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Margaret A. Ormsby

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS*

MARGARET A. ORMSBY
University of British Columbia

Tonight I speak as a Westerner, and as a Westerner who, in order to arrive at this meeting in comfort and convenience, chose to be airborne across this broad land at high elevation and at great speed. En route to my destination I have sacrificed three irretrievable hours of my life-span. It will be in time attenuated, however, that I shall accomplish my course to the Western Sea, flying high above the deep river-troughs, the wide flatlands and the pinnacled mountains to reach home in the evanescent after-glow of the setting sun. I know that the full significance of time lost and of time gained will not be comprehended by me, for I am neither philosopher nor mathematician, and it is my habit as historian to search only for a hidden meaning in the visible and the invisible signs of time past.

Most Canadians, we are told, find their orientation by raising their eyes to the far line of the sky.¹ To be airborne is to permit this sky-line to recede, to allow the concrete example to be excluded by the abstraction, and to lose the familiar detail in the over-view. Thus when I become passenger-by-air I discard for a while the concepts of space and of time that were held by my grandparents.

Pioneer settlers in British Columbia, these grandparents of mine reached their western destination by cart-track and by rail-line, consuming on their journey great portions of their allotted time. But in so doing they gained an understanding of the linear expanse of Canada that I do not have. And they knew, as I do not know, that this is a country where there is such a succession of landscapes that only a few hold intimacy for any one individual. They saw granite defiles in which the waters of the rivers hurl themselves with great velocity, and they forded shallow, crooked, turbid streams. They discovered Canadian localities in which the definition of the valleys is wide and deliquescent, and others in which it is narrow and manifest. But they did not see the farther line of the sky as I have seen it, or have the over-view that I have obtained of the pervasiveness of the northern wilderness, of the voids that separate settlement from settlement, and of the lonely desolation that in Canada surrounds the works of man. Through benefit of modern technology, spatial dimension is for most Canadians of my generation something quite different from what it was for my progenitors.

* *A Horizontal View*, read before the Canadian Historical Association, University of Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, P.Q., June 9, 1966.

¹ Northrop Frye, "Conclusion", *Literary History of Canada*, (Carl F. Klinck, ed.), Toronto, 1965, p. 828.

In an autobiography written some thirty years ago, Lord Tweedsmuir tells us that it was by entering the United States by land from Canada that he gained his understanding of "America". America "is not in every part a country of wide horizons", he concluded; "... most of America, and some of its most famous parts, is pockety, snug and cozy, a sanctuary rather than a watch-tower. To people so domiciled its vastness must be like the mathematicians' space-time, a concept apprehended by the mind and not a percept of the eye."²

As everyone knows, the age of the aeroplane had hardly arrived when these words were written; distance still had its perceptible boundaries, and time seemed immutable. Before long, North Americans would be forced to relate their decisions to events taking place "over the hill", theories of relativity would be given scientific application, improved communications would extend the "percepts of the eye" into outer space, and mankind would be haunted by the fear that time had acquired a limitation of its very own. Even so, most of us would still continue to be earthbound and still continue to take our unhurried sightings from a horizontal position.

Historians, in particular, are apt to take the horizontal view, and I am no different from the others. For most of my days are spent in being earthbound and in suffering the further disability of having my vision foreshortened by the ranges of the tall mountains. Yet though my contemporaries make no excuse for viewing the Canadian past from their customary horizontal position, my experience in travelling across space and through time has left me with a conviction that a new relativity should be applied in the scientific examination of the nation's past. But convention is a hard master and I am its victim. So, without apology, but with misgiving, I offer one more horizontal view of the Canadian endeavour.

.

It was at Canada's "Pacific Door" that

... Spaniards and Vancouver's boatmen scrawled
the problem that is ours and yours,
that there is no clear Strait of Anian
to lead us easy back to Europe,
that men are isled in ocean or in ice,
and only joined by long endeavour to be joined.³

Of all men, the Westerner is the man who knows that he is both on the edge of civilisation and on the verge of something new. Estranged

² John Buchan, *Memory Hold-The-Door*, London, reprinted 1954, p. 277. First printed, June, 1940.

