

That said, it is the more unfortunate that the commissioners did not apply the same principles of civilian control and third party review to all the records questions which they considered. Most important of all, the Report is silent on the question of the disposal of RCMP records. What we needed from McDonald was a solid recommendation that the RCMP open its historical records to public research itself or transfer them to the Public Archives of Canada. Precisely what Canadian historians cannot do now is create a third party review of the history of the RCMP and its activities in the twentieth century based on the original documents. The Public Archives of Canada currently lists in its public inventory of RCMP records 3,514 volumes. At least eighty per cent of these records pre-date 1920 and the other twenty percent which is of later date consists almost entirely of routine material. There is almost nothing on the history of the kinds of RCMP activities that concerned McDonald.

This situation is a tragedy in many ways and it also constitutes a denial of basic democratic rights. As a matter of principle it should be possible for the public to review all publicly funded activities. It may make sense to delay such review for some period of time but not so long that the review have no relevance to contemporary policy formation. The McDonald commissioners regarded one of its main responsibilities "to restore public trust in a public institution which has fallen under suspicion" (Second Report, vol. 1, p. 13). Personally, I do not believe that this objective will be fully achieved in this country until our writers, researchers and historians are free to inquire fully into the history of the RCMP as a means of understanding its current role and activities. If the RCMP is to be trusted by Canadians, if it has nothing to hide, why does it continue to hide even its old records from legitimate researchers?

By not entering the deliberations of the McDonald Commission, the historical and archival communities in Canada have helped to maintain an unhealthy silence which injures their own professional interests and those of the Canadian people at large. We wait still for some force in this country, private or public, to come forward to make the RCMP accountable for its handling of the public records it holds.

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**Journals of the Colonial Legislatures of the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1851-1871.** Edited with an introduction by JAMES E. HENDRICKSON. Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1980. 5 volumes, illus., index, appendices, 2441 p. ISBN 0-7718-8183-5 bd. \$150.

In this monumental set of five volumes, running in all to nearly 2700 pages, Dr. Hendrickson has assembled and printed verbatim the journals of the Council Executive Council, Legislative Council and House of Assembly of Vancouver Island (1851-1866), and those of the Executive Council and Legislative Council of British Columbia (1864-1871). He has prefaced them with an illuminating thirty-page introduction, and in appendices has added such key documents as the Royal Grant of Vancouver Island to the Hudson's Bay Company and Governor Blanshard's instructions. He has also reprinted the lengthy debate on Confederation that took place in the Legislative Council in 1870—the only attempt at a Hansard-like report of the proceedings of any of the councils, and not included in the journals because the Council was sitting in Committee of the Whole. Other items in the appendices include the colonial estimates and accounts (highly relevant in view of the almost perpetual wrangling over matters of finance) and schedules recording the progress of legislation through the councils and assembly. Each volume has a detailed index.

The journals are complete, except for a puzzling gap in the records of the Council of Vancouver Island for the period from June 1861 to February 1862. Dr. Henrickson takes me gently to task for not noticing this when the journals were being catalogued in the 1930's while I was Provincial Archivist. I take comfort in the fact that a far more serious gap would exist if it had not been for a quite extraordinary coincidence. One afternoon in 1936 or 1937, when the old heating plant in the main block of the British Columbia Parliament Buildings was still functioning, some instinct caused me to walk along a lower corridor which I hardly ever frequented. There I chanced upon an open door at the head of a stairway to the basement. I could see the glow of fire at the bottom, and curiosity led me to go exploring. Beside the furnace, ready to be thrown into it, I found a pile of old records, mostly from the Department of Finance, and—on top of the lot— the original manuscript journal of the House of Assembly of Vancouver Island for the period October 1858 to July 1859. How long it had been missing from the Archives is not known, but it evidently went wandering before 1914, as it is not included in the listing of the journals in the bibliography of the first volume of Howay and Scholefield's *British Columbia* published that year. Nor were its contents included in the transcripts which seem to have been prepared when the Archives began printing the journals in its *Memoir* series in 1918.

