

Recent Developments in Prairie Historiography

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ford, N.J., 1969). His book has to be added to the list of recent "essential reading" that includes Norton's book, already mentioned, a work of greater and at times lesser significance than its topic, the exiles in England, might suggest; L.F.S. Upton's *William Smith* (Toronto, 1969) — there's room for lots more biographies; Scot Symons, *Heritage: A Romantic Look at Early Canadian Furniture* (Toronto, 1971), an indication of the possibilities of an unorthodox approach; Charles R. McKirdy, "A Bar Divided: The Lawyers of the American Revolution", *The American Journal of Legal History*, 17 (1972), pp. 205-214 and Anne A. Allan, "Patriots and Loyalists: The Choice of Political Allegiance by members of Maryland's Elite", *Journal of Southern History*, 38 (1972), pp. 283-292, both of which have the over-riding virtue of a broad approach. The future of Loyalist studies looks bright and complicated and exciting.

WALLACE BROWN

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PRAIRIE HISTORIOGRAPHY

Plains historiography is at least a century old. A recent article by T.D. Regehr surveys over one hundred key books, articles and papers published since 1870 which have shaped our conception of the historical development of the Canadian prairie west.¹ Nevertheless, even with this long and honorable tradition, the study of plains history has not often been marked by significant academic dissent, reinterpretation or even widespread controversy. The historiography of the prairies has been keyed to harmony, tradition and academic conservatism, and though many recent works have expanded the scope and depth of prairie history,² few have offered challenge to ideas and beliefs which have prevailed for at least a generation. As the popular song once reminded us, however, "the times, they are changing." In the last half decade or so a number of books and articles have appeared which are important not so much for the new ground they cover as for the old terrain they attempt to re-map. Though it would be an obvious over-dramatization (not to mention exaggeration) to assert that a whole new era is upon us, it does appear that a handful of scholars are finally beginning to offer some significant, even radical, reinterpretation of the history of the Canadian prairies. Some of these works will, perhaps, finally spark the beginning of

1 T.D. Regehr, "Historiography of the Canadian Plains after 1870," in R. Allen, (ed.), *A Region of the Mind* (Regina, Canadian Plains Studies Centre, 1973).

2 See, for example, R. Allen, *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1971); P. Berton, *The National Dream* (Toronto, McLelland and Stewart, 1970) and *The Last Spike* (Toronto, McLelland and Stewart, 1971); J. Gray, *The Winter Years* (Toronto, Macmillan, 1966), *The Boy From Winnipeg* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969) and *Red Lights on the Prairies* (Toronto, Macmillan, 1971).

healthy scholarly controversy while others may be ignored. They cannot fail, in any case, to lend a new maturity to our understanding of the dynamics which have shaped the history of the prairie west.

One of the most perplexing problems concerning the political development of the prairies has centred on the growth of two apparently very different protest movements in two provinces which appear to be very much alike; Social Credit in Alberta and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in Saskatchewan. C.B. Macpherson's study of Social Credit in Alberta,³ still considered a pivotal work by many political scientists and historians, posited the existence of a 'quasi party' system in Alberta but left the question of why such a system did not also develop in Saskatchewan almost completely unanswered. In 1969 David E. Smith attempted to provide the missing link in a comparative study of political developments in the two provinces. Smith concluded that in both cases the fortunes of the provincial Liberal parties, combined with the influence of Henry Wise Wood in Alberta, accounted for the differences. Smith accepted Macpherson's analysis of the Alberta political scene and worked from the assumption that the rise of Social Credit and the existence of a 'quasi party' system went together. Conversely, the survival of a "real" party system in Saskatchewan during the 1920's preserved conditions which allowed for the rise of the CCF. This occurred because Premier Martin successfully divorced his provincial Liberal party from national politics in general and from the federal Liberals in particular. The arrangement fostered an even stronger alliance between provincial Liberals and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association; by contrast such an alignment never developed in Alberta, where the UFA adhering to the group government theories of Henry Wise Wood, were determined to stay clear of politics up to 1919. Once forced by groups such as the Non Partisan League to involve themselves in political activity the UFA was able to do so alone and did not act in conjunction with the provincial Liberals. The short and long term result of this process was that the Alberta party system was destroyed by the UFA's dramatic capture of the government in 1920 while the party system in Saskatchewan remained intact, allowed the CCF to grow and develop in opposition from 1933, and gave them the opportunity of seizing power from a weak Liberal administration in 1944. Because there was no party system as such in Alberta in 1935. Social Credit could follow in the tradition of the UFA by taking all the marbles at one and the first time, and then settle in to govern under the same 'quasi party' conditions which had protected the UFA.⁴