³ Earle Birney, "Pacific Door", in *The Strait of Anian*, Toronto, 1948, p. 37. Quoted with the kind permission of the publishers, The Ryerson Press.

by distance from his own kind, separated by a time-lag from the culture of his former society, he permits the landscape to intrude itself into the very pith of his subconscious being. The symbol of his aspiration, the badge of his despair, the landscape assumes romantic proportions to compensate him for his solitude.

Thus, long ago, Gabriel Franchère, fur hunter, alone in the western interior of the continent, stood on the banks of the Saskatchewan River and beheld an idyllic scene:

The banks are perfectly charming, and offer in many places a scene the fairest, the most smiling, and the best diversified that can be seen or imagined: hills in varied forms, crowned with superb groves; valleys agreeably embrowned, at evening and morning, by the prolonged shadow of the hills, and of the woods which adorn them; herds of light-limbed antelopes, and heavy colossal buffalo — the former bounding along the slopes of the hills, the latter trampling under their heavy feet the verdure of the plains; all these champaign beauties reflected and doubled as it were, by the waters of the river; the melodious and varied song of a thousand birds, perched on the tree tops; the refreshing breath of the zephyrs; the serenity of the sky; the purity and salubrity of the air; all, in a word, pours contentment and joy into the soul of the enchanted spectator.

But in the end Franchère, like every other mortal who sojourns in the Great West, had to discard myth and come to terms with geographical reality:

these countries, at times so delightful, do not enjoy a perpetual spring; they have their winter, and a rigorous one; a piercing cold is then spread through the atmosphere; deep snows cover the surface; the frozen rivers flow only for the fish; the trees are stripped of their leaves and hung with icicles; the verdure of the plains has disappeared; the hills and valleys offer but a uniform whiteness; Nature has lost all her beauty; and man has enough to do, to shelter himself from the injuries of the inclement season.⁴

In the Great West, where there is little of that sinister, melancholy sadness that oppressed the spirit of André Siegfried when he travelled by train among the bare rocks and the dark lakes of the Laurentian Shield,⁵ the grandiose scale of the panoramas, the audacity of the high sky and the crystalline atmosphere create a buoyant optimism and an *élan*. The far-off horizon holds a mystic appeal for those who live on the great plains, and this same mystique is present for those who dwell on the Pacific coastline amid the dark forests, the indenting fiords and the frozen glaciers.

⁴ Gabriel Franchère, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America in the Years 1811, 1812, 1813 and 1814, Or, the First American Settlement on the Pacific*, [trans. and ed. by J. V. Huntington, New York, 1854], pp. 321-24. Cited in John Warkentin, ed., *The Western Interior of Canada*, [The Carleton Library no. 15], Toronto, 1964, pp. 110-11.

⁵ André Siegfried, *Canada: An International Power*, [trans. by Doris Hemming]. London, rev. ed., 1949, pp. 29, 31.

Yet both Canadian painting and architecture, themselves the product of "an intelligence that does not love"⁶ nature, reflect the cruel assaults made by the Westerner on his natural surroundings. In part his ruthless exploitation of nature is related to the tempo of life being quickened by the abrupt rhythm of the northern seasons, and to the sharp contrast between summer abundance and winter need. In a sense the early fur traders were "people of plenty", but they were people who found that they could survive in the remote wilderness and make profit from their enterprise only by destroying the very source of their support.

These first residents in the Northwest also discovered that whatever the bounty that could be found in the new country, the opportunity it presented was offset by the human and the psychological need for communication with their compatriots in the baseland. The "reptile on the North Shore" —

A hybrid that the myths might have conceived,
But not delivered, as progenitor
Of crawling, gliding things upon the earth? —

was their dreaded foe: its existence induced in every inhabitant of a forlorn western fort a sense of having been banished from civilization. To compound this sense of alienation, the location of the Laurentian Shield created an economic barrier between east and west and interposed an obstacle to be overcome in easing the inward flow of supplies and the outward flow of commodities.