Terry Eastwood recently unearthed some reminiscences by R.E. Gosnell, the first permanent Legislative Librarian, showing that indifference and neglect ninety and more years ago might well have resulted in the loss of the whole of the House of Assembly records. Soon after he was appointed in 1893 Gosnell "began his duties as librarian by cleaning up 'with a pitch fork and wheelbarrow' the mass of 'newspapers and Blue books. . . thrown into an outside passage and heaped up there for years.' In the pile he found the 'original journals of the Vancouver Island legislature, indited in the hand of the Hon. J.S. Helmcken.' When Gosnell showed the journals to Helmcken [who was Speaker of the Assembly throughout its existence], the good doctor 'almost wept'."

Hendrickson remarks that the preparation of this edition had "served to bring these journals under detailed scrutiny, perhaps for the first time, with a view to ascertaining the precise nature of the institutions that were established, of their relationship to each other, and of the manner in which they changed and developed through time." This is undoubtedly true, and his introduction corrects and clarifies many points of interest. To cite an example, many writers (myself included) have referred loosely to the Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia as crown colonies, but that designation was usually applied only to colonies that had been "acquired by conquest or by cession." Vancouver Island and British Columbia were "settled" colonies, that is, "colonies settled by British subjects." The distinction was highly significant, because "settled" colonies were deemed to be entitled to representative institutions, which would give British settlers a voice in government, whereas crown colonies were not. The long struggle to make that representative voice louder and stronger is indeed the major theme in these council and assembly journals. From the very beginning it tended to centre upon the raising of revenue and control of expenditure. It did not figure in the first meeting of the Council of Vancouver Island, as Governor Blanshard did nothing except announce his resignation and appoint the three original members. But difference of opinion on matters financial emerged promptly at the second session, convened by James Douglas, Blanshard's successor, whose suggestion that revenue should be raised by imposing a duty on imports was not accepted by the Council.

The journals naturally reflect the constitutional changes that occurred, and Dr. Henrickson clarifies the reasons that lay behind each of them. The first major change was the creation of the Vancouver Island House of Assembly in 1856, a prospect that filled Douglas with dismay. His reaction is not surprising, for he had been in the wilderness of the fur trade since the age of 16. This makes all the more impressive the dignity and competence with which he managed affairs and dealt with an assembly jealous of its rights and anxious to extend them. Two years later the gold rush led to the creation of the mainland colony, and the high regard that the

Colonial Office had come to have of Douglas was shown not only by his appointment to the governorship but by the unfettered personal authority that was vested in him. Then, in 1863, came Douglas's retirement and the decision to appoint separate governors for the two colonies. At the same time each colony acquired an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. The latter gave British Columbia a first but very small measure of popular representation, but no doubt bearing in mind that the mainland population was still largely American, the so-called elections were no more than popular nominations; those "elected" had still to be appointed by the governor.

Douglas had been much criticized at times, but his worth was appreciated, and he was given a cordial sendoff. Neither of his successors shows up very well by comparison. He had been the right man in the right place at the right time. One wonders what the course of events might have been if the Hudson's Bay Company had happened to send Peter Skene Ogden or John Work, the obvious alternatives, to Fort Victoria in 1849 instead of Douglas.

The journals seldom make exciting reading. The content, as Hendrickson notes, "is often tedious, the style repetitious, and the substance disappointing." But there are occasional exceptions. One such is found in the Assembly journal for 1859, when the House challenged Douglas's decision to build the first Parliament Buildings at James Bay. The House noted that, on his own responsibility, Douglas had "determined on removing some of the Government offices from a central position in the town to the South end of it, as well as having a bridge contracted 800 feet in length leading there," and declared his action "unconstitutional and a breach of privilege." Douglas's reply, typically firm but courteous, pointed out in effect that he considered the proposal to be none of the Assembly's business. The buildings would be paid for by the Hudson's Bay Company, which would be reimbursed eventually by the British Government; the bridge was required to give easy access, and the "airy, spacious and convenient" 10-acre site, being a government reserve, was available free. To secure an adequate site in the centre of the town would incur "an enormous expenditure," the price of property on Yates Street having risen to 21 sterling a front foot. Moreover, he considered it "neither proper nor judicious to pack the public offices of the Colony into a confined space." There seems to have been something of the town planner in Douglas.

