camped to trade at the Fort and at Winnipeg. Within a few years, however, the federal government constructed its Dominion Lands Offices and immigrant sheds nearby. The appearance of these buildings near the Forks was physical evidence of arrival of the national policy in the West.⁸

The objectives of the national policy were brought home to the local population of free traders and Metis upon the arrival of the first Lieutenant Governor in August 1870. A.G. Archibald promised that "new routes of communication would connect the West with the eastern province,"⁹ but even before these plans could be put into effect, the Dominion Lands policy was employed to prepare the way for settlement. Colonel Wolseley's troops were given grants of lands of 160 acres each, and rumours of railways and the opening of the western frontier contributed to a real estate boom in 1871-1872. Control over Rupert's Land by Canada and the Province of Manitoba marked the beginning of the displacement of Indians to federally administered reserve lands.

Metropolitan Growth and Expansion - Early metropolitan growth (indicated by the achievement of financial maturity and political organization, improved transportation, and the appearance of manufacturing and industry) was evident at Red River soon after the end of the Metis resistance in 1869-1870.

In this regard, change at the Forks was part of a broad strategy by the HBC as early as the 1850s and 1860s to protect its fur trade activities by changing its corporate structure. Under increasing competition in the Northwest and the decline of the fur trade monopoly in central Canada, the HBC began to centralize its operations in ways similar to those of other companies during the emergence of capitalism in England and parts of North America during the nineteenth century.

The HBC's new direction meant extensive re-organization at its fur trade posts in the 1870s and 1880s. At Fort Garry Donald A. Smith, James A. Grahame, and later C.J. Brydges were chosen to implement new policies with respect to land, merchandising and transportation. Upper Fort Garry could not accommodate the resulting administrative bureaucracy that congregated in Winnipeg. In 1874 the HBC built two brick buildings at the corner of Main Street and Broadway to compensate for the lack of space within the Fort. By 1882 these functioned as the HBC's General Offices consisting of the manager, J.J. Hargrave, the Chief Commissioner, J.A. Grahame, a cashier, an accountant and six clerks.¹⁰

Changes in transportation were a key factor in modernizing the HBC and in the promotion of metropolitan growth. The costs of conventional transport of provisions to the interior and extraction of furs increased in the mid-nineteenth century. After the maiden voyage of the Anson Northup in 1859 and its purchase shortly thereafter, the HBC began to build riverboats capable of navigating the interior river systems. With its "policy of maintaining a controlling interest in rival transportation concerns" the Company was able to secure a monopoly over river transport on the Red River until 1878. This control contributed to its unpopularity among citizens of Winnipeg in the 1870s because the steamboats docked at Fort Garry, forcing local merchants to

travel by cart from their properties further north to pick up their goods. The appearance in 1872 of the Selkirk, a St. Paul riverboat, resulted in a drop in freight rates and the amalgamation of the HBC and Hull, Briggs and Co., the owner of the Selkirk, in the Red River Transportation Company. With the HBC monopoly thus still firmly in place, local merchants modernized their own businesses. Winnipeg's first fire engines, printing presses and factory equipment were all imported by boats which docked at the Forks. In the summer of 1875 "the first installment of McKenzie's celebrated steel rails" for the intercontinental arrived on the Cheyenne and two years later the Selkirk brought the first CPR locomotive to Winnipeg. With the railway making its impact felt across the West, officials such as Brydges, Smith, and Hargrave realized the limitations of the steamboat and foresaw for the HBC a future in railroads. In 1877 and 1878, for example, Grahame became involved in a scheme to acquire the St. Paul and Pacific Railway.¹¹

Re-organization of the HBC's corporate structure had a dramatic effect on its economic activities at the Forks between 1870 and 1886. During the early and mid-1870s the Company began to expand its retail trade. The retail store at Upper Fort Garry was renovated in 1871. Later other retail buildings were constructed on Main Street north of Broadway. By the 1880s these retail operations confirmed the HBC identity in Winnipeg as a "branch operation and an important agent for distribution"¹² A warehouse was built southeast of the Fort on the HBC's vacant reserve land to accommodate the steamboat traffic on the Red River. In 1877-78 the warehouse was moved north away from the river to avoid flooding. The construction of the warehouse established the Forks as an important distribution point for the community, since most goods were transported down the Red and unloaded at the levee before being transported to the town.

The HBC also attempted to compete with local manufacturers. Following the completion of McMillan's grist mill in the summer of 1876, the Hudson's Bay mill was opened in October and in 1876 was leased to J.W. McLane. When it was built, the mill was a model of advanced steam technology.¹³ During the building boom of the early 1880s the steam generated by the plant provided power for the city's lighting system. McLane made several improvements to the

mill, and when it was operated by the HBC in the early 1880s, the complex consisted of two storehouses, one of which was used for flour, and the mill itself. By 1881, however, the mill had lost its former status as the most modern in the West to the newer facilities of the Ogilvie Milling Company at Point Douglas.

The HBC competed for participation in national policy projects. In 1878 the city of Winnipeg attempted to have the CPR mainline brought through Winnipeg by authorizing and financing the construction of the Louise Bridge at Point Douglas. Donald Smith and J.H. McTavish attempted but failed to obtain a provincial charter to construct their own bridge at the Forks to connect the HBC lands with the Pembina Branch of the CPR. Before the Company finally received a charter in 1880, C.J. Brydges had taken control as Land Commissioner. Based on the belief that Upper Fort Garry was "a harbinger of the fur trade...old and dilapidated, poorly situated" and inadequate for the HBC's retail trade, he argued that the Fort be dismantled, a bridge constructed at Broadway, and Main Street straightened.¹⁴ At the same time the Company offered twenty acres of land as a location for a railway station. None of these tactics succeeded in persuading the federal government to route the CPR through the Forks, though Brydges' recommendations regarding the Upper Fort and Main Street were implemented in the early 1880s.

