

# Two B.C. Pacifists and the Boer War

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Relatively little has been written on the subject of English-speaking Canadian opposition to the Boer war and Canada's participation in the conflict.<sup>1</sup> Possibly that reflects the fact that there was relatively little of such opposition; or it may be that, given the tendency of Canadian historians to seize upon the racial conflict interpretation of our history whenever the opportunity presents itself, the obvious French-Canadian *versus* English-Canadian debate on the subject has shielded other opponents to the South African struggle from view. In this instance the racial interpretation also carries the implication that Anglo-Canadians, behaving as a cohesive group, were virtually all supporters of the war and the British cause. But two outspoken opponents of the conflict — who certainly have been hidden from sight — resided in British Columbia: William Marchant of Victoria and J. Herbert Bainton of Vancouver. Both men made known their pronounced opposition to the war and, as a consequence, produced reactions in their respective communities. In order to set the stage for a tentative analysis of these communities' responses, it is necessary to offer some detail on the background and positions of these two men.

## I

In the late summer of 1899, William Marchant, a well-respected, forty-four-year-old Baptist and Liberal who was employed as a federal customs collector and who served as a Victoria school trustee, was deeply troubled by the prospect of war in the Transvaal.<sup>2</sup> Moved by his convictions, he

<sup>1</sup> Two exceptions to this are R. Craig Brown, "Goldwin Smith and Anti-imperialism," *Canadian Historical Review*, XLIII (1962), 93-105; and Carman Miller, "English-Canadian Opposition to the South African War as seen through the Press," *Canadian Historical Review*, LV (1974), 422-38. The latter article notes that support for opposition came out of four groups: English-Canadian farmers, radical labour, protestant clergy and ethnic anglophobic Canadians. But the author barely manages to get into British Columbia in his paper; he briefly notes rumours of a pro-Boer aid fund that was organized in the province — his source, however, is the *Montreal Gazette*.

<sup>2</sup> Marchant, born in Devonshire in 1854, arrived in Victoria in 1889, and became joint owner of an importing business. A strong Liberal, he sought and secured his

penned a letter to the *Victoria Times* in which, after detailing the British and Boer positions, he concluded that Britain did not have cause for war and that any conflict would be unjust and "most diabolical" if waged against "a peaceful, liberty loving and inoffensive people."<sup>3</sup> Marchant's statement produced an immediate response in the columns of the *Times* from correspondents who stoutly defended Britain's position and that of the Uitlanders, criticized the Boers and their attitudes, and deplored Marchant's ignorance of the "real" situation. The customs collector, left by Victorians to defend himself, hammered back at his critics, arguing hard against the British stance which, he insisted, was prompted by greed.<sup>4</sup> This pre-war debate made it perfectly clear where Marchant would stand when the conflict erupted.

Marchant was afforded an opportunity of expressing his opinion when the war, and Canada's commitment to the British side, were but days old. The events which elicited a response from Marchant occurred on Sunday, October 22, the day on which Victoria's first volunteers left town to begin their journey to the east and, ultimately, the Transvaal. At evening church services, three Protestant ministers preached moderately belligerent sermons and, later, at a monster meeting in the Victoria drill hall to salute the volunteers, two more clergymen participated in the send-off. Dr. John Campbell, of First Presbyterian church, preached on the "Transvaal," and made reference to Canada's participation in the shape of her brave volunteers; this salute was accompanied by the singing of suitable patriotic selections by choir and congregation. Robert Hughes of James Bay Methodist church talked on "The Foundations of the British Empire," and J. C. Speer of Metropolitan Methodist church delivered a special sermon to the soldiers leaving for the war over a pulpit bedecked with Union Jacks. At the drill hall gathering, the Anglican bishop of Columbia, W. W. Perrin, said the invocation, in which he called on God's protection for the Victoria contingent and prayed that He might "hasten the time when peace and order" would be restored to the empire. Ageing bishop

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position in Victoria's customs house in 1897, as a reward for his labours in the federal election of the previous year. He retired from this post in 1921. He took part in the organization and establishment of Emmanuel Baptist church; served as president of the Western Baptist Convention for a number of years; and was the editor of the *Western Baptist*. He was one of Victoria's earliest prohibitionists, argued for the single tax when Henry George's theories had currency, and favoured proportional representation. He died 6 December 1935, as Italian forces rolled over Ethiopia. *Times* (Victoria), 6 December 1935. Public Archives of Canada, Laurier Papers, W. Marchant to W. Laurier, 12 December 1896.

