EDITORIAL

OUGLAS COLE is the focus of this special double issue of *BC Studies*, but Wendy Wickwire has been the driving force behind it. The idea of the issue was hers, and it was she who contacted prospective authors and commented first on their drafts. We have been in the background, organizing the review process and offering suggestions while essentially observing her editorial enthusiasm and hard work turn an idea into the remarkable collection of writing that is published in this issue.

Her judgement was right. Douglas Cole's stature as a scholar has grown steadily with the years. He had little use for postmodern and postcolonial theory, most of which he considered trendy and meretricious, and thought of himself as a thoroughgoing empiricist. But the distinction between empirical work and theory is more apparent than real. An empirical study – certainly one treating Cole's subjects – confronts vast archives and involves reflection, choice and conceptualization at every turn. So it was with Cole, and the paradoxical result, as Wendy Wickwire points out in her introduction, has been that Cole's empirical work is of abiding theoretical interest. Moreover, he was often strikingly original. In several cases, as with his work on the cultural politics of museum collecting, the "theory" implicit in his work preceded others' more explicit formulation of it. The difference between such deeply inductive theorizing and its more deductive alternative is that the former is grounded in the details of its case and, so contextualized, has a body and life-span that less grounded theorizing cannot match. The price of theory, except for the most brilliant, is ephemeral recognition, whereas the corpus of Cole's work will be read and appreciated for years.

We congratulate Wendy Wickwire for work well done, and take a quiet, vicarious satisfaction that a scholar who contributed so much to this province, and to the study of culture, landscape and colonialism, is recognized in this special double issue.

Jean Barman and Cole Harris