Book Reviews

The Men at Cary Castle, by S. W. Jackman. Victoria: Morriss Printing, 1972. 207 pp., illus. $6.50.

S. W. Jackman has now published a second volume in the field of British Columbia political history. *The Men at Cary Castle*, a volume of biographical sketches of the Lieutenant-Governors of the province, is obviously a companion piece for his earlier work, *Portraits of the Premiers*. The subject matter has changed but the format remains the same, even to the precise wording of the first few lines of the "Acknowledgements."

Technically, *The Men at Cary Castle* is an improvement over the previous book. While not so lavishly bound as its predecessor, it is attractively illustrated by a series of fine pencil drawings by Gustav Rueter, a pleasant variation on the use of too well-known official photographs. As importantly, the text is free of the vexatious typographical errors which marred the *Portraits of the Premiers*.

The style, as one expects from Dr. Jackman, is that of an accomplished, if somewhat pedantic, raconteur. Fact and anecdote are deftly interspersed in a smooth narrative well capable of capturing the interest of the lay reader. If a certain tedium overcomes the reader in the later chapters, it may fairly be attributed to the lack of interesting subject matter rather than a flaw in the author's literary ability.

Such errors as do occur can be considered to be "slips of the tongue," a perpetual hazard of story tellers. The most obvious is in a comparison drawn between the political careers of Amor De Cosmos and Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinere. Dr. Jackman writes that "De Cosmos too acted in a similar fashion, deciding to stay in Victoria." The reference is clearly an accident, since earlier in the book, Dr. Jackman correctly notes that, with the passage of the Dual Representation Bill in 1874, unlike de Lotbinere, Amor De Cosmos resigned his post as Premier of British Columbia to retain his seat in the House of Commons.

In the "Acknowledgements," the author states the limitations of his book.

This volume does not pretend to be a definite [definitive?] collection.... It is not a formal historical study — the obvious trappings of scholarship such as footnotes and bibliography are deliberately omitted. This book is an informal consideration of the Lieutenant-Governors.

While respecting an author's right to delimit his own works, this reviewer cannot accept such a limitation in his consideration of the volume. The book is not merely literary entertainment but avowedly historical. It was supported, in some part, by the University of Victoria. Most importantly, it is written in a field inadequately served by scholarly works. Because of the lack of alternative secondary sources, this volume will, whatever the intention of the author, become a reference for students of all levels. Thus some criticism of its academic merit must be made.

As a minor point, this reviewer objects to the omission of footnotes and bibliography. These are not just "the obvious trappings of scholarship" but an integral part of any historical study. They indicate the care with which the subject has been researched and provide an indispensable guide for those who wish to enlarge their knowledge. Placed discreetly at the back of the book, they would be no distraction to the casual reader while greatly enhancing the worth of the publication.

A major criticism of the work is the disparity between the information given on the social and family background of the Lieutenant-Governors and the summary accounts of their business and political careers. Most of the men sketched in this book were prominent businessmen in British Columbia and it may be presumed this prominence was one reason for their appointment to office. Yet Dr. Jackson skims lightly over the details of their business interests, an omission particularly notable in the cases of H. Nelson, J. Dunsmuir, F. S. Bernard and E. G. Prior. While it is useful to know the familial connections and ethnic origins of all of these men, it would seem logical to devote as much care to outlining each one's career and reason for provincial eminence. In the case of W. C. Woodward, an account of his short and very independent political career might enliven the chapter.

From the contents of this book, one would assume that virtually the sole activity of the Lieutenant-Governor is to entertain Victorians and distinguished visitors. Apparently, after 1900, no Lieutenant-Governor played any role in provincial politics with the exception of Clarence Wallace in 1952. Yet there is some question about the part de Lotbinere played in Richard McBride's decision to introduce party politics into British Columbia in 1903. Moreover, J. W. F. Johnson intervened directly in 1933, threatening to dissolve the Legislative Assembly, to force

the reluctant S. F. Tolmie to set a date for a general election. Perhaps these political interventions were exceptional. Only a careful scrutiny of various premier's papers can demonstrate their uniqueness. There is no sign in this book that this scrutiny took place.

