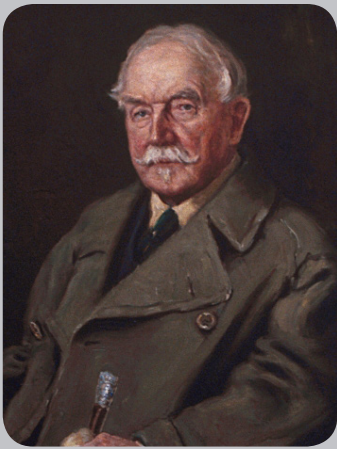


# HAYTER REED: SEPARATION AND THE PASS SYSTEM



"Mr. Hayter Reed" by George Russell via © McCord Museum, licensed under CC-BY-NC-ND 2.5 ca. 1900-1925, <http://collections.Musée-mccord.qc.ca>

Ontario-born Hayter Reed, retired from his part-time career in the militia in 1881, when he took on the role of Indian Agent in Battleford, North-West Territories (NWT). Reed's career ascent was due to his affiliation with Edgar Dewdney.

Dewdney, impressed by Reed, appointed him to the Council of the NWT. Reed was Acting Lieutenant-Governor in 1882, when he lived in Regina. When Dewdney's assistant Indian commissioner resigned in 1883, Dewdney selected Reed to replace him. In 1888, Dewdney resigned his role and Reed became Indian Commissioner (NWT). Despite charges against

him regarding furs he had allegedly stolen from Métis Charles Bremner (later blamed on Middleton), and despite First Nations resentment of him, Reed became the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs in 1893, due to the efforts of Dewdney, who had arranged for the forced retirement of incumbent, Lawrence Vankoughnet. While in this position, Reed worked on revisions to the *Indian Act* which would increase and strengthen the department's ability to control and regulate Indigenous social and spiritual practices. When the Liberals came to power in 1897, departmental reorganizations forced Reed to leave the federal government.

While he was Assistant Indian Commissioner, Reed advocated for and implemented a pass system, imposed on any Indigenous nations who participated in the 1885 North-West Resistance: "No rebel Indians should be allowed off the Reserves without a pass signed by an I. D. official. The dangers of complications with white men will thus be lessened. And by preserving knowledge of individual movements any inclination to petty depredations may be checked by the facility of apprehending those who commit such offences."<sup>1</sup> He informed Dewdney, "I am adopting the system of keeping the Indians on their respective Reserves and not allowing any [to] leave them without passes—I know this is hardly supportable by any legal enactment but we must do many things which can only be supported by common sense and by what may be for the general good. I get the police to send out daily and send any Indians without passes back to their reserves."<sup>2</sup> Under this policy, First Nations people on the prairies had to seek government permission to leave their reserves. Those who did not comply were charged with "trespassing" or in some cases denied rations. Though the pass system was initially set up to contain "rebels," it was eventually applied to all people living on reserve. Though illegal, this system was enforced into the late 1930s.

By 1892, Reed was recommending government legislation be enacted that would require "children being retained in Industrial Schools pending the Department's pleasure."<sup>3</sup> In 1894, as Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, Reed promoted the industrial and semi-industrial institutions because they removed children "from the retarding influences" of contact with their reserves.<sup>4</sup> He wrote, "Experience has proved that the industrial and boarding schools are productive of the best results in Indian education. At the ordinary day school the children are under the influence of their teacher for only a

**Hayter Reed, (known as "Iron Heart" by local Indians because of his harsh enforcement of the work-for-rations policy), described the First Nations people he encountered as the "scum of the Plains."**

Cutland, D. (2007). *Askiwina: A Cree World*, p. 33. Regina, SK: Coteau Books

short time each day and after school hours they merge again with the life of the reserve. It can readily be seen that, no matter how earnest a teacher may be, his control over his pupils must be very limited under such conditions. But in the boarding or industrial schools the pupils are removed for a long period from the leadings of this uncivilized life and receive constant care and attention. It is therefore in the interest of the Indians that these institutions should be kept in an efficient state as it is in their success that the solution of the Indian problem lies."<sup>5</sup> He reported that parental opposition to sending their children to boarding schools had decreased to the point that the government could, "without fear of exciting undue hostility,"<sup>6</sup> introduce policy for compulsory attendance at schools. Accordingly, in 1894, the *Indian Act* was amended, authorizing the government to retain "children of Indian blood under the age of sixteen years" in the schools.<sup>7</sup> The amendments gave authority to an Indian agent or justice of the peace to remove any "Indian child between six and sixteen years of age" who was "not being properly cared for or educated, and that the parent, guardian or other person having charge or control of such child, is unfit or unwilling to provide for the child's education,"<sup>8</sup> and to place the child in an industrial or boarding school. Reed instructed that vacancies in the Indian residential schools could now be filled with orphans. Where current administrators failed to obtain attendance, Reed warned that it "may yet become incumbent upon the department to adopt more stringent measures to secure attendance."<sup>9</sup> Reed campaigned successfully to close day schools on reserves and to fill the residential schools and by 1904, only one day school was operating. The lack of day schools in the West left parents with limited options, forcing them at times to send their children far away to school. Despite the distance, some parents still visited the industrial schools. Battleford and Qu'Appelle school principals Thomas Clark and Joseph Hugonard were welcoming to parents, believing their presence reassured them their children were well-treated. Reed was displeased when he discovered that Hugonard had provided a place for entertaining family visitors and was serving them breakfast and giving them provisions. Dewdney confronted Hugonard saying that "relations of the pupils are allowed to visit the school, to an extent which can only be regarded as quite unnecessary... Children can be obtained and kept" without allowing excessive parental visits, as was done in other schools.<sup>10</sup> Reed sent out a reminder that without a Pass, Indians were not allowed to visit the school. Passes should only be given occasionally. Reed shared his school regulations with everyone involved except First Nations, who would be dealt with on an individual, case-by-case basis. Indigenous communities were not to be consulted about school policies.<sup>11</sup>

Reed was also pushing for restrictions on language. When he became Deputy Minister of IA, the department's program of study Reed specified that "every effort must be made to induce pupils to speak English, and to teach them to understand it."<sup>12</sup> Along with the suppressing the Aboriginal languages of students, this had implications for many French Catholic schools in which some teachers could not speak English.

<sup>5</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 199

<sup>6</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 254

<sup>7</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 254

<sup>8</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 255

<sup>9</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 257

<sup>10</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 602

<sup>11</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 606

<sup>12</sup> Honouring the Truth, Reconciling the Future, p. 80

<sup>1</sup> Public Archives of Canada, RG 10, Vol. 37 10, file 19,550-3. Hayter Reed to Edgar Dewdney, 20 July 1885.

<sup>2</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 251.

<sup>4</sup> The History, Part 1. Origins to 1939, Vol. 1, p. 164