

## EVIDENCE OF MUTUAL CROSS-UTILIZATION OF ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Until recent years the Plateau was largely an ethnographic unknown. Aside from the work of Dr. Verne F. Ray, still at the University of Washington, Seattle, few anthropologists had major research commitments in the area. Ray's numerous works need not be listed here, but it is important to note that very few of his pioneering observations are open to question. More recent research has expanded and refined his early insights rather than contradicted them. An illustrative example of recent contributions to the ethnography of the Plateau is the work of Anastasio (1955). Although Ray (1939) has repeatedly emphasized the substantial ethnic interaction typical of Plateau peoples, Anastasio has added substantially to our knowledge of its forms and extent. Perhaps the most important conclusion he reaches is that the many ethnic groups of the aboriginal Plateau can be regarded as a single social system (1955:92). He says,

Therefore, we would say that the norms of intergroup relations and the relevant ceremonies, ritual beliefs, and values form part of an intergroup culture. The component groups were bound together by their acceptance of this culture, which made it possible for them to perform a number of tasks jointly and which permitted the peaceful solution of disputes and other common problems. On this basis we would say that the area was a society, in the general sense of the term, and more specifically a political entity.

The mechanisms of intergroup relations regulating interethnic relations in the aboriginal Plateau according to Anastasio (1955:91) were norms permitting peaceful settlement of disputes, co-utilization of resource sites, peaceful congregation of large multiethnic groups, group responsibility guaranteeing welfare of persons and property of visiting members of other groups, formalized trading and gift exchange between ethnic groups, and finally the extension of kinship relations between ethnic groups. Although it is neither desirable nor necessary that each of these mechanisms be described or illustrated in detail, it is essential that those concerned with aboriginal rights to resources among ethnic groups of the Plateau be apprised of several major findings of this and other recent studies verified and amplified in our own research.

### Plateau Patterns of Mutual Exploitation

1. Aboriginally, the Plateau was an area marked by great cultural similarity, substantial interethnic movement, and marked ambiguity of territorial boundaries. Both direct and indirect evidence for this finding comes from the following sources:

Chalfant (n. d. a: 2, 3, 7, 16, 24, 26, 36; n. d. c: 5, 7, 8, 66-7, 75, 112; n. d. d: 248, 250-51; n. d. e: 37-8), Curtis (1907-30, 8:49), DeSmet (1906: 282), Douglas (1914: 127), Drury (1958: 121; 1963, I: 97, 123, II: 158, 170, III: 120, 187), Elliot (1909, 10: 305), Gibbs (1855: 403, 416, 423-25; 1877: 169-70, 197), Hulbert & Hulbert (1935: 159), Indian Claims Commission 1959b: 8, 42-43, 48), Johansen & Gates (1957: 16, 18), Lewis (1906: 193, 196), Merk (1931: 42, 53, 55), Ordway (1916: 254, 290), Parker (1838: 127-34, 275-96), Ray (1955b: 6; 1962: 60),