

EDITORIAL

THE AUTHORS WHOSE WORK we feature in this issue reflect the richness and diversity of contemporary scholarship on British Columbia. Karena Shaw and Margaret Low are in the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. Patricia Roy is a retired professor of history at the University of Victoria, and her biography of Sir Richard McBride will be published later this year by UBC Press. Mark Crawford is a political scientist at Athabasca University and a former Rhodes Scholar. Michael Kennedy, a director of the Grasslands Conservation Society of British Columbia, is a physical geographer who spent his career teaching high school in Lillooet. Andrew Nelson was, until recently, a graduate student in the Department of Geography at UBC, where he worked with fluvial geomorphologist Michael Church, researching the historical impact of placer mining on the Fraser River.

Not surprisingly, then, the articles that follow employ very different intellectual frameworks and reflect widely diverse influences; indeed, the five substantial contributions that make up this issue draw from very different analytical traditions. Shaw and Low use the literature of environmental studies and environmental governance. Roy bases her piece on a careful reading of archival and documentary sources, including contemporary newspapers and the correspondence of provincial and federal politicians. To gauge the analytic traction of the classic theories of BC political science, Crawford considers Martin Robin's class analysis, Edwin Black's "politics of exploitation," and Mark Sproule-Jones's analysis of postwar voting behaviour, and then proposes fruitful lines of inquiry based on novel frameworks of postmaterialism, new institutionalism, and "path-dependent processes." Nelson and Kennedy draw on some studies of the California and Australian gold rushes; however, for the most part, their article is based directly on gold rush remnants, including mine sites, tailings fans, and ditches, which they mapped by foot, tape, and a hand-held global positioning unit. They also examined the banks of the Fraser River from river rafts and promontories; sketched site boundaries; consulted air photos and archival data, including gold commissioners' ledgers, free miners' certificates, and maps; and considered the evidence for place names such as Boston Bar, China Bar, and hundreds more. All of this careful research has also given us the splendid and informative "Fraser River Gold Mines and Their Place Names: A Map from Hope to Quesnel Forks," drawn by Eric Leinberger, which is the fifth research contribution of this issue.

For all their differences there are some significant connections and overlaps among the four articles and the large-folio map that fill our pages this winter. Together these contributions deal with matters that are fundamental to thinking about this province. To a very considerable extent these coalesce around the issue of “resources” (land, gold, forests, ecosystems, scenery) and the ways in which these have been alienated, exploited, administered, and understood.

To proceed chronologically, we start with Nelson and Kennedy, who provide a basic reconnaissance of mining sites of the Fraser River and early Cariboo gold rushes, outline the temporal shift in mining techniques from the gold pans and rocker boxes of 1858 to the heavily capitalized hydraulic mining industry in the 1880s and 1890s, and provide a complete map of mines along the Fraser River. Their methods vindicate and affirm the conviction of an earlier generation of historical geographers that “a pair of stout boots” is a primary requirement of the profession. “Over seven field seasons,” write Nelson and Kennedy, “we traversed most of both sides of some 520 kilometres of the Fraser River, surmounting steep canyons, walking through dense forest, and travelling very rough roads to discover and confirm mines in remote locations to which it was generally difficult to gain access.” Historical records lead them to the arresting observations that “between 1857 and 1865, from the lower Fraser River to its tributary gold streams in the Cariboo Mountains, every prominent physical feature, stream, gravel bar, and bench was named,” but that only 5 percent of the place names on the mining landscape were of Aboriginal origin. In Nelson and Kennedy’s reading, all the new names expressed “claims against prior occupants.” The renaming of the landscape was a corollary of the rush for spoils, but it was an instrument of dispossession nonetheless, at once legal, explicit, surficial, and implicit.