Dr. Jackman also evades the central question of the whole book. Why were these particular men chosen for this particular office? It may be impossible to answer this question with any accuracy. Yet the Provincial Archives does contain some material from the papers of Wilfred Laurier and R. L. Borden. In these collections, information relevant to certain appointments may be found. Since the book contains no bibliography, one can not know whether these sources were consulted and to what extent the generalizations stated by the author are valid.

The preceding criticisms lead inexorably to a final question. Why was this book on this topic written and published? The obvious answer has already been given. It is a logical companion piece to the *Portraits of the Premiers*. It is also meant to entertain and instruct the lay reader. Yet, for all his literary skill, Dr. Jackman has been unable to surmount the handicaps of his reliance on secondary sources and the innate lack of importance of his subject. One can only wonder why, when writing in a field so lacking in scholarly works of insight and original perspective, an author would waste time and effort on such a routine approach to a barren topic.

Mount View Senior Secondary IAN D. PARKER

Queen Charlotte Islands, a Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific, by Francis Poole. Reprinted with an introduction by Susan Davidson. Vancouver: J. J. Douglas Ltd., 1972. 347 pp. $8.95.

In 1862 Francis Poole, a mining engineer, went to the Queen Charlotte Islands to prospect for copper on behalf of the Queen Charlotte Mining Compony. He was accompanied by eight miners whom he had employed to provide the necessary labour, and he stayed there for almost two years, inevitably in almost daily contact with the Haida Indians. He claims at one point in his *Queen Charlotte Islands* (now reprinted after more than a century as No. 2 in the Northwest Library) to have been "the first white man who had dared to go and live amongst the hostile Indians of Queen Charlotte Islands . . ." Here, of course, Poole is indulging in the bragging that forms a tediously persistent element in his

narrative. He forgets the eight miners who worked with him; he ignores the groups of gold prospectors who had preceded him in 1852 and 1859 and lived, even if for short periods, in contact with the Haidas. He perhaps did not know of the man whom Captain Gray of the *Hancock* left in the Queen Charlottes as early as 1790 to live among the Indians and to collect furs.

There are times when the brags blossom into positive lies. For example, briefly describing an expedition in the Coast Mountains before he went to the Queen Charlottes, Pool talks of shivering "on a mountain-top, 16,000 feet above sea-level"; but Mount Waddington, the tallest on the British Columbian coast, is in the 13,000 feet range, and I doubt if Poole climbed it. One can only assume that to measure the height of mountains he used the method he recommends for measuring the height of trees, which is "to walk away from the tree till you can sight its topmost branch when looking backwards between your legs. You have then got the tree's height in the distance between the spot where you stand and the base of the tree itself."

A whopper or two of this kind, where his statements can be checked, make one suspect all of the more sensational episodes which Poole narrates and regarding which there is no independent evidence. Is it really true, one wonders, that a Haida chief's daughter "once . . . had the courage to bid defiance to all her tribe, and even to her own father, a chief, in order to save my life, when I was alone and unarmed in the presence of a dozen Indians, dancing round me with drawn knives and thirsting for my blood." Or did he steal the tale from Captain John Smith's account of Pocahontas? And that journey by Haida canoe down to Victoria which Poole boasts of as being "the greatest canoe voyage ever known in the North Pacific" and second only in the whole Pacific ocean to Bligh's famous open boat voyage? Apart from the great Polynesian canoe expeditions from Samoa to Hawaii and New Zealand, all far longer than the trip from the Queen Charlottes to Victoria, the Haidas themselves had been raiding with their great canoes down to the Gulf of Georgia even before the white men came, and after 1858 many parties of them went down to Fort Victoria, attracted by the lure of the Gold Rush centre; indeed, it was through such voyages that the smallpox which Poole found so rampant on the Coast and the islands in 1862 was actually spread. Since Poole's claims to the uniqueness of his achievement are obviously faulty, may he not also have been somewhat excessive in his sensational recounting of the perils of a journey which so many undertook at that time?