Smith's theory is intriguing and makes Macpherson's earlier interpretations whole. But the basic assumption of his and Macpherson's arguments are being

3 C.B. Macpherson, *Democracy in Alberta* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1953).

4 David E. Smith, "A Comparison of Prairie Political Developments in Saskatchewan and Alberta," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, IV (February, 1969).

increasingly called into question by writers who doubt whether there ever was any real difference, actual or perceived, between the CCF and Social Credit. John W. Bennett and Cynthia Krueger, were amongst the first to conclude that the CCF was never really socialist and that it began “. . . compromising its radical doctrine the day after the day after the Regina Manifesto was issued” Supporters of the CCF in Saskatchewan voted for the party because it was the farmers’ own creation, or because it represented a “better break” for the farmers and made it possible for them to “compete with the city people” but not because they were committed to socialism. Bennett and Krueger did believe, however, that the CCF retained some vestiges of its socialist heritage until just prior to its 1944 provincial election victory.⁵

Not so Peter Sinclair. In a recently published analysis of the pre-1944 Saskatchewan CCF, Sinclair described the birth, growth and ascent to power of a true political party always ready to sacrifice ideological principle in its search for power. Sinclair hinged his argument on CCF land policy and concluded that significant modifications were being made in this area even prior to the 1934 provincial election so that both party and policy would be more attractive to the voters. Even so, the party suffered a resounding defeat in its first election and this, Sinclair maintained, “. . . marked the end of the socialist phase for the CCF in Saskatchewan.” By 1937 the CCF had so watered down its socialism, in part to enable it to forge an alliance with Social Credit against the Liberals that “. . . its position in Saskatchewan had become similar to what the Social Credit government was actually doing in Alberta.” Sinclair saw no great mystery in Social Credit’s failure in Saskatchewan. To begin with it was an imported product with no local roots and had an authoritarian flavour which did not go down well with the voters. Then, too, Aberhart, by the time of the 1938 provincial election, had certainly wrought no miracles in the neighbouring province of Alberta. In other words, Sinclair did not believe that any fundamental ideological objection to Social Credit existed, only that its failure grew from normal political considerations and conditions. As for the CCF, once its socialist ideas were shed, it became a reformist party not unlike Social Credit during its first years. Sinclair firmly believed that “CCF members accepted small scale capitalist production and only flirted briefly with a socialist solution to the agrarian crisis of the thirties.”⁶

Two new essays by Gary Teeple and R.T. Naylor attack the same problem but from a distinctly marxist viewpoint. Teeple asserted that the CCF never amounted to anything more than a party of moralistic liberalism which sought to reform capitalism — in part through government ownership — but not to

5 John W. Bennett and Cynthia Krueger, “Agrarian Pragmatism and Radical Politics” in S.M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism, Up-dated edition*, (New York, Anchor Books, 1968).

