

**THE ALBERTA MÉTIS LETTERS**  
*1930-1940 - Policy Review and Annotations*

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Dedicated to  
Maurice L'Hirondelle, Adrian Montrose Hope  
and those interested in democratic policymaking today.

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DW 2008

## Jimmy Brady

“A Survey of our activities since 1932 will reveal we have committed many mistakes for which I am ready to admit fully my shortcomings and accept due criticism. We must admit our mistakes openly, disclose its [sic] reasons, analyse the conditions which gave rise to it, and study the means of correcting them and thus reassert our leadership.”<sup>1</sup>

## Karl Polanyi

“What we call land is an element of nature inextricably interwoven with man’s institutions. . . . Land is thus tied up with the origins of kinship, neighbourhood, craft and creed—with tribe and temple, village, gild, and church. . . . The economic function is but one of many vital functions of land. It invests man’s life with stability; it is the site of his habitation. It is the landscape and the seasons. We might as well imagine his being born without hands and feet as carrying on his life without land.”<sup>2</sup>

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1. Brady to Tomkins April 22, 1940 Glenbow M-125-23 p. 127. (In all references following, “Glenbow” refers to the Glenbow Museum Archive in Calgary. See note 6 below for detail on Archives reference style).

Jimmy Brady, first elected Secretary-Treasurer of l’Association des Métis d’Alberta in December 1932, made this remark because during the Depression he was an analytical and well-read Métis activist and organizer who hoped to find out what went wrong with the actual implementation of his theory. He was curious to find out how the initial clarity of his political ideals had helped organize the Association, to some extent, but had led the Métis into what he felt was less than ideal terrain. He was curious to find out how the Association’s activities during the previous decade could be improved upon when the time came.

2. Karl Polanyi, *Origins of our Time: The Great Transformation*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1945. p. 179. Immediately after these comments Polanyi discusses land and its importance in the colonial processes of the day.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements . . . . .	iv
Table of Contents . . . . .	vii
Introductory Comments . . . . .	ix
Foreword . . . . .	xiii
How this Project Got Started . . . . .	xiii
Métis Settlements Today . . . . .	xiv
The Sources . . . . .	xvi
The Structure and Use of the Manuscript . . . . .	xvii
Introduction . . . . .	1
Background . . . . .	1
The Métis Association . . . . .	2
The Following Chapters . . . . .	3
What Happened, Year by Year. . . . .	5
Overview of Events in the 1930s . . . . .	5
1930 and 1931—Métis Action . . . . .	6
1932—The Movement Strengthens . . . . .	7
1933—Métis Policy Positions Clarified . . . . .	10
1934—Uncertain Government-Métis Relations . . . . .	13
1935—The Ewing Commission . . . . .	17
1936-37—Métis Movement Inactive . . . . .	19
1938—Social Credit Métis Policy . . . . .	20
1939—Movement Instability . . . . .	23
1940—Movement in Conflict; Government in Control . . . . .	27
Centre Plates. . . . .	31
Plate 1—PAA 70.414.1417 August 13, 1931 . . . . .	33
Plate 2—Glenbow m-331-2-p04 May 14, 1932 . . . . .	34
Plate 3a—Glenbow m-331-2-p07 March 2, 1933. . . . .	35
Plate 3b—Glenbow m-331-2-p08 March 2, 1933. . . . .	36
Plate 4—Glenbow m-331-2-p11 October 29, 1933. . . . .	37
Plate 5—Glenbow m-331-2-p10 November 1, 1933. . . . .	38
Plate 6a—Glenbow m-125-23-p099 July 29, 1938 . . . . .	39
Plate 6b— Glenbow m-125-23-p100 July 29, 1938 . . . . .	40
Plate 7a—Glenbow m-125-21-p126 February 13, 1939 . . . . .	41
Plate 7b— Glenbow m-125-21-p127 February 13, 1939 . . . . .	42
Plate 8a—Glenbow m-331-2-p48 March 19, 1939 . . . . .	43
Plate 8b— Glenbow m-331-2-p49 March 19, 1939 . . . . .	44
Association/Government: The Working Relationship. . . . .	45
Negotiating Positions . . . . .	46
The Métis View . . . . .	47
The Provincial View . . . . .	49
Employment with the Government . . . . .	51
The Umbrella Role of the Association . . . . .	53
Métis Solidarity . . . . .	55
Attempts to Reinvigorate the Association . . . . .	60

Afterword . . . . .	63
Appendices . . . . .	65
Appendix One: Métis Proposals to Government . . . . .	67
April 5, 1932 . . . . .	67
September 7, 1932 . . . . .	68
January 1933 . . . . .	68
August 10, 1933 . . . . .	70
August 26, 1933 . . . . .	70
November 17, 1933 . . . . .	70
January 29, 1934 . . . . .	71
April 14, 1934 . . . . .	72
Appendix Two: Government Policy Responses . . . . .	75
July 28, 1932 . . . . .	75
November 1, 1933 . . . . .	76
February 27, 1934 . . . . .	76
Sessional Paper #75 (assumed date during fall 1934). . . . .	77
July 29, 1938 . . . . .	78
November 22, 1938 . . . . .	78
February 10, 1939 . . . . .	79
February 3, 1940 . . . . .	79
February 29, 1940 . . . . .	80
January 31, 1941 . . . . .	80
Appendix Three: Biographies of Principal Writers . . . . .	83
James Patrick (Jimmy) Brady . . . . .	83
Edward Ainslie Braithwaite . . . . .	84
John E. Brownlee . . . . .	84
Francis J. (Frank) Buck . . . . .	84
William Warren (W.W.) Cross . . . . .	85
Joseph M. Dechene . . . . .	85
Joseph Francis (J.F.) Dion . . . . .	85
J. (Jack) Harvie . . . . .	86
Malcolm Frederick Norris . . . . .	86
(Mr.) T.C. Rankine . . . . .	86
Richard Gavin (R.G.) Reid . . . . .	86
Peter C. (Pete) Tomkins, Jr. . . . .	87
References . . . . .	89
Annotations of Letters and Reports. . . . .	93
1930-1940 . . . . .	95
1930 . . . . .	97
1931 . . . . .	98
1932 . . . . .	101
1933 . . . . .	113
1934 . . . . .	126
1935 . . . . .	149
1936 . . . . .	160
1937 . . . . .	163
1938 . . . . .	164
1939 . . . . .	169
1940 . . . . .	185
Later than 1940 . . . . .	196