Nevertheless, braggart or not, Poole was undoubtedly in the Queen Charlottes for almost two years and, as John Lyndon who introduced *Queen Charlotte Islands* when it was published in 1871 more guardedly remarked, he was up to that time "the only educated Englishman" who had lived in the group. But this fact only aggravate's one's exasperation at the thought of such an opportunity having been almost completely wasted. Poole was in the presence of one of the most remarkable of North American cultures at the vital transition point before the influences of traders and of missionaries transformed and finally destroyed it. The Haida were at the height of their numbers, and all the villages we now know only as sites of rotting poles in the bush were still inhabited and flourishing. Yet Poole was so set in his English Victorian superiority that he constantly talked of "savages," of the "poor Indians," even of "poor Blacky," without any evident consciousness of the sophisticated techniques which the Haida had developed for extracting a rich and prosperous existence out of their environment, or any sense of their complex social and ritual life.

In two years Poole appears to have learnt nothing about the Haida winter ceremonials, about their shamanic rites, about the function of the potlatch, about the systems of lineage, or about the social system, which accounts for his constant astonishment when one chief or another turned out to have very little authority over his fellow villagers. He mentions Haida carving once, but only in connection with an early argillite flute he acquired, but he has nothing to say about their methods of house construction, their ways of building canoes, their methods of fishing and the ceremonies associated with it. Nor does he once mention a carved pole of any kind. This may be an indication that in 1862 there was still nothing so striking as the groves of poles that decorated the Haida villages by the 1880's; yet Mackenzie had described such poles among the Bella Coola in 1793, and it is unlikely that Poole failed to see them among the Haida. Obviously, he thought them of no importance or interest.

The fact is that this great field of observation was lost on a man who seems to have lacked even an average share of curiosity regarding anything outside his own narrow interests. Poole was, in fact, so inflated by his own importance, and so blinded by his prejudices, that what he really produced in *Queen Charlotte Islands* was not a true travel book but rather the self-portrait of a disagreeable man whose attention was centred on his own pursuit of the ignis fatuus of mineral wealth. He hated Americans so bitterly that he refused to see any good in them, and as his miners

were mostly Americans it is hardly surprising that the venture ended with the men refusing to work; Poole eventually left them to their own resources, making his much-bragged-of canoe voyage southward in order to resign his position because work has virtually ceased on the claims. One feels a distinct sympathy for the men, first bullied and then maligned by Poole.

His attitude towards the Indians was no better. He talked of their life and their beliefs with a nauseatingly facetious superiority: e.g. "The Queen Charlotte Islands Indians hold views, on the subject of their aboriginal ancestry, decidedly in advance of the Darwinian theory; for their descent from the crows is quite gravely affirmed and steadily maintained." (Need one add that such a man inevitably refers to a bear as Bruin?) Nevertheless, Indians — "those poor savages" — are better than Americans; yet they cannot be left to follow their own way of life, which Poole finds merely despicable. The Indian "must be continuously guided, watched and controlled, that too by exceptional teaching and legislation. . . ." How unpleasant to meet Mr. Poole!

The reprinting of such a book calls into question certain aspects of the recent flood of new editions of long out-of-print or forgotten books about Canada. There are already several series. Mel Hurtig in Edmonton has by now reissued the obvious classics of Canadian exploration; Coles Canadian Collection has given us a wide selection of good and bad pioneer books; the Carleton Library has specialized in reprinting works of political and sociological interest; the University of Toronto Press's Social History of Canada is rapidly reprinting the more important texts from the earlier twentieth century. We are coming near the point when everything that is likely to be interesting or useful to the general reader or even to the student of Canadian history will have become available.

Is it necesary to go beyond these limits of interest and usefulness merely to reprint lost books? *Queen Charlotte Islands* raises that point very clearly. It is a bad piece of writing, factually shaky, projecting a self-complacent but fundamentally uninteresting personality, and telling us amazingly little that we cannot gather from other sources about the Haida culture and the general aspects of the Queen Charlotte Islands 111 years ago. The student seeking hard information will merely be confused by it; the addict of adventure tales will do much better to stick to Rider Haggard; the historically inclined general reader will be amused by Poole's idiosyncracies when he begins and bored with his vanities when he finishes the book — if he does; the libraries are of necessity shortening their purchase lists.

