

bibliographers, librarians, and archivists from both Canada and Britain “to create a context for our discussion of Library policy.” Also, according to Wilson, the Library was “convinced that national and international cooperation of librarians and archivists is essential for the undertaking of major retrospective cataloguing, microfilming and preservation programmes.” Unfortunately, the Library was unable to convene such a cross-professional, multinational group, with the result that the colloquium was not the lively interchange of new ideas and comment on Canadian studies that had been anticipated.

Two reasons why the conference seems to have failed are readily apparent. First, it was totally dominated by librarians and bibliographical projects. More than half of the seventy registrants were practicing librarians or teachers of library science, representing six Canadian and eight British institutions. In stark contrast, only three archivists attended: the Keeper of Manuscripts of the British Library, and the chief and staff archivist of the London Office of the National Archives of Canada. Daniel Waley’s short and uninspiring description of the Library’s holdings of private papers of relevance to Canadian studies was disappointing. The only occasion during the two-day meeting in which archival matters were considered to any extent was the paper given by Bruce Wilson, then Chief of the London Office of the National Archives, on that institution’s British copying and acquisition programme.

The other group absent from the colloquium was the Canadian research community. Not one practicing historian or other social scientist even attended — save for those involved in bibliographical work. Hence the second problem: the conference’s failure to recognize and accommodate in the programme the night-and-day difference between Canadian Studies as they are prospering in Canada today and their marginal status in Britain. What the conference needed, and what the British Library surely required for its own institutional analyses, was a full picture of the diversity, richness, and directions of current research and teaching about Canada in the homeland. That should be the starting point of any discussion about the contributions that libraries and archives may make to the development of Canadian Studies.

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Vancouver Past: Essays in Social History. ROBERT A.J. McDONALD and JEAN BARMAN, eds. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986. 327 p. ISBN 07748-0256-1 \$24.95.

This special Vancouver Centennial issue of *B.C. Studies* brings together ten essays examining various aspects of Vancouver’s social development over a sixty-year period. Works by established historians of Vancouver, Robert McDonald, Pat Roy, Deryck Holdsworth, Paul Yee, and Irene Howard are mixed with scholarly articles by others writing about the city for the first time.

These essays focus on the most current topics in Canadian history: labour, women, medicine, ethnicity, and education. These subjects have not been widely explored in relation to Vancouver; previous writers have examined an earlier period and concentrated on political and biographical studies, studies which place the city in relationship to the surrounding regions, or anecdotal histories of people and events.

As it is currently popular to examine the everyday lives of ordinary people, the contributors offer readers new insights into the lives and concerns of Vancouver residents from 1900 to 1960. Veronica Strong-Boag and Katherine McPherson record that by the 1930s most Vancouver women delivered babies in hospitals attended by male doctors rather than in familiar home settings. They argue that these doctors were unsympathetic to the needs of women giving birth. An essay entitled "The Triumph of Formalism: Elementary Schooling in Vancouver from the 1920s to the 1960s," written by education historian Neil Sutherland, recalls the type of schooling experienced by most Vancouverites and argues that formalism in the curricula of elementary schools was as strong in the 1950s as it was in the 1920s. He places the school system in the social context of the time which strived for "peace, order and good government." Other authors identify groups and document their strategies or responses to social and economic needs. Irene Howard's essay on the Mothers' Council of Vancouver records the activities of a group of women who helped support unemployed men in the 1930s. Jill Wade's essay on the 1946 occupation of the old Hotel Vancouver recalls how a group of veterans responded to the severe housing shortage in the city.

A study of a large and successful business in early Vancouver by Paul Yee presents an interesting picture of business life in Chinatown. Yee traces the diversification of the Sam Kee Company and describes the contract labour system through which the company supplied labour for local canneries and lumber mills. Yee argues that this system of contract labour and the Chinese success in the business arena prevented Chinese immigrants from becoming "victims of racism and industrial capitalism." Deryck Holdsworth, an urban historical geographer, brings readers "Cottages and Castles for Vancouver," which, like Jean Barman's essay "Neighbourhood and Community in Interwar Vancouver," documents the social significance of the city's urban landscape. Holdsworth, using early visitors' and residents' impressions of Vancouver, argues that plentiful and cheap land, the booming resource-based economy, and an extensive streetcar system allowed middle and working classes to acquire detached homes. Vancouver developed as a low-density, attractive suburban city, distinct from the industrial cities of eastern Canada and Great Britain.