6 Peter Sinclair, “The Saskatchewan CCF: Ascent to Power and the Decline of Socialism,” *Canadian Historical Review*, LIV (December, 1973).

change it. They were, in short, Liberals in a hurry. His yardstick consists of the three most essential aspects of marxist ideology: the labour theory of value, historical materialism and the class struggle. Since the CCF rejected all three from the start and adopted a course of Fabian "parliamentarism," he asserted, they cannot be considered socialist at all.⁷ If Teeple's analysis is accepted, Naylor's argument naturally follows from it. He explained the Social Credit/CCF phenomenon by asserting that there was no significant difference between the two. Both accepted capitalism, both sought to reform the system and bring about a more equitable distribution of wealth, both accepted the private ownership of property — specifically the family farm — as fundamental to prairie society. Furthermore, the CCF and Social Credit were both manifestations of western discontent and both aimed to smash eastern banking and mercantile power while turning the terms of national trade in favour of the west.⁸

The "French Fact" in western settlement has been one of the few areas of controversy in prairie historiography since the days of Louis Riel. In the last five years new approaches have been brought to bear against interpretations which have become too firmly rooted in Canadian historical literature. Donald Creighton has been a leader amongst those who have asserted that the west was intended to be a preserve for English Canadians but that Ottawa's plans were foiled by Louis Riel and Bishop Tache who used the provisional government established at Red River in 1869 to blackmail guarantees of separate schools and French language rights out of John A. Macdonald. He has gone so far as to assert that this was done against the wishes of the inhabitants of the area.⁹ These views have recently been challenged by Ralph Heintzman. Heintzman has accused Creighton of being much too careful in the selection of his sources and of studiously ignoring strong evidence that many political leaders intended the west to be bicultural. This came not out of any philosophic commitment to French-English partnership but simply because Canadian politicians were very practical men and had learned, during the union period of 1840 to 1867 how to accommodate themselves to the hard facts of Canadian duality. They were, as a result, willing to grant bicultural status to Manitoba (1870) and the Northwest Territories (1875 and 1877) because it appeared that the white and metis inhabitants wished it. To support this argument Heintzman pointed out that the Ruperts Land Act of

7 Gary Teeple, "Liberals in a Hurry: "Socialism and the CCF-NDP," in G. Teeple (ed), *Capitalism and the National Question in Canada* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1972).

8 R.T. Naylor, "The Ideological Foundations of Social Democracy and Social Credit," in *ibid*.

9 There are several examples of Creighton's views. See, for example, Donald Creighton, "John A. Macdonald, Confederation and the Canadian West," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, *Transactions*, Series III, No. 23, 1966-67 and Donald Creighton, *Canada's First Century* (Toronto, Macmillan, 1970).

1869 was clearly intended to be only temporary and thus tells us nothing about the intended status, bicultural or not, of the area. Further, the sentiments of politicians from George Brown to Joseph Howe and A.G. Archibald show that important Canadian political leaders expected the French to play a key role in opening the west. His most telling point is that when the Manitoba Act was debated in 1870 and the Northwest Territories Act in 1875 and 1877 *not a single objection* was raised in parliament to the provisions for separate schools or the guarantees of the French language. It was not until D'Alton McCarthy raised his Equal Rights standard in the House of Commons in 1890 that anyone ever really questioned the "French fact" in western Canada.¹⁰

Arthur Silver has challenged another traditional interpretation of the French role in western settlement with his strenuous objection to the idea that French Canadians ever believed in western expansion. The logical corollary to this argument is that they did not lose the race for the west to the English because they were never in the competition. Theirs was simply not a pioneering society, Silver maintained, and they were incapable of meeting the great challenges that western expansion must necessarily have involved. Silver believed that French Canadians were always pessimistic about settlement in the north west and tacitly assumed that western expansion would be the sole concern of Ontario. They believed that western land was basically unproductive, that they would lose their identity if they moved to Manitoba, and that they could never consider the prairies "part of *their* country." However, these reasons were not the only, nor even the primary, factors behind their failure to attempt to colonize the northwest. Silver asserted, as have others who have dealt with frontiers and expansion, that "one has to be born, or at least brought up, in the right kind of society to become a frontiersman . . ." French Canada in 1870, however, was not the right kind of society for producing pioneers. It had not overcome serious obstacles or challenges. It had not experienced any major national mobilizations. It had not, in short, done great and dynamic things. It was, Silver asserted, a conquered society which had accepted its own conquest. It was a society "not of movement, but stasis, enforced by the very nature of the task of 'survival'."¹¹