HBC Land Policies and the Forks - HBC activities at the Forks were motivated by a need to survive in a rapidly changing urban and industrial environment. Between 1870 and 1880 its land policies were indicative not only of the impact of the national policy on Red River, but also of the HBC's attempts to secure higher profits from resources that had outgrown the fur trade. As an isolated enclave at the south end of the city, the HBC had little hope of reaping profits from properties that were susceptible to flooding.

As a result of HBC efforts to profit from increasing land values, many of its attempts to focus urban and industrial development at the Forks brought it into conflict with local and provincial governments. Under the terms of the Land transfer of Rupert's Land to the Government of Canada, the HBC had

retained 500 acres of land at Red River. In anticipation of the inflated values that would be caused by railways and settlement, Donald A. Smith argued that these lands, known as the Reserve, be surveyed as soon as possible to prevent the village of Winnipeg from gaining any geographic advantage over HBC interests. A survey of the reserve was completed a year later. At the same time that these events were occurring at the Forks, the federal government in Ottawa went ahead with plans for the transcontinental railway by chartering Sir Hugh Allan's syndicate (which included Smith on its board) and by passing the Pacific Railway Act in 1872. Before the Pacific Scandal destroyed these plans, however, the HBC was able to sell 85 lots at auctions in the summer of 1872.¹⁵

The HBC attempted to exert its influence over development at Red River during the boom of 1871-1872 by attracting building projects to its lands. Generous land grants were made available to provincial and federal authorities to build government facilities on or near the Forks. In 1872 a cottage development was built west of Upper Fort Garry on Reserve land.¹⁶

Incorporation of Winnipeg - The land transfer and the surveys fueled local merchants' anger with the HBC 'monopolists.' These actions provided additional stimulus to civic leaders' ambitions to obtain municipal incorporation. Relations between Winnipeg merchants and the HBC worsened in 1872 and 1873 during the incorporation movement when proponents accused Smith (who also sat as a member of the provincial legislature) of stalling the bill. By empowering the Winnipeg merchants with the means to levy taxes and promote trade and commerce, incorporation removed the HBC's control over development at Red River. In 1875 the HBC and the City of Winnipeg became embroiled in a dispute regarding jurisdiction over the Portage Road, a traditional trade route that bisected a portion of the HBC's Reserve. The HBC maintained that Broadway was the main east-west thoroughfare in the city but a legal decision was brought down in favour of Winnipeg's claim for Portage Road. This action shifted the main road north towards the city and eventually contributed to the development of a commercial core around Portage and Main rather than at Main and Broadway.¹⁷

The decision of 1875, coupled with the collapse of the boom and a recession in the late 1870s, resulted in a slump in sales of HBC real estate. With the renewal of economic prosperity and the railway connections established in the 1880s and the boom of 1880-1882, the HBC began aggressive campaigns to increase the value of its land. The HBC financed construction of the Broadway and Assiniboine Bridges in 1880 through the Red River and Assiniboine Bridge Company. These thoroughfares increased traffic from the districts of St. Boniface and Fort Rouge through the Forks and facilitated transportation to Winnipeg, thus increasing land values on the HBC Reserve. After the construction of the Broadway Bridge, a large block of the Reserve around the Fort was sold, and this 50-year old centre of HBC activity was abandoned in 1882.¹⁸

A Metropolis Emerges - The appearance of residential housing at the Forks in the 1880s signifies the emergence of a metropolis with commercial, industrial, and residential property that was used by a diverse population for the production and trade of goods and services. During the real estate and building boom of 1880-1882, seasonal artisans (e.g., carpenters, masons) set up tents on the unsold HBC lots northeast of the Fort to avoid paying high rents in hotels and boarding houses. They were joined there by a new class of worker, the unskilled wage labourer, who came in large groups from Ontario to find work in local factories. South of this area, along the riverbank, were the homes of professionals and businessmen. By the beginning of the boom, the railway had stimulated the growth of a skilled and unskilled labour market that had not yet become segregated into neighbourhoods by class. However, the process was underway by 1884 when the professionals deserted the area leaving only a squalid shanty-town and red light district.

CONCLUSION

On May 10, 1887 two of the early historians of the Hudson's Bay Company, Charles N. Bell and Robert Miller Christy, walked down to the riverbank at the Forks. There they found the remains of Fort Garry, Fort Gibraltar, and what Christy believed was old Fort Rouge. At the site of Fort Garry "an old wooden building at least 3/4 of the site... has gone into the river," and traces of burnt wood chips, old cellars, chinking mortar, iron and tinware, and burnt

beams were found nearby.¹⁹ As the city expanded, these old forts, relics of the fur trade, slowly slipped into the river. Their condition in the 1880s was symbolic of the passing of an old order and the emergence of a new socio-economic structure, but this shift did not involve the decay of the HBC itself. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s the Company had attempted to adapt to the forces of modernization by changing its corporate structure, by allying itself with Ottawa's national policy, and by trying to attract urban and industrial development to the Forks.

III The Junction and the Railway Era, 1886-1923.