<sup>3</sup> *Times*, 29 August 1899.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 August, 1 and 2 September 1899.

Richard Cridge of the Reformed Episcopal Church of Our Lord spoke a few words to the troops before pronouncing the benediction, and he gently cautioned that, although most believed “Britain’s cause just,” there were those — particularly the Boers “from whom the final resolve to fight came forth” — who did not.<sup>5</sup>

This clerical activity drew down the wrath of an extremely angry Marchant, who attacked the clergymen for their “august approval” of “the brave boys” who had left Victoria “to kill, mutilate and butcher the Boers.” In writing that was drenched in bitterness and sarcasm, he noted that “the Prince of Peace has been importuned to grant success to the sanguinary contest.” The remainder of his critical letter to the editor continued in a similar vein as he contended that the five ministers had irreverently stood the teachings of Christ upside-down. And, in passing, he took a roundhouse swing at Anglo-Saxon supremacism: “The British people,” he wrote, “have a Divine mission to conquer and subdue the earth. If human victims are needed upon the Imperial altar, South Africa will furnish them.”<sup>6</sup>

Marchant’s denunciation struck nerves throughout Victoria. Aside from apparently enraging imperialists, he offended those who judged his intemperate references to the five clergymen to be completely unwarranted since the latter were simply discharging their “patriotic duty.” Even the *Times*, which had printed his letter and which argued that he was “as good a Britisher” as could “be found in Canada,” thought Marchant’s opinions “incomprehensible” “in the light of history,” although it allowed “that many prominent public men in Great Britain do hold such views.” There was an immediate call that he should resign as school trustee, because in that position he had the task of choosing those “who should inculcate patriotism into the minds of the rising generation” and he had proven himself to be a disloyal menace. Finally, a petition was circulated calling upon the mayor to summon a public meeting at the city hall “to discuss the position of School Trustee Marchant” as a consequence of his conduct. Although the *Times* argued that the true purpose of such a gathering would be to manufacture Conservative capital and stated that any such event would simply, and wrongly, magnify Marchant’s offence, the mayor — in all likelihood unnerved by the vociferous criticism of the school trustee — yielded and called a meeting for Tuesday, October 31.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 and 23 October 1899.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 October 1899.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 and 31 October 1899.

In the warm atmosphere of the council chamber a crowded audience listened to a reading of the offending letter and then a resolution which condemned Marchant's words and called for his resignation as school trustee. To the accompaniment of "hooting and derisive cheers," the mayor then read another letter from Marchant in which he observed that he had not been invited to defend himself. He then proceeded to argue that, although he customarily admired the clergy he had addressed, he was convinced that on this occasion they "had forgotten for a time their professions as ministers of Jesus Christ in their other capacities as citizens." He said that he had expressed no "intentional malice," but only wanted "to arouse the thought of Christian people to the horrors and desolation of war." If he had gone beyond the bounds of good taste, he was prepared to apologize; but he would not be moved from his condemnation of the "sanguinary method of dealing with international disputes." In the general denunciation of Marchant which then ensued, the customs collector had only two defenders. One cited his public service and suggested that war fever had taken grip on the audience; he also noted that John Bright had once been condemned for his position on the Crimean war, only to be praised for the same at a later date. Marchant's other defender hinted that the ring-leaders of the meeting were politically motivated and left the platform with the observation that war was murder, a remark which caused a noisy, hostile response from his listeners. Ultimately, the motion was put to a voice vote and there were no sounds of dissent. "The whole audience then joined in the National Anthem, gave three ringing cheers and a tiger for the Queen, [and] paid a similar compliment to the soldiers in South Africa. . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Marchant did not directly comply with the recommendation of the meeting: he served out his term as school trustee. But when nominations for another term were called for in January of 1900, he decided not to contest for a seat on the school board. For the time being he dropped out of visible Victoria politics, although some of his friends had attempted to persuade him to seek an aldermanic seat in these same elections.<sup>9</sup>

## II

J. Herbert Bainton, a Congregational minister, arrived from England in Vancouver in June 1898 to serve the needs of the First Congregational church, an overbuilt structure designed to accommodate 700 people and

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 November 1899.