There is also the question of introductions to historical reprints. To my mind they should either be non-existent — as in Coles Canadiana Collection — or essays in condensed research, packed with background information about the times and the author, like the introductions to the Social History of Canada. *Queen Charlotte Islands* does have an introduction, but it is precisely the kind of limp and lukewarm production that gives the reader very little help, since it brings in almost no information that cannot be gathered from reading the book, and is almost entirely devoted to a descriptive paraphrase of Poole's narrative which at no point resolutely denounces his atrocities of outlook, his insufferably bombastic style, or his inexcusable failings as an observer.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Wesbrook and His University, by William C. Gibson. Vancouver: The Library of the University of British Columbia, 1973. xii & 204 pp. $7.00.

Among the abiding puzzles of the historical development of Canadian higher education is the failure of the Province of British Columbia to establish a university until 1915. A second is the failure of the University, when at long last established, to develop into a major institution until the late 1940's. There is no doubt that U.B.C. has been since about 1950 one of the half-dozen most important Canadian universities, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, i.e., in terms not only of numbers of students, staff, buildings, etc. but of range and quality of teaching programme and research performance. The question is one which is not simply of antiquarian interest; universities do have roots, and their position at any time is conditioned by the structures, the traditions and the style which have evolved from the time of their establishment. George Grant continues to cast his shadow over Queen's, Dawson, Rutherford and Leacock over McGill, Bishop Bourget, Edouard Montpetit and Maurice Duplessis over Montreal. The present strengths — and the weaknesses — of Toronto, Dalhousie, Manitoba can not fully be explained without reference to events which occurred as much as a century ago. The University of British Columbia is no exception to this rule. What happened and, as important, what did not happen in 1871, in 1890, in 1908, and particularly between 1911 and 1918 remains highly relevant to the kind of institution it is today.

Since its population in 1871 was only 36,247, it is not surprising that British Columbia was the only one of the colonies which entered federation that did not have at the time any facilities for post-secondary education. By 1890 in Canadian terms at least it did have sufficient population (98,173 according to the 1891 census) to justify the establishment of a university; Manitoba, with a population of under 60,000 had established its provincial university in 1877, and Alberta and Saskatchewan established theirs in 1908 and 1909 when their populations were well below the 100,000 mark (the 1911 census for Alberta was 73,022, for Saskatchewan 91,279). In 1890 the British Columbia Legislature did pass An Act Respecting the University of British Columbia but rivalry between Vancouver and Victoria resulted in the lapsing of the Act in 1891. It was not until 1908 that a second act authorizing a university for the Province of British Columbia was adopted by the Legislature. In the meantime some facilities for higher education had been provided for British Columbia residents through the establishment of McGill University College, incorporated in 1906 but offering instruction at Vancouver since 1899 and at Victoria since 1903. In 1901 the population was 178,657 and in 1911 524,582. The McGill operations provided an immediate basis for the establishment of the University authorized in 1908, but very little was done until 1910 when a commission was appointed to select a site for the institution, and the search for a president instituted. The search was a careful one, but it took more than two years to complete. The choice was Frank Wesbrook, a Canadian who had been associated with the University of Minnesota since 1895, initially as professor of bacteriology and pathology and since 1906 as dean. At the time of his appointment as president he was 45.

It is clear from Dr. Gibson's biography that Wesbrook was an admirable choice to be the effective founder of a great university. It is also clear that he did not accept the position without very clear guarantees not only of adequate but generous support for the new institution on the part of the Provincial government. Nor is there any doubt that he was not only an imaginative and vigorous but a realistic planner, that he had the full support of the staff, many of whom he personally recruited, and of the students, and that he had views on education that were both novel and well-conceived — it is a pity that the half dozen major papers he wrote on university education are not included as appendices since only two of them, 1907 and 1914 papers in *Science*, are easily available. He appears in every respect to have been the man to do what H. M. Tory did for Alberta and what Walter Murray did for Saskatchewan, specific-

ally by 1918 to have first established the basis for a sound university and second to have enabled it to survive the difficulties posed by World War I. The University was finally opened in 1915 and it did survive long past 1918, the year that Wesbrook died, literally a victim of his eighteen-hour-a-day effort to cope with an impossible task.

