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## Book Reviews

*The politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898–1909*, by David R. Morrison.  
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968. \$4.75.

This book is an encouraging development in the literature of the Yukon Territory. While the Klondike gold rush has been written about again and again, for seventy years remarkably little attention has been paid to anything but narratives of the epic treks over mountain passes, the difficult search for precious metal, and the naughty-nineties hijinx in Dawson City. Mr. Morrison's volume, adapted from an MA thesis submitted to the University of Saskatchewan, may herald the long overdue turn of scholarly attention to factors behind the fantastic and well-publicized gold-rush era. Certainly the fabulous legend of the Yukon will be confirmed (and footnoted) by this study, rather than being exploded as myth.

Morrison's avowed purpose is "to render an account of the relationship between government and governed in the Yukon during the period from 1898 to 1909." Although his study is "not cast in a theoretical mold it offers a case study of political behaviour in an environment of economic decline." It attempts "to shed some light on Canada's experience as an imperial power" and to make "some contribution to the continuing debate over what form Canadian territorial governments should take in future."

The book is not always completely successful in keeping these theoretical objectives in focus. The reader has a tendency to lose sight of the broad framework while following the extremely intricate manoeuvrings of the Yukon politicians whose amazing behaviour is told in a wealth of documentation.

Yukon politics then centred exclusively around patronage and personalities, not principles or the pretense of principles. There is a larger-than-life quality to political life in Dawson between 1898 and 1909. The personalities and their actions almost defy academic analysis. Have such people and such behaviour ever appeared between the covers of any of the eleven preceding volumes of *Canadian Studies in History and Government*?

Most Territorial officials appear to have been appointed because they were friends of Sir Wilfrid Laurier or Clifford Sifton. Once in the Yukon these administrators played politics to the hilt and added old Canadian controversies, such as Roman Catholic-Protestant rivalry and competition between English- and French-speaking cliques, to a political cauldron already

boiling with local grievances about mining laws, administrative efficiency, and local autonomy.

Yukon Liberals split into two factions styled "Tabs" and "Steambeers." Newspapers reached the ultimate in vituperation. When Commissioner Congdon attempted to make Dawson City agree to the suspension of its charter, "Duff Pattullo, one of the city councillors, crawled into the building through a window, and later reported that the [City] Clerk was altering the voter's list to disenfranchise all those who favoured retention of the present local institutions." Some apprenticeship for a future premier of British Columbia!

It is unfortunate that the University of Toronto Press print this Canadian Studies series as they do; the lines of print are too long and too close together. They tired the eyes of one interested reviewer and their density will probably discourage many prospective readers. While neat and equipped with appendixes, notes, a bibliography, and an index, the volume does lack physical "customer-appeal." This is a pity, because David Morrison's *Politics of the Yukon* has broken new ground and deserves to be widely read. It is not only informative but for an academic study amazingly entertaining.

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*A bibliography of British Columbia: Laying the foundations, 1849-1899*, compiled by Barbara J. Lowther with Muriel Laing. Victoria: Social Sciences Research Centre of the University of Victoria, 1968. \$18.50.

*Union list of manuscripts in Canadian repositories*, edited by Robert S. Gordon et al. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1968. \$10.00.

The publications under review mark a new stage in the development of studies of British Columbia. The *Bibliography of British Columbia* brings together in a convenient form the holdings of many libraries, and the *Union list* makes available for the first time a systematic listing of the largest collections of manuscript materials in the area. As well as providing a solid base for new work, they reflect the current state of the field. In neither case did the initiative for publications come from those institutions with the richest holdings of books and manuscripts about British Columbia; for this leadership we are indebted to the Social Sciences Research Centre of the University of Victoria and the Public Archives of Canada.

The handsomely printed pages of the Lowther volume make a worthy addition to the growing list of regional Canadian bibliographies and are destined to become a standard reference. Listed are published materials about British Columbia, contemporary works appearing in order of their date of imprint, followed by more modern works dealing with the period 1849-