Robert McDonald's essay examines the pre-World War I working class in Vancouver, challenging the popular theory that Vancouver's workers were unusually militant or radical. His essay is also a miniature historiography as he reviews the historical literature of Vancouver and examines many prevalent themes including neighbourhood differences, the role of women, transiency of the city's population, militancy of the labour class, and the conflict between different ethnic groups. Pat Roy's important historiographical essay, "A Half-Century of Writing on Vancouver's History," argues that the scholarship has matured; that the emergence of specialized neighbourhood studies, a new interest in the city's later years, and case studies designed to test popular themes and theories prove that writers have begun to take a more sophisticated approach and to examine Vancouver subjects in a broader perspective.

The writing of Vancouver's history is only now maturing. There are fewer histories based on anecdotes and less emphasis on metropolitanism. The publication of this volume is a significant leap forward, especially considering the essays' view of Vancouver as a complex urban environment and the writers' concentration on subjects which examine the lives and concerns of working people. However, most of the essays in the collection do not go beyond the 1930s and most base their conclusions on secondary

research. Only Paul Yee's analysis of the Sam Kee Company records, Neil Sutherland's use of oral history interviews, and James Huzel's analysis of police court records provide us with studies based on archival research.

There is a wealth of subjects virtually unexplored by historians of Vancouver. Many important collections of records are available to provide new evidence or to test prevalent theories. These sources must be examined by historians of the city in order to build on the contribution to Vancouver's historiography marked by the publication of this volume in Vancouver's centennial year.

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Raising a Baby the Government Way: Mothers' Letters to the Children's Bureau, 1915-1932. MOLLY LADD-TAYLOR. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1986. x, 212 p. ISBN 0-8135-1177-1 \$18.00 (U.S.).

"I am busy all day and all evening but my work is never done — I am tired enough to drop when night comes and in the morning look with dread upon the day ahead of me. I want to play with my babies, I want to have time to love them and laugh with them. I have wanted babies for years and now, when I'm [sic] so tired and with unfinished work every where I turn, I could scream at their constant prattle. I love them until it hurts and know that, when they are out of their babyhood, I can never forgive myself for not making more of these precious years." So wrote Mrs. N.W. of Seattle, Washington, in a letter dated 4 March 1920, one of the fascinating letters to the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labour that appear in Molly Ladd-Taylor's *Raising a Baby the Government Way: Mothers' Letters to the Children's Bureau, 1915-1932*. Ladd-Taylor has scoured the central registry files of the Children's Bureau in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and has come up with a gripping collection of first hand testimony from both rural and urban working class homemakers, a group that historians, including women's historians, have long considered inarticulate.

The Children's Bureau was established by an act of Congress in 1912, at the height of the reform fervour of the Progressive Era, as an agency to investigate all aspects of child welfare in the United States. High infant mortality rates and the poor health and exploitation of American children were considered national disgraces, and the Children's Bureau soon moved beyond its purely investigatory mandate to work for more important changes in child and maternal welfare. Throughout most of its existence the Bureau, staffed almost entirely by women, stressed educational and social solutions to the problems of children and their mothers. Its greatest achievement was the passage of the federal *Sheppard-Towner Maternity and Infancy Protection Act* (1922-1929), which allowed for federal government grants to the states to provide public health facilities and education directed at the improvement of child and maternal health. The Children's Bureau also produced numerous pamphlets and bulletins on all aspects of prenatal health and child care, stressing common sense, prevention, and structured habits. The most popular publications were *Prenatal Care* (1913) and *Infant Care* (1914). These pamphlets reached literally millions of American mothers and played a role in the raising