EARLY GEOGRAPHICAL WRITING IN ENGLISH ON BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

I

Introduction

In 1849 an English agricultural scientist, J. F. W. Johnston, while exploring the agricultural resources of New Brunswick came across a newly settled area on the Restigouche river. In his report he wrote:

One thing the traveller through a region like this is surprised at, when he stumbles on a settled and cultivated tract of land, such as I was now passing through. He wonders how the people leave remote corners of Scotland, and settle in this remoter corner of southeastern Canada? The whole line of country is a *terra incognita* at Quebec and at Fredericton. At the seats of Government of both provinces, where they complain of how little we know of their geography at home, the spot I speak of was absolutely unknown; and yet humble Scotchmen and their families had made choice of it, and already fixed upon it their future homes. There is an under-current of knowledge flowing among the masses, chiefly through the literary communications of far distant blood relations, of which public literature knows nothing, and even Governments are unaware.¹

Johnston's comments underscore the fact that for practical purposes there is a continuing need for books accurately describing different parts of the earth. And not for practical purposes only; the need is equally great for descriptive and explanatory books which will satisfy the general curiosity of people about what the earth is like on which they live. In short, we are recognizing a necessity for geographical writing.

In this talk I want to select a number of books, dating from 1795 to 1911, some of which are conscious geographical works, others not, and consider what knowledge and insight they give of the geography of Canada. Most of my examples are from 19th century writing on Canada, but I have included a few earlier and a few later books.

A "geography" of a country or a region is an attempt to describe the significant physical and human characteristics of that place, and provide some understanding of how it got that way. Usually there will be an analysis of the distribution of major natural features, population, and man's economic activities,

¹J. F. W. Johnston, *Notes on North America*, London: 1851. 2 Vols. Vol. I, 395.

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taking into consideration relationships between man and nature and between different places.

Good regional geographies are extremely difficult to write. In part this is because one is dealing with an enormously difficult subject, a portion of the seemingly chaotic, constantly changing surface of the earth in all its complexity. Also there is a dichotomy in geographical writing; authors have both freedoms and restraints. There is freedom to select and organize material, offer opinions, develop concepts, explore relationships, and so on. But this freedom is partly delusory because there are constraints, that is responsibilities; the writer must present facts on physical and human geography in a coherent form, and be comprehensive. Further, the state of the discipline at the time of writing may demand that certain analytical techniques and approaches be used, while at the same time the book should hold the interest of the reader and not just be an inventory. It is a good geographer and writer who can successfully cope with all these demands and produce a good book.

Some of the early writers I will examine had relative freedom. They emphasized their exploration activities and did not write to any careful plan. Some of the last writers I refer to also felt free to stress what they thought important and subordinated many characteristics of the geography of a place. On the other hand, most of the avowed regional accounts and text books, in their authors' attempts to be complete, almost become formula books and inventories. A few regional writers, however, managed to combine comprehensiveness, discipline in selecting material, and an effective presentation of their views and interpretations.

I have identified six groups of books, exemplifying different categories of geographical writing on Canada, as listed in the table. The list represents just a small selection from a huge number of books. The categories are not meant to imply that there necessarily were discrete stages marking sharp changes in writing. There were, however, gradual changes in geographical writing as the century progressed, reflecting changes in objectives in geography and increasing availability of source material, and the categorization identifies trends which I think did exist.

II

Early Explorers

In the late 18th and early 19th century a number of explorers published books describing in various degrees of thoroughness the areas covered on their travels. All of you are familiar with the exploits of Samuel Hearne, Alexander Mackenzie, and David Thompson, and I have selected their journals and narratives for consideration. Although these works are not necessarily geographies, they will serve as examples of the kinds of contributions explorers can make to geographical writing.

Samuel Hearne's *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort, in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean*, published in London in 1795 (458 pages), describes three journeys northwestward from Prince of Wales's Fort to look for copper on Coppermine river. These were journeys beyond the treeline into the Barren

Grounds. On the third attempt Hearne reached his objective, and most of his book is devoted to describing this journey lasting from December, 1770, to June, 1772.

Hearne travelled alone with a group of Chipewyan Indians, taking with him a sextant so that he could make observations for latitude and longitude, although they were not very accurate. An extremely observant man, he recorded a great deal of information, and a prime geographical contribution of the journal is Hearne's detailed observations of the Indians' relationship to nature as revealed in the events of the journey. Hearne was very sympathetic to the Indians, and was not an alien roaring through the land. He led the life of the Indians while travelling with them under a great range of conditions through the gamut of all seasons. Other explorers such as Kelsey and Henday travelled alone with Indians as well, but they did not record the abundant information which Hearne provides. The relationships of the Indians to the white trading culture are brought out, an important contribution to cultural geography.