Both Heintzman and Silver have cast a new light upon the French role in western settlement. It is clear from Heintzman's interpretation that the French would not have been in danger of losing their identity if they had moved west and had every opportunity to make Manitoba and the northwest as much *their* country as that of the English. Silver, on the other hand, is

10 Ralph Heintzman, "The Spirit of Confederation: Professor Creighton, Biculturalism, and the Use of History," *Canadian Historical Review*, LII (September, 1971).

11 Arthur L. Silver, "French Canada and the Prairie Frontier, 1870-1890," *Canadian Historical Review*, L (March 1969).

telling us that the French themselves chose not to participate in the struggle to settle the west and thus completed a circle of self-fulfilling hypothesis. Their very absence allowed groups such as the Equal Rights Association to "cleanse" French from the west, and they were absent precisely because they were too docile a society to be confident of their ability to survive the pressures that such groups might bring to bear.

Another tradition in prairie historiography which has started to fall victim to re-interpretation centres around the founding and early activities of the North West Mounted Police and the treatment accorded the plains indians in the years prior to the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. The belief that the Police were founded and sent west to protect the indians from the ravages of the American-based whiskey trade and that their efforts were rewarded with the undying gratitude of chiefs such as Crowfoot of the Blackfeet is being seriously undermined. The story that is just starting to emerge will undoubtedly rob Canadians of one of their prize myths concerning the "humane" treatment accorded the indians north of the forty-ninth parallel as well as the friendly and understanding attitude of the Police towards those indians. It will, however, introduce a refreshing note of reality to the history of the momentous period of 1873 to 1885. The facts, according to S.W. Horrall, official historian of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, are that John A. Macdonald had no intention whatever to drive away American whiskey traders for the welfare and benefit of the indians when he contemplated the establishment of the Mounted Police. He simply feared a repetition in Canada of the continuous warfare of the American frontier and wished to create an efficient military force which would advance westward with the frontier of settlement to protect whites against indians. His concept of a force of mounted rifles was derived from his belief that such a group would be the most efficient under the unique conditions of western Canada. Since there was no appreciable settlement of whites in the west prior to 1873, and since the government was continuing to maintain a militia presence at Fort Garry, Macdonald continued to hesitate to carry out his plans. Despite the effects of the whiskey trade on the indians and complaints from the government of the United States that "Canadian" indians were raiding across the border into Montana to steal horses which were then taken to the whiskey peddlers for rifles and rotgut, Macdonald would take no action.

If any one factor shook Macdonald from his lethargy, Horrall asserted, it was the massacre of a band of Assiniboine indians by a mixed group of English and French Canadian, as well as American, wolf-hunters, operating out of Fort Benton, Montana. The American Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, as well as Alexander Morris, Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest Territories, feared that if some attempt were not made to bring the white killers to justice, a general indian war might break out in the area and they urged the Canadian government to action. Now Macdonald finally moved

and, prodded almost continually by Morris, went ahead with the organization of the Mounted Police Force and arranged their transfer to the northwest before the freeze-up on the Great Lakes in the fall of 1873. But he still had no intention of sending the force on a chase after whiskey peddlers. Macdonald had moved, but only because he was simply not willing to take chances with the possibility of an indian war. The man responsible for sending the police on their famous march to evict the unruly occupants of Fort Whoop Up, albeit reluctantly, was Macdonald's successor, Alexander Mackenzie. He was unsure of the potential effectiveness of the new force and at one point was ready to propose to the United States that it send its troops onto Canadian soil to suppress the whiskey trade. Eventually Morris' urgings and the complaints of the Americans prevailed and in the spring of 1874 Antoine Doiron, the Liberal Minister of Justice, received authorization to unleash the Mounties against the whiskey traders.¹²