The journals rarely give more than the bare bones of a story. The incorporation of the City of Victoria is a case in point. The first bill was introduced in the Assembly in April 1860, but the matter dragged on for more than two years. The final measure did not receive the Governor's assent until August 1862, after a concluding episode that bordered on farce, of which the journals give no hint. It was found (in Helmcken's words) that the bill "had incorporated the land and not the inhabitants," and the Council hastily made the necessary amendments, which the House accepted. Kennedy, Douglas's successor as Governor of Vancouver Island, later remarked unkindly to the Colonial Office that the Council "was mainly occupied in the correction of mistakes, or undoing the crude legislation of the Lower House."

The journal of the Executive Council of Vancouver Island for 1864 is enlivened by a touch of scandal in a verbatim record of the investigation into the conduct of Richard Gollege, acting Gold Commissioner at Sooke. He was charged "with having been, at his station, in a state of intoxication, and in having played cards in a public drinking place with a common prostitute." The Council's verdict was "that Mr. Gollege was not sober." But this was exceptional. Even well-known events of some interest are passed over without comment. The famous speech of Leonard McClure in the House of Assembly in 1866, reputed to be the longest delivered in any legislature in what is now British Columbia, failed to prompt any notice in the journal, which merely states that "The House having remained uninterruptedly in Session from 1.15 p.m. on April 23rd until 1.15 p.m. on April 24th" adjourned for a week, presumably to recover. A footnote would have been in order here, and in sundry other places as well. The discussion of the wording of the oath taken by Selim Franklin when he was elected to the second House of Assembly in 1860 is also of more than passing interest. He was

the first Canadian Jew to sit in a legislature. And although the instrument appointing Alfred John Langley to the Council of Vancouver Island in February 1861 is reproduced in facsimile, his disappearance only two months later is unexplained. In fairness, it must be admitted that once annotation is embarked upon, it is difficult to keep it within limits. It is clear, however, that an inviting opportunity awaits someone with the patience to check contemporary newspapers, especially those edited by Amor de Cosmos and John Robson, the two leading campaigners for responsible government, and letters, diaries and reminiscences relating to the period. This would provide material for a companion to the journals giving the background to the proceedings that are here recorded in such a concise and colorless way.

Both Kennedy and Seymour, the second governors of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, soon became entangled in procedural difficulties. Gold discoveries at Sooke prompted Kennedy to summon the Assembly, but he failed to give the required 14 days' notice to members who insisted that a second proclamation be issued that conformed with the law. Kennedy had been Governor of Western Australia, where his authority had been almost as unfettered as Douglas's in British Columbia. As Dr. Ormsby notes, "he had had no experience with an elected house and never before had encountered men like Helmcken, de Cosmos and Dr. Tolmie, who held advanced views concerning the legislative powers of a representative assembly." Inevitably differences over financial matters were much to the fore, and these culminated in the last months of his years in office, when the Assembly refused to pass a supply bill and Kennedy was forced to borrow money to meet current expenses. Seymour's difficulties are recorded discreetly in the journals of the Legislative Council. In October 1864, he dissolved the first Council and arranged for the appointment of a successor that was in session from December 1864 until April 1865. Then came a despatch from the Colonial Office pointing out that he had had no authority to dissolve a council, and instructing him to re-appoint the members of the first Council and have them pass a Confirmatory Bill that would validate the acts of the previous session. This was duly accomplished in January 1866.