When the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway (NPMR) was chartered in the late 1880s, Winnipeg became the focus of the entire West because it was transformed into the headquarters of the branch line that broke the monopoly of the CPR. Construction of the NPMR facilities at the Forks represented more than the victory of Manitoba over the federally sponsored railway. Between 1886 and 1900, Winnipeg experienced its first industrial revolution in which manufacturing and transportation facilities expanded to meet the demands of the growing wheat economy. At the same time, the urban infrastructure continued to change. The Forks was related to this important phase of development because land was made available there for the new branch line. Thereafter, economic development and industrial activity at the Forks were a reflection of developments that occurred elsewhere in the city throughout the 1890s and 1900s.

The Challenge to the CPR Monopoly - The transformation of the Forks into an industrial site in the late 1880s and early 1890s was a by-product of western discontent with privileges for eastern capital and CPR shipping policies. In 1883 the CPR established its first freight rates for western traffic. Poor harvests and declining prices during the mid-1880s turned many farmers against what they believed was a company which charged ruinous rates for their cargoes. Protection of the CPR monopoly against competition (through federal disallowances) increased bitterness against the railway. Not only were alternative railways forbidden to offer cheaper services, but the CPR also possessed control over grain-handling facilities. In the mid-1880s the company refused to accept shipments of grain from small, flat storage facilities because they were not fully equipped with the cleaning equipment necessary to handle wheat damaged by frost. Many western farmers claimed that this policy favoured the large expensive grain elevators owned by such eastern capitalists as William Ogilvie. Further complaints arose over Ogilvie's practice of falsifying wheat grades in order to reduce prices. The freight rates imposed by the CPR also had a negative effect on Winnipeg wholesaling.²⁰

The HBC's land commissioner, C.J. Brydges, played a prominent role in these years of discontent, both as a critic of the CPR and as a person who worked to provide a viable alternative to the CPR monopoly. As early as 1880 he predicted that the CPR would be forced to charge high rates to support its operating costs, and in 1883 he attempted to obtain a charter for a branch line, the Great North-Western Railway of Canada. In 1886 he was a vocal critic of the CPR freight policies, in 1886, he participated as a member of the Board of Trade in the movement to force the CPR to lower its freight rates. By this time the provincial government had begun to challenge the federal disallowances which protected the CPR monopoly. Meanwhile, Brydges took the opportunity to make a profit on vacant land at the Forks.²¹

Western opposition to the CPR and federal disallowances forced Manitoba's Conservative Premier, John Norquay, to oppose the Tories in Ottawa. A branch line, the Red River Valley Railway, was chartered as a provincial public work in 1887 to link Winnipeg with the U.S. border. C.J. Brydges immediately contacted the Board of Directors of the HBC to suggest that land at the Forks be made available for the Red River Valley Railway yards and terminals. Sensing a bitter federal-provincial dispute over the issue of disallowances, HBC officials remained lukewarm to Brydges' proposals.²²

Provincial authorities claimed that because the Red River Valley Railway was a public work, it was immune to disallowance legislation. Construction of the line progressed through the early summer of 1887, but in mid-July the federal government disallowed the railway. Meanwhile, the Manitoba government ran into financial difficulties with the project and was forced to seek British investment to continue construction. Failure to secure the necessary funds led to the postponement of construction on the Red River Valley Railway, and to the defeat of Norquay in the provincial elections of 1888. By spring 1888 the CPR, requiring further federal monetary grants for the railway, was willing to yield on the issue of disallowances and the monopoly clause. In April the Manitoba government was informed that the disallowance of the Red River Valley would be removed. The provincial government then opened negotiations with prospective railroad companies from the U.S. In September 1888, a charter was granted to the NPMR, a company formed by the President of

the Northern Pacific for the purpose of connecting the American railway's branch lines with the NPMR line at the Manitoba-U.S. border. On October 4, 1888 the Red River Valley line, "which is now within days of its completion, was... handed over to the newly organized Co. (NP&M)."²³

With the RRVR track nearly laid the railway still required land for its terminal facilities. C.J. Brydges continued to promote HBC property at the Forks for this purpose. Negotiations between the HBC and the NPMR continued from 1888 to 1890, when a formal agreement resulted in the sale of river lots to the railway. The HBC retained its property near the Broadway Bridge and around its mill on the Assiniboine.²⁴

Construction of the NPMR Shops - Construction of the NPMR facilities at the Forks began in 1888. During the summer "the company built the necessary stations and section houses, water tanks, etc." on its rail line, then constructed a "truss draw bridge, 400 feet long over the Assiniboine."²⁵ Several structures were erected on the site by the fall. These included a permanent freight shed near the corner of Wesley and Water Streets and a temporary two-stall engine house close to the Broadway Bridge. The ticket offices and general offices were located in the Wesley Hall Block. These makeshift facilities enabled the railway to begin freight shipments in September and passenger service in October.²⁵

Permanent buildings were constructed in 1889. At the corner of Main and Water, workers laid the foundation for a seven-storey hotel. On the second floor the building housed the NPMR depot, baggage, express, customs, conductors', dispatchers', and train masters' offices. An "immigrants' waiting room" was also located on this floor. Two storeys were occupied by "higher officials and internal departments."²⁷ The hotel was completed in 1891. East of the HBC mill the railway company constructed its shops which, according to the Free Press, consisted of a

ten stall roundhouse, repair car shop and a blacksmith shop, all solid brick and connected with each other under the same roof; also water tanks, coal sheds, oil house[,] land[,] other small buildings....(28)

The Junction During the NPMR Years, 1890-1900 - The changes that occurred at the Forks in the 1890s were representative of urban and industrial growth throughout Winnipeg and the West. Construction of the NPMR transformed the junction into an industrial site within the city. Construction of the Winnipeg Electric Street Railway Shops and barns in the early 1890s was evidence of inter-urban transportation systems that were growing to serve expanding urban and suburban neighbourhoods. The development of Fort Garry Park on the vacant portion of HBC land adjacent to Main and Broadway was one of several parkland projects that were encouraged by the civic elite to beautify and promote Winnipeg as an urban center in the West. Such early attempts at beautification contributed to a city planning movement by the 1900s that attracted labour, capital, and industry to Winnipeg.