The story of white-indian relations from this point is distressingly familiar to anyone who has read George Stanley's important work, *The Birth of Western Canada*,¹³ and is one continuous tale of paternalism, official indifference and tragic suffering amongst the plains indians because of the ill-conceived policies of Ottawa officialdom. Canadians have sought some solace from this in the lack of any large-scale and sustained wars on their frontier as well as the apparently good relationship that prevailed between Mounted Police, missionaries and local government officials on the one hand and the indians on the other. They will not much longer be able to find comfort in any of these beliefs. Hugh Dempsey's biography *Crowfoot, Chief of the Blackfeet* is primarily the story of one of the greatest chiefs of the Blackfoot Confederacy, a powerful group composed of the Blackfoot, Blood, Piegan, Gros Ventre and Sarcee tribes who roamed an area from the Upper Missouri river to the North Saskatchewan and from the Yellowstone River to the Rocky Mountains. It is also, however, a history of the decline and fall of an entire indian nation in Canada in the 1870's and 1880's. Dempsey's picture of what happened to the Blackfoot Confederacy, and it undoubtedly applies to other Canadian plains indians, is not one of misguided paternalism, official myopia or innocent miscalculation. It is an indictment of criminal negligence, callousness and brutal inhumanity to be found not only in Ottawa, but on the spot, in the northwest, as well. Dempsey's farm instructors, missionaries, indian agents and, with too few exceptions, Mounted Police, cared little for the indian and less for his welfare. They were not particularly adept at what they did, could not sympathize with the plight of the indian, were greedy to the point of brutality and latched on to the Indian only for what

12 S.W. Horrall, "Sir John A. Macdonald and the Mounted Police Force for the Northwest Territories," *Canadian Historical Review*, LIII (June, 1972).

13 Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1960.

they could get from him whether it was his soul or the rations he was supposed to receive by right but which fetched higher prices elsewhere. The police often recognized the agents and instructors for what they were but were duty bound to protect the white man and his laws, even if it meant arresting indians who attempted to steal, from locked reservation storehouses, rations they needed to keep from starving. Everytime the police rode to protect a farm instructor or reservation agent who had been roughed up or shot at after trying to bilk starving indians out of their rations they lost more and more of the friendship and prestige so necessary for such a small force to maintain order. Dempsey's account plainly showed that only some of the police, particularly Cecil Denny and James MacLeod, really sympathized with the indians and genuinely tried to help them in their terrible hour of need.

As to the lack of continuous indian war on the Canadian frontier, Dempsey clearly saw this as the result of nothing more than Crowfoot's realistic appraisal of the true strength of the whites. By the time of the outbreak of the Northwest Rebellion in 1885, Crowfoot was thoroughly disgusted with the treaty system but he had been taken on a tour of Regina and Winnipeg as part of Lieutenant Governor Dewdney's strategy of impressing the power of white society upon the chiefs of treaty area number 7. On this trip Crowfoot saw, particularly in the thriving young city of Winnipeg, enough men and weapons to defeat the entire Blackfoot nation. In Dempsey's words he "returned to the reserve a wiser man." By 1885 the Blackfoot Confederacy was but a shell of its former powerful self, but Crowfoot was still one of the most influential chiefs on the plains. Had he joined forces with Poundmaker, Wandering Spirit and Riel there can be little question that a long and bloody war would have resulted. At the least this would have impeded the completion of the CPR and set western settlement back indefinitely. At worst, it would have resulted in the intervention of the American army and the possible loss of the Northwest to Canada. None of these things happened but, according to Dempsey, it had nothing to do with Crowfoot's trust in whites.¹⁴

