

advertised himself as having twenty years' experience in stage and screen production, and with the assistance of some starry-eyed backers including Kathleen Dunsmuir, heiress to the James Dunsmuir fortune, he planned to make Victoria the "Hollywood of the North." How Bishop interested Columbia Pictures, additional investors and Victoria citizens in getting into the movies could be the basis for a great Canadian feature film.

This catalogue and history are an important contribution to existing studies in Canadian film and may be particularly useful to readers of Peter Morris' *Embattled Shadows*, a history of filmmaking in Canada from 1895 to 1939. It is especially valuable, however, because it expands our sensitivity to the role of film in shaping our social history.

*University of Victoria*

NORAH HUTCHISON

*Community Work in Canada*, edited by Brian Wharf. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1979. Pp. 272.

*Community Work in Canada* is concerned with the conscious intervention by professionals and their cohorts (professionals from other disciplines or, more significantly, socially conscious citizens) in the unfolding history of Canadian communities. These communities may be a neighbourhood, e.g., Regent Park (chapter 2), a city, e.g., Vancouver (chapter 8), or a rural region, e.g., North Frontenac (chapter 4). The conscious intervention is thought to be both necessary and beneficial for the social development of that community, and is justified on the basis of certain societal and professional value assumptions: e.g., strengthening social provisions for disadvantaged people (Caring) and improving the problem-solving capacities of citizens in these communities (Education).

Wharf's objectives in presenting eight Canadian case studies are manifold, but a principal one is the testing of the validity of two interrelated heuristic devices for categorizing the strategies and tactics of community work. The details of these heuristic devices are of no consequence for this particular review. What is of interest for readers of local British Columbia history, however, is the very question of conscious professional intervention in the social development of particular local communities: i.e., Michael Clague's description of "The Britannia Community Service Centre" in chapter 3, and Christiane McNiven's description of "The Vancouver Social Planning Department" in chapter 8. The former, in the light of the heuristic rubric, would be an example of locality develop-

ment which, stripped of its professional jargon, emphasizes the importance of the contributions by, and the various roles of, the local neighbourhood's citizenry. The latter, by the same token, would be an example of social planning and stresses the key factor of centrally located professionals who are in touch with the social and political pulse of the city as a whole.

Whether it be citizen-inspired locality development or more centrally oriented social planning, one may well ask, *sub specie eternitatis*, whether conscious professional intervention anywhere in the world has made significant strides either in strengthening social provisions or in improving people's problem-solving capacities. From time immemorial people all over the world have been concerned with "improving" their condition, but always from within their specific value framework. This last condition is crucial in the light of some of our (western) dismal attempts to introduce improvements in various world communities without much reference to local value systems.

Clague's description of the birth, development and stabilization of the Britannia Centre is minutely detailed but lacks conceptual clarity. McNiven's Vancouver Social Planning Department, on the other hand, skips some of the historical and descriptive detail in favour of a more conceptual and very erudite exposé of that particular organization. Both struggle with questions which, in my mind, are central to the social development of a community: What are the dominant social values in any given community and how are they defined? How does one determine the boundaries of such a community for the purpose of ascertaining the dominant and variant value systems? And, lastly, to what extent does one follow or confront such a value system? It is in the answers to these questions that the community's willingness and ability lie for strengthening its social provisions and/or its capacity for solving its own problems. Britannia community does not exist in a vacuum; it is surrounded by the rest of Vancouver, and it in turn by the province of British Columbia, the country of Canada, the world. The same goes for the Vancouver Social Planning Department. It is, therefore, more logical (rational, sensible) to start with the larger value system and work down, or keeping in mind "small is beautiful," does one attempt to start from a relatively small core and influence outward? Can both occur simultaneously?

Wharf argues eloquently against centralization and for a thorough kind of participatory democracy:

Until we have grappled with the dilemmas of introducing participatory management schemes into schools, hospitals, and public departments of social

welfare, we will be little more than bystanders in a significant and developing area of reform. (p. 268)

Is this an "either-or" situation? Is it not equally logical, glancing sideways at some examples from more centrally planned societies, e.g., China or Cuba, to express admiration for some of their accomplishments? Will our obsession in the west with social and political pluralism leave us forever mired in a morass of incremental social change? In the last analysis I would have to agree with Buchbinder ("Just Society Movement" — chapter 5) that we cannot bring about much strengthening of social provisions and/or improvement in our problem-solving capacities without "revising perceptions and assumptions about basic givens in our society."

In his last chapter, Wharf raises some of these fundamental questions. For these alone I would recommend this book to local and not so local historians, if they can avoid the "trees" of the technical questions around community work and look for the "forest" of philosophical, social and political questions that lie hidden there.

*University of Calgary*

GUSTAVE A. DE COCQ

*Vancouver Island: Land of Contrasts*, edited by Charles N. Forward. Western Geographical Series Vol. 17, 1979. Victoria: Dept. of Geography, University of Victoria. Pp. 349.

The preceding volumes of the Western Geographical Series have been excellent sources of information and viewpoints concerning various geographical aspects and topics in British Columbia and western Canada. This volume on Vancouver Island is the first regional geography example in the series. It was prepared to be distributed to members who attended the meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers in Victoria in June 1979, but the volume will be useful to educators throughout the province and across Canada. The authors of each chapter are faculty members of the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria, and the editor was Chairman at that time.

The organization of the chapters follows a time-honoured format for regional geographies. Some geographers may have wished for some "innovative" or "new" approach to such a regional study, while others may agree that this standard format has the advantages of familiarity and logic. As is often the case in regional geography, the two introductory