Thorough descriptions of animals and their habits comprise a significant addition to the biological knowledge of the time. Terrain and vegetation are not described as systematically or as completely. Hearne makes an attempt to step back and provide a regional summary of the lower reaches of the Coppermine, but he is not too successful in bringing the information together.

Our best impression of the nature of the land comes from the running account of Hearne's day-to-day experiences of walking, obtaining food and shelter, with the heat and cold and the weariness and sickness all woven in. There is an immediacy in the writing, and Hearne's personality comes out effectively, which makes the book absorbing to read. He has a sense of humour which livens some of the pages. A few of the sketches of landscape, animals and Indian and Eskimo objects are reproduced. The landscapes have an abstract symbolic quality which conveys the feeling of the Barrens. The maps, as is characteristic of this time, show rivers, lakes and a few ranges of mountains, and the explorer's route.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages from Montreal*, London, 1801 (cxxxii, 412 pages), is introduced by a general essay on the fur trade (132 pages), followed by accounts of Mackenzie's journey down the Mackenzie river to the Arctic Ocean in 1789 (119 pages) and across the Western Cordillera to the Pacific Ocean in 1793 (278 pages), and ends with general summary remarks on the geography of Canada (15 pages).

The chapter on the fur trade describes the history and operations of the trade as conducted from Montreal, and extending to Fort Chipewyan, including an account of the terrain, rocks, vegetation, Indians, and productivity of the country. This geographical traverse cuts across many important regions, but it is presented in one linear dimension and does not have the scope of a genuine regional treatment of the country. Mackenzie is an acute observer of people and countrysides, but he tends to describe each in its own right, and we do not get the added insights of looking at relationships. However, Mackenzie shows that he is capable of generalizing and seeing spatial patterns when he describes physical features, and he catches the dynamism of the Indian migrations.

The accounts of the two great explorations are straightforward records of two very efficiently conducted journeys with a crew of voyageurs over great distances, surmounting major difficulties. On the journey to the Arctic Ocean

the travellers were on a fixed route along one river, but on the voyage to the Pacific, decisions had to be made on which route to follow. Hearne was protected by the group of Indians he was with, but Mackenzie and his crew were always meeting new bands, and had to be cautious and prepared to negotiate, cajole, and even fight.

Mackenzie was a cool man under self-imposed pressure to get each journey completed as quickly as possible. Basically the narratives are dominated by descriptions of getting the canoes forward. Little sense of the larger country emerges; we get minutia on the landscape from the unremitting record of the experiences of the moment in hard-driving canoe travel, and it is up to the reader to assimilate this, generalize, and try to establish a pattern of topography. There is much detail on rivers, river banks, trees, and fish but Mackenzie does not have the gift of placing this information in context, even when crossing such spectacular features as the mountains. In his detached way, Mackenzie gives conscientious accounts of the Indians he saw, but it is not the living detail of Hearne, nor does he spell out the relationships between man and environment. There are some set pieces on scenery, including the odd comment on how awe-inspiring certain areas are, but in the main, scenic qualities are ignored.

In the conclusion there are a few very acute geographical generalizations. Northern North America is divided into regional divisions, but the criteria for the divisions vary and the divisions do not all make sense. Mackenzie distinguishes limestone beds of the sedimentary plains on the west side of Lake Winnipeg from the dark-grey granite rocks of the Shield, which he says extend all the way from the coast of Hudson Bay to Labrador. This does show that Mackenzie can think in terms of geographical patterns extending almost across a continent. And he is stimulating when he compares the climate of North America with that of Europe, and in his remarks on climatic change.

Mackenzie does not reveal much of himself, his motivation, or his attitudes to Indians, nor are there asides on his philosophy of life, preferences in diet, etc., and this partly accounts for the duller style compared to that of Hearne or Thompson. The geographical content of the reports of the journeys themselves would be much improved if Mackenzie had tried to see a few more patterns and deliberately attempted to spell out some relationships. As it stands, the bulk of the book provides factual detail for others to utilize in a more sophisticated geographical way. The volume did become an essential source on the North West, because it was the first published account of much previously unexplored land. The maps are important, showing clearly the vast new countries explored. The conclusion really shows what Mackenzie might have done had he chosen to write short resumé's on the different types of country he had traversed. This innovation is found in David Thompson's work.

