

“A BUSINESS ACTIVITY SURROUNDED BY A CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT”¹:

Regional Educational Publishing, 1970–2015

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ROBIN FARR, WHO “worked at the heart of Canadian educational publishing,”² commented in 1973 that, for large foreign companies publishing was “overwhelmingly business-oriented ... a cultural activity contained in a business environment.”³ For smaller Canadian publishers, by contrast, he thought publishing had “more of the characteristic of a business activity surrounded by a cultural environment.” He added that, “from whatever vantage point the view is taken, the cultural implications far outweigh the economic implications to Canadian society.”⁴

Within this context, demand for Canadian and regional content in school curricula and authorized textbooks came to the fore in the late 1960s and 1970s as a consequence of a rising tide of nationalism accompanied by a growing interest in regionalism.⁵ After surveying 849 history and civics classrooms, A.B. Hodgetts’s influential report *What Culture? What Heritage? A Study of Civics Education in Canada* (1968) called for radical changes to encourage students “to discover a

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¹ Robin Farr, “Government Looks All Around,” in *Publishing for Canadian Classrooms*, ed. Paul Robinson (Halifax: Canadian Learning Materials Centre, 1981), 105. First published in *Publishing in Canada II: “East Looks West”* (Halifax: Dalhousie School of Library Service, 1973), 64–84.

² Roy MacSkimming, *The Perilous Trade: Book Publishing in Canada, 1946–2006* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2007), 32.

³ Farr, “Government Looks All Around,” 104–5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁵ I use the definition of “authorized” offered in Glenn Rollans and Michel de la Chenelière, *Study of the Canadian K to 12 Educational Book Publishing Sector* (Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, 2010), 13, available at www.pch.gc.ca/eng: “the certification given by ministries of education or their delegates to resources that have been reviewed for their curriculum fit and content and found to satisfy the requirements of that jurisdiction.”

real and vital Canada for themselves.⁶ There was accelerated demand for curricula and textbooks that would teach Canadian students about themselves and the nation in which they lived. Hodgetts's call for a national Canada Studies consortium resulted in the establishment of the Canada Studies Foundation in 1970. The curriculum projects produced by the foundation were developed by teachers, who were organized into three regional groups: the Laurentian Project in Ontario and Quebec; Project Atlantic Canada, which involved the three Maritime provinces and Newfoundland and Labrador; and Project Canada West, which included the four western provinces. One of the more successful of Project Canada West's projects was a series of issues-oriented booklets called *Public Issues in Canada: Possibilities for Classroom Teaching*, which was developed under the direction of Donald C. Wilson in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia.⁷ In 1972, Ontario (Canada's largest English-speaking market for textbooks) instituted *Circular 15, Canadian Curriculum Materials* to accompany *Circular 14*, its list of authorized resources. This list consisted entirely of Canadian-authored or manufactured materials.⁸

In 1970, in the midst of this nationalistic fervour, iconic Canadian publishers Ryerson Press (the trade and educational division of the United Church Publishing House) and W.J. Gage were taken over by American firms McGraw-Hill and Scott Foresman, respectively. Both were acquired for their lucrative textbook revenue. The sales of two of the oldest and best regarded publishing firms in the country sent waves of consternation through the publishing community as well as through the federal and Ontario governments. The Ontario government established a provincial royal commission on publishing in 1970 in response to the sales. Its 1973 report had enormous implications for the national publishing scene as it helped to increase the awareness of federal and provincial governments regarding the importance of protecting a cultural industry – one that not only contributed to the economy but also expressed the essence of what made Canadians Canadian.⁹

The Independent Publishers Association (originally called the Emergency Committee of Canadian Book Publishers) was formed

⁶ A.B. Hodgetts, *What Culture? What Heritage? A Study of Civics Education in Canada* (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1968), 121.

⁷ Donald C. Wilson, ed., *Public Issues in Canada: Possibilities for Classroom Teaching*, 14 vols. (Vancouver: Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, 1984–88).

⁸ There were five thousand English-language and one thousand French-language entries in the 1974 *Circular 15*.

⁹ Ontario, *Canadian Publishers and Canadian Publishing, Royal Commission on Book Publishing* (Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1973).

in 1971, again in response to the sales of Ryerson and Gage. Over the decade, as regionalism was on the rise, regional publishers' associations were also formed. By 1978, three regional affiliates, the BC Publishers Group, the Book Publishers Association of Alberta, and the Atlantic Publishers Association, had formed and joined the pan-Canadian association, now called the Association of Canadian Publishers. The Manitoba Independent Publishers Association was formed in 1976 and the Saskatchewan Publishers Group in 1980.

This article considers regional educational publishing from 1970 on, with a particular focus on the BC firm of Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) (1980 to 1989) because it had such a spectacular rise before its ultimate fall.¹⁰ Regional educational publishing firms are defined here as small to medium-sized firms that began with the purpose of publishing textbooks intended for use in the region in which the firm was located. Support by provincial departments of education for regional publishing resulted in the establishment in the 1970s and 1980s of a number of regional educational publishers keen to profit by addressing the lack of Canadian and regional content in kindergarten to Grade 12 (K to 12) provincial curricula. Educational publishing was lucrative up until the early 2000s. As Clyde Rose, president of the regional firm Breakwater in Newfoundland and Labrador, put it in 1989, "For many publishers who came on the scene in the seventies, the choice was very obvious: either get a toe-hold in the lucrative educational market or face almost certain annihilation in the trade."¹¹

REGION AND EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING

According to Manitoba historian Gerald Friesen, who has written extensively about the Canadian Prairies as a region, the concept of region "offer[s] insights into economic, political, social, and cultural

¹⁰ Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) provides a relatively rare example of a publishing firm that has left quite extensive records. These have been deposited in Special Collections and Rare Books (SCRB), Simon Fraser University Library. The records of the Association of Canadian Publishers are there as well. The records of the BC Book Publishers Association are located in the UBC Archives. A second data category involved interviews in the Roy MacSkimming Collection deposited at the McMaster University Archives. This collection includes two lengthy interviews conducted in 1998 and 1999 by MacSkimming with President Scott McIntyre of Douglas and McIntyre. The Canadian publishers' trade journal *Quill and Quire* is another very useful source for issues, trends, and changes as well as information on key people in the publishing scene.

¹¹ Clyde Rose, "Notes on Educational Publishing in Canada," presentation to Association for Canadian Publishers Seminar, 27 April 1989, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, box 14, PR 2000.0780, file 207, ACP Fonds, Provincial Archives of Alberta.

difference.”¹² Writing from the Atlantic region in 2000,¹³ historian Philip Buckner contended: “In a country as large and diverse as Canada, the state has never been able to establish a single, hegemonic vision of the nation. It never will.”¹⁴ In his view, regionalism has enabled individuals of diverse backgrounds to come together in an imagined community and “been an integrative force, placing regional issues on the national agenda.”¹⁵ He contends that the concept has an important place in public discourse despite conceptual disagreements and ambiguities. Historian Margaret Conrad, also writing from the Atlantic region, calls region a “bracketed and playful space between the bounded nation and the unbounded individual.”¹⁶ Her point is that region is a flexible notion that can serve to mediate between individual and nation.

Not only is the concept of region flexible, but what makes a particular geographical or political area a region is mutable and contested. Lawrence Douglas McCann defines region in his edited collection *Heartland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada* as:

a homogeneous segment of the earth's surface with physical and human characteristics distinct from those of neighbouring areas. As such, a region is sufficiently unified for its people to be conscious of its geographic character, that is, to possess a sense of identity distinct from those of other regions. The term regionalism applies to a society's identification with a territorial unit. Regionalism is therefore shaped and given expression by the interplay of land, economy, and society; by the emergence of a group consciousness that voices regional grievances and demands; and by the behaviour of society as expressed most commonly through political actions.¹⁷

Historian Ramsay Cook, in his review of the McCann collection, makes the point that the above is a good definition of a province, adding: “so why not call a region what it really is – a province?”¹⁸ In fact, many of

¹² Gerald Friesen, “The Evolving Meanings of Region in Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 82, 3 (2001): 545.