French *voyageurs*, those most intrepid and indefatigable of all Canadian travellers, early undertook to surmount these difficulties. Sometimes as individuals, sometimes in the company of British explorers, they defiantly disregarded the gravitational north-south pull of the continent's geological folds and solved the transport problem by linking together the northern transcontinental waterways. In so doing, they also linked the landscape of the Laurentian basin with the landscape of the Pre-Cambrian Shield, and both of these landscapes with the landscapes of the mid-western sedimentary plains, of the northwestern parklands, and of the far-western transmontane slope. The first transcontinental commercial enterprise emerged when French trading-expertise and French mastery of the technology of transportation were combined in the peltry trade with Montreal-British capital investment and British entrepreneurial ability. The artificial east-west axis was reinforced by the North-West Company, and the fact demonstrated that a northern continental unit having a wide territorial base could be established if the two peoples of the Old Province would pool their talents and jointly risk their effort and their money.

⁶ Northrop Frye, "Conclusion", *Literary History of Canada*, p. 829.

⁷ E. J. Pratt, "Towards the Last Spike", in *The Collected Poems of E. J. Pratt*, (Northrop Frye, ed.), Toronto, 2nd. ed., 1958, p. 369. Quoted with the kind permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company of Canada.

The horizontal mobility of capital and labour, first put to the best in the terms of free enterprise under these primitive conditions, held the promise of the future. Its potential benefits would long be obscure, but in time they would be glimpsed on the wharves of Halifax and in the counting-houses of Montreal. It would take Macdonald, Cartier and Tupper to transform them into a nation's ambition.

Throwing aside the more bleak and inhospitable regions, we have a magnificent country between Canada and the Pacific, out of which five or six noble provinces may be formed larger than any we have, and presenting to the hand of industry and to the eye of speculation every variety of soil, climate and resource,

declaimed Tupper in his maiden speech in the Canadian House of Commons;

With such a territory as this to overrun, organise and improve, think you that we shall stop even at the western bounds of Canada? Or even at the shore of the Pacific? Vancouver Island, with its vast coal measures, lies beyond. The beautiful islands of the Pacific and the growing commerce of the ocean are beyond. Populous China and the rich East are beyond; and the sails of our children's children will reflect as familiarly the sunbeams of the south as they now brave the angry tempests of the north.⁸

Yet, at Confederation, a man of Tupper's sanguine temperament had to face the incontrovertible fact that the Great West, sealed off in 1821 as a vast fur preserve, was still severed by restrictive monopoly enterprise from its continental context.

For the Hudson's Bay Company had permitted a remote and almost virgin territory, extending from Rupert's Land to the western seaboard to become separated from its Laurentian baseland and to be tied to a distant metropolis in London. By employing its great capital reserves, its business acumen, and its unusual managerial ability the Great Monopoly had established in North America a distinct and integrated regional unit, and in order to protect it against intrusion, surrounded it by a zone of emptiness and a vacuum of silence. A closed society had been created: the timbered bastions sheltered officers and servants who, only hearing faint rumours about political experimentation in the British provinces to the east, and knowing little about the liberalizing trends in mid-Victorian economic and political thought, accepted without questioning a hierarchical social structure and an authoritarian rule. Privileges granted by the Chief Factors to their subordinates were proportional to the favours which they, in turn, might expect to receive from their own superiors in Fenchurch Street. Such paternalism drove free traders and *engagés* to protest restriction; when these protests came they were the fruit of frustration long borne, and expressed by a show of force.

⁸ The Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Tupper, Bart., *Recollections of Sixty Years*, London, 1914, App. 1, pp. 333-34.

The expanding pressure of the American frontier, coinciding with the plough being put to work in the valleys and the Protestant missionaries beginning to tread the wilds of Rupert's Land, disturbed after 1850 the delicate balance at mid-continent between the trader and the settler, and the still more delicate balance between the French and the English. By the time that the Company, under new management, finally read aright the signs of the times and adjusted its philosophy, the Great West had come to comprise a vast hinterland in which the Western Interior was frozen in space and immobilized by time. If Britons could query whether British North Americans were really their own contemporaries, it was still more right for Canadians in 1867 to ask if the officers, the colonists and the half-breed squatters on the Company's lands in the Red River Valley were really theirs.

No one in Canada, in advance of the new nation's attempt to project itself into the fertile valleys of the Red and Saskatchewan, raised the vital question of the historical proximity of an alien, static society, composed of native trappers, *Métis* freighters, riverside farmers and free traders, to a dynamic expanding society consisting of land-hungry backwoodsmen and urgent, exploitive railroaders, shipbuilders, lumbermen, bankers and merchants. Though the driving at Red River of the land-surveyor's stake — itself the symbol of the restoration of the horizontal mobility of capital and labour — might represent to the primitive mind an invasion of natural rights and an intention by outsiders "*pour piller notre pays*",⁹ to the mere sophisticated, but less sensitive and subtle Canadian way of thinking, it represented chiefly the positive purpose of civilizing the wilderness and holding it for Britain and for Britain's colony.