The villain of the piece was the government. There is some excuse for its withdrawal of expected funds from 1915 on, but, in the light of the promises made to Wesbrook, none for its failure to provide the funds needed to establish the university before the outbreak of World War I. There are, of course, explanations — unexpected (though one suspects not unpredictable) reductions of provincial revenue and other governmental commitments, notably railway construction. But there is a difference between explanation and excuse.

The chief value of Dr. Gibson's book is that it does provide an accurate and detailed portrait of Frank Wesbrook, an honourable man. It does not, unfortunately, add anything to our knowledge of the University of British Columbia and its relations to the government that is not contained in Harry Logan's *Tuum Est.*

This would be less disappointing had the government's position been clearly outlined in Margaret Ormsby's *British Columbia: a History*, a work, which as the footnote references to both the University and Wesbrook indicate, effectively ignores the situation. The story is still untold, the puzzle of U.B.C. remains.

University of Toronto ROBIN S. HARRIS

People in the Way, by J. W. Wilson. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1973. xiv, 200 Pp. $12.50.

In the spring of 1964 it became apparent that the Pearson government had decided to ratify the Columbia River Treaty. This meant that the time was rapidly approaching when we at the B.C. Hydro and Power Authority would become responsible for the construction of three major dams on the Columbia system in Canada.

From the beginning it was clear that our most serious problem would arise from the fact that some 2000 people would have to move to escape the water that would rise behind the dam to be constructed at the foot of the Arrow Lakes. We were all conscious of the importance of this critical interference with a long-established way of life and that we would

need the assistance of skilled help. Fortunately, we knew of a man with the essential qualifications — technical expertise, wide experience and, above all, sensitivity and deep human sympathies. James W. Wilson was born in Scotland and trained as a civil engineer (Glasgow and M.I.T.). He later studied regional planning at the University of North Carolina and then worked with the Tennessee Valley Authority before coming to British Columbia. In 1964 he was Executive Director of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board and a man of outstanding reputation in his field. He was also lecturing at U.B.C. (where, incidentally, the present provincial Minister of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources, The Honourable R. A. Williams, was one of his superior students!).

After some persuasion Mr. Wilson agreed to join the Hydro staff and for nearly two years he was responsible for meeting the people of the Columbia Valley and for making recommendations as to how their problems of resettlement could best be solved. His work was of enormous value to us and to the people he came to know and admire. His book, *People in the Way*, is the report of his experiences, of his conclusions as to what things were well done, what mistakes were made, and how in future such projects should be approached. (Today, as Executive Director of B.C. Hydro, Mr. Wilson may have concrete opportunities to apply his skills.) The book is admirable and should be read by planners, engineers, sociologists, ecologists and, indeed, by everyone with an interest in human beings and in their social relationships. Fortunately, the author's prose reflects credit on his Scottish teachers and his own sense of style. His report is clear — as well as being objective, humorous, vivid, emotional and humane.

Mr. Wilson's task was as difficult as it was important. He was expected to learn to know the people, to understand their needs, and to assist them to adjust to the inevitable changes. It was also his duty to advise us as to how we could carry out our responsibilities with the least distress and the most benefit to the persons affected. *People in the Way* describes how, with the assistance of Hydro personnel, he developed his proposals; and the degree to which he was successful, or failed, in persuading the Authority to take the actions he considered desirable. It is a complicated story of physical, psychological, financial, political and organizational complexities — and of human nature under stress.

The book is no apologia for B.C. Hydro. It firmly records the author's belief that the Authority should have done much more than it did to meet the needs of those who were adversely affected. He records mistakes of omission and commission. The fact that he attributes many of

the errors and defaults to the policies — or lack of policies — of the provincial government is only a partial defence for Hydro.

With most of the author's strictures I agree.