In addition to the emergence of an industrially organized economy, the 1890s saw the development of Winnipeg as a metropolitan center of the wheat economy. At the Forks, the HBC expanded its milling operations in response to the growing wheat economy. By 1890, nine buildings were located on the site. The three and a half storey mill with its adjacent feed storage shed was joined by walkways to two elevators and a power house. Three warehouses were located nearby, and the buildings were serviced with railroad sidings that connected them to the CPR lines at Point Douglas.²⁹

As one of the major sources of prairie transportation, the NPMR also played a significant role in the wheat economy. Though a much smaller company than the CPR, the NPMR offered lower freight rate schedules which were welcomed by Manitoba farmers along lines from Winnipeg to Souris, Portage la Prairie, and Morris. On these lines, the company made regular shipments of firewood, lumber, livestock, flour, grain, and manufactured goods. Grain shipments were the company's major source of income by 1900 and the NPMR maintained an elevator capacity of over 1.5 million bushels, second in Manitoba to the CPR. The railway also reaped benefits from immigration in the late 1890s. Other activities, such as mail and express freight, were relatively insignificant in comparison with heavy freight cargoes and passenger traffic.³⁰

The depressed economy of the 1890s was troublesome for the NPMR. Its parent company, the Northern Pacific, went into receivership in 1893 and stocks plummeted. A year later, the Pullman strike in the U.S. exploded into an international dispute when members of the American Railway Union walked off their jobs in the CPR shops. Workers in the NPMR yards were canvassed for their support. Before the strike was over at the yards near the end of July, company officials announced that the shops would be closed until September 1. The NPMR was forced to expand its services to fend off bankruptcy, but in 1897 the company went into receivership. Two years later its luxurious Manitoba Hotel burned to the ground. The Northern Pacific sought buyers for the troubled branch line.³¹

NPMR Takeover by the Canadian Northern - Although the NPMR challenged the CPR monopoly, it had little effect on the implementation of the national policy in the West. By 1900 the CPR had obtained control of the movement of goods throughout the West. After the NPMR was chartered, rates fell slightly and the CPR established regulation agreements for rates in certain areas, but these concessions did not diminish the public perceptions of the CPR as an exploiting monopoly. Western farmers despised CPR policies which they believed were responsible for the slow movement of wheat to market. The emergence of the Canadian Northern Railway in the late 1890s reassured many farmers and traders. It seemed to offer an alternative to the wave of combines and trusts that had apparently begun to take control of industry and government by the turn of the century. The Canadian Northern was, nevertheless, as much a child of the national policy as it was a product of innovative private enterprise as it, too, became part of the federal government's new rail initiatives.³²

Against the background of changing federal and provincial transportation policy the Canadian Northern Railway emerged, with the blessing of the federal government, as a competitor to the CPR. From 1895 to 1897 the provincial government issued bond guarantees to William Mackenzie and Donald Mann for the construction of branch lines in Manitoba. At the same time the provincial government approached the Northern Pacific Railroad to expand Manitoba's services eastward to the lakehead with the construction of a Manitoba-Duluth

line. Clifford Sifton, the federal Minister of the Interior, was opposed to this plan and urged Premier Greenway to finance Mann and Mackenzie. By 1898, after the Manitoba-Northern Pacific deal had fallen through, the Canadian Northern Railway was formed in an amalgamation of two Mackenzie and Mann branch lines. A federal charter for the new line was issued in 1899.³³

As a result of the subsequent sale of the NPMR, the Canadian Northern took over the facilities at the Forks. Acquisition of NPMR property transformed the Canadian Northern into a major western railway capable of competing with the CPR. As well as the transfer of NPMR rolling stock and shop facilities, the Canadian Northern acquired assets with which to expand and improve its own equipment and facilities. As early as February 1901, William Mackenzie announced his company's plans to establish Winnipeg as the central terminus of the Canadian Northern system. He indicated at the time that the NPMR facilities would not be adequate to meet the Canadian Northern's requirements on completion of its system, and that the depot would require some "radical changes" so that all new rolling stock could be built in Winnipeg.³⁴

Improvements to the eastyards facilities were first on the agenda of the Canadian Northern's extensive program of modernization. In 1902, a year after purchase of the NPMR, drawings were made of existing buildings, including the enginehouse and the roundhouse. In his study of the Red-Assiniboine junction, Rodger Guinn argued that few alterations to the eastyards took place from 1901 to 1907. But Guinn's own evidence, based on a comparative analysis of 1895 and 1908 plans of the terminal and yard, showed major alterations. Moreover, the 1906 fire insurance plans of the area also depict major changes, most of which were probably undertaken in the boom years between 1903 and 1906. To the west of the NPMR roundhouse and enginehouse, the Canadian Northern added three sidings to the main track that led to the coal sheds in the late 1890s. An ice house supplied ice to cool cooking and passenger cars, and there were small houses to oil the wheels and other moving parts of the rolling stock. A fifteen stall roundhouse was constructed at the foot of the sidings and connected to the main line by a turntable. Other sidings and lines were added to the yards just west of the new roundhouse, as were several buildings,

including yard offices, a gas house, and storehouses.³⁵

The 1906 fire insurance plans also depict major alterations to the structure and function of the old Northern Pacific and Manitoba roundhouse and enginehouse complex. The shunting of cars and other such yard activities were now taken over by locomotives stationed in the new roundhouse, while the older building was converted to maintenance and repair of rolling stock. An addition was constructed onto the southern extension of the car shops, and several sheds and small buildings were constructed around the blacksmith shop. The old engine house was now used as a machine shop, while the roundhouse was used as an erecting shop for engines and as a boiler shop. Daily maintenance of locomotives was undertaken in the new roundhouse.³⁶