<sup>9</sup> *Colonist* (Victoria), 9 December 1899 and 9 January 1900.

having a membership of but 126. Initially much of his energy had to be devoted to rearranging the mortgage indebtedness of the church, which was in difficult financial straits when he came upon the scene, and to building up the church membership, problems compounded by the highly transient nature of Vancouver's population at that time. In both of these matters Bainton achieved some measure of success, but when the Boer war broke out sixteen months after his arrival in town he pursued a course which was to undo much of his labour for money and members.<sup>10</sup>

In fact it was Bainton's young son, Roland, who first encountered the strong imperial feeling of some of Vancouver's population. At school he was asked by the teacher to explain his proficiency in reading. His reply that he had learned as a result of reading W. T. Stead's *Penny Books for the Bairns* produced a response from the teacher: "'Stead!' she bristled, 'He is a dreadful man. He is opposed to the war.'" If young Roland related the episode at home, it had no effect in deterring Bainton senior from the path he proposed to follow.<sup>11</sup>

Once the conflict had begun, Bainton determined to pray for "all who suffered or had been widowed or orphaned by the sanguinary conflict, British and Boer alike," and, beyond that, he made public reference to the "bad war." Those of an imperial bent in his congregation were disturbed by his refusal "to pray for the British." Presumably they meant his refusal to pray for the British alone, to pray for British success. Objection to his prayers "for foe and friend alike" produced a demand from one of his congregation that he read a prepared prayer in which there "was no mercy" for the Boers; Bainton rejected the order out of hand and this led to a request from some of his congregation that he explain his decision. He did so in a sermon entitled "What I Think About the Boer War," which was delivered about a month after the conflict had broken out.<sup>12</sup>

In this address he argued that all war — and particularly the struggle in South Africa — was deplorable because of the physical damage to humans and the moral damage caused by throwing the participants "back into savagery," including those who only killed Kruger "with the mouth." He also offered the opinion that this conflict was inevitable and stated

<sup>10</sup> Roland H. Bainton, *Pilgrim Parson: The Life of James Herbert Bainton (1867-1942)* (New York and Toronto: Thomas Nelson, 1958), pp. 49-60. *News Advertiser* (Vancouver), 5 June 1898. I am indebted to H. Keith Ralston for directing me to the subject of Herbert Bainton.

<sup>11</sup> Bainton, p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64. *Province* (Vancouver), 18 November 1899 and 26 November 1902.

that, after much thought, he had changed his mind and decided that the "Boers were really forcing war upon us." But he went on to observe that the war was not compatible with Christianity: "'In my heart of hearts,'" he said, "'I do not believe that Jesus Christ would have countenanced war of any description.'" He realized that Britain had been slapped in the face, that British prestige was at stake and that turning the other cheek might have encouraged European nations to pounce upon her; but, he concluded, "'if we had had enough faith to try the way of Jesus, perhaps it might have meant our salvation.'" The earlier words of his sermon were undoubtedly crowded out of the minds of some of his listeners by this final observation. Consequently his statement did nothing to calm the restless element in his congregation. That conclusion rests on the fact that he had to return to the subject early in 1900, when he preached a sermon entitled "Can a Christian be a Patriot?"<sup>13</sup>

Bainton's refusal to "pray for the British" and his subsequent sermons produced an opposition party within his church and the demand by some that "a new minister be brought from the east" to replace him and to counter his harmful effect upon congregational unity. This proposition was rejected by the "managing board" "on the ground that the congregation was unable to pay the salary suggested and bringing such a man would be a sort of speculation." And, surely, some defence of Bainton's position was also involved in the decision to turn down this proposal. The opposition to the clergyman would not evaporate, however, and as a consequence either "a faction seceded" or one of the louder dissidents was expelled, taking those of like mind with him. Whichever development occurred — and the evidence on the point is contradictory — the forced or voluntary departure of some led to "the formation of a new congregation."<sup>14</sup>

When Central Congregational church was established in the late spring of 1901, with a minister fresh from Winnipeg, some attempt was made at glossing over the reasons for the creation of a second church. The explanation offered was that First Congregational was a mission church "under the supervision of the Canada Congregational Missionary Society (Montreal) and the Colonial Congregational Missionary Society (London,

<sup>13</sup> Bainton, pp. 64-69. *Province*, 3 February 1900. Correspondence with Herbert Bainton's son, Professor Roland H. Bainton of New Haven, Conn., makes it perfectly clear that his father "was torn asunder by every war." Nor did he quit his position: in 1932, he preached an Armistice day sermon on the futility of war, observing that the First World War had failed to achieve any of its ideal objectives. R. H. Bainton to the author, 19 and 23 November 1979.