Nor did the pragmatic nationalist inform himself of the character of the separate cultural entity on the Pacific Slope. On the far Pacific edge, where "earth bent to the world's roundness — land and water circling the West back to the East again"¹⁰ — fur traders had contact with China, Russian Alaska, California, the Hawaiian Islands and England; to them Kanakas were more familiar figures than *Métis*, officers of the Royal Navy than redcoats, and farm bailiffs of English county gentry stock than crofters. For Victoria, with remarkable agility, had been transformed from a fur-trade depot into an English village ("as civilized as any respectable village in England, with the few very few upper ten leading"¹¹), then into colonial capital, and in 1858 into a miniature San Francisco. The gold stampede had brought to the mainland a mobile, polyglot population; an atmosphere that was both speculative and secular; and argonauts who were prepared to take the initiative in building "works of a stupendous

⁹ "Chanson écrite par Pierre Falcon" in J. J. Hargrave, *Red River*, Montreal, 1871, App. A, p. 489.

¹⁰ Emily Carr, *The Book of Small*, Toronto and London, 1942, p. 239.

¹¹ J. S. Helmcken, *Reminiscences*, 1892, vol. 3, p. 32. Provincial Archives of British Columbia.

character" in a country of towering mountains, rushing torrents and rock-bound inlets.

The strategy of civilization was at fault in 1869; as terrain abutted on landscape, tradition abutted on tradition, and race on race; first in the Western Interior, and then in the nation as a whole, race and creed were thrown into juxtaposition. By endeavouring to take possession of the western lands and thereby convert itself into a continental power, Canada had permitted its national unity to become characterized by racial and cultural diversity, and by the complexity of political divisions.

If Canadians in deciding to take over the lands and rights of the Hudson's Bay Company forgot their habit of self-scrutiny, the debt-ridden colonists in British Columbia made no such mistake before reaching a decision to enter into an entangling alliance with Canada. Confronted by the stark presence of the mountains, by the vertical physiography of the continent, and by the rough ocean waters which separated them from "Home", these British colonists put self-interest under close examination. Rather than run the risk of being drawn into "the republican vortex" by borrowing from their southern neighbour the capital and the labour which they needed to develop their abundant but scattered natural resources, they would turn to Canada while admitting that "Love for Canada has to be acquired by the prosperity of the country, and from our children".¹² For them, transportation and communication were the necessary condition of union; only the thrusting power of the railway locomotive could conquer distance and the mountain barrier. The catalyst of union was the Ottawa ministry's determination to make Canada a North American power. From Ottawa in 1870, a delegate from British Columbia was able to write to his "motherless child";

Everybody is very kind to us and we have been received in a very cordial and unostentatious manner, nothing has occurred to make our visit at any time disagreeable, on the contrary exactly the reverse... My dear little Girl, our country will most certainly be attached to and form part of Canada before very long: you must learn everything you can and do everything you are able not to be behind in any way, those who will be joined on to us.¹³

With British Columbia in the union and all British North America except Newfoundland joined by 1873, Canada took its leap across space. New dimension endowed the Dominion with an endless, open horizon extending from Atlantic to Pacific, and from the American Border to the Arctic barrens; largeness raised hope that collective human power could dominate the creative-destructive power of nature. A feeling existed that parochialism would be replaced by community of interest,

¹² British Columbia, Legislative Council, *Debate on the Subject of Confederation with Canada*, reprinted from the *Government Gazette Extraordinary* of March 1870, Victoria, 1912, p. 11.