In recent years scholars have paid increasing attention to trade unions, workers, labour political action, and industrial unrest in Canada and it has become evident that western workers have played a prominent role in the history of the Canadian labour movement. Not only did they take to unionism from the beginning, they were also apparently more radical than workers in central Canada. In a recent paper Paul Phillips attempted to explain this phenomenon by pointing to the working environment of a post-frontier, resource extraction area. Though much of Phillips' study would apply specifically to British Columbia his basic conclusion — that the National Policy created a separate and more radical labour movement in the west — applied to the prairies as well. The core

14 Hugh A. Dempsey, *Crowfoot, Chief of the Blackfeet* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1972).

of Phillips' argument is basically quite simple. The National Policy moulded the distinctive resource-based economy of western Canada and the workers and unions developing in that environment tended to demonstrate distinctive, and radical characteristics. The National Policy tended to promote commercial rather than industrial enterprise in the west and management tended to view labour relations as a short-run, rather than a long run consideration. They were unimpressed with the need to develop stable and peaceful relationships with their workers. Phillips believed that the National Policy essentially created regions in Canada; one a protected manufacturing area in Ontario and Quebec, the other an unprotected resource extraction area in the west. The unprotected nature of western output meant greater instability in demands and prices for its products which, in turn, created greater insecurities of wages and employment. When combined with the isolation of the workers, their numerical weakness and the hazards of occupations such as mining and logging, this had a direct bearing on the growth of radicalism. The unions which developed in the west were thus a reflection both of the outlook of their membership and the attitudes of employers who wanted to place as much of the entrepreneurial risk as possible on the shoulders of their employees. Because the risk was considerable, the burden was great, and was one important cause of radicalism.¹⁵

Phillips' interpretation should add a new dimension to the study of prairie labour history but some areas of specialization are so new that virtually everything published constitutes reinterpretation. One field is urbanization and it has been well served in the last few years by Alan Artibise, Max Foran and John Taylor who have each added immeasurably to our understanding of the dynamics of urban growth in the prairie west. Artibise has explored many facets of the development of Winnipeg to 1914 stressing the role of business and commercial interests, physical growth, urban planning (or the lack of it) and ethnic and class division in the city. He has described the iron-grip of business interests on the development of Winnipeg and stressed the belief of the commercial classes that only their particular brand of knowledge and expertise could create a rational and profitable urban environment.¹⁶ Foran has described Calgary in the period 1884 to 1895 and has discussed its growth, metropolitan impulses (evident even at this early stage), and social

15 Paul Phillips, "The National Policy and the Development of the Western Canadian Labour Movement," in A.W. Rasporich and H.C. Klassen (eds.), *Prairie Perspectives II* (Toronto, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1973).

16 See, for example, Alan F.J. Artibise, "Winnipeg Civic Politics, 1874-1914: The Search for Business Efficiency in Municipal Affairs," paper presented to Seventh Annual Northern Great Plains History Conference, October 1972. Other articles are "An Urban Environment: The process of Growth in Winnipeg, 1874-1914," presented to the Canadian Historical Association meetings in 1972 and to appear in the *CHA Historical Papers* and "Winnipeg and the City Planning Movement, 1910-1915" in D. Bercuson (ed.), *Western Perspectives I* (Toronto, Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1974).

character. Foran asserted that even though Calgary was tied to the ranching industry which played so important a part in the business, political and social life of the city, Calgary had commercial and agricultural aspirations, shared by the ranching community, from the very beginning. In addition, the relatively small population and the lack of any significant commercial class in these early years meant that the town council was forced to take upon itself tasks which might ordinarily have fallen to a Board of Trade.¹⁷ Taylor, concentrating on a later era, has revealed that urban political patterns developed quite differently in prairie cities such as Edmonton and Winnipeg. The latter city had been split along class lines by the Winnipeg Strike and its urban politics tended to follow socialist versus conservative lines. In Edmonton, however, class politics became almost irrelevant, geographic factors important, and a populist such as Joe Clarke could emerge to dominate the urban scene.¹⁸ A different but no less new, area of research is being covered by Ian Macpherson's studies of the cooperative movement. He has examined the Cooperative Union of Canada and its political involvements and has uncovered the roots and workings of cooperation in the west beyond the traditional and oft-studied Wheat Pools.¹⁹ In these areas it is far too early to talk of the emergence of traditional patterns of interpretation but it is evident that the work being done is adding new depth to our understanding of prairie history.