David Thompson's account of his explorations is a departure from the usual explorers' narrative. It is a description of his activities in the North West from 1784 to 1812, but more important for our purposes it is also a consciously shaped regional geography of the area. Indeed, it is one of the first great regional geographical works on any part of Canada.

In the course of his career as trader and surveyor Thompson travelled from Hudson Bay and Sault Ste. Marie on the east to the mouth of the Columbia on the west, and from the Bow river and the sources of the Mississippi on the south

to the Athabaska river on the north. In most of these journeys, he was surveying the courses of rivers and shorelines of lakes in order to prepare maps for his employers, first the Hudson's Bay Company, and then after 1796 the North West Company. A great map of Western Canada was finally prepared in 1812. The map is not an integral part of the book, so we will not discuss it here, although we should bear in mind that many of his travels were expressly carried out to gather data for this map.

Many years after he had retired from the fur trade, in the 1840s when he was over 70 years old, Thompson started to prepare a narrative of his travels basing his account on his very full journals. The narrative was first published by the Champlain Society in Toronto in 1916, as *David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812* (582 pages), edited by J. B. Tyrrell. In a later edition, there is additional material. The *Narrative* is an impressive presentation of the geography of the West for many reasons. Thompson visited most of the major regions in the West, except the plains south of Saskatchewan river and the mountains west of the Columbia in present British Columbia, so that he wrote from his own observations. A number of regions were visited repeatedly, so Thompson could write from some depth of experience. He was a careful observer; in each region he made notes of many physical and human characteristics, and had the insight to see relationships among many of the features. He brought the precise attitudes of a surveyor to the narrative and included occasional statistical calculations to increase the precision of his descriptions.

The book is organized in a distinctive way. Thompson divides the West into major regions, described in the order in which they were first visited. We go from the Hudson Bay Slope, to the Saskatchewan and the Muskrat Country (the Shield north of Lake Winnipeg); to Lake Athabaska and Reindeer Lake; to the Great Plains, the Swan River, Missouri River, Assiniboine and Red River Countries; to the Source of the Mississippi, the Great Western Forest Lands, and the country west of the Rockies. The surprising thing is that this method of arranging the material works and does not confuse the reader. There is no general statement explaining the basis on which the divisions were drawn, but his main premise can be inferred from the introductory remarks to some of the regional chapters: each region has a distinctive natural environment, in which man has evolved a distinctive way of life. Thompson found it possible to define the boundaries of a few regions clearly, but some of the regional divisions overlap. West of the mountains Thompson was baffled at first in finding any order in the terrain, but gradually he discerned some pattern as his knowledge grew and as he gained better vantage points:

This range of rude, high, rocky Hills gave me a view of the structure of the country which I had not [had] before . . . the breadth of this fine valley is irregular, and may be estimated at one hundred miles . . . I now perceived the Columbia River was in a deep valley at the north end of these rude Hills, and it's west side the high rolling lands of Mount Nelson, round which it runs.²

²Richard Glover, editor, *David Thompson's Narrative 1784-1812*, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1962, 308-9

Perhaps the regional geography remains somewhat unobtrusive because the apparent thread of continuity and pattern of organization remains the sequence of travels, yet Thompson's art as a geographer enables him to give the reader an insight into the geography of each region regardless of the order in which the regions are described. Good regional exposition is not just accidental; Thompson has consciously worked at his writing. To present the character of one complicated area he uses a case example; to convey the monotonous nature of the Plains he says he will write in the form of a journal describing a journey; to give the "workings of the climate" he quotes from his climatic notes; and he writes "I brought together that part of the Great Stony Region," showing that he was deliberately preparing a synthesis of that area.³

At the opening of a chapter Thompson often provides a good perspective on the character and extent of a region. Within many of the chapters, however, there is ample evidence of an indecisive approach to organization. Thompson's problem was whether the book should be regional exposition or a narrative of his experiences. The two are mixed along with accounts of native life, natural history, and descriptions of the operations of the fur trade. The *Narrative* is not nearly as tightly organized as the Hudson's Bay Company district reports written annually at this time by the masters of the various posts, in which they presented information on their districts in the form of routine geographical inventories. Thompson, by contrast, has an essentially free approach, without the structuring envelope of a well-integrated outline such as was insisted on by the Hudson's Bay Company, or would be by a modern publisher.