¹³ Helmcken to "Dolly", June 9, 1870. PABC, Helmcken Papers.

and that Canada, instead of being merely a mosaic of parochial provinces, would become a great nation. "How seldom have men the opportunity we have had of creating a new power on earth, one which is evidently destined to make its mark amongst the nations of the world!"¹⁴ exclaimed Langevin. But the fact of the matter was that in nation-building, the motion would have to take much of its energy from tension. It would be desperately difficult to secure the articulation of regional economies and of disparate cultural traditions. And memory of the doings at Fort Garry in the cold winter of 1869 would make it a necessity to take second thought and to keep one foot on each bank of the Ottawa.¹⁵ The temptation for the federal government in dealing with the people of the West would be for it to be tentative and indecisive. But British, British Columbia, in particular, must be told that "If we want this Confederation to work well we must respect Provincial rights, as we intend to have ours respected".¹⁶

Only in an economic sense did the West represent the hope of Confederation. Behind its incorporation lay the determination of the St. Lawrence Valley to solve its own economic problems, problems that had arisen from reliance on water transportation, staples, and the markets of Great Britain. This region's shift to a new industrialism based on manufacturing and the railroad involved danger of a sharp economic confrontation with the United States. Development of the West could offset the danger: the prairie lands, put under the protective custody of the Dominion were available for its own use, and properly employed, they would support the construction of a transcontinental railway. Free lands in the Western Interior would be the magnet for immigration; immigration, in turn, would supply traffic for the all-Canadian route and markets for Eastern goods. The provision plains which once had kept the rapid system of canoe brigades in operation were capable of producing wheat, a bulky new staple which would earn funds on the world market for capital investment in Canada and also prime the pump of eastern industry. Monopoly privileges granted to steam power would guarantee economic and political security for the nation, and a high tariff wall would promote the development of a strong, varied and integrated national economy. The profit and power dynamics of a capitalistic enterprise rested on the untold resources of the West: Montreal realized this fact, and in a speculative mood it set foot in the West. In gratitude, the federal government, proffering favours of land and money, permitted itself to enter the embrace of private enterprise.

National expansion along latitudinal lines emphasized Canada's subservience to the industrialization of Great Britain and strengthened the imperial tie. But it also revived the age-old dream of trade being

¹⁴ Hector Langevin to J. W. Trutch, May 1, 1874. PABC, Trutch Papers.

¹⁵ *Our Sense of Identity*, (Malcolm Ross, ed.) Toronto, 1954. Introduction, p. ix.

¹⁶ Langevin to H. P. P. Crease, March 3, 1873. PABC, Crease Papers.

opened with Cathay. The steamship and the trans-oceanic cable were natural allies of the railway, and these could be used to extend the horizontal lines across the seas to other continents, and in the process of increasing national prosperity establish contact for the Canadian community with intellectual movements in older societies. Sensing this possibility of the future, Macdonald, during his stop-over in Winnipeg on the occasion in 1886 of the inauguration of passenger service between Montreal and Port Moody, declared in his exaltation, "I have now disappointed friends and foes, and am taking a horizontal view".¹⁷

By shattering the barricade against encroachment from the direction of the Laurentian Shield, and by piercing the farther barrier of the Rocky Mountains, the parallel lines of track made possible the welling of Canada, "the fling of a nation".¹⁸ British Columbia found a new gold field in the construction work, but neither prosperity nor the railway itself could Canadianize the province. In the Western Interior, no less than on the Pacific Slope, there prevailed little attachment to the Canadian fact. Then at the Regina scaffold, the parochialism of the Western Interior experienced its death-moment. From that time forward the Canadian stereotype became the pioneer equipped with the proper tools to get on with the job of levelling nature's obstacles.

Only in the instance of the postage-stamp province of Manitoba did men push down into the depths of their memory the thought of the spontaneous expression in 1869 of popular democracy. Compliantly, these Westerners permitted the society of Upper Canada to protrude itself into the continental-heartland, and in so doing, to destroy the historic dualism of the Red River Valley. Elsewhere on the broad plains and on the poplar-clad uplands, the ambient silence continued: "One feel's one self to be the centre of a kind of indescribable vastness or emptiness"¹⁹ the settler found.

The key to turn the clock forward was still lost. Neither Laurier nor Sifton would find it by introducing a new stock into the plains. Western pluralism built on a stock that was multi-racial, multi-denominational and multi-lingual would emphasize the distinction between Canada in the West and Canada in the East. And for the Western Interior, time would become multi-dimensional as immigrants from central and eastern Europe swarmed on to the soil and began to erect their mud-plastered shacks.

