

## EDITORIAL

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In a recently resettled place like British Columbia, the photograph is one of the principal records of change. The first professional photographer (Stephen Spencer) was established in Victoria in 1858; by 1888, when the Kodak was invented, some twenty-five professional photographers had operated studios in the province. Early photographic equipment was bulky and expensive, the tools of professionals, but photography eventually diffused through the population, creating a huge record. The catalogue at the British Columbia Archives and Records Service (the former Provincial Archives) gives access to a small fraction of an enormous collection, part of it available on the World Wide Web.

Of course, the photographic record blends fact, cultural preferences, ideology, and politics. A camera records what it sees, but that seeing is easily manipulated. Photographers chose and variously emphasize their subjects. They leave out a great deal. They reflect themselves and their times as much as the material objects recorded on their plates and negatives. Photographs comprise, therefore, an opinionated record of a changing place and its peoples — but such is the nature of all documents. As long as we understand that the photograph is not innocent or naive, our huge collection of photographs, past and present, provides telling access to the people and places, the minds and manners, of a rapidly changing province.

With such thoughts in mind, we launch an intermittent series: *Photoscape*. In this case we have chosen the photos (from two books reviewed in this issue) and have written commentaries on them. Now we invite submissions. Current work is welcome, however experimental, so are early photographs. The requirements are these: a British Columbian focus, a limit of ten *BC Studies* pages in a combination of photographs and text, and permission to reproduce the photographs. We will publish *Photoscape* as often as we have good material to offer.

We also launch *Forum*, probably a considerably more intermittent series. *Forum* provides context for discussion and debate around important and controversial topics — in this issue the salience of marxian labour history. The format is a short introductory argument, followed by comments, followed by a reply from the initiator of the argument. Again, we invite readers' suggestions and submissions.

*The editors*