¹³ The Atlantic region is comprised of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

¹⁴ P.A. Buckner, “‘Limited Identities’ Revisited: Regionalism and Nationalism in Canadian History,” *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* 30 (Autumn 2000): 14. Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30303153>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Margaret Conrad, “Past Imaginings: Reflections on Nation, Region, and Culture in Canada,” *Cars: Canadian American Research Symposium* 2, 1 (2004): 7.

¹⁷ L.D. McCann, ed., *Heartland and Hinterland: A Geography of Canada* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1982), vii.

¹⁸ Ramsay Cook, “Regionalism Unmasked,” *Acadiensis* 13, 1 (1983): 140.

the authors in McCann's collection make the case for province as region. Geographer Cole Harris, for example, notes that a province's "constitutionally defined power, its growing political history ... replaces ... the broader but amorphous regions that have no clear political definition. The provinces are crystal clear. Their territorial boundaries are precise ... [T]hey enormously simplify Canadian reality, and it is this simplified and thereby politically more powerful regionalism that now confronts the concept and the sentiment of Canada."¹⁹ Cook concludes that, "as a tool of analysis, 'regionalism' is a concept whose time has gone."²⁰

In keeping with Cook's argument, Friesen contends that the four western provinces are themselves regions, with both "a single West and four provincial Wests."²¹ "Today . . . there are four Wests, because each western province is increasingly definable, and there is one West, an overarching regional presence in national conversations."²² Writing in 2004, Conrad pointed out that the geographically defined Prairie region incorporated British Columbia into a politically defined West in the early 2000s, with the West voting as a bloc for the Conservative Party of Canada in 2004.²³ But, while there is certainly such a thing as western alienation, which can encompass the geographical space west of Ontario, British Columbians generally do not consider themselves part of the Prairie provinces/region. British Columbia stands apart geographically (on the other side of a mountain range), politically (at least in its provincial politics), and, one could also argue, culturally. As BC historian Patricia Roy maintains, British Columbia is "a region in its own right."²⁴ BC historian Jean Barman's concept of "the West beyond the West" captures this distinction rather nicely.²⁵

When it comes to region and educational publishing, the two concepts central to this article, it is reasonable to argue that most provinces are their own regions, as Gerald Friesen and Ramsay Cook suggest. Educational publishing fits comfortably within the context of province as

¹⁹ Cole Harris, "Regionalism and the Canadian Archipelago," in McCann, *Heartland and Hinterland*, 471-72.

²⁰ Cook, "Regionalism Unmasked," 141.

²¹ Gerald Friesen, *The West: Regional Ambitions, National Debates, Global Age* (Toronto: Penguin/McGill Institute, 1999), 10.

²² *Ibid.*, 4.

²³ Conrad, "Past Imaginings."

²⁴ Patricia E. Roy, "Provincialism and Nationalism: A British Columbia Case Study," in *Canadas of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalisms in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 2007), 234.

²⁵ Jean Barman, *The West beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

region because of the autonomy over education enjoyed by provincial governments, which sets each province apart from the others. In the 1980s and 1990s, British Columbia, Alberta, and the provinces in the Atlantic region were the loci of significant educational publishing by regional publishers.

Each of the four western provinces/regions developed its own distinct (and, to very different degrees, successful) educational publishing sector. Alberta's educational publishing scene was the most vibrant, with about twenty-five years of high productivity. Ontario is unique in that, for well over a century, it has been the home of significant publishers that have supplied textbooks to the entire country. Quebec has operated in a separate sphere, with French-language companies benefiting from provincial government assistance not available in other provinces. The Maritime provinces (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick) made some effort to publish as a unit. Each of these regions is discussed in this article. The North has not had a significant indigenous nongovernmental educational publishing industry in any of its three jurisdictions; instead, this region has made significant use of textbooks authorized in British Columbia and Alberta, supplemented by local resources produced, since the 1970s, under the auspices of the departments of education in Yukon and the Northwest Territories and, since 1999, under the auspices of the Department of Education in Nunavut.²⁶

The ascent of regional publishing, including educational publishing, took place from the late 1960s through the 1990s.²⁷ In 1984, Tony Gregson, the executive director of the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia, confidently predicted "a heightened, and perhaps, even, dramatically expanded role, for the regional publisher."²⁸ Demands for Canadian content on the part of educators and the public, and the willingness of provincial governments to provide some limited subsidies, as well as the practice of provincial departments of education to give precedence to Canadian-authored and manufactured textbooks on their authorized textbook lists, helped to nurture the development of regional

²⁶ Paul Robinson, "Curriculum and Materials Development in the Northwest Territories," in *Publishing for Canadian Classrooms*, ed. Paul Robinson, 221-28 (Halifax: Canadian Learning Materials Centre, 1981).

²⁷ See Fiona Black, "Prairie Publishing," 182-85; Sandrine Ferré-Rode, "Atlantic Canada," 178-81; Peter J. Mitham, "British Columbia and the North," 188-92; George L. Parker, "Trade and Regional Publishing in Central Canada," 168-78. All of the preceding are in Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon, eds., *History of the Book in Canada*, vol. 3, 1918-1980 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

²⁸ Tony Gregson, Executive Director, Association of Book Publishers of BC, to Linda Turnbull, Marketing Director, Douglas and McIntyre Educational Ltd., 8 August 1984, ABPBC Fonds, box 29, file 11, Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC), UBC.

firms devoted to educational publishing. A few firms, such as Weigl in Alberta, continue to publish educational resources today. Others, like Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) in British Columbia, burst on the publishing scene like a meteor, shone brightly for a time, and then disappeared from view.²⁹

In the 1980s, Arnold Publishing, Reidmore Press, Les Éditions Duval/Duval House, and Weigl thrived in Alberta, and Peguis in Manitoba. Maritext, Ragweed, and Breakwater were operating in the Atlantic provinces. British Columbia's only major textbook publisher was the firm of Douglas and McIntyre (Educational), which operated from 1980 to 1989.³⁰ Carl F. Klinck, in *The Literary History of Canada*, describes the small regional publishing firms that were established "as part of a wave of cultural nationalism"³¹ as "small, undercapitalized, but ideologically fervent presses."³² This remark would include both educational and trade firms.

SASKATCHEWAN

In the Prairie region, Saskatchewan was first off the mark with the establishment of the School Aids and Textbook Publishing firm in Regina in 1932. This firm published most of its books between 1932 and 1950.³³ It continued to publish for the next twenty years but was struck from the Saskatchewan register of corporations in 1978. Its collection included social studies, science, English, art, and mathematics textbooks as well as teacher resources, including a charming collection of primary activity-based school projects.³⁴ The firm placed significant emphasis on books about the Indigenous peoples of Saskatchewan.

According to MaryLynne Gagné, most of the firm's publications were either approved as core textbooks or, at the very least, listed as recommended reference books for Saskatchewan schools, and several

²⁹ For a detailed analysis of the rise and demise of Douglas and McIntyre (Educational), see: Penney Clark, "A Precarious Enterprise: A Case Study of Western Canadian Regional Educational Publishing, 1980-1989," *Historical Studies in Education* 25, 1 (2013): 1-29.

³⁰ In the interest of full disclosure, I co-authored several publications for Arnold Publishing between 1992 and 2000 and for Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) between 1985 and 1989, although these were not resources that were part of the original Explorations series. I also co-edited several publications for Pacific Educational Press, which I discuss later.

³¹ Carl F. Klinck, *Literary History of Canada: Canadian Literature in English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 173.

³² *Ibid.*, 170.

³³ MaryLynne Gagné, "Print, Profit and Pedagogy: The School Aids and Text Book Publishing Company," *Saskatchewan History* 60, 1 (2008): 17-27.