In the age of land transport and industrial capitalism, the restrictive monopoly enterprise of a private transport company with headquarters in Montreal had replaced in the Great West the restrictive monopoly

¹⁷ Cited in Donald Creighton, *John A. Macdonald [The Old Chieftain]*, Toronto, 1955, p. 459.

¹⁸ The phrase comes from Earle Birney's poem, "North Star West".

¹⁹ [Sir] Henry Norman, "The Prairies of Manitoba...", Montreal, 1888, p. 4.

enterprise of a private trading company based in London. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company established a "landlock" on the fertile belt in the Interior, regulated the horizontal flow of the golden wheat to Fort William, and lured from Europe pioneers to transport four thousand miles across Canada. And in place of a paternalistic trading company which had had the power to make rules and regulations, there was substituted the paternalism of a distant government which believed in the centralization of power and which only reluctantly granted responsible government to homesteaders in the Northwest. After a long delay, the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were created in 1905, the boundaries of Manitoba extended in 1912, and exactly sixty years after the transfer of Rupert's Land, the public lands were returned to Manitoba in 1930.

To the wheat farmers who had opened up the world's last frontier, no prosperity came for thirty years; then, in the next thirty years, they not only consolidated the economic bonds of Confederation but maintained the nation in prosperity.

In the Far West, where Canada fronted the Pacific and the Orient, a land-holding elite solicited from abroad the capital that was needed to develop fisheries, forests and mines. "British Columbia feels big, it is optimistic, it is in a hurry",²⁰ a British Columbian informed Laurier, and even at the depths of a depression men spoke of "the confident optimism [that] has always been the spirit of the West".²¹ The frontier revolved on its axis with the discovery of gold in Atlin and in Klondike and of base metals in Kootenay, and with the later discovery of power resources and with development of the pulp and paper industry. The North, opened by applying the most advanced technology, presented the nation with a new frontier dynamic. It drew two further transcontinental railway lines across the mountains, and in the process created at Toronto another eastern metropolis.

Political consolidation proved to be a matter quite different from economic consolidation. The native radical tradition of the Western Interior made the political philosophies of the old-line Canadian parties appear stultifying and unresponsive to the people's needs. Laurier, that "courteous old Procrastinator"²² as Earl Grey called him, found excuse in the "wheels within wheels, rings within rings" which dominated political life in the province of British Columbia, to deny the Far West cabinet representation, though as Goldwin Smith remarked, "In Canada from the composition of a cabinet to the composition of a rifle team,

²⁰ T. R. McInnes to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Nov. 27, 1909. Public Archives of Canada, Laurier Papers, p. 16282.

²¹ Premier Sir Richard McBride to the Editor, Home Publishing Co., Winnipeg, Nov. 11, 1915. PABC. Premier's Letterbooks, Aug. 16, 1915—Nov. 25, 1915.

²² Earl Grey to Lord Crewe, August 17, 1908. PAC, Grey of Howick Papers, Part II.

sectionalism is the rule".²³ "Distance from the seat of government is always one of our great troubles here in dealing with the central authorities",²⁴ every premier of British Columbia complained, "Victoria is 3,000 miles from Ottawa, while Ottawa is 30,000 miles from Victoria". "You never hear the word Canada", deplored Charles Mair, the Canada Firster, when he resided in British Columbia, "and you never hear the word annexation. It is a province *sui generis*, each valley with its little community, shut off until yesterday from the outer world..."²⁵ This fact would become even more true as people in the West become dependent on provincial authorities in the later age of motor transport, urban growth and welfare services.

In social values a deep gulf separated East and West. The East felt more sophisticated though in many respects it had fewer contacts with British and American thought, and it considered the West to be a raw frontier, which, in some respects it was. "We have a rough country in B.C., Soda Creek hills, Jack Ass Mountains, rough roads, wild stage horses, cold weather, poor hotels, bad cigars and sometimes fat mid-wives in crowded stages, but we are free from cowboys",²⁶ boasted one loyal son of British Columbia. On the Pacific Slope, the legacy of the gold rush remained: placer mining with its emphasis on labour, supplies and capital emphasized individualism, and almost everyone in British Columbia expected to make a lucky strike somehow. A Toronto business man with a sense of urgency was likely to find little respect for a Holy Sabbath or for the Calvinist conscience, and to discover in Vancouver "multitudinous temptations" assailing "on every hand those who were idling while Satan was inventing new forms of enticement."²⁷ Not until 1941 did the Canadian-born outnumber the British-born in the population, and even then the "Français de Canada" represented only three percent of the population. English families who travelled the full length of the Canadian Pacific Railway during the Great Boom often brought with them their libraries, sheet music, Georgian Silver, Chippendale furniture and oil paintings, and in that period Victoria could be described as "an unrivalled school of manners and of form".²⁸ Both Sir Henry Joly de Lotbinière, as Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, and Earl Grey, as Governor General of Canada, were impressed with the "looks, distinction and quality"²⁹ which they found in the Island capital.

