

years . . . But I just couldn't stick it out that long." Bill and Phyllis were two of many.

*Along the No. 20 Line* lacks both footnotes and bibliography, and the author's ideas about "urban villages" and "neighbourhood community" can be questioned, but there is no doubt that he has succeeded in capturing the mood and tone of working class Vancouver of forty years ago.

*University of British Columbia*

NORBERT MACDONALD

*Schooling and Society in 20th Century British Columbia*, edited by J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1980. Pp. 191; \$11.25 (paper).

The most schooled generation in history, the one Paul Goodman said was growing up absurd from not enough of the right kind of education, is now churning out educational history in an attempt to understand the place and processes of schooling in industrial society. This collection of essays drawn from recent graduate work at the University of British Columbia is meant to mark the arrival of the new educational history on the provincial scene. Like many collections of essays, this one is characterized more by diversity than unity of theme, a quality not lessened by the failure of the introduction to draw the articles together.

Under the guise of being a discussion of British Columbia historiography of education, co-editor Wilson's introduction gives a short account of the trends in educational history in North America over the last twenty years. While his discussion may well provide a useful summary of those trends for undergraduates on whose reading list this volume is apparently destined to appear, he regrettably passes over the opportunity to give the reader an overview of the society which is the context of the essays. Wilson's main point seems to be that educational history, which he accuses British Columbia historians of ignoring (he goes to the extent of uncharitably counting the "few references" to education in Margaret Ormsby's "readable but traditional" history of the province), has joined the mainstream of history. Educational history has indeed made a large contribution to the new social history, and in some senses, such as in the use of quantification, has been in the lead. In that light, we may judge these essays on the methodological approach they take, the sources they use and the historical context they evoke.

For the most part, the essayists adopt traditional historical techniques to advance their arguments. If, occasionally, certain authors seem more interested in building their narrative to fit theoretical models than they do in using any new methodology to quantify and analyze their findings, they usually do so in a laudable effort to put provincial experience in a wider context. While it is useful to place British Columbia education in the context of recent studies of schools and schooling elsewhere — for British Columbia educators and administrators and the society they served were increasingly, as the twentieth century progressed, bombarded by prescriptions for schools from all quarters — we are also looking for an elucidation of the distinguishing features of local development of schooling. For all its problems, quantification aims at specifying historical circumstances and analyzing them closely enough to permit valid comparisons. In the process, we may gain a less monolithic view of such subjects as the rise of mass public schooling. We may even combat some of the wilder statements of critics like Ivan Illich who, without marshalling historical evidence, ascribe to schools and schooling responsibility for a wide range of social pathologies.

The limitations of the available sources may help explain the impressionistic nature of these articles. By impressionistic, I do not mean shallow or ill-founded; it is just that the authors tend to cull quotations or figures from documents they are reading in much the way historians traditionally do. The articles on the Boys' Industrial School by Diane Matters and the Vernon Preparatory School by Jean Barman, which are solid pieces of work, are cases in point. Who were the Industrial School boys? How do we measure the success of the school? Do the principal's reports and letters that Matters used give the answers? Who attended the Vernon Preparatory School? Do we know why parents chose the school? Do the speeches and pronouncements of the founder and first principal, Reverend Austin C. Mackie, on whose papers the study is based, tell us what the school was really like or merely what he wanted it to be? No doubt the authors would like to answer these questions, but the administrative records of the two schools were not available and likely no longer exist. Here it might be noted that even the public school system makes little attempt in this province to preserve its institutional records.

Despite these problems with sources (and it is precisely the more sophisticated use of sources that is responsible for the advances of the new educational history), with the records at her disposal Matters draws a convincing picture of the impoverished philosophy and ineffectual

practice of those who ran the school, which always straddled some confused ground between reformatory and penal institution. The inclusion of Matters' essay on juvenile delinquency suggests that there was a community of spirit in the reformers' zeal to redeem the delinquent child, on the one hand, and mould the regular school child to social purpose, on the other. In a similar vein, Barman is trying to size up the ideology of the private school. She finds that the Vernon Preparatory School was consciously patterned by Mackie on the model of the British public school in an attempt to preserve an oasis of British ways in the province at a time when the dominance of the British-born segment of the population was declining.

Even Timothy Dunn's article sketching the statistical outlines of the growth of the public school system from 1900-1929 fails to support a sustained argument from the figures. He does try to probe beneath the surface manifestations of rosy progress to connect growth with societal purposes, and in the process raises some interesting themes. The school as one of society's major agents of social control has recently come in for much critical examination. Radicals see the school as a regimenter and indoctrinator moving to capitalist industrial rhythms. Dunn's conclusion is milder. He links British Columbia educational reformers to the movement for efficient social engineering of the work force, but, echoing the reformers, he believes "the ultimate aim of mass public schooling in British Columbia was to prepare youth for socially efficient citizenship." So he sees nineteenth-century schools as lacking the physical and financial resources and administrative expertise to provide relevant education. This sort of judgment seems to be as present-oriented as any Wilson accuses F. Henry Johnson or C. E. Phillips of having harboured twenty years ago.

Jean Mann's piece on G. M. Weir and H. B. King provides companion reading to Dunn's. A University of British Columbia educator with reformist credentials, Weir joined the Pattullo cabinet in 1933 as Minister of Education, and promptly chose King to write a report on educational finance. Mann reveals that the efforts of Weir and King supported the Pattullo government's activist strategy to combat the Depression and ward off the feared drift to communism. Weir and King combined the reformer's zeal for efficiency with the eugenicist's view of intelligence in their plan to turn the education system to better account by more careful streaming of students. This period is one of the more interesting ones in this century. The story of all the things the Pattullo

government tried to do, and how and why it often failed, still needs to be told. Mann's essay is a good beginning in one area.

David Jones has reworked his study of agricultural education in the 1920s in the light of prevailing optimism behind land settlement schemes. He recognizes that a full understanding of why British Columbia embarked on an elaborate program of agricultural education requires a closer examination of patterns of land settlement, boosterism and change in agriculture itself, but not having that knowledge, he falls to musing about the point when a myth "assumes the form of a *Zeitgeist*." As Doug Owram's book, *Promise of Eden*, demonstrates, the ideas and enthusiasms spawned by visions of the bountiful west provided fertile ground for myth-making. Jones is onto something that ought to be carried further for British Columbia, but the present article adds little to his earlier one in *BC Studies* (Fall 1978).

Gillian Weiss' account of the long struggle to institute public school kindergarten also leaves larger questions open. No doubt British Columbia governments were backward in supporting kindergarten as compared to other governments in North America, but, as Weiss' evidence of the flowering of private arrangements for pre-schoolers demonstrates, the push for publicly-supported kindergarten was part of a larger pressure for child-care facilities that had relatively little to do with pedagogical presumptions about kindergarten being "an essential year for the child." The volume is rounded off with a useful select bibliography from Frances Woodward.

The editors have performed a service in making these readable, well-researched articles more available through publication in book form. The articles expand the conventional subject matter of educational history, and together provide a useful contribution to the study of ideas that motivated several educational movements in twentieth century British Columbia history.

*Provincial Archives of British Columbia*

TERRY EASTWOOD

*Songs of the Pacific Northwest*, by Philip J. Thomas. Saanichton, B.C.: Hancock House, 1979. Pp. 176; \$19.95.

The scope of *Songs of the Pacific Northwest* is set out by Thomas in the first paragraph:

This book of songs attempts to bring to life something of the story of British Columbia and its people. In the Pacific Northwest setting from the