³⁴ Edna M. Payne, *Primary Projects: 14 Complete Enterprises* (Regina and Toronto: School Aids and Text Book Publishing Co., 1947).

books were listed in Department of Education textbook circulars for up to and exceeding twenty years. Gagné notes that the firm profited from its connections with the Saskatchewan Department of Education and from the movement across the Prairie region towards textbooks published in the region. It also profited from the department policy of authorizing textbooks, which “translated into sizable print runs and guaranteed yearly profits.”³⁵ Gagné observes: “In an era where most Canadian textbooks were published in Eastern Canada or the United States, School Aids publications afforded Saskatchewan children the rare opportunity to find themselves, their history and their physical surroundings reflected in the curriculum.”³⁶ A significant factor in the firm’s demise was the Saskatchewan Department of Education’s move to authorizing more books by central Canadian firms such as Gage and American and British branch plant firms such as Thomas Nelson, Prentice-Hall, McGraw-Hill, and Macmillan.³⁷

This firm lived outside the time frame of this study, but I include it because it provides a picture of how educational publishing in Saskatchewan predated the era when educational publishers in other provinces became so prominent. The firm is also of interest because it was ahead of its time in its efforts to focus on the region in which its young readers lived and on the Indigenous peoples of the region.

ALBERTA

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Alberta had the strongest regional educational publishing environment in the country. Provincial government policy, including strong initiatives in Indigenous education, which meant that new resources were required; a system of prescribing selected textbooks;³⁸ centralized textbook purchasing; and government-sponsored publishing projects encouraged the development of the second-largest centre of K to 12 core-resource publishing in English-speaking Canada, the first being in Ontario (although Ontario’s market was national rather than regional).³⁹ Alberta publishers benefited enormously from the largess of the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund. In the early 1980s, \$8,387,000 was provided from this fund in order to support the development of literature

³⁵ Gagné, “Print, Profit and Pedagogy,” 20.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁸ Prescribed textbooks were considered to be core to a course. Sometimes there was more than one book from which teachers could choose, but they were required to use one.

³⁹ Rollans and de la Chenelière, *Study of the Canadian K to 12*, 12–13.

anthologies with selections written by Alberta authors, along with social studies resources, which included a large fibreglass relief map of the province for each elementary school, the multimedia Kanata Kits for all grades, and class sets of textbooks about Alberta (e.g., *Landscapes of Alberta* and *Albertans All*) and the *Junior Atlas of Alberta* (which came with 3-D glasses) that were developed to support the curriculum at each of Grades 4 to 6.

Alberta publishers had a strong regional focus. As Pat Reid, co-owner of Reidmore Publishers, put it: “If we don’t have vehicles to tell our own story, the province is diminished and the country is diminished ... This is particularly important in education and textbooks. Do we want Americans educating our kids, their ideas populating our minds, our future decisions based on their values and ideas? Alberta publishers are more apt to deal with Alberta writers and Alberta ideas and values and history.”⁴⁰

Four regional publishing companies thrived for a time in this fertile environment: Arnold Publishing (est. 1967), Weigl Educational Publishers Limited (est. 1979 in Regina, Saskatchewan, and moved to Calgary in 1984), Reidmore Publishing (est. 1979), and Les Éditions Duval/Duval House (est. 1985). All published for provincial K to 12 markets before moving on to national and, in the case of Weigl, international markets. Arnold Publishing, which was established by Edmonton junior high school social studies teacher Phyllis Arnold, was highly successful. In 1999, George Melnyk, in *The Literary History of Alberta*, calls Arnold Publishing “Alberta’s leading educational publisher.”⁴¹ The firm’s social studies, history, and geography texts were usually written originally for the Alberta curriculum but sold well across the country. Its core Canadian history textbook, *Canada Revisited*, originally published to support the Grade 8 curriculum in Alberta, was printed in runs of fifty thousand to one hundred thousand copies.⁴²

Reidmore was founded by Pat Reid and Randy Morse in 1979 as a trade publisher, and it did not move into education until 1986. Like the other Alberta firms, it started out with social studies textbooks, beginning with a Grade 5 textbook for Manitoba entitled *Canada: Its Land and People*. This text sold widely across the country. The firm published about thirty-five other social studies texts as well as texts in language arts

⁴⁰ Quoted in Tim Christison, “A Local Perspective: Do We Really Need an Alberta Book Publishing Industry?” *Albertaviews: The Magazine for Engaged Citizens*, 1 September 2001, 6.

⁴¹ George Melnyk, *The Literary History of Alberta* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1999), 170.

⁴² Christison, “Local Perspective,” *Albertaviews*, 7.

and mathematics.⁴³ It also became known for its Native Studies series. By 2000, Reidmore had a list of 150 titles and was generating revenues of between \$2 million and \$3 million annually.⁴⁴

Les Éditions Duval/Duval House was managed and co-owned by Glenn Rollans, who currently co-owns Brush Education, which publishes higher education resources. Les Éditions Duval/Duval House published Canada's largest list of K to 12 Aboriginal resources as well as social studies and English-as-a-second-language resources for schools in China.⁴⁵ The firm also published some of Arnold's social studies textbooks in French for schools outside Quebec.

In 2000, Reidmore was purchased by Nelson Canada, which was owned by the multinational, but Canadian-owned, firm International Thomson. This was followed by the sale of Arnold (then called Tortoise Press) in 2002. In 2006, Duval closed in Alberta, and its Montreal operation was purchased by Modulo, which had already been purchased by Nelson. Nelson was permitted to make these purchases because it was Canadian-owned. Foreign branch plant publishers operating in Canada could not make such purchases under Canada's foreign investment rules for the book industry.

Of these four firms, only Weigl Educational Publishers made the leap from regional publisher to national to international. President Linda Weigl commented recently: "I hate the notion of being regional. We are international in our focus. That is the way of business today, whether we are in publishing or we are in oil."⁴⁶ Weigl received a major initial boost in 1979 when it landed the Alberta Kanata Kit project contract to support Alberta's new social studies program. This project, which was initiated and managed by Alberta Education, involved sixteen kits to support social studies units from Grades 1 to 12. The kits contained teacher guides, student booklets, audiovisual resources, picture sets, manipulative items such as puppets in the primary grades, and the like. Alberta Education sent the kits to every school in the province. Weigl's Canadian history textbook, *Canada's Political Heritage*, originally published for Grade 8 in Alberta, sold over seventy thousand copies between 1985 and 1990.⁴⁷ This successful firm is still publishing as the Weigl Group of Companies.

⁴³ Laurie Bildfell, "Provinces' Taste for Local Content Gives Boost to Regional Publishers," *Quill and Quire* 56, 4 (1990): 22.

⁴⁴ Derek Weiler, "Nelson Buys Alberta's Reidmore Books," *Quill and Quire, Industry News*, 30 January 2004, available at www.quillandquire.com/omni/nelson-buys-Alberta-s-reidmore-books/.

⁴⁵ Rollans and de la Chenelière, *Study of the Canadian K to 12*, 15.

⁴⁶ Interview, Linda Weigl, President and Publisher, Weigl Group of Companies, 18 July 2017.

⁴⁷ Bildfell, "Provinces' Taste for Local Content," 22.

Weigl Educational Publishers, located in Calgary, is described on its website as “one of the largest Canadian-owned educational publishing houses in Canada.”⁴⁸ Given that Nelson is now owned by three American capital management firms, it may well be the largest, at least in English Canada.⁴⁹ It publishes about twenty supplementary K to 12 textbooks in various subject areas and school library books each year. Weigl Publishers Inc. (est. 2000), with offices in New York City and Chicago, produces supplementary materials for the American education and school library markets. The entire output of Weigl’s third firm, AV2 by Weigl (est. 2010), is digital. This firm has produced “hundreds of titles.”⁵⁰ It is clear that Weigl can no longer be considered a regional educational publisher.