<sup>14</sup> Bainton, p. 69. *Province*, 26 November 1902.

England),” and that “a number of Congregationalists” were desirous of having “a self-supporting Canadian Congregational church.” There was no escaping the fact, however, that Bainton’s conduct had been responsible for what had occurred.<sup>15</sup>

Once the war was over, Bainton made the decision to leave Vancouver as soon as an opening became available elsewhere in the hope that his departure would heal the breach in the congregation. Consequently he jumped at the chance to become the minister to the Congregational church in Colfax, Washington; and he departed Vancouver late in the summer of 1902. As he saw it, such a move would free him of Canada and those imperial ties and sentiments which had ruptured the unity of his flock in Vancouver. He left his British Columbia Congregationalists in the expectation that they, too few in number to support two churches, would quickly come together in a single body once he was gone. Such a hope, as it turned out, was some distance from realization.<sup>16</sup>

### III

Thus two outspoken critics of the war were apparently defeated by the conflict, just as surely as were the Boers. William Marchant retired from the field of municipal politics and Herbert Bainton retreated from the country. On the surface, then, it would appear that opponents of the struggle in South Africa were lonely figures indeed on the British Columbia landscape; and the troubles which surrounded them would evidently tend to confirm the view that the province — or, at least, its chief cities — were intensely imperial in their feelings. But a closer examination of these events would seem to justify a modification of such an opinion.

No one would deny the heavily British composition of Victoria’s population at the century’s turn. Of a citizenry slightly in excess of 20,000, three-quarters were of British background, with those of English derivation representing 60 percent of the latter group. The only other ethnic groups which rose above the figure of 700 in the capital’s population were the Chinese and Japanese, who were lumped together and totalled just under 3,000 (a fact which undoubtedly contributed to other attitudes which were developing in British Columbia at that time). The ethnic composition of Victoria was reflected in the religious affiliations of its people: the Anglicans were by far the largest single group, followed by the Presbyterians, Methodists and Roman Catholics. The Baptists, Marchant’s

<sup>15</sup> *Province*, 25 May 1901.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 August and 5 September 1902. Bainton, pp. 69-71.

denomination, were a poor fifth in this picture, represented by just over 900 members.<sup>17</sup> Thus Marchant spoke out in a very British Victoria and, in consequence of its composition, the city was quite supportive of Britain's position in South Africa. He probably made the reaction more intense by being of British origin himself — a fact which likely made his conduct even less understandable to his contemporaries and may, in part, account for the virulence of the denunciation which followed. He was truly an enemy within.

Yet an examination of the 110 men who signed the petition which called for the public meeting to discuss Marchant's conduct reveals that few in the group could be judged to be at the top or the bottom of Victoria's social scale. Contractors and small businessmen dominate the list; and after them come white collar workers. There are but three identifiable lawyers and two architects; at the other end of the scale are a trio of bartenders, a couple of bricklayers and, possibly, a labourer at the Albion Iron Works. And it is worthy of note that despite the clamouring of the petition-signers, only fifteen of them rushed to give money towards a purse for the Transvaal volunteers from Victoria: the hearts of most were in the war, but not their wallets. Consequently questions arise of how representative were the petitioners and how deep were their imperial affections.<sup>18</sup>

It is safe to suggest that the demands for Marchant's head came out of Victoria's middle class; and it can be postulated that these men were either upwardly mobile or imagined themselves to be so: that is, that a number of them, particularly the contractors, were not very far from working-class roots. Could it have been that staunch support for Britain in the conflict was judged by them to be a badge of proper social conduct? It can also be observed that the upper echelons of Victoria's society did not dirty their hands in the rather grubby attempt to punish Marchant. They likely deemed such activity to be beneath their station, and they certainly refrained from taking part in the effort to remove Marchant from office.