²³ Goldwin Smith, *The Political Destiny of Canada*, Toronto, 1878, p. 17.

²⁴ Premier E. G. Prior to Premier S.N. Parent, Jan. 3, 1903. PABC, Premier's Official Letterbook, 1903.

²⁵ Charles Mair to Col. G. T. Denison, Oct. 6, 1892. PAC, Denison Papers. Cited in *Confederation to 1949*, [Canadian Historical Documents Series, vol. 3], (R. C. Brown and M. E. Prang, eds.), Scarborough, 1966.

²⁶ Joseph Hunter to D. B. Jones, March 16, 1882. PABC, Hunter Letterbook.

²⁷ C. L. Burton, *A Sense of Urgency*, Toronto, 1952, p. 109.

²⁸ Robert England, "A Victoria Real Estate Man", *Queen's Quarterly*, vol. LXV [Summer 1958], p. 219.

²⁹ Grey to Lord Elgin, Oct. 8, 1906. PAC, Grey Papers.

On the prairies, wheat farming, a occupation made hazardous by climate and other natural obstacles, promoted neighborliness and cooperative endeavour. Wheat farming had a levelling effect on class structure; on the prairies there were fewer "improvised Englishmen" than in British Columbia and fewer radical socialists than on the Coast where great extractive industries produced both capitalists and wage-slaves.

For the Great West, the mould was set by the time that the First great boom collapsed in 1913: though nominally Canadian, the West was still a region distinct and separate; its inhabitants felt solitary in their North American habitat; and for them time lost would not easily be retrieved. Through pooling their efforts, technological knowledge and entrepreneurial ability, the two peoples in Eastern Canada had joined in the assault on nature and developed western resources. But the social values of an energetic, vital people living in a western setting were still likely to be drawn from a metropolis in London, and after the development of wheat farming and of the pulp and paper industry, from metropolises in Chicago and San Francisco. Political philosophy in the West was still inchoate, but it combined elements of a tradition of popular democracy with a conservatism drawn from a long tradition of submitting to restriction imposed, like law and order, by outside authorities. It would remain for the sound-wave and the airway to promote unification by shrinking distance and contracting time.

.

I have been speaking about problems which arise in this country out of space being almost unconfined and time having its own variations. Because of the wildness of Canada I find that I often choose to make my flights across the continent by night: it is then that I discover that I am lost in space and that only the light flickering skywards from a human habitation, like the lights of Perth shining heavenwards to guide the astronauts, has meaning for me. At these moments, I recall the fact that Rousseau extolled the merits of belonging to a small, confined society, "a society which had an extent proportionate to the limits of human faculties", in which it is possible for individuals to be well known to one another, and where the pleasant custom of seeing and knowing one another produces love for the citizens rather than a love of the soil.

Love of the soil is a Canadian characteristic, just as reliance on the "percepts of the eye" is a Canadian habit. Both can make more for a distortion of reality. The great danger is that in our snug, cozy valleys we will be content with visual impressions, though such impressions can never have the accuracy of the truth revealed by the

science of a cartographer. As a British Columbia poet has put it, if you draw your own map,

Your map will show whatever you want to boast,
Sites of convents,
Seams of coal,
How wholes are divided
Or parts made whole,
Or a northwest passage
An undiscovered goal,
A long, long journey to a far, far coast,
Everyone plots the things he cares for most.³⁰

³⁰ Roy Daniells, "Your Map Will Show" in *The Chequered Shade*, Toronto, 1963, p. 82. Quoted with the kind permission of the publishers, McClelland and Steward Limited.