All of these changes were examples of how new philosophies towards operations and the implementation of advanced technology were contributing to the obsolescence of old lines like the NPMR. The alterations to the NPMR buildings were made with the intention of maintaining and repairing only NPMR locomotives and rolling stock, while the new roundhouse was necessary for daily marshalling activities of locomotives in the yards. The old roundhouse and adjacent shops, however, were incapable of servicing the new, larger and more powerful locomotives that were being built to pull longer trains at a reduction in operating costs. For these purposes, the Canadian Northern decided to construct more modern yards at Fort Rouge.³⁷

Construction of the Fort Rouge yards enabled the Canadian Northern to expand its capacity to ship freight and to increase passenger traffic in the 1900s. The vast amount of space and the improved facilities at Fort Rouge also redefined the role of the Forks in the Canadian Northern system. Previously a fully integrated terminal, repair, and marshalling yard, it would soon be used almost exclusively as a terminal facility.

Because of its place in the Canadian Northern system, the Forks was an industrial site, but growth of the built environment around the Forks reflected many of the spatial patterns of development elsewhere in the city. The northern edge of the railway yards beyond Water Avenue, for example, had

become a mixed industrial, commercial and residential area. On the north side of Water Avenue, across the street from the corrugated iron-clad Canadian Northern freight sheds were residential buildings inhabited by eastyards railway workers. Part of Notre Dame Avenue was used for the same purpose, as well as for storage facilities of A.R. Williams Machinery Co. and J.J. Case Agricultural Implements. The Winnipeg Electric Street Railway Power House was located nearby. The City Asphalt Plant, serviced by a siding, stood at the corner of Water and Broadway by the Broadway Bridge. Cattle pens were erected on the other side of these sidings in the Canadian Northern yards. Livestock was probably transferred from here by rail to the abattoirs in Elrwood. The HBCo.'s mill and warehouse further emphasized the industrial nature of the Forks. These structures were demolished in 1907 to make room for additional railway facilities.³⁸

The Joint Terminals Years and Expansion - The Canadian Northern acquisition of property from the NPMR took place at the same time as the eastern-based Grand Trunk Railway was attempting to expand towards the Pacific. In 1903, the Grand Trunk secured a charter for a transcontinental railway from New Brunswick to British Columbia. The eastern portion of the line "was to be built and supervised by the government-owned National Transcontinental Railway", while the western section would be built and operated by the newly created Grand Trunk Pacific (GTP).³⁹ Construction on these eastern and western portions of the transcontinental was underway by 1905, financed by federal government bond guarantees and British capital. At the same time the Canadian Northern successfully raised financing from the same sources to fund construction at the Forks and in Fort Rouge. Aside from improvements to the NPMR shops and construction of the new roundhouse, the Canadian Northern drew up plans for a terminal and warehouse facilities. The provincial government promised to furnish bond guarantees for these projects only if the terminals would be shared by both the Canadian Northern and the GTP. Similar attempts by the federal government in 1902-1903 had failed, but the scarcity of bonds in 1906 and 1907 prompted the two railway companies to come to an agreement.⁴⁰

The joint terminals agreement of 1907 allowed the Canadian Northern and the GTP to make large scale changes to the eastyards. Construction of a large three storey railway station began at Broadway and Main in 1908 under terms of a sale of HBC land transacted in 1903. Warren and Wetmore, the New York architectural firm prominent for that city's opulent Grand Central Station, prepared the design in the Beaux-Arts style, so popular for public buildings in the period. The project was contracted out to Peter Lyall and Sons, the same Montreal company which had constructed the Royal Alexandra Hotel for the CPR in 1904-05. When completed in 1911, and named Union Station, it provided the office space required for the expanding clerical staff of the two companies as well as modern passenger facilities. Construction of the station also made space available along Water Avenue for additional freight sheds, since some of these facilities had been used as terminal and office space after fire destroyed the Manitoba Hotel in 1899.⁴¹

While construction of the Union Station was underway, several other buildings were erected around the Forks. In the eastyards, the Canadian Northern built a two storey brick stable in 1909. This building was an indication of how modern the railway had become since its pioneer days in the 1890s: the stable was used to "house their cartage and express teams."⁴² In 1910, the Canadian Northern built a marshalling yard in St. Boniface on the south bank of the Red, just across the river from Point Douglas. In the same year, the GTP built its own stables beside that of the Canadian Northern, and in 1912 it constructed the Fort Garry Hotel at the corner of Broadway and Fort Street, next to the Manitoba Club. All of these construction projects reflect the growing involvement of railway companies in various economic activities as they attempted to diversity their markets in the 1900s. The expansion of transcontinental services required better transportation and terminal facilities, more maintenance of rolling stock, maintenance of way structures, operating personnel, and larger clerical workforces. In addition, the companies became involved in new service areas such as express transport.

