first half of the 19th century, resisting serfdom by maintaining voluntary clientship with Bantu-speakers as happened in other parts of Africa. But it was their weak social position in the whole region that prevented the San from gaining access to new instruments of power (e.g., guns and horses) introduced in the 19th century through the European trade routes.

Wilmsen concludes that the San, a people studied so extravagantly by so many anthropologists, only became subsistence foragers in recent times. The process began in pre-colonial times, continued into the colonial era and into the present.

This is an important book which has already sparked both controversy and ire amongst anthropologists. Wilmsen is at his best when he focusses on his central theme: the political economy of the Kalahari and the place of San-speakers in the system. His flirtations with Tylor, Durkheim, Tönnies, Marx and their critics adds little to this long overdue book.

Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy
Sarah Carter
Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990. ix + 323 pp. $34.95 (cloth)

Reviewer: Peggy Brezinski
Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Saskatchewan

"Prairie Indians were never farmers, only hunters and warriors. Why should they get land for farming now? They . . . will only waste good farmland."

Paraphrased, these are the types of questions and comments which sometimes come to the Office of the Treaty Commissioner from farmers and other members of the public. We are in the process of assisting in the settlement of outstanding treaty land entitlements in Saskatchewan, and are doing ongoing land entitlement research with many of the bands mentioned in Sarah Carter's *Lost Harvests*. The 27 entitlement bands may soon be selecting land to expand their reserve holdings for economic development, and some provincial residents question why this is happening. *Lost Harvests* has assisted us in understanding the historical context of treaties for our own research, and it has helped us respond to public concerns about the process.

Carter covers primarily the period from the 1870s to World War I. Using the Treaty Four bands of what is now southern Saskatchewan as a focus, she explores the question of whether the failure, as it were, of Indians to become productive farmers during this period was because of cultural reluctance, as many have argued, or due to government policy. Carter begins by debating the dualism theory of labour economies, which espouses a distinction between traditional/resource or peasant economies and modern, industrialized capitalist ones. Dualism supposes that the two economies, one underdeveloped and one developed, are independent of each other. A dualist assumption, found in once-"standard" academic sources such as George Stanley's vision (*The Birth of Western Canada* [University of Toronto, 1936]) and the Hawthorn report (*A Survey of Contemporary Indians of Canada* [Ottawa, 1966]) is that the underdeveloped economy stays that way by preference or inclination: indigenes and peasants prefer family-based labour patterns which are "unproductive" in a capitalist economy.

In a sense, Carter is attacking a straw man, since in academic theory dualism is no longer widely held as defensible. She is, however, highlighting an attitude which is still defended by many members of the public and by government policy-makers, and that is why the book is relevant not only in the classroom but in the various "applications" of history and geography. Carter investigates and critiques the assumption that Indians were never inclined to farm; she does this by showing how prairie Indians have repeatedly made choices about economic strategies. The extent of pre-contact and early historical agriculture are documented, followed by a discussion of the fur trade in order to explore the post-contact era of movement onto the Plains. This leads to the treaty era and the move to reserves. At the same time, Carter presents another "solitude," as she calls it, the cultural life world of Ottawa bureaucrats and field agents from the various Departments of Indian Affairs. Gradually she brings the reader into the world of policy creation and its effects on Indian farming policy as the two solitudes crossed.

Using archival material, Carter gives example after example of how Indian bands, once living on reserve sites, tried to begin farming in accordance with a very restrictive set of policies. She shows the early and impressive successes of some bands, particularly in the Battlefords, and the gradual removal of these farmers from competition with non-Indian settlers. Through these examples Carter brings to life the tensions between treaty promises and expeditious policy, between field agents faced with starving Indians and Ottawa bureaucrats philosophically well-intentioned but ignorant, and between Indian grain farmers and non-Indian immigrants who wanted reserve land. By the end of the book Carter has developed an argument that the enfranchisement and peasant farming policies of Indian Affairs were not only at odds with the treaties, but were meant to ultimately deprive the Indian people of their land and open it to settlement. The vision of the property-owning, tax-paying Indian who had a small mixed farm, the vision which apparently drove Indian policy to allot reserves and assimilate their owners, would by early in the century become only an intermediate rationale for a deadly competition. The small assimilated Indian farmer would stand eventually to lose his land to the more competitive non-Indian settler.

There are some irregularities which can confuse the reader. Carter does not stick with the Treaty Four bands but jumps sporadically in her analysis to other regions; a few case studies could have been developed more fully in preference to the scattergun approach which sometimes appears. The analysis weighs heavily, especially in discussions of policy. The reader might find it hard to distinguish description from interpretation in some passages, and to distinguish general federal policy from the impact of selected officials. The conclusion is undeveloped; while Carter appears to let the data "speak for themselves," the presence of analysis is in fact continuous and it would be helpful for the author to summarize her material and to return to her theoretical opening. The amount of data presented and the lack of summaries reduce the accessibility of the book for non-academic users.

Overall, however, the strength of *Lost Harvests*, and the breadth of the research, produce a valuable document which will never be "outdated," will probably not be disputed and will be useful for many years to come.