But it is fair to add that Mr. Wilson records the ineviable difficulties in negotiating with people whose whole way of life is being uprooted, even if to others that way of life may seem circumscribed and poor. The Arrow Lakes communities constituted, in modern terms, a badly depressed area. Many of the people were glad to take their compensation and leave. But many others had found satisfactions in their way of living for which no compensation could be a substitute. Disruption itself was painful and shocking and this was not always recognized by those in charge of Hydro's programme. As Mr. Wilson states

> Most of us (Hydro personnel) were essentially urban people with middle-class ideas about 'proper dress', adequate housing, and tidy serviced communities. The people of the Lakes did not share these values, yet some of them were sensitive about the difference and quick to feel that they were regarded as Canadian hillbillies.

(A few pages later he records that Hydro was criticized because in a picture in the Property Owners' Guide — a booklet issued to assist those who would have to move — both a Hydro representative and a local resident were shown wearing ties — "a dead giveaway" as according to a local saying "only teachers 'n preachers wear ties." But what would the critics have said if the local resident had *not* been given a tie?)

The author agrees that the Authority did make a serious effort to deal fairly with those being displaced, particularly the old and poor. He quotes one severe critic of the programme as saying that in the matter of compensation in most cases the Authority "leaned over backwards to be generous." He recognized the good intent behind the appointment of an "Ombudsman" who was selected and whose terms of reference were approved by the Chief Justice of British Columbia.

Among those affected there were some people who, from strong political or personal motivations, would not have approved no matter what Hydro did. And he quotes a Nakusp councillor as saying: "A lot of people scream about the poor deal they are getting and round at the back door they brag about how much they got."

Reviewing the basic difficulties of the task, Mr. Wilson wrote:

> Does this imply that every Hydro representative, especially those with the prickly task of negotiation, would have to be a paragon of compassion, objectivity, and firmness? It does. It also points out that it is impossible for a

program of this kind to be completely trouble free. There just are not enough saints to go around.

When he returned to the Columbia in 1970, Mr. Wilson tried to assess the feelings of the local people through interviews, and by circulating a questionnaire to those still remaining of the persons who had gone through the displacement period. Unfortunately, only a meagre number of replies were received: too few, as Mr. Wilson says, to provide any serious statistical proof. The people who bothered to reply, moreover, could be assumed to include a disproportionate number of those who still harboured ill feelings: many of those who had been satisfied were more likely to throw the questionnaire away. Nevertheless, the response did disclose that almost everyone agreed that the roads, ferries, town facilities had been vastly improved; "newer, brighter communities" had developed. Sixty per cent, moreover, were generally "satisfied" with the compensation they had received. But almost unanimously the respondents said that their payments were not "fair"; some were treated better than others. Satisfactory but unfair!

The author has a most excellent final chapter in which he outlines the considerations that should govern, and the procedures that should be followed, if another dam should be built in a valley from which residents will have to move. Naturally this is a statement of an ideal but it is an ideal that should certainly be accepted as the objective by whatever agency is assigned the task.

There are a few minor matters which, in a subsequent edition, the author may wish to reconsider.

The statement on page 157 that the Ombudsman's services became "available only *after* the normal negotiating process had been completed" is contradicted by the terms of reference, and by the actual facts. Again, there is very little reference to the notable effect of the Treaty dams in reducing flooding downstream in Canada. Yet in 1972 the city of Trail was saved from the worst flood in its long history of inundations by the existence of the Arrow reservoir. The editor of the *Trail Times*, a paper that had once been critical of the whole programme, wrote that a visitor to the Trail-Castlegar area in 1972 would have heard "Prayers of thanks for the new dams." In the Creston area over 25,000 acres are now permanently protected.

Pertinent to the general theme is the fact that in 1970 the American Public Power Association, having organized a panel to study all major hydro construction activities on the continent, selected B.C. Hydro's

Arrow project as one of only two recipients of its honour award. The panel which made the decision was drawn from the American Societies of *Civil Engineers*, *Architects*, *Landscape Architects*, and of *Planners*! Their report said in part that the programme "has contributed greatly to the entire region surrounding the artificial lake. It has created a regional facility in the lake and brought life back to a whole community up and down the lake."

Nor should it be forgotten that B.C. Hydro and the provincial government have spent something over $50 million in excess of the cost of "replacing like with like" on amenities in the area.