The McBride era (1903–15), which is the focus of Pat Roy’s article, represented both the zenith of the pre-1914 immigration boom experienced by British Columbia and the nadir of First Nations population and influence. Aboriginal people could not buy or pre-empt land, and McBride denied that First Nations had any claim to land beyond their existing reserves, some of which he said contained “far more [land] than [was] reasonably sufficient” and stood in the way of progress. In 1911, the *Victoria Colonist* vividly asserted that the “Indians” of British Columbia no more possessed the land “than a ship at sea possesse[d] the ocean.” This pithy metaphor, concludes Roy, “reflected McBride’s ideas.”

In 1906, McBride and federal politicians allowed the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to acquire Tsimshian Reserve No. 2, containing 13,567 acres (5490 hectares). In 1909, part of that reserve was included in the new City of Prince Rupert. In Victoria and Vancouver, the Songhees and Kitsilano reserves, laid out in colonial times, were deemed “detrimental to civic development” early in the twentieth century: newspapers called Songhees “a blot” and Kitsilano “a blemish” on the landscape. When the province bought the Songhees Reserve in 1911 and the Kitsilano Reserve in 1913, and relocated the inhabitants to Esquimalt and Squamish, respectively, the First Nations lost forever the use and amenity of about half the shoreline of Victoria Harbour as well as a fine situation on English Bay, which now includes Kits Point, the Vancouver Museum, Vancouver Planetarium, and the City of Vancouver Archives.

A hundred years on, these high-handed actions and the development imperative they supported stand in stark contrast to the Great Bear Rainforest Agreements of 2006, described here by Karena Shaw and Margaret Low. These landmark arrangements resulted from a decade of negotiation among twenty-seven First Nations, various governments, several environmental groups, members of the forest industry, and mediators. The Agreements protect 2 million hectares between Bute Inlet and the border of Alaska from logging. Much of this area is set aside as a “conservancy,” a new designation that acknowledges First Nations cultural and traditional use values. Elsewhere in this territory, which is approximately the size of Ireland, resource use will follow the principles of ecosystem-based management, an innovative concept that stipulates low-impact forestry practices. Further, the creation of the \$120 million Coast Opportunities Funds is “aimed at preserving the ecological integrity of the Great Bear Rainforest for generations while promoting economic development opportunities with lasting benefits for First Nations.”

There is, perhaps, no more striking encapsulation of the changing nature of the Province of British Columbia and of the political behaviour found within it than is provided by this century-wide comparison, and it is Mark Crawford’s achievement to remind and show us how this evolution has influenced the usefulness of the various frameworks through which scholars have sought to understand this place. Interpretations centred upon the pervasiveness of hard-edged class conflicts associated with what Martin Robin characterized as the rush for spoils; arguments, advanced by Edwin Black, that provincial politics reflected the sense, among small businesspeople in particular, that many British Columbians

received too small a share of the profits of resource exploitation; and claims, like that of Mark Sproule-Jones, that electoral success has turned on the government's ability to control the dissemination of information in the hinterland all need to be reappraised as we strive to understand the twenty-first-century province.

British Columbia, it is often said these days, has entered a new postmaterialist phase of its history. Societal priorities of survival and wealth maximization have been superseded, so this argument goes, by a commitment to the maximization of subjective well-being. This has recast citizen/voter priorities and the practice of politics, and it means that we need new lenses with which to analyze contemporary British Columbia's diverse and complex polity and society. Crawford provides useful suggestions for meeting this challenge of understanding, but, in the end, he also reminds us that "there are good reasons for thinking that the land will continue to occupy centre stage in BC politics." It will do so not simply because resource industries remain important beyond Victoria and the Lower Mainland but because of the "growing *scarcity*" of the province's land and resource base "in the face of various competing First Nations, industrial, residential, recreational, investor, conservationist, and other users." This is a new challenge for a still relatively new millennium, and we believe that our contributors to this issue have, by sharpening our understanding both of how we came to this juncture and of how it differs from what has gone before, begun the process of enabling British Columbians to rise to it.

Richard Mackie and Graeme Wynn