

In reading such an account one cannot but be impressed by the physical and mental stamina demanded of the pioneer. The back-breaking work, the constant pressures to innovate and adapt and the isolation were still hallmarks of the frontier experience in North America even in the third decade of the twentieth century. This example would seem to suggest that Frederick Jackson Turner's ascription of special formative qualities to the frontier environment may not have been too far off the mark. The frontier tolerated only those whose vigour and determination could endure the unrelenting routine of physical labour. Isolation and limited capital necessitated innovation and adaptation, the second key to survival. Both were qualities that the Lavingtons seem to have possessed in good measure.

Regrettably, the reader, after following the author through his pioneering trials, is left hanging. The story is unfinished, and one is left to speculate what happened once the ranch was operational. An epilogue outlining the subsequent history of Lavington and the L<sup>c</sup> ranch would have solved the problem.

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*Vancouver's Fair: An Administrative and Political History of the Pacific National Exhibition*, by David Breen and Kenneth Coates. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982. Pp. 192; illus.

The history of a fair like the PNE can provide "a glimpse of how people view themselves and their region, what they feel they have accomplished and what they see as still to be done" (p. 155). As Breen and Coates note in their brief introductory chapter, such a fair comprises a selection of traditional elements descending from English and European fairs of the eighteenth century and before — agricultural and industrial marketing, competition for rewards offered by government or other elites to encourage progress in agriculture and husbandry, entertainment *per se*. It is in the particular forms and relative importance of those elements in a fair that it displays the mentality of its time and place.

When the first Vancouver Exhibition (as the fair was styled before World War II) was held in 1910, its entertainment catered to frontier tastes for burlesque shows, games of chance, horse races and wrestling matches; by the late 1940s it was more family-oriented, featuring Shrine Circus, Miss PNE contest and stage shows by famous entertainers like

Jimmy Durante and Edgar Bergen in addition to the ever-popular races. Although the PNE now has pride of place among agricultural fairs in the lower mainland of British Columbia, this must be attributed to its general success as a public attraction and to the catastrophic failure of its predecessor in that role, the Royal Agricultural and Industrial Society exhibition, whose buildings at Queen's Park in New Westminster burned down in 1929. The Vancouver fair's promoters were reasonably diligent in seeking federal and provincial subsidies for the competitions in agriculture and husbandry which were always part of their show, but farm producers were a small minority of fairgoers and their competitions were important primarily for the country-outing atmosphere they supplied; this status is affirmed by the fair's August date, which was moved back to September in keeping with farm interests only for two years (1919 and 1920). Like many contemporary forms of entertainment, the fair always included a good measure of advertising — consumer-oriented exhibits by manufacturers and by associations of suppliers, a major recent example being the B.C. Federation of Agriculture's "Acres of Food" exhibit of samples and recipes. The relation between the marketing and entertainment functions of the fair could provide an important indication of mentality: if gate receipts plus government grants exceeded the expense of non-marketing entertainment ("attractions," at least some prize money, and a proportion of overhead), then the public can be said to have subsidized the marketing effort; in the contrary case, the advertisers were paying for entertainment to attract the public. This clue is unfortunately not discovered in the present "administrative & political history."

*Vancouver's Fair* is primarily a history of the association of businessmen which produced the fair, its negotiations for government support and its efforts to obtain the goodwill of local residents and to expand facilities at Hastings Park. The association sought financial independence from government and fickle voters by contracting its facilities out year-round for horseracing, trade shows, football, hockey and rock concerts. The enlarged economic base required the association "to function more as a business than a fair organization" (p. 153); this added new grounds for public criticism (traditionally focused on supposed immoralities in the fair itself) and helped lead to a takeover by the provincial NDP government in 1973. As a presentation of this history, the book is reasonably successful; the reader seeking to know the range of decisions that faced the association and the sequence of its actions will be satisfied.

Fortunately, *Vancouver's Fair* wanders from its narrow purpose to explore "the social dimension of the fair and what it reveals about the urban community" which the authors label "not an explicit part of this study" (p. 5). Unfortunately, these intrinsically valuable excursions are not well integrated and tend to deprive the book of shape. Furthermore, analysis of matters external to the association is inconsistent; the importance of economic conditions for passage of money bylaws for the exhibition is an example. Prosperity is credited for passage in 1910 (p. 16), but the severe depression of 1913 is not mentioned in connection with passage in that year. Defeat in prosperous 1927 is attributed to inadequate cultivation of public opinion, passage in 1930 to remedial action in that regard: "In a time of increasing economic distress, the exhibition association had succeeded in having its largest ever by-law request passed by the electorate" (p. 72).

There are annoying flaws at the level of detail, some involving factual error. The map of 1908 ward boundaries (p. 14) locates Hastings Park within the city, although (as suggested on p. 19) it was not. (The difficulty is that this map superimposes 1908 ward boundaries on the city outline of 1911, following annexation of Hastings Townsite.) The map of 1912 ward boundaries (p. 38) correctly locates Hastings Park in Ward 7, but shows five of the other seven wards with boundaries no ward ever had. The fair is said on page 4 to have "been held annually . . . since 1910"; in the 1940s it was not held for five years (ch. 7). There are inconsistencies in the form of index entries: "Bethune, Alexander" (for an alderman and later mayor) *vs.* "McSpadden, Mr. (alderman)" (for George McSpadden).

*Vancouver's Fair* is a frustrating book. It is not merely an administrative and political history, but its "social dimension" is poorly integrated and as a whole it lacks sharpness of focus as a result. It could have been more satisfying if Breen and Coates had done either more or less.

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*The Boundary Hunters: Surveying the 141st Meridian and the Alaskan Panhandle*, by Lewis Green. Vancouver and London: University of British Columbia Press, 1982. Pp. 214; maps and photographs.

A treaty between Great Britain and Russia signed at St. Petersburg in 1825 stipulated that the boundary between British and Russian territory