

There is also the question of introductions to historical reprints. To my mind they should either be non-existent — as in Coles Canadiana Collection — or essays in condensed research, packed with background information about the times and the author, like the introductions to the *Social History of Canada*. *Queen Charlotte Islands* does have an introduction, but it is precisely the kind of limp and lukewarm production that gives the reader very little help, since it brings in almost no information that cannot be gathered from reading the book, and is almost entirely devoted to a descriptive paraphrase of Poole's narrative which at no point resolutely denounces his atrocities of outlook, his insufferably bombastic style, or his inexcusable failings as an observer.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Wesbrook and His University, by William C. Gibson. Vancouver: The Library of the University of British Columbia, 1973. xii & 204 pp. \$7.00.

Among the abiding puzzles of the historical development of Canadian higher education is the failure of the Province of British Columbia to establish a university until 1915. A second is the failure of the University, when at long last established, to develop into a major institution until the late 1940's. There is no doubt that U.B.C. has been since about 1950 one of the half-dozen most important Canadian universities, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, i.e., in terms not only of numbers of students, staff, buildings, etc. but of range and quality of teaching programme and research performance. The question is one which is not simply of antiquarian interest; universities do have roots, and their position at any time is conditioned by the structures, the traditions and the style which have evolved from the time of their establishment. George Grant continues to cast his shadow over Queen's, Dawson, Rutherford and Leacock over McGill, Bishop Bourget, Edouard Montpetit and Maurice Duplessis over Montreal. The present strengths — and the weaknesses — of Toronto, Dalhousie, Manitoba can not fully be explained without reference to events which occurred as much as a century ago. The University of British Columbia is no exception to this rule. What happened and, as important, what did not happen in 1871, in 1890, in 1908, and particularly between 1911 and 1918 remains highly relevant to the kind of institution it is today.

Since its population in 1871 was only 36,247, it is not surprising that British Columbia was the only one of the colonies which entered federation that did not have at the time any facilities for post-secondary education. By 1890 in Canadian terms at least it did have sufficient population (98,173 according to the 1891 census) to justify the establishment of a university; Manitoba, with a population of under 60,000 had established its provincial university in 1877, and Alberta and Saskatchewan established theirs in 1908 and 1909 when their populations were well below the 100,000 mark (the 1911 census for Alberta was 73,022, for Saskatchewan 91,279). In 1890 the British Columbia Legislature did pass An Act Respecting the University of British Columbia but rivalry between Vancouver and Victoria resulted in the lapsing of the Act in 1891. It was not until 1908 that a second act authorizing a university for the Province of British Columbia was adopted by the Legislature. In the meantime some facilities for higher education had been provided for British Columbia residents through the establishment of McGill University College, incorporated in 1906 but offering instruction at Vancouver since 1899 and at Victoria since 1903. In 1901 the population was 178,657 and in 1911 524,582. The McGill operations provided an immediate basis for the establishment of the University authorized in 1908, but very little was done until 1910 when a commission was appointed to select a site for the institution, and the search for a president instituted. The search was a careful one, but it took more than two years to complete. The choice was Frank Wesbrook, a Canadian who had been associated with the University of Minnesota since 1895, initially as professor of bacteriology and pathology and since 1906 as dean. At the time of his appointment as president he was 45.

It is clear from Dr. Gibson's biography that Wesbrook was an admirable choice to be the effective founder of a great university. It is also clear that he did not accept the position without very clear guarantees not only of adequate but generous support for the new institution on the part of the Provincial government. Nor is there any doubt that he was not only an imaginative and vigorous but a realistic planner, that he had the full support of the staff, many of whom he personally recruited, and of the students, and that he had views on education that were both novel and well-conceived — it is a pity that the half dozen major papers he wrote on university education are not included as appendices since only two of them, 1907 and 1914 papers in *Science*, are easily available. He appears in every respect to have been the man to do what H. M. Tory did for Alberta and what Walter Murray did for Saskatchewan, specific-

ally by 1918 to have first established the basis for a sound university and second to have enabled it to survive the difficulties posed by World War I. The University was finally opened in 1915 and it did survive long past 1918, the year that Wesbrook died, literally a victim of his eighteen-hour-a-day effort to cope with an impossible task.

The villain of the piece was the government. There is some excuse for its withdrawal of expected funds from 1915 on, but, in the light of the promises made to Wesbrook, none for its failure to provide the funds needed to establish the university before the outbreak of World War I. There are, of course, explanations — unexpected (though one suspects not unpredictable) reductions of provincial revenue and other governmental commitments, notably railway construction. But there is a difference between explanation and excuse.

The chief value of Dr. Gibson's book is that it does provide an accurate and detailed portrait of Frank Wesbrook, an honourable man. It does not, unfortunately, add anything to our knowledge of the University of British Columbia and its relations to the government that is not contained in Harry Logan's *Tuum Est*.

This would be less disappointing had the government's position been clearly outlined in Margaret Ormsby's *British Columbia: a History*, a work, which as the footnote references to both the University and Wesbrook indicate, effectively ignores the situation. The story is still untold, the puzzle of U.B.C. remains.

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People in the Way, by J. W. Wilson. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1973. xiv, 200 Pp. \$12.50.

In the spring of 1964 it became apparent that the Pearson government had decided to ratify the Columbia River Treaty. This meant that the time was rapidly approaching when we at the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority would become responsible for the construction of three major dams on the Columbia system in Canada.

From the beginning it was clear that our most serious problem would arise from the fact that some 2000 people would have to move to escape the water that would rise behind the dam to be constructed at the foot of the Arrow Lakes. We were all conscious of the importance of this critical interference with a long-established way of life and that we would