<sup>17</sup> *Fourth census of Canada, 1901. I: Population* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1902), pp. 22, 284-85, 154-55. English born or descent, 9,435; Scottish born or descent, 3,728; Irish born or descent, 2,262; other British born or descent, 160. Anglicans, 6,588; Presbyterians, 3,604; Methodists, 3,043; Roman Catholics, 2,001; Baptists, 926.

<sup>18</sup> *Colonist*, 31 October 1899. *Times*, 26 October 1899. *The Williams' Official British Columbia Directory, 1899* (Victoria and Vancouver: R. T. Williams, 1899), pp. 340-571. *Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory and Mining Companies, for 1899-1900* (Vol. VI), (Victoria and Vancouver: Henderson Publishing Co., 1899), pp. 781-988.



There is another reason to question the sincerity of some of those who fussed over Marchant's decline into error. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the prime minister, duly received a copy of the resolution censuring the school trustee for his provocative letter; and the Liberal leader turned to British Columbia senator William Templeman for "advice as to the real inwardness of the whole affair." Templeman, publisher of the *Times*, which had printed Marchant's letter, replied to the effect that within five weeks the incident had been "almost forgotten." While admitting that it had been a mistake on Marchant's part to write the letter and an error on the newspaper's part to print it "at that moment," the senator defended Marchant's pacifism, which rested on "his intense religious convictions." Then Templeman proceeded to charge that political considerations had motivated those who had called the meeting. "The feeling," he wrote, "was aroused by a very few Conservative hotheads," and while the public meeting "was largely attended few persons of any standing took part. . . ." The senator thought that the prime minister would "understand the motive" behind the gathering: "it was the same that prompts the Eastern Tories to attempt to fashion a charge of disloyalty on Mr. Tarte & even to call your own loyalty into question." Templeman firmly concluded by commenting that he would sooner be in Marchant's position "than in that of the cowards who attacked him."<sup>19</sup>

The politics of most of those who signed the petition cannot be established, although it is a fact that Liberal MLA Richard Hall of Victoria put his name to the document. But given that the other members from Victoria were Tories, Hall's signature likely indicates an awareness of his vulnerability more than a measure of his imperial sentiment. The document was also signed by Lieut.-Col. Edward G. Prior, the Conservative MP for Victoria. Templeman's charge does possess a degree of credibility and that makes local politics a prime factor — in company with public indignation — behind the calling of that protest meeting.

All of this suggests that, despite Victoria's British make-up, despite the heat generated by Marchant's letter and despite the call for his resignation as a school trustee, the imperial sentiment of some in the capital city was prompted more by show than by conviction. And the idea of solid English-speaking Canadian support for the war and Canada's part in it can be questioned.

<sup>19</sup> Laurier Papers, Mayor C. E. Redfern and B. Williams to W. Laurier, 3 November 1899; W. Laurier to W. Templeman, 13 November 1899; W. Templeman to W. Laurier, 21 November 1899.

If such questioning can be raised by the Marchant affair, it can be intensified by a closer look at the reaction to Bainton's conduct in Vancouver. Although his refusal to pray only for British success led to a split in his congregation, Bainton's decision produced absolutely no notice in the Vancouver newspapers of the day. The story as to what had caused the division only slipped into print some three years after Bainton's behaviour had begun to divide his flock. That would suggest that the newspapers of the period either could not see a news story or did not regard it as of consequence. Bainton certainly provoked no storm beyond his own congregation in a city which, like Victoria, was made up of people three-quarters of whom were of British birth or descent. It might be argued that Vancouver's Congregationalists, composing but 1.5 percent of the city's population, were scarcely newsworthy in a centre in which, again like Victoria, the Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Roman Catholics dominated in that order.<sup>20</sup> But that is to suggest that newspapers did not judge small minorities to be worthy of coverage, and that conclusion simply will not bear even the most cursory examination. Vancouver evidently chose to take Herbert Bainton in stride and paid scant attention to his behaviour. And that scarcely conjures up the vision of a citizenry ready to defend Britain's cause at every turn.

