interest to a wide audience. In addition to its anticipated professional audience the volume ought to be popular in local schools and libraries.

Simon Fraser University PHILIP M. HOBLER

The West: The History of a Region in Confederation, by J. F. Conway. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1983. Pp. 261.

John F. Conway, a sociologist at the University of Regina, has written a lively account of western discontent within the Canadian political and economic structure. His west includes British Columbia but excludes "the Yukon and the Northwest Territories." The story is "told through the most dramatic events characteristic of the West's uneasy place in Confederation," from "the Riel Rebellions of 1869 and 1885," through the rise of agrarian populism and the growing self-consciousness of the working class, the devastation caused by drought and depression in the thirties and the impact of potash and petroleum, to current confrontations emerging out of the National Energy Policy, the "patriation" of the constitution and the collapse of the boom in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

"Concession and compromise," Conway asserts, have "always stopped short of redressing the structural sources of the West's unhappiness." Western discontent arises from "a contradiction historically rooted in the very political and economic structures of Canada, as the nation was established and developed" (p. 5). Confederation was intended to create in British North America a structure that would at once be acceptable to the substantial French-speaking and Roman Catholic minorities (a majority in Canada East) and maintain a British presence in the northern part of the continent. This presence west of the Great Lakes would be reinforced by the entrepreneurial enterprise of the established colonies and by British immigration.

The "structural" difficulty arose from the principles of representation by population and the rule of the majority as applied in a federal system. Federal statesmanship had to deal not merely with three entities roughly balanced in population, but also with an increasing number of political entities in the western hinterland. A balancing act, not beyond the competence of a political gymnast, became a display of the juggler's art that involved clubs that varied more in weight than in colour or shape. Finally a northern magus, convinced that Canadian survival depended less on internal manipulations than on the assumption of fuller responsibilities in

an increasingly threatening and threatened world, managed to administer to his fellow Canadians a strong dose of constitutional realism.

The medicines of bilingualism and patriation, though widely hailed as long overdue, did not affect the "structural" difficulty that arose from disparities in population. The federal government, by sheer weight of votes in the House of Commons, continues to be seen by the west as at least potentially dominated by the two central provinces. In the eyes of the west a federal political party, whether in or out of office, is apt to pursue policies that are in the interest of the centre but not necessarily in those of the other regions.

This structural difficulty, Conway suggests, can only be overcome by federal policies that convince at least the majority of western voters that the west needs Canada. "But," Conway asks, "does the West need Canada?" (p. 3). Confederation was a plan "conceived by the business and political elites of the . . . colonies, inspired by the elite of . . . Canada, for no other reason than to assure their futures" (p. 7). The federal state, and here Conway quotes the late Donald Creighton, was to "clear and prepare the way for the beneficent operation of the capitalist" (p. 11). "The West must be filled not only to expand the domestic market for protected industrial capitalists but also to make the CPR viable and increase the value of the vast tracts of land held by the Hudson's Bay Company . . . and by the CPR consortium . . . " (p. 24). By 1913 "wheat was king, wheat had made Confederation work" (p. 30). But "the myth of the Prairies as a land of homesteaders is false . . . they were involved in a highly sophisticated capitalist agriculture concerned with the extensive industrial cultivation of cash grain crops for a distant market . . . " (p. 32).

These quotations hint at the direction and flavour of Conway's analysis of the sources and manifestations of western alienation. To have compressed so much into 261 small pages of large and admirably clear print is no inconsiderable achievement. Yet some readers might be assisted by a fuller consideration of the changes that western society has undergone since 1870. John Diefenbaker was "the first truly western prime minister" (p. 175), but the Alberta voters who turned out the Social Credit incumbents in 1958 were a different generation from those of 1935, and in very different material circumstances. For a sociologist, Conway seems to skate rather lightly over attitudes to property in an immigrant society.

Conway has a solution. Indeed he has two, but he reluctantly discards proportional representation at the federal level because it "would lead to uncertainty and the horrifying prospect of never having a comfortable

majority" (p. 238). He calls instead for a new national policy and a new economic strategy for national development. "Canada . . . needs serious economic planning and active government intervention at federal and provincial levels in order to achieve regional justice and balance" (p. 240). This proposal may not seem to differ very much in substance from the rhetoric of the established parties, but it does address with greater frankness the nostalgic yearnings of western Canadians for a world in which not only political parties but even most of the machinery of government would wither away.

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Russian Shadows on the British Northwest Coast of North America, 1810-1890: A Study of Rejection of Defence Responsibilities, by Glynn Barratt. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983. Illustrations; notes; bibliography; index. Pp. xvii, 196. Cloth, $26.00.

Although there were Russian influences upon the history of the Northwest Coast and British Columbia from the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries, it is easy to forget their presence and to focus totally on the much more obvious impact of the United States. The overwhelming strength of American military and naval power in the latter nineteenth century made investments in British Columbia militias and coastal defences appear almost pointless. Lack of population and of a British commitment to risk conflict for territories so far isolated from major markets and commercial routes made defence planning a permanent nightmare. When there were scares of Russian raids, privateering activities or even invasions, the British and Canadian authorities could not agree about the responsibility for funding coastal artillery or paying the costs of an adequate defence program.

Barratt's study of the shadowy Russian presence hinges upon perceived dangers, the international relations of Britain and Russia, and Anglo-American relations. Following the War of 1812, Britain did not press the case for sovereignty over the Oregon territory. Fur traders of the North West Company and, after amalgamation, the Hudson's Bay Company feared Russian-American collaboration to freeze out or severely limit the British presence. From the 1820s through the 1840s, the fur company agents were much more committed to Northwest Coast claims than was the British government. Occasional clashes with the Russians such as the