MANITOBA

In Manitoba, Winnipeg-based Peguis (est. 1967), Manitoba’s first full-time publisher, has operated as Portage and Main Press since 2001. The firm shifted to a focus on education in 1985 and mainly publishes teacher resource books for Grades 1 to 6 for the curriculum areas of social studies, mathematics, science, and English-language learning, but it has recently produced history textbooks for Grades 5 to 8 that have been authorized to support the current curriculum in Manitoba (with the Grades 7 and 8 books authorized for Saskatchewan as well).⁵¹

ONTARIO

Given that it is the largest English-speaking market in the country, Ontario enjoyed hegemony until the 1970s as major publishers catered to its curriculum requirements and Ontario-centric textbooks, produced by national and foreign branch plant publishers, were adapted for use in other provinces. As Phillip Buckner has put it, the Ontario identity has been taken as the Canadian identity.⁵² Ontario is, of course, a region like other provinces. However, regional educational publishing was not the prominent phenomenon there that it was elsewhere. This is possibly because, if Phillip Buckner is correct, Ontario has had no need to assert its regional identity.

⁴⁸ See www.av2books.com/weiglgroupofcompanies.swf.

⁴⁹ “Nelson Education completes sale to lenders, overhauls board,” 21 October 2015, available at <https://www.pchub.com/canada/2015/10/nelson-education-completes-sale-to-lenders-overhauls-board/>.

⁵⁰ Interview, Linda Weigl, 18 July 2017.

⁵¹ www.portageandmainpress.com.

⁵² Buckner, “‘Limited Identities’ Revisited,” 7.

Ontario has been the home of large foreign (British and American) branch plants and, more recently, multinationals. For the most part, the many small presses established in the 1980s and 1990s did not venture into the K to 12 educational market. Crabtree Publishing in St. Catharines and James Lorimer in Toronto were two exceptions. Both had books listed on the province's *Circular 14* in the 1980s. Crabtree specializes in Canadian history books for young students and is still publishing textbooks and books primarily intended for school libraries. James Lorimer had two primary reading series listed on Ontario's *Circular 14* in the 1980s: the *Time of Our Lives – Lorimer Reading* series and the *Adventures in Canada* series. However, James Lorimer's participation in textbook publishing was short-lived. The children's book firm Annick Press also had books listed on *Circular 14* in the 1970s. These were storybooks that happened to be deemed suitable to support the primary language arts program, but they were not originally published as textbooks. Other well-known small Ontario firms published for markets other than K to 12. Broadview Press, for example, targeted the higher education market in English and the social sciences. Fitzhenry and Whiteside published for K to 12 schools but not on a regional level. Its Canadian history textbooks were sufficiently generic to fit with curricula across the country. (Many of Fitzhenry and Whiteside's resources were also available in French.)

QUEBEC

The K to 12 publishing industry has been strong in Quebec thanks to programs not available in other provinces. The Société de développement des entreprises culturelles offers manufacturing tax credits and other programs, and the Fonds d'investissement de la culture et des communications offers equity investment. These programs are, according to industry analysts Glenn Rollans and Michel de la Chenelière, "by far the strongest provincial support programs accessible to K to 12 publishers in Canada."⁵³ Rollans and de la Chenelière also point to a lack of competition in terms of French-language publishers in North America and strong investment in K to 12 publishing by the Quebec printing industry as factors in the strength of the industry in Quebec.⁵⁴

Les Éditions de la Chenelière, established by Michel de la Chenelière in 1984, took an opposite route to other regional publishers, first publishing French-language K to 12 resources outside of Quebec and then

⁵³ Rollans and de la Chenelière, *Study of the Canadian K to 12*, 75.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

moving into the provincial market. The firm became the largest French-language educational publisher in North America before de la Chenelière sold it in 2006 to Transcontinental. At present, it continues to operate under the Chenelière imprint and is the second largest K to 12 publisher in Quebec after Pearson ERPI, which is owned by the multinational Pearson.⁵⁵

ATLANTIC REGION

The Atlantic region is comprised of the four provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick. But it is the three Maritime provinces that, albeit briefly, acted as a region when it came to educational publishing. Carl Klink's phrase in *The Literary History of Canada*, "ideologically fervent presses," is more applicable to the Atlantic region than to the Prairie provinces or British Columbia. The firms established there were very clear about their regional cultural mandate. For example, Breakwater in St. John's, Newfoundland (est. 1973), was "founded on the principle of preserving the unique culture and stories of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Maritime provinces."⁵⁶ It was established by five Memorial University professors: Clyde Rose, Richard Buehler, Pat Byrne, Tom Dawe, and Al Pitman, with the explicit purpose of rectifying the lack of materials about the Atlantic region available for use in schools. Its textbook output has been significantly greater than that of the other two firms that are discussed here. It currently has a catalogue of sixty-four educational resources (textbooks and teacher guides) on its website. The list includes literature anthologies, algebra texts, a history of Newfoundland and Labrador for Grade 8, science textbooks and teacher guides, and textbooks and teacher guides for the religious education program. Publication dates range from 1980 to 2015.⁵⁷ Of these, twenty-four have been published since 2000 and are still authorized by the Newfoundland Department of Education and regularly purchased.⁵⁸ President Rebecca Rose estimates that an additional twenty-five were authorized prior to 2000.⁵⁹ This firm is still very active under Clyde Rose's daughter Rebecca Rose, but it has moved from education to trade, publishing twelve to

⁵⁵ Ibid., II.

⁵⁶ www.breakwaterbooks.com/about/about-us/.

⁵⁷ www.breakwaterbooks.com/product-category/genre/educational/.

⁵⁸ Interview, Rebecca Rose, President, Breakwater Books, 19 July 2017.

⁵⁹ Email, Rebecca Rose to Penney Clark, 18 July 2017.

sixteen trade titles per year at present.⁶⁰ Order quantities no longer justify the publication of textbooks, which are expensive to produce.

Maritext (est. 1987), a Halifax-based firm, seems to have been incorporated solely in order to co-publish resources for the new Maritime studies course offered at the Grades 9 and 10 levels in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. The firm published the textbooks *The Maritimes: Tradition, Challenge and Change* (1987) and *The Maritime Provinces Atlas* (1988) and then ceased publishing.⁶¹ *The Maritimes* textbook was intended to teach students about the social conditions of the Maritimes. Maritext was a joint venture of Halifax's Formac Publishing, owned by ardent nationalist James Lorimer; Ragweed Press of Prince Edward Island; and New Brunswick printer David Nelson.⁶² It was supported by the Maritime Provinces Education Foundation, which included all three provinces and had federal support from the Canadian studies program of the Department of the Secretary of State.⁶³ The purpose of the foundation was to facilitate joint ventures in the production of learning materials.

The Council of Maritime Premiers established its Educational Publishing Development Program in 1989, offering loan guarantees to help publishers break into the educational market.⁶⁴ Given that the Maritime provinces were spending about \$20 million annually on learning materials, most of which went immediately out of the region, part of the rationale was to keep some of that money at home, providing benefits not only to publishers but also to the entire infrastructure of publishing, including artists, editors, authors, and support staff. This level of collaboration among provinces was not evident in other regions. Certainly, British Columbia did not offer this level of financial support for the development of educational resources. Nor was it able to collaborate with other provinces in this way. Formac continues to publish in Halifax and describes its mandate as "publish[ing] books about Canada's Maritime provinces or by Maritime Canadian authors. We're publishing for readers

⁶⁰ www.breakwaterbooks.com/about/about-us/.

⁶¹ George Peabody, Carolyn MacGregor, and Richard Thorne, eds., *The Maritimes: Tradition, Challenge and Change* (Halifax: Maritext, 1987); Robert J. McCalla, *The Maritimes Provinces Atlas* (Halifax: Maritext, 1988).

⁶² Peggy Amirault, "Tri-Province Group Wins Maritime Text Tender," *Quill and Quire* 50 (September 1984): 67. This article provides useful background information. However, although it states that Moncton's Editions d'Acadie was one of the publishers, it is not listed on the copyright page of the textbook.

⁶³ Peabody, MacGregor, and Thorne, *Maritimes*, copyright page.

⁶⁴ Dean Jobb, "Maritime Outcry over Text Contract," *Quill and Quire* 56, 8 (1990): 6.

in the Maritimes, and beyond.”⁶⁵ Its output includes children’s books but not textbooks.