In 1918 the Provincial Archives instituted a *Memoir* series, in which volumes II and III printed the first manuscript volumes of the journals of the Council and House of Assembly of Vancouver Island. The reasons why the series was not continued are perhaps not as completely "lost in obscurity" as Dr. Hendrickson suggests. As has been pointed out, the second volume of the journals of the Assembly was not available at the time. E.O.S. Scholefield, who had launched the *Memoir* series, was suffering from the illness that resulted in his death on Christmas Day 1919. And there were financial complications, particularly after Scholefield's death. The cost of publishing the first *Memoirs* had been met by the King's Printer; succeeding volumes had to be paid for by the Provincial Archives, and money was not easy to come by in the years immediately following World War I. No addition was made to the series until 1923, and by that time a quite different editorial policy had been adopted.

Illustrations (in four of the five volumes) are mostly facsimile of documents, supplemented by half a dozen photographs. The frontispiece of volume I is a painting of James Bay in 1860 by Lady Crease; the frontispiece for the mainland journals is an interesting sketch of Government House, New Westminster, by Lady Musgrave, wife of the last colonial governor. Both are reproduced in colour. One regrets that there are no photographs of the five governors, who figure so largely in the journals.

Dr. Hendrickson notes that the *Journals* were "the last major project to be typeset by the hot metal process by the Queen's Printer of British Columbia," photocomposing having won the day. The five volumes are an impressive swan song, and to ensure long life, paper and binding are acid free.

Only two misprints were noted. On p. xxiii of volume I the printer has omitted the date 1856, making it appear that the minutes of the House of Assembly as they appear in *Memoir*

III extend only from August 12th to September 25th, 1858, and the caption for the group photograph of the Legislative Council of British Columbia in volume V refers to the "Seventh Council" instead of to the "Seventh Session" of the Council.

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**Reflections on the Symons Report: The State of Canadian Studies in 1980.** A Report Prepared for the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada by JAMES E. PAGE, 1981. x, 236 pp. ISBN 0-662-11608-9.

Professor T.H.B. Symons, Chairman of the Commission on Canadian Studies appointed in 1972, released his report *To Know Ourselves* in 1976. Four years later, James E. Page, a lecturer in the Canadian Studies Program at Seneca College and President of the Association for Canadian Studies, prepared this report in an effort to document the impact of the Symons Report and to "review...current work being done to advance teaching, research and publication about Canada." Page has examined several major areas of concern, including the responses of government agencies, Canadian studies programs at various universities, the activities of concerned national organizations, the responses of certain journals and disciplinary/professional bodies, Canadian studies abroad, and Canadian studies and archives. Although there are passing references to the state of Canadian archives throughout the report, Page follows the model of the Symons Report and devotes a chapter to what Symons saw as the foundation of Canadian studies. In this chapter, Page focuses on four groups in the Canadian archival community and their responses to Symons. First, he deals with the responses of the Association of Canadian Archivists by summarizing the highlights of the ACA select Committee's report *The Symons Report and Canadian Archives*, briefly describing the panel discussion on the Symons Report at the 1977 annual meeting and reporting on the activities of the ACA's Committees on Education, Business Archives, and University and College Archives. Secondly, he summarizes the report of the Consultative Group on Archives. Thirdly, he discusses the response of the Public Archives of Canada to the fourteen recommendations in the Symons Report specifically directed to PAC. Finally, he describes the regional system put in place by the Archives nationales du Québec, and suggests that other provinces would do well to consider a system with similar potential. In his summary to the chapter, Page stresses the impact of the Symons Report on archivists, and points out that "no other professional body has been so engaged by *To Know Ourselves*." However, despite the debate and response which Symons engendered, Page cannot help but agree with the conclusion of the Consultative Group—that if the future of Canadian studies rests on the Canadian archival system, it rests on an insecure foundation. Page makes some specific suggestions about what further steps must be taken to improve the situation. He also emphasizes the need for support from the Canadian studies community to improve the state of Canadian archives. But much remains to be done. In other words, this report does not really tell us anything that we do not already know. Apparently two more volumes will be forthcoming from Professor Symons, and it will be interesting to see if these volumes will have more to say about archives. In the meantime, Page's report is a useful summary of what has happened in response to Symons. Unfortunately its pedestrian, repetitive style and somewhat gloomy conclusions do not provide inspiring reading.

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