Recession, War and Formation of the CN System - The recession of 1913 was triggered by the outbreak of war in eastern Europe. The Canadian Northern and GTP were able to complete large scale projects during the recession

because many of them had been planned and financed before 1913. In January, 1913 the GTP shops opened in Transcona and both the Canadian Northern and GTP finished their branch lines. However, involvement in large financial commitments, such as new terminal facilities and modernization of equipment, the extensive borrowing on international money markets, rising overhead costs, and rate reductions that were demanded of the company all placed financial burdens on corporate growth. High freight rates, Mackenzie and Mann argued, were necessary to cover heavy operating costs, and railroad expansion was essential if the lines were to be competitive with the CPR. In major cities, such as Winnipeg, the Canadian Northern laid off workers in its shops to minimize overhead, but this action was not enough to allow the financing of new lines and facilities. By 1914, the GTP and the Canadian Northern were in financial difficulty and approached the Canadian government for funds that would keep the railways in operation.⁴⁴

Changes in the eastyards during World War I reflected the problems of financial stringency during this period. As early as 1914, both roundhouses were reportedly "in a ruinous state."⁴⁵ Between 1914 and 1920, the roundhouse closest to Broadway Avenue was demolished completely, leaving a vacant piece of land located between a series of sidings and the asphalt plant near Water Avenue. The turntable at the other roundhouse was removed and replaced with three tracks leading into the original NPMR roundhouse, part of which had been removed. Most of this building and the entire engine and car shops were "vacant" and "dilapidated."⁴⁶ Many of the small buildings that had surrounded the original roundhouse and engine shops were either torn down or left vacant, although two structures, a pumphouse and an unspecified building (according to the 1916 fire insurance plans), were erected very close to the bank of the Red River.⁴⁷

At the end of the war, the Canadian government was forced to seek a solution to the financial crisis of the GTP and Canadian Northern Railway companies. Despite huge federal loans at the public's expense and corporate attempts to pull the railroads out of debt, they faced bankruptcy by 1917. Amidst growing public and private pressure to rectify the situation, the government, through a series of unpopular inquiries and legislation, acquired

the stock of the Canadian Northern in 1917 and took over the GTP in 1921. These actions were the foundation of the emergence of the Canadian National ~~road~~ in 1923, an amalgamation that integrated Winnipeg and the Forks ~~into~~ into modern twentieth century international transportation systems.

By the time the NPMR yards were built in 1889, North American railways had undergone significant changes, having already passed through a pioneer period of development. Railroading had formerly existed as a craft-oriented occupation which combined the independence and creativity of artisanal labour with the industrial environment of the steel industry. The demise of the pioneer road was apparent by the 1880s. Technological advancement such as the automatic coupler and air brake had reduced the need for some workers, though they had not yet eliminated the need for skilled tradesmen. Still, occupations were becoming differentiated and segmented so that division between workers such as shopmen and enginemen had become dramatic.⁴⁸

Craft traditions persisted in the shops of the NPMR in the 1890s. Like other buildings of its type the roundhouse at the Forks "was a place of social interaction" largely because the British immigrants and Canadian workers employed there were able to possess craft skill and independence. It was here that machinists, firemen, stationary engineers, and wipers wielded pry bars, fire hoses and nozzles, augers, wrenches, chisels, and punches to fix and clean parts on the NPMR locomotives.⁴⁹ In the machine and car shops adjacent to the roundhouse rough and finishing carpenters, painters, blacksmiths and machinists worked on heavier repairs.

There was also a great deal of activity in the freight sheds, located along Water Avenue at the east end of the Manitoba Hotel: the "operations in the loading of car-loading trucks, running the trucks, and stowing the freight in the car or shed"⁵⁰ were performed by loaders, truckers and stowers. A foreman was usually in charge of the entire shed. The Northern Pacific was well known for employing techniques of scientific management in the workplace. The pioneer days of the railroad were far removed from the experiences of employees on the Northern Pacific and NPMR trains. Wages were cut often and rigorous work rules were enforced.⁵¹ The effect of these kinds of conditions

on skill and craft independence compelled skilled workers of the NPMR to join Local 243 of the American Railway Union (ARU), an organization that supported Eugene V. Debs' brand of socialism. Strikes in 1894 on the NPMR, and in 1902 and 1914 on the Canadian Northern, were evidence of a growing propensity of skilled workers to see beyond their immediate surroundings and to identify with broader goals of a wider working-class labour movement. Such an outlook was not limited to workers, but was shared by employers as well. For railway companies, this meant the reorganization of tasks in the workplace and the erosion of skill. Workers responded by attempting to incorporate the less skilled into their ranks, such as freight handlers and baggage handlers into their ranks.⁵² By the 1900s this craft exclusivism had begun to break down more among railway workers than any other group. Momentum grew during the war years, especially in the CPR shops under the leadership of R.B. Russell for a 'One Big Union' of skilled and unskilled, but this movement was interrupted by the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919.

IV. The Junction and the Immigrant Experience

In conjunction with its ambitious railway policy, the federal government adopted a wide range of activities which were designed for the joint purposes of promoting immigration and encouraging settlement. The overall objective was to stimulate the development of a thriving wheat economy in Western Canada. The immigrant experience was shaped in large part by the objectives of the national policy and according to the specific features of immigration policy.