One of the statements in the book that has my unqualified concurrence is the last sentence in Chapter Four:

> If Hydro is judged to have emerged with credit from its exercise in the Arrow Lakes, it will be largely to the credit of its field men — its appraisers, engineers, planners, and information officers — who did their difficult jobs, for the most part, with understanding and humanity.

And prominent among all those who contributed understanding and humanity was Jim Wilson.

Victoria HUGH L. KEENLEYSIDE

Recollections of the On To Ottawa Trek, by Ronald Liversedge. *With Documents related to the Vancouver Strike and the On To Ottawa Trek* edited by Victor Hoar. Toronto: The Carleton Library No. 66. McClelland and Stewart, 1973. xviii, 331 pp. $4.50.

In the annals of social dissent in the 1930's the On To Ottawa Trek is a landmark. The number of men involved, their objectives and leadership. The support they received in Western Canada and the tragic riot in Regina on July 1, 1935, attracted widespread attention, caused a great deal of controversy and contributed to the defeat of R. B. Bennett's Conservatives in the federal election several months later.

Amongst the scattered literature on the subject, Ronald Liveredge's *Recollections* has occupied a place of honour ever since they were made available in a limited mimeographed edition a dozen years ago. He belongs to that rare breed of Canadian writers: a manual worker who sets down his reminiscences on paper. Like many other opponents of the status quo in the 1930's, Liveredge was an immigrant. Born in England,

he spent some time in Australia before he came to North America in 1927. Typically of rebels during the Depression, he was a staunch Communist. His vividly described experiences at Sudbury, on the Prairies and in Vancouver strengthened his Marxist predilections and his hostility to the established order and its representatives; these he denounces in no uncertain terms, regardless of whether they are Mounties or his *bête noire* R. B. Bennett.

To students of B.C. history and politics the most interesting parts of his memoirs are those that deal with the struggles of the unemployed in Vancouver; the preparations for the strike of Relief Camp workers in the Interior; the techniques that the strike leaders used to preserve solidarity among the rank-and-file, to seek moral and financial support in the communities in which they agitated and to obtain at least some relief from the three layers of government. As a fairly prominent activist among the unemployed and the trekkers, Liversedge was in a good position to observe what happened in the course of street riots, the occupation of the Vancouver Library and Museum on Hastings and Main, and at meetings of trekkers' leaders, who carefully planned their moves when they were not addressing large crowds or negotiating with the authorities.

The picture which emerges is of widespread dissatisfaction among the young single unemployed. These, according to the Trek leaders, Arthur "Slim" Evans, were "mainly concerned" with the "hopelessness of life" in the Relief Camps. Their strong criticism of living and working conditions in the camps was not shared by members of the Macdonald Commission whose report Professor Hoar publishes in its entirety. (He would have enhanced the usefulness of the section on Relief Camps had he also drawn on articles about the "slave camps" or "internment camps" in the *Commonwealth*, the organ of the C.C.F. in B.C.)

Police documents, including reports of anonymous spies among the trekkers in Vancouver, provide a glimpse of the role the Communists played in channelling the frustrations and anger of the unemployed. Both Liversedge and the documents Professor Hoar has unearthed in the National Archives show convincingly that public opinion on the West Coast was for a time in broad sympathy with those who left the Relief Camps to draw attention to their plight. This complicated the task of the authorities eager to remove the trekkers who had become highly politicized. Not that the various layers of government could agree on how best to cope with the trekkers, either in Vancouver or as they moved eastward. The telegrams and letters that the Mayor of Vancouver and the Premier of B.C. exchanged with members of the federal Cabinet reveal the ex-

tent to which those in power were unwilling to assume responsibility for unpopular measures. Dire warnings were used in an effort to shift the blame and gain short-term political advantage over their political rivals.

Similar differences of opinion emerged in the debate over the Trek in the House of Commons, reproduced by Professor Hoar. There the government was criticized at great length by one of its former members, H. H. Stevens, while R. B. Bennett defended the record of the Tory administration. Earlier on, the Prime Minister and his colleagues met a trekkers' delegation. Their exchange of views, also included in this valuable collection of documents, helps to explain why those who vegetated in the Relief Camps and in Vancouver hated so much R. B. Bennett and all that he stood for.

University of British Columbia IVAN AVAKUMOVIC