Ragweed, known as “the island press,” was established in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in 1973 by academic Harry Baglole as a vehicle to publish materials on Prince Edward Island for the province’s schools. The first book to use the Ragweed imprint was Baglole’s *Exploring Island History* (1977), which was intended for high schools in the province.⁶⁶ The firm later co-published *The Maritimes: Tradition, Challenge and Change* for the Grades 9 and 10 Maritimes studies course and also a Grade 6 text that was published under contract with the PEI Department of Education.⁶⁷ Other than these three textbooks, the firm focused on trade titles, publishing about seventy titles in total, with mainly regional content. The firm was purchased by Balmur in 2000 and moved to Toronto in 2001.⁶⁸ Overall, despite government financial support, the educational resource output of Atlantic region publishers has been limited.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

The only significant educational publishers in British Columbia have been Pacific Educational Press (1971–2015) and Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) (1980–89), both of which are now out of business. Pacific Educational Press, part of the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, was established in 1971. For its first twenty-nine years, its output consisted mainly of teacher resource books and university textbooks intended for use in teacher education programs. It began to publish core K to 12 textbooks in 2000, mainly in the areas of science and math. Most of its textbooks were authorized in British Columbia, Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut.⁶⁹ As of 2015, the firm is an imprint of UBC Press, which distributes some of Pacific Educational Press’s inventory but is not publishing new books under that imprint.

⁶⁵ www.formac.ca/forma-about-us.html.

⁶⁶ Harry Baglole, ed., *Exploring Island History: A Guide to the Historical Resources of Prince Edward Island* (Belfast, PEI: Ragweed Press, 1977).

⁶⁷ For more information on the beginnings of Ragweed Press, see Charles Duerden, “Ragweed Press Celebrates 10th Anniversary,” *Atlantic Advocate* 82, 3 (1991): 38–39. The firm did not incorporate until 1980 when Libby Oughton, an employee of the Association of Canadian Publishers, invested in the firm and became a partner. Baglole departed soon after Oughton’s arrival. Louise Fleming took over from Oughton in 1990. See also www.booksincanada.com/article_view.asp?id=2440.

⁶⁸ “Ragweed press sold,” www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ragweed-press-sold.

⁶⁹ www.pacificedpress.educ.ubc.ca/about-2/.

D&M Publishers, located in Vancouver and subsuming Douglas and McIntyre, Greystone, and New Society Publishers, declared bankruptcy in October 2012.⁷⁰ In the numerous media articles and interviews published both at the time and since, there has been scant reference to Douglas and McIntyre's decade as a successful educational publisher, during which it produced *Explorations*, a remarkable elementary school social studies series that had a national impact, as well as a number of other educational resources.

The story of Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) begins in 1977, with the publication of the provincial review of the BC social studies program.⁷¹ In response to this report, the BC Ministry of Education made the decision in 1979 to develop a new social studies curriculum, producing the elementary version in 1983 and the secondary in 1985. The intention was that both curricula were to be supported by textbooks written and published in Canada.

Meanwhile, the firm of Douglas and McIntyre had been publishing trade books of regional interest under that imprint since 1978. In 1980, the BC Ministry of Education put out a call for textbook proposals to support the elementary curriculum. At this time, Scott McIntyre was majority shareholder, president, and publisher of the firm. His partner and original founder, Jim Douglas, was preparing to retire. Bill Clare, an individual with over twenty years of experience in educational publishing, who had been assembling a team of teachers (including Carol Langford) in anticipation of the call, approached the firm with the intention of convincing it to develop a proposal for a new elementary social studies series to support the curriculum. Langford, an elementary schoolteacher and curriculum consultant in the suburb of Surrey, and faculty associate at Simon Fraser University, had been a key member of the provincial review team. Bill Clare was highly credible and persuasive, and the partners decided to take the leap. In order to protect their equity in the existing firm, they formed a new company called Douglas and McIntyre (Educational), putting up their homes to provide the necessary collateral to support the bank loan. Douglas agreed to delay his retirement during the development phase of the new series, taking over the management of the original trade firm in order to free up McIntyre to head the new educational company.

⁷⁰ Douglas and McIntyre, the trade firm, celebrated its fortieth anniversary in 2011. In 2013, after declaring bankruptcy, it was purchased by a BC regional trade publisher, Harbour Publishing, and operates as a separate imprint, Douglas and McIntyre (2013).

⁷¹ Ted A. Aoki, Caroline Langford, David M. Williams, and Donald C. Wilson, *British Columbia Social Studies Assessment, Summary Report* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1977).

The new firm invited four current Douglas and McIntyre employees to join the project and involved forty freelancers as well. There were “two general editors, 11 teachers, 11 authors, 8 illustrators, a cartographer, 5 photographers, photo editors and photo agencies.”⁷² They worked to develop a proposal for Explorations, a Grades 1 to 6 social studies program with three thousand proposed textbook pages. The proposal included 15 to 20 percent finished pages for each book in the series as well as sample teacher book pages.⁷³ With the exception of the editors and the Douglas and McIntyre employees, these people donated their labour in the hope of receiving royalties should the proposal be successful. In 1982, the ministry announced that Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) had won the contract over twenty-one other firms, including every major educational publishing company operating in Canada.⁷⁴ This marked the first time that a BC publisher had won a major educational publishing contract.⁷⁵

Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) was awarded a monopoly over textbook provision in Grades 1 to 3 and shared the contract with Prentice-Hall Canada, an American branch plant firm, at Grades 4 through 6. (Like the Explorations series, Prentice-Hall’s Identity series was written by local authors.) In the end, Prentice-Hall was not able to publish a book for Grade 6. Ultimately, Douglas and McIntyre provided 60 percent of the Grade 4 and Grade 5 classrooms in the province with textbooks and all of the books for Grades 1 to 3 and 6. Unlike today, when schools decide how many texts they can afford to purchase, once a school chose which company it would support, the Ministry of Education provided it with one book per student.

It is apparent that there was significant resentment on the part of foreign branch plants that had competed in good faith for the elementary social studies contract in British Columbia. In a letter to Arden Ford, assistant director of the Association of Canadian Publishers, Gladys Neale of branch plant firm Macmillan Canada expressed dismay at the BC government’s decision to grant the Explorations contract to Douglas and McIntyre. She called it “a serious threat to all of us” and went on to say, “we should be addressing ourselves to this problem.”⁷⁶ In her

⁷² Scott McIntyre, 20 May 1981 letter in “A Brief Submitted to the British Columbia Ministry of Education,” 31 May 1981, Education box, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ “Textbook Contract Let,” *Vancouver Sun*, 18 May 1982.

⁷⁵ Ellen Godfrey, President ABPBC, to Brian Smith, Minister of Education, 11 June 1982, ABPBC Fonds, box 5, file 30, RBSC, UBC.

⁷⁶ Gladys Neale to Arden Ford, Assistant Director, ACP, 25 September 1979, Association of Canadian Publishers Archives, F57-4-9-31, Learning Materials Development, 1979-81,

view the province was entering the business of educational publishing in direct competition with private enterprise publishers. Apparently referring to the Douglas and McIntyre contract, writer Laurie Bildfell commented in a 1990 *Quill and Quire* article: “Though no rigid policy exists, as a general rule if a book deals primarily with Newfoundland, the tender will be open only to Newfoundlanders. Other provinces, some publishers believe, have given the appearance of tendering to all interested publishers, while in reality making decisions based mostly on location – an approach that is especially galling, not to mention costly.”⁷⁷ She followed this comment with a quote from Rob Greenaway, president of branch plant Prentice-Hall Canada’s school division:

The biggest effect has been to eliminate certain marketplaces we traditionally have had an opportunity to compete in . . . These are political intrusions into the educational decision-making process that have affected not only large educational publishers but any publisher who isn’t resident in the province that’s tendering the project.⁷⁸

It is fair to say that Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) had an advantage over its competitors simply because it was located in the province/region. In 1980, R.J. Carter, the deputy minister of education, made the ministry’s position clear when he remarked: “the basic position is that all things being equal, or even not quite equal, Canadian and BC materials and curriculum get the nod.”⁷⁹ BC publishers were given “a strong word of encouragement . . . to submit proposals,” according to Jerry Mussio, director of curriculum development.⁸⁰ Finally, Minister of Education Brian Smith remarked that the ministry’s intention was “to give social studies a Canadian and BC point of view – not an American branch plant view.”⁸¹ The province’s position was quite clear.

The Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia (ABPBC) was very influential in the firm’s acquisition of the lucrative textbook contract. By 1980, the association, formed in 1974, had spent six years lobbying the provincial government for greater support for the province’s nascent publishing industry. It had demonstrated an interest in educational publishing from the beginning, submitting a brief in 1975 to the

SCRB, SFU.

⁷⁷ Bildfell, “Provinces’ Taste for Local Content,” 22.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Judith Turner, “The Community and the Curriculum,” *BC Teacher* 60 (September–October 1980): 22.

⁸⁰ Ann Vanderhoof, “Reshape El-Hi Market: Finding No Amending Formula to Meet Provincial Guidelines,” *Quill and Quire* 47 (May 1981): 7.

⁸¹ Quoted in “Textbook Contract Let,” *Vancouver Sun*, 18 May 1982.

minister of education promoting the establishment of a learning material development fund. It also urged the government to be more forthcoming about areas in the curriculum in which textbooks were needed.⁸² The 1980 Ward-Harris Report, commissioned by the ABPBC to review the state of publishing in the province, also had an impact. It recommended to the Ministry of Education that textbooks receive official approval earlier in the development process so that publishers would not have to incur the significant expense of taking books all the way to completion before learning whether or not they were to be approved.

In the end, Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) was immensely successful with its Explorations series. Langford described the situation in 1984 as “successful beyond our wildest hopes.”⁸³ Print runs were between thirty and sixty thousand copies per title, resulting in a gross revenue of \$10 to \$15 million between 1983 and 1988.⁸⁴ Parts of the program were authorized in most provinces and both territories. As Scott McIntyre put it when looking back in 2013, “It was one of those unexpected and extraordinary successes that catapulted us to a different financial plateau.”⁸⁵

Brilliant educator Carol Langford, who had, at different times, the title of director of publishing and president, was key to this success. In terms of regionalism, this was an enormous step forward, both for education and for publishing. The core textbooks supporting the previous BC elementary school curriculum had been published by Fitzhenry and Whiteside, a central Canadian firm, and the American branch plant firm Ginn.

Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) did not rest on its laurels. Once the initial sales of the Explorations series were completed, it considered how to maintain its revenues. An attempt was made to leap from regional to national, “to continue and develop the Company’s presence as an ongoing, growing mainstream national educational publisher.”⁸⁶ It began to market the series in other provinces and plan for a health program at Grades 4 to 6. The firm entered the primary whole language market

⁸² “Education Brief – Points for Discussion,” 15 October 1975, ABPBC Fonds, box 5, file 41, RBSC, UBC.

⁸³ Quoted in Vaughn Palmer, “Education Ministry’s Bright Child,” *Vancouver Sun*, 22 December 1984.

⁸⁴ Interview, Roy MacSkimming with Scott McIntyre, 8 February 1999, Roy MacSkimming Fonds, series 1, box 3, William Ready Division, Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University.

⁸⁵ Scott McIntyre, “Changed beyond Imagining,” *Amphora* 165 (Fall 2013): 11.

⁸⁶ Carol Langford to Scott McIntyre, 13 October 1987, memo with goal statements, 1 July 1984–30 June 1987, attachment, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

with its purchase of the Dragonfly series, a set of Grade 1 supplementary readers from Australia. A Canadian teacher guide was developed for each of the six readers. It also began to consider a move into secondary social studies but did not proceed with this. Its three-year plan, formulated in 1988, set out its goals: "To maintain the division's base strength of elementary social studies materials, expanding to elementary health and reading, secondary social studies, and Pacific Rim materials at all levels while broadening the range and mix of products to include where possible audio-visual materials, software and other ancillary media."⁸⁷

By 1988, Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) had forty-three titles included in *Circular 14*, Ontario's list of authorized textbooks.⁸⁸ By 1989, it had published about one hundred titles.⁸⁹ (These were not all major textbooks. Many, particularly those intended for the primary grades, were more akin to booklets. This total would also include teacher guides and books that had been translated into French.)

There were several challenges connected to maintaining the firm's sales levels. First, its focus on elementary school materials limited sales. Elementary textbooks typically do not sell in the quantities that do secondary textbooks because secondary schoolteachers have traditionally been more reliant on textbooks than have elementary teachers and are much more willing to purchase books in class sets. Carol Langford's expertise in elementary social studies was a huge asset in terms of determining the high quality of the series during the development phase, but her lack of familiarity with secondary social studies was a drawback at stage two, when the firm needed to seek out other opportunities.

Second, financial forecasts for the success of the firm's Young Canada Health series were cautious for two reasons:⁹⁰ (1) because health, unlike language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics, is not a core curriculum, the firm could not be sure of the frequency with which it was taught in elementary school classrooms across the country, even though it was part of the curriculum in every jurisdiction; (2) teachers often choose to teach health using more ephemeral resources than textbooks, such as current government-produced materials (e.g., safety pamphlets, nutritional guides, drinking and driving pamphlets).

⁸⁷ "Corporate Three-Year Plan 1988-1991, Summer 1988," President Box 2, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

⁸⁸ Linda Turnbull to Tony Vander Woude, President, Addison-Wesley, 7 July 1988, Education Box 2, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

⁸⁹ Holly Millinoff, "Nelson Canada Buys D&M Educational Division," *Quill and Quire* 55, 10 (1989): 4.

⁹⁰ Business plan for the amalgamation of D & M Ltd., & D&M (Education) Ltd., August 1987, President Box 2, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

Third, market fragmentation due to the fact that each educational jurisdiction (provinces and territories) has a different curriculum meant that the firm was not able to sell the series as a whole to any other province. For example, Alberta purchased only the Grade 1 and Grade 3 textbooks (in 1985) and on the condition that Alberta authors be paid to write new teacher guides. The Grade 2 books were not of interest to most other provinces because four of the six texts in the set were about BC communities. In response, the firm published six new books about communities across the country, featuring “real Canadian children with their own unique views of their home communities from Vancouver, BC to Kentville, Nova Scotia.”⁹¹ These had wide appeal and were approved not only in Alberta but also in other provinces, including Ontario. Alberta did not authorize the Grades 4 to 6 books because the topics did not fit with its curriculum. It was simply too expensive for Douglas and McIntyre to develop new books for those grades because they had to be far more comprehensive than the Grade 2 books.

Fourth, government policies played a role. In 1989, the BC Ministry of Education changed its textbook authorization policies, giving school districts greater autonomy over textbook choice. The result of this change was that there would be no more guaranteed sales even when a textbook was approved by the ministry. President Scott McIntyre pointed to this change in policy as “a particularly significant factor” in the decision to sell Douglas and McIntyre (Educational).⁹² He noted: “If we had detected greater will on the part of western ministers of education to see a range of small and medium-sized houses develop, we might have looked at things in another way.”⁹³ In a memo to staff, at the time of the closure of the firm, McIntyre referred to “the difficult circumstances where market conditions, particularly those resulting from a sharp change in textbook purchasing policy in this province, make high quality textbook creation impossible with our level of sales and resources.”⁹⁴ The provincial government also had a policy of authorizing new textbooks only at the time of implementation of a new curriculum. Given that there was no new social studies curriculum development on the horizon, there was no reason to engage in new textbook development, at least in British Columbia.

⁹¹ Carol Langford to the Honourable Flora MacDonald, 4 March 1987, Education Box 2, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

⁹² Scott McIntyre to Susan Katz, Department of Communications, 14 August 1989, President Box 2, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

⁹³ Quoted in Millinoff, “Nelson Canada,” 4.