One paper which has signified the new mood of western historiography, perhaps better than any other, was recently delivered to the fifth Western Canadian Studies Conference at the University of Calgary. In it J.E. Rea offered challenge to traditional interpreters of western development who have utilized an almost exclusive agrarian approach to prairie development. Historians such as W.L. Morton, Rea asserted, belong to the landscape and glory in the rural experience — the warm sun, rich soil and blue skies of the prairies. Their attitude towards the cities of the west is scornful because all cities to them are very much alike and urban dwellers "know neither the revolution of the seasons nor the relevance of time and place . . ." Not only are their roots agrarian, Rea pointed out, but Anglo-Saxon as well and thus they extol rural, British, values to the virtual exclusion of all others. There *is*, however, another west, Rea asserted, and it is the west of the immigrants, the cities and slums, the industrialists and unions and the too often corrupt

17 Max I. Foran, "Urban Calgary 1884-1895," *Histoire Sociale* Vol. V. (April, 1972).

18 John H. Taylor, "Urban Social Organization and Urban Discontent: The 1930's", in D. Bercuson (ed.), *Western Perspectives I* (Toronto, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974).

19 See, for example, Ian Macpherson, "The Cooperative Union of Canada and the Prairies, 1919-1929," in S. Trofimenkoff (ed.), *The Twenties in Western Canada* (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1972) and "The Cooperative Union of Canada and Politics, 1909-31," *Canadian Historical Review* LIV (June 1973).

politicians. And a new breed of "pavement bred" historians is beginning to record this history as well. Theirs is as much the story of the west as are the writings of Morton and others of his stripe, but is more concerned with society and economics, social movements, ethnic groupings and regional characteristics. Here Rea discussed scholars such as John Thompson, who has undertaken a study on the immigrant/prohibition question, William Calderwood, who has explored the fascinating appeal of the Ku Klux Klan to the "xenophobia" of the Anglo-Saxon population of Saskatchewan, and Richard Allen, who has done so much to uncover the roots, accomplishments and legacies of the social gospel movement in the Canadian west. Rea concluded this fascinating look at prairie history with the hope that this new research may bring about the recognition that "the west, as a complex social matrix, was much more than an agricultural domain."²⁰

There is, thus, much that is new and exciting developing in prairie historiography. The old one dimensional, dry and dusty, images are fast disappearing. Reinterpretation, controversy and vigorous debate are the foundations upon which a mature historiography is being built. If the scholarship of the last few years offers true portent of things to come, then the study of the prairie west is about to embark on its most fascinating and enlightening adventure to date.

DAVID J. BERCUSON

"THE COMPANY PROVINCE" and ITS CENTENNIALS A REVIEW OF RECENT BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORIOGRAPHY

Upon crossing the mountains to British Columbia, a visitor is soon struck by the extent of public recognition given the province's relatively brief history: a myriad of historical markers alongside the highways; new historical museums in small towns and large; reconstructions of old towns at Barkerville and Fort Steele; and a variety of historical pamphlets on the newsstands. History in British Columbia, however, is more than an adjunct to the tourist industry. Much of the physical evidence of historical interest is the legacy of provincial centennials in 1958, 1966 and 1971 and the Canadian centennial of 1967. These, and long-standing general interest have inspired the publica-

20 J.E. Rea, "Images of the West," in D. Bercuson (ed.), *Western Perspectives I* (Toronto, Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1974).

Prairie Perspectives II, *Western Perspectives I* and *The Twenties in Western Canada* are papers of the Western Canadian Studies Conferences held annually at the University of Calgary. *A Region of the Mind* is a publication of the Canadian Plains Studies Centre located at the University of Saskatchewan, Regina.