

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.”¹

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.”²

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.

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