In the 1870s, shortly after the transfer of HBC territory to the Canadian government and formation of the province of Manitoba, the Forks was the most important port of immigration on the edge of the unsettled Northwest. The junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers possessed this distinctive status for only a brief period - until the construction of the CPR facilities in Winnipeg in the 1880s revolutionized overland transportation in the West and established North Winnipeg as a more feasible location for the reception of incoming travellers.

The construction of the NPMR facilities at the Forks in 1888 and 1889 re-established the area as a terminus for immigration, albeit on a scale smaller than that of the CPR. The NPMR built an immigrant reception area in its hotel, though no immigrant sheds were available. Neither the Canadian Northern nor the GTP possessed buildings to accommodate immigrant travellers. Presumably, upon arrival, they made their way to the sheds at Point Douglas or the boarding houses on Main Street.⁵³

The Immigrant Sheds - Promotion of immigration to Manitoba was undertaken by a government bureaucracy that had existed from the time of Confederation. The Immigration Branch, a division of the Department of Agriculture, was given responsibility for the implementation of policy. Soon after Manitoba's place in Confederation was confirmed, the activities of the Branch in the Northwest expanded quickly. Most immigrants to Manitoba arrived by steamboat at Fort Garry until the completion of the first railways in Winnipeg during the late 1870s and early 1880s. The Forks became a major disembarkation point for travellers throughout this period by virtue of the

importance of the HBC's control over river traffic in the years preceding the incorporation of the City of Winnipeg. The boom of 1871-1872 created a demand for better housing facilities. At the time newcomers to Winnipeg were able to find accommodation either in commercially owned establishments such as local hotels or in the small immigration hall set up in the 'Theatre Royal'. As early as 1871, Ottawa authorities were made aware of the pressing need for more adequate accommodations, and the department's annual report for 1871 outlined a proposal for construction of an immigration shed near Fort Garry.⁵⁴

Two immigrant sheds, each capable of accommodating from 50 to 500 people, were built at the Forks by 1872. These facilities were immediately too small to deal with the waves of incoming population. By the early 1880s the immigrant sheds at the Forks were in deteriorating condition and the federal government made plans to construct new buildings closer to the CPR facilities in North Winnipeg.⁵⁵

Leaving Home - The people who came to the West via the Forks in the 1870s and early 1880s left home for many different reasons. The migrations of several thousand Icelanders in the mid-1870s began after the eruption of Mount Hecla in 1873. In 1873 and 1874 entire colonies of Mennonites left Russia to preserve their pacifist religious beliefs. In the early 1880s, the Canadian government sent hundreds of Russian Jews, escaping from the pogroms, to the Northwest for colonization and settlement. Britons, Americans, and eastern Canadians came to farm, to find employment in a growing city, or to take advantage of new opportunities in the trade and commerce of the West.

Despite promises of free lands and the impression of unlimited opportunities, the departure from one's homeland was a traumatic experience. The situation was perhaps more difficult for the European emigrant who looked with apprehension to the uncertainties of the long journey to an unknown land, with its strange language and customs, than for the British emigrant artisan who was used to 'tramping' in search of work. Many hardships (e.g., border crossings, money changers, lost baggage, inspections, endless line-ups) had to be overcome before leaving Europe.

The journey across the Atlantic from Europe took about twelve days. After the ship docked at one of several ports, including Montreal, Quebec City, Halifax, or New York, the people were once again shuffled through line-ups by medical and immigration authorities. Then began a difficult overland journey to Winnipeg. The first leg was usually by rail on the Grand Trunk to Southern Ontario. In the early 1870s the immigrant would have travelled along the Dawson Road, a journey that included "311 miles of [inland water] navigation interrupted by eight portages"⁵⁷ between Lake of the Woods and Fort Garry. On at least one occasion the "inferior management of the Dawson Route contractors" was a source of "severe losses to the new settlers," who were "compelled to wait from three to five weeks for their baggage, after enduring a most trying journey which averaged twenty-two days."⁵⁸ When the Dawson Route was closed in 1874 the trip could be made predominantly by boat and rail through Windsor and Duluth. Until the CPR made it possible in the 1880s to travel by rail from Port Arthur to Winnipeg, the Duluth trip caused considerable hardships for travellers. Immigrants found the route extremely slow, especially in the spring when steamboats could become frozen in the ice. The overall journey from Europe to Winnipeg could last four to six weeks or more. The ordeal was both frightening and exhausting.⁵⁹

Settling in Winnipeg - As soon as they arrived, whether by steamboat or by train, immigrants were directed by agents and officials to government immigration sheds. From the very beginning the sheds were inadequate for accommodating settlers. Two years after they were constructed, when the first arrivals were accommodated in 1874, the Winnipeg agent reported that the buildings were overcrowded. This situation continued through the remainder of the 1870s and was, no doubt, a contributing factor to successive outbreaks of scarlet fever and measles from 1876 to 1878.⁶⁰

In 1878 and 1879, during the construction of the branch line from Pembina, other immigrants began to settle at the Forks, near the sheds, on the area known as the 'flats.' Lack of adequate housing forced many carpenters, bricklayers, and labourers from England, Ontario, and Italy to pitch tents on the flats during the spring and summer, and more appeared during the boom of 1881-1882. Many of the skilled immigrants had been attracted to Winnipeg by

reports of high wages. They later complained "bitterly that the state of affairs in the city was greatly misrepresented to them in England."⁶¹ Most of these skilled workers came to Canada without their families and were able to make their way home or to more hospitable climates in the U.S. for the winter months.