⁹⁴ Scott McIntyre to All Staff, 25 July 1989, President Box 2, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

Ultimately, these factors were insurmountable. In 1989, the educational division (now a division of Douglas and McIntyre rather than a separate company) was sold for \$700,000 to Nelson Canada, a division of multinational, although Canadian-owned, International Thomson. The five remaining employees of the educational division were let go.⁹⁵ Nelson Canada published the Young Canada Health series in 1990.⁹⁶

THE ZENITH OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING

The year 1988 can be considered the high point of regional educational publishing. Although the multinationals controlled about 75 percent of English-language textbook sales, Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) was thriving, as were regional educational publishers in Alberta and in the Atlantic region.⁹⁷ A comment made by Randy Morse, one of the principals in Alberta's Reidmore Publishing, represents the optimism of the time: "The message, I think for Canadian publishers should be a positive one. It can be done. You can do all these things, have a lot of fun doing it, feel proud of your work, and make a very handsome return on your investment as well."⁹⁸ Reidmore switched from trade to education in 1986 and, subsequently, saw its sales volume increase 40 to 60 percent per year. Reidmore's titles were sold across the country, with thirty educational books published in 1990.⁹⁹ This would be an impressive number even for a larger, more established firm. By 1990, textbooks published by Weigl were approved in every province.¹⁰⁰ Peguis Publishers in Winnipeg reported 470 percent growth between 1986 and 1989.¹⁰¹ Clyde Rose of St. John's Breakwater Books was quoted in 1990 as saying:

One of the things that we ran into when we first got into educational publishing was that the major branch plants had convinced the Newfoundland authorities that it was not profitable to do a textbook for the Newfoundland market alone. That, as any trade publisher in Canada will tell you, is [nonsense]. If I can sell 15,000 copies in the first order and then a recurring 20% to 25% of that order over the next five to ten years, I know we can make a dollar on it.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Alan G. Cobham, President, Nelson Canada, a Division of International Thomson, to Scott McIntyre, President D&M, 6 July 1989 (signed agreement at end of letter, Scott McIntyre, 21 July 1989), memo to file, from Scott McIntyre, 9 June 1989, President Box 2, D&M Archive, SCRB, SFU.

⁹⁶ Nelson continues to publish this series, 27 years later.

⁹⁷ Bildfell, "Provinces' Taste for Local Content," 22.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Bildfell, "Provinces' Taste for Local Content," 24.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 24.

From the vantage point of twenty-seven years on, with a marketplace controlled by multinationals and most of the regional educational publishers discussed here now extinct, these comments by Morse and Rose seem very naive.

FACTORS THAT HAVE AFFECTED REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING

Some provinces made significant contributions to regional educational publishing by means of subsidies. The Maritime Provinces Education Foundation established by the Council of Maritime Premiers to encourage cooperation in education among the provinces and to facilitate joint ventures in the production of learning materials is one such example. The textbook *The Maritimes: Tradition, Challenge and Change* by Maritext, mentioned earlier, was one result of this collaboration. Alberta provided significant financial support to educational publishers through the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund.

BC educational publishers were not as fortunate in terms of financial support as were those in the Maritime provinces or Alberta. The province was not as prosperous as Alberta at the time and the political commitment to “made-in-BC” materials was weaker than in Alberta or the Maritimes. Perhaps as important was the absence of a political leader who took the interest in education, particularly social studies education, demonstrated by Alberta premier Peter Lougheed.¹⁰³ Lougheed was willing to use the resources of the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund to support the Alberta publishing industry to develop educational resources about Alberta and to supply class sets of those resources to every school in the province.

One initiative offered by the BC government in 1981, after considerable lobbying by the ABPBC, was an interest subsidy program that would rebate one-half of the prime rate of interest for loans up to a maximum of twenty-five thousand dollars per year.¹⁰⁴ It is fair to say that it pales in comparison to what Alberta had to offer.

By the 1980s there was increased federal government support for regional publishers. In 1987, the federal government, in response to representations from regional publishers, allocated \$500,000 to component B of its Educational Publishing Fund as part of the \$13.5 million

¹⁰³ Peter Lougheed was passionate about Canadian history and, after his retirement from politics, served on the board of the non-profit Historical Foundation.

¹⁰⁴ Evan M. Wolfe, Provincial Secretary and Minister of Government Services, “Speech to the Annual General Meeting of the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia,” 24 January 1981, ABPBC Fonds, box 5, file 33, RBSC, UBC.

Book Publishing Industry Development Program. Component B was aimed at Canadian-controlled trade publishers, with the intention of encouraging them to develop books for the elementary/high school market by providing project grants up to 50 percent of the development costs of a textbook. However, one limitation was that some provincial funding had to be secured first. According to Clyde Rose of Breakwater Books, “hardly a publisher was successful in surmounting the prohibitive regulations, although there were many attempts to do so which cost publishers valuable time and ended in frustration.”¹⁰⁵

Although federal and provincial government support was important, ultimately, small, regional firms simply could not compete over the long term with American branch plants and multinationals. They did not have sufficient working capital to invest in extensive textbook development, which was far more costly than publishing trade books. Robin Farr puts this point well:

Publishing is an extremely capital-intensive enterprise; one which cannot very well be carried out on a small scale in a purely regional market. Thus it is that the Canadian-owned publisher, issuing Canadian books only and for the Canadian market primarily, has the most exceptional difficulties in generating enough working capital to permit large healthy expansion of his publishing programme “in the face of foreign owned competition largely based on run-on costs of editions first published abroad.”¹⁰⁶

Pre-production costs of textbooks are higher than those of trade books for many reasons. Research into provincial curriculum requirements has to be conducted, and draft content is vetted by curriculum consultants and often piloted in classrooms. Textbooks have a pedagogical infrastructure, including such elements as a glossary, end-of-chapter questions and activities, and graphic organizers of key content. They are also highly visual, which increases production costs. Various items have typically been produced to accompany a textbook, such as teacher guides and student activity sheets. Recently, they are expected to have supplementary digital components as well.

Another factor that has made textbook publishing challenging is that publishers often have not known until after the textbook has been published whether or not it will receive provincial authorizations. In the

¹⁰⁵ Clyde Rose, “Notes on Educational Publishing in Canada,” delivered to an ACP Seminar, 27 April 1989, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Association for Canadian Publishers, Provincial Archives of Alberta, box 14, PR 2000.0780, file 207.

¹⁰⁶ Farr, “Government Looks All Around,” 103.

period under discussion, provincial authorizations were essential to the financial success of a book. In addition, textbook publishers often have had to finance large print runs prior to the making of purchasing commitments on the part of provincial departments of education. This has put significant pressure on working capital. Another point is that Canadian regional publishers did not have access to books already developed by foreign parent companies, as did the American branch plants. Often the foreign firms were able to simply Canadianize existing books, a much less expensive proposition than developing new ones.¹⁰⁷

As mentioned previously, market fragmentation due to provincial jurisdiction over education has played a central role. However, Weigl has been able to successfully move on from the regional to the national level and then to the international. In 1990, Linda Weigl, president of the Alberta firm Weigl Educational Publishers, objected to what she called the “politicization” of the publishing industry. Referring to other regional publishers, she said: “If they want to publish only for Alberta, that means likewise someone is going to do that in BC and Saskatchewan and right across the country. Over the long haul this is not good for the industry. My perspective is more national.”¹⁰⁸ Given that Weigl is the only Alberta firm that is still publishing, her point is well taken. However, it must be acknowledged that the other regional firms in Alberta did attempt to go national, and it may have been their national presence that attracted Nelson to them.