It is equally important to note that Bainton's actions split his congregation but did not leave him without parishioners. As nearly as can be determined, the division ran down the middle of his congregation. Some key people in his charge left him on the issue: he lost, among others, an architect and his family, a butcher and his spouse, a flour merchant, the family of an insurance agent, the owner of a printing establishment and his wife, a couple of travelling salesmen with their families, and the operator of a transfer business along with his wife. Also departing the Bainton flock were a stonemason, a female stenographer, a clerk, a CPR quarry boss and a warehouseman. Among this group were persons who had filled various church offices: Sunday school teachers, president of the Ladies' Aid Society, congregational auditor and church secretary.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Province*, 26 November 1902. *Fourth census . . .*, pp. 284-85, 154-55. English born or descent, 10,251; Scottish born or descent, 6,069; Irish born or descent, 3,760; other British born or descent, 248. This was in a population of 27,010. Anglicans, 7,063; Presbyterians, 6,505; Methodists, 3,785; Roman Catholics, 3,064; Baptists, 1,551; Lutherans, 446; Congregationalists, 413.

<sup>21</sup> Vancouver School of Theology Archives, Membership Roll of the Central Congregational Church, Vancouver. *Henderson's British Columbia Gazeteer and Directory for 1901* (Vol. VIII), (Victoria and Vancouver: Henderson Publishing Co., 1901), pp. 537-812. *Congregational Magazine* (First Congregational Church, Vancouver), January and February 1899.

Bainton, however, kept to his side individuals who held occupations which were the equal of those of the dissenters; and people who had also served — and continued to serve — in central roles in the church's administration. For example, the owner-principal of a business college stayed with the preacher throughout the controversy. Those who remained with the minister were prepared to live with his views of the war in South Africa; and that suggests that they were something less than deeply committed to the imperial cause in the conflict. Not only did they remain loyal to Bainton, but they deeply resented the departure of his critics, and continued to do so even after Bainton had left for Colfax. They would not entertain the possibility of the two churches disbanding and forming a new congregation. Rather, they stoutly "refused to acknowledge those who [had] seceded . . . in any form but as individuals." They would not recognize Central Congregational as a church because "by so doing . . . they would be practically condoning the action of its members in seceding from the First Church." And even when their church building was seized on legal order by the missionary society of the Congregational church in Canada — apparently in an effort to force a union of the two groups — Bainton's supporters refused to be cowed and ultimately secured repossession of their building. In the end, it was Central Congregational church which yielded and disbanded, with its members returning to First Congregational if they felt so inclined.<sup>22</sup>

Such tough stubbornness by Bainton's followers after he had left the scene would indicate that the dispute between the two groups had grown considerably beyond the original sources of the dispute, not an unusual development. But the fact remains that, at root, it was their loyalty to Bainton and implicit support of his position — or his right to his views — which had led to the ensuing events. So Bainton did not really stand alone with his opinions. Nor had the Vancouver response to those opinions been nearly as strong as the Victoria reaction to the opinions of Marchant.

There is a necessary footnote to these stories. Marchant was not politically destroyed by his letter of 1899; later, after the First World War, he was to return successfully to municipal politics, serving first as Victoria's mayor in 1922 and then as a city alderman from 1924 to 1929.<sup>23</sup> And Bainton was not driven out of Vancouver because of his views. He departed, after the war, in hopes of healing the breach in his congregation.

<sup>22</sup> *Province*, 25 and 26 November 1902; 9 January 1903. *Daily World* (Vancouver), 26 and 27 November 1902. *News-Advertiser* (Vancouver), 27 November 1902 and 28 June 1903.

<sup>23</sup> *Times*, 6 December 1935.

These two minor events in British Columbia in the opening weeks of the South African war would tend to reinforce the view that there was no such thing as a monolithic English-Canadian opinion of the struggle on the African continent. Critics were more numerous than has been previously suggested, and in British Columbia there is clear evidence that the pacifist position had its supporters, some of whom were quite prepared to go a considerable distance in defence of their position. Nor were the societies of Victoria and Vancouver united in denouncing the war critics. Possibly the factor of opposition in French-speaking Canada has, on this occasion, provided Canadian historians with an easy interpretation of the nature of the division in Canada on the subject of the war. It would seem that easy interpretations are suspect.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Robert Craig Brown and Ramsay Cook in *Canada, 1896-1921: A Nation Transformed* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974), p. 26, offer this assessment without much qualification: "This 'new imperialism' struck a sympathetic chord at almost every level of the new industrial societies, perhaps providing a sense of adventure and challenge amid the drabness and routine of factory and slum." That would seem to be an over-statement.