Other immigrants were not as fortunate. In the spring and summer of 1882 parties of Russian Jews began arriving at the Forks. Some found work in Winnipeg and were able to leave the sheds, but by August there were still several families, comprising a total of 25 people, at the sheds. They spent the winter in buildings which were designed only for summer use. Many of them suffered from bronchitis and asthma. Some families abandoned the sheds and erected small shanties nearby.⁶² In July, as many as 50 families were reported to be living in the "filth and dirt" of the immigrant sheds: refuse was "piled up each door inside and everywhere else inside the sheds."⁶³ At the end of the month the city health inspector threatened to close down the buildings. Fearing prosecution, the Jewish refugees vacated the immigrant sheds and built "little miserable shanties" on the nearby HBC flats south of Broadway Bridge.⁶⁴

By the end of the building boom in 1882, the flats had become the home of many of the city's destitute population. One source reported as many as 2,000 squatters on the site at one time. Aside from the Jewish refugees, there were groups of English, Scots, Irish, Italians, and Icelanders, some of whom had settled in the days of the first transient tent communities. The tents and shanties at the Forks were washed away in the flood of 1882, but this part of the town was re-built when building construction and immigration resumed in the summer of 1883. The population at the Forks increased in 1884. Shacks and tents were again erected daily by carpenters, masons, unskilled workers, and the unemployed who could not afford to rent accommodations elsewhere in the city. By the end of the year the flats had become well-known for prostitution and general disorderliness. From September to November police raided the area repeatedly.⁶⁵

Adaptation and Assimilation - Of all the settlers who came to Winnipeg in the 1870s and 1880s, Anglo-Canadians from Ontario were by far the largest group. They brought with them capital, values, and traditions which, already by the mid-1870s, dominated the cultural and economic life of Winnipeg. The early immigrants to the West were expected to share in the aspirations for growth and development that were held by these transplanted Ontarians, to contribute to rural settlement and agriculture, or to adapt to the customs of Anglo-Saxon working-class society when they remained in the city. The early Mennonites and Icelanders who settled in farming communities outside Winnipeg probably fulfilled most of the expectations held by the Canadians, but the immigrants who came during the boom of the 1880s and settled at the Forks were much more difficult to assimilate despite the efforts of local charitable organizations. As the Jews and other European immigrants sank deeper into poverty, Winnipeg residents began to change their perceptions of the immigrant. On one hand, there were industrious people who could adapt to a new way of life through virtuous hard work. They might be rewarded some day with a prominent social or economic position in the community. Conversely there were those whose refusal to accept responsibility led them further into obscurity until they eventually became a social and civic liability. The growth of these perceptions coincided with a shift in attitude first towards the Jews, then towards the other people living in the shanties on the HBC flats.⁶⁶

In the 1870s and 1880s the destitute immigrants could respond only in limited ways to their circumstances at the Forks, either by enduring their conditions or by appealing to the goodwill of their fellows and benefactors. One consequence of the events of 1885 was that the immigrant communities became more centralized spatially than ever before. Subsequent influxes of settlers, concentrated in the North End in the 1890s and 1900s, contributed to the creation of cohesive ethnic neighbourhoods that remained "separated on the basis of ethnicity, religion and class"⁶⁷ from the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture. Before 1923 these communities had established their own ethnic clubs, benevolent societies, and meeting halls.

Work - The Forks was transformed for immigrants in the 1880s from a place of residence to a place of work. Workers found employment on the construction gangs and maintenance crews of the NPMR, the CNR and the GTP, while upwardly mobile young business people pursued their careers in the offices of these companies. For both the working and the business classes employed here and elsewhere in the city the changes they encountered during the emergence of industrial capitalism presented innumerable opportunities for them to assert their cultural and class identities.

In broad terms, the nature of work for the labourer as well as the office clerk evolved from an artisanal activity based on commercial principles of exchange (which predominated prior to the boom of the 1880s) into combinations of skilled and unskilled wage labour afterwards. Because this process was underway in central Canada and Western Europe earlier than the 1870s, many of the people who came to Winnipeg in the 1870s and early 1880s had already experienced the impact of processes associated with the rise of industrialization: the new steam technologies, the loss of skill, the segmentation of tasks, and the general erosion of craft independence. At the same time, the artisanal experience was still part of their culture.

The communities at the immigrant sheds and the shanty town at the Forks reflected the co-existence of these transitional work experiences in the early 1850s. The immigrant sheds themselves were the product of artisanal labour and design. The carpenter's and joiner's work, as specified in the Department of Public Works Tender, provided for the use of wood prepared in the mill or by hand. As early as the 1880s many of these hand dressed materials would be more commonly made in local factories or imported as prefabricated products.

Many of the immigrants who stayed in the sheds and later settled in the shanties on the flats were skilled workers. Icelandic carpenters and joiners worked for immigrants like William Brydon, who came to Winnipeg and began a career as a building contractor. In this early period, artisanal customs still blurred the distinction between worker and employer.

Other immigrants found work as navvies or as shop workers for the CPR. More jobs were made available by the completion of the CPR yards. Here they discovered in the smokefilled foundries and car shops a work experience much different from that of the artisan. Ten hour days, low wages, and regimented work routines were common as railway work had already become split into a series of skilled and unskilled jobs. These conditions generated some of the first immigrant strikes and riots in the prairies. The workers who built the NPMR facilities in 1888 and 1889 as well as those who were employed in the yards afterwards could lay claim to be a brief tradition of trade union organization that had begun with immigrant workers on the CPR, some of whom had struggled to eke out a living while residing at the Forks.