Textbook authorization has become increasingly less important since the late 1980s, and this trend continues. At present, British Columbia does not authorize textbooks to support its new curriculum, although other provinces continue to do so. The 2012 study of the publishing industry in Canada, commissioned by the Association of Canadian Publishers, points out that teachers and parents now demand choice and agency rather than standardization in both curriculum and educational resources.¹⁰⁹ The study goes on to note that new approaches to curriculum present challenges for educational resource developers who look to curriculum as their guide for creating authorized educational resources. Many publishers report a highly iterative process of authorization, in which curriculum authorities struggle to express exactly what they are looking

¹⁰⁷ See Rowland M. Lorimer, *The Nation in the Schools: Wanted: A Canadian Education* (Toronto: OISE Press, 1984) for a comprehensive and well-documented analysis of the impact of foreign branch plants on the Canadian educational publishing scene and on the materials available for use in schools.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Bildfell, “Provinces’ Taste for Local Content,” 24.

¹⁰⁹ Glenn Rollans and Simon de Jocas, *Consultation on K to 12 Educational Publishing in Canada* (Toronto: Association of Canadian Publishers, 2012), 27.

for and prefer to review a series of options in order to find what they can endorse.¹¹⁰ This creates a very precarious situation for publishers and effectively closes the door on any resurgence of regional educational publishing.

The gap in world view between teachers, on the one hand, and those connected to the private enterprise of textbook publishing, on the other, is also a factor. Schoolteachers work apart from the marketplace, making their decisions without concern for the profit-making motive. A consequence of this is a proclivity to photocopy resources instead of purchasing them.¹¹¹ This is not a new phenomenon. Robin Farr referred to the “inroads on publishing revenues which photo-copying now represents” back in 1973.¹¹² This has been a huge cost to publishing firms and it is increasing. Rowland Lorimer may have said it best in *Ultra Libris*, his 2012 book on the publishing industry: “The continuous resistance of the education community represents a continuing assault on creators and publishers and undermines respect for copyright in society as a whole.”¹¹³ Of course, educators are not obliged to maintain the economic base of publishing firms; but they do have a responsibility to obey copyright law.¹¹⁴

It is interesting to note that the publishers that received and accepted offers from Nelson Canada were all in British Columbia or Alberta. The Atlantic publishers did not receive such offers. They either moved increasingly from education to trade titles, as in the case of Newfoundland’s Breakwater, or they ceased to publish, as in the case of Maritext in Nova Scotia. No doubt, there was no interest in purchasing them because they had far fewer titles, and, consequently, their sales were far lower and their profits less. The firms in British Columbia and the Prairies had a national market. For example, Nelson Canada purchased Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) primarily because of its new health series, which was always intended for the national level. Nelson was already developing its own junior high school health texts and thought they would fit well with the Grades 4 to 6 books being developed by Douglas

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 28.

¹¹¹ I had a personal experience with this situation. Walking through a Lower Mainland secondary school storeroom one day in the late 1990s, en route to a meeting, I observed my co-authored Canadian history textbook on shelves, photocopied and neatly stacked in class sets, chapter by chapter.

¹¹² Farr, “Government Looks All Around,” 103.

¹¹³ Rowland Lorimer, *Ultra Libris: Policy, Technology, and the Creative Economy of Book Publishing in Canada* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2012), 331.

¹¹⁴ In fairness, copyright law has been confusing of late. It is beyond the scope of this article to tackle this subject in depth.

and McIntyre.¹¹⁵ Arnold, Reidmore, and Weigl all published secondary school Canadian history texts that were authorized in other provinces, including Ontario, the most lucrative. Social studies textbooks published in the Atlantic region were very much about the Atlantic provinces. That was the whole point of publishing them in the first place.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Perhaps it is not necessary to go quite as far as political economist Donald Savoie, who declared in 2000 that “all things Canadian are now regional.”¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that region shapes individual identity and that Canada’s regions, taken together, shape our conception of the nation. Paradoxically, then, part of what makes us Canadian is connection with region.

In 1981, historian Robert Bérard urged provincial governments to “exercise their prerogatives in education to interpret their people to themselves and to the rest of Canadian society.”¹¹⁷ In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a new responsiveness to regional concerns on the part of provincial governments. Prior to the 1980s, textbooks were often either American in origin or published by American or British branch plants in Ontario to support the Ontario curriculum and subsequently sold to other provinces. Increasingly, provincial departments of education began to insist that textbooks, particularly in the subject areas of history, geography, and social studies, have Canadian authorship and be more reflective of the region in which students lived.

Douglas and McIntyre (Educational) in British Columbia lasted less than ten years. It was spectacularly successful from about 1983 to 1988 but had run out of lucrative possibilities by the time of its sale to Nelson in 1989. In Alberta, Arnold, Reidmore, and Duval were all purchased by Nelson. Weigl continues on in Canada, but its main revenues originate in the American market. Saskatchewan does not have any significant educational publishing firms at this time. Portage and Main Press in Manitoba continues to publish but has a limited output. In the Atlantic region, Maritext published only two textbooks. Ragweed in Prince Edward Island was sold in 2000. Breakwater, located in St. John’s, New-

¹¹⁵ Millinoff, “Nelson Canada,” 4.

¹¹⁶ Donald J. Savoie, “All Things Canadian Are Now Regional,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35, 1 (2000): 203-17.

¹¹⁷ Robert N. Bérard, “The Preservation of Regional Cultural Identities: Limits on Federal Involvement,” in *Federal-Provincial Relations: Education Canada*, ed. J.W. George Ivany and Michael E. Manley-Casimir (Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1981), 133.

foundland, deemed educational publishing to be no longer sustainable and focuses solely on trade at this time, although it has a backlist of educational titles.

This all makes it evident that regional educational publishing is not viable under present circumstances in Canada, and British Columbia is no different than the rest of the country in this regard. Ultimately, publishing is a business. It has a role in the economy by virtue of the fact that it provides people with employment and it produces goods that people purchase. But publishing also has an important place in Canadian culture. The products of our publishing firms represent who we are as well as who we have been and who we aspire to be. Students have a right to know how we as Canadians see ourselves, and regional educational publishers could have a role in this. However, they can't take up that role without support. Regional educational publishing requires government financial support. This is a given. It also depends on educators who value resources that represent a range of perspectives, including regional.

The 2012 report written by Glenn Rollans and Simon de Jocas for the Association of Canadian Publishers (ACP) on the state of educational publishing in Canada is very gloomy. It points out that the total K to 12 industry outside of Quebec declined roughly 30 percent between 2010 and 2012, dropping from about \$240 million to about \$170 million. However, it does offer one small ray of hope. It is that small regional presses may prove to be more adaptable to the shrinking K to 12 market than the multinationals. The report claims: "It will be possible to thrive in K to 12 publishing during this era. It will, however, be difficult to maintain or grow large operations. It will be much easier to grow from modest beginnings."¹¹⁸

The report also claims:

Today's K to 12 environment offers opportunities to smaller, faster companies, those with more flexible business models, open to partnering, capable of undertaking opportunities that do not fit standard business models, regionally tuned in, free of the stigma that sometimes attaches to large corporations, and still at a scale where they can grow by doing one or a few things right rather than trying to do everything. Such companies are less brittle, more adaptable, and – if they are ACP members – probably eligible for provincial and national grants and programs of support. This is an era where small can be beautiful.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Rollans and de Jocas, *Consultation on K to 12*, 31.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

It remains to be seen whether Rollans and de Jocas are grasping at straws. The reality appears to be that educational publishing in Canada is not sustainable at the level of region, and it is hanging on by its fingertips at the level of nation.

Why does the state of educational publishing in Canada matter? I was recently asked this question in the discussion period following a presentation in the United Kingdom. It matters because publishing is a cultural industry, or “a business activity surrounded by a cultural environment,”¹²⁰ as Robin Farr put it in 1973. It was identified as such as early as the 1951 Massey Commission Report, and the point was reiterated with emphasis in the 1973 Ontario Royal Commission on Publishing.¹²¹ This continues to be the case. The loss of a car manufacturing plant is devastating because of lost employment opportunities and a reduced tax base. But the loss of a national or regional publisher is even more devastating because it is a loss that strikes at our sense of ourselves.

¹²⁰ Farr, “Government Looks All Around,” 105.

¹²¹ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences* (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1951); Ontario, *Canadian Publishers and Canadian Publishing*.