In a few sections there is almost a stream of consciousness flow from one idea or set of ideas to the next, with topics thrown in that are not related to any main theme. Usually, however, Thompson writes simply and with clarity occasionally composing good pithy phrases as when he describes the land east of Lake Athabaska as "a wretched country of solitude."⁴ There are a few fine descriptive passages, such as an account of a blizzard on the open plains encountered on a trip to the Mandan Indians. But it is Thompson's fine comprehensive sustained accounts of the character of the land and its inhabitants which hold the reader, not isolated descriptive high spots.

Interesting natural features attracted the attention of most traders but Thompson goes much further and looks for scientific explanations of the phenomena he observed. At the continental divide in the Rockies he makes this contrast about attitudes:

... the view now before us was an ascent of deep snow, in all appearance to the height of land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, it was to me a most exhilarating sight, but to my uneducated men a dreadful sight, they had no scientific object in view, their feelings were of the place they were; ...⁵

Thompson reveals a great curiosity about climate, and compares the climates of different areas. He notes that the climate gets warmer westward and suggests that savants should attempt to explain this. Mirages and aurora are described and Thompson speculates on their origin. There are occasional remarks on geology, fossils and physiography. West of the mountains where rocks are not

³*Ibid.*, 188, 108.

⁴*Ibid.*, 114

⁵*Ibid.*, 321

obscured by trees, Thompson makes many comments on the different kinds of rocks. Processes of erosion interest him; for instance, he notes that the northern banks of rivers are eroded more quickly than the southern banks, and he tells us that he has long speculated on this problem, and even calls this observation the "Law of Rivers flowing eastward".⁶ His background reading in the geological writing of his day is evident in places. For example, he describes basalt and the fantastic shapes into which it has been eroded, and says he is skeptical about the alleged igneous origin of basalt!⁷ Providence often is brought in, and Thompson states that many features have been produced to assist man:

Who ever calmly views the admirable formation and distribution of the Rivers so wonderfully conducted to their several seas; must confess the whole to have been traced by the finger of the Great Supreme Artificer for the most benevolent purposes, both to his creature Man, and the numerous Animals he has made, none of whom can exist without water. Water may be said to be one of the principal elements of life.⁸

A few major physiographic patterns are identified, such as the arrangement of great lakes between the limestone and the granite formations across central British North America; as Thompson puts it, "The Great Architect said 'Let them be, and they were.'"⁹ Thompson's regional divisions are strongly based on topography so a number of great topographical patterns are described and discussed, demonstrating his powerful capacity to generalize.

The physical geography, interesting as it is, remains in fragmentary parts scattered through the book. The descriptions of human geography are much more sustained. For each region there is a fine depiction of the life of the Indians within that particular natural environment. Thompson points out that the Chipewyans of the north have an easier time subsisting than the Cree to the south because of the dependable supply of fish in the many lakes of the north country. Thompson's interest in religion is revealed in the detailed accounts he gives of the rituals of the Indians, and his sympathetic attitude to the natives shines through his descriptions.

Thompson repeatedly attempts to assess the carrying capacity of different lands, calculating the density of population by relating it to the hunting area available to each family. In the Red River Valley, for example, he calculates that each family has a hunting ground of 206 square miles. Such thinking is an advance over most other writers at this time, and he explains his objectives when he says:

Calculation is tedious reading, yet without it, we cannot learn the real state of any country. (Note. Mr. Ballantyne of the Hudson's Bay Company has lately published a work, with the title of "Six years residence in Hudson's Bay," in which, speaking of the Bay, he says "the interior has Myriads of wild animals." The Natives will thank him to show them where they are. When he wrote those words he must have been thinking of Musketoos, and in this respect he was right.)¹⁰

Thompson is aware that impressions are not enough in geographical writing.

⁶*Ibid.*, 364

⁹*Ibid.*, 216

⁷*Ibid.*, 377-8

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 219

⁸*Ibid.*, 145

When he discusses the way in which he determined the height of the sources of the Mississippi river, he says:

It is tedious to the reader to attend to these calculations and yet to the enquiring mind they are necessary that he may know the ground on which they are based. For the age of guessing is passed away, and the traveller is expected to give his reasons for what he asserts.¹¹

Elsewhere he calculates the heights of mountains and of passes.

Thompson attempts to assess the future of these lands and makes frequent comments on the potential of various districts for agricultural settlement. After a journey across the plains he stresses that farmers need trees and water, and therefore predicts that the plains will remain a pastoral land at best. He is fully aware that if agriculture is going to develop in the western interior, external trade in foodstuffs will have to be established.

The effective analysis of relationships provides a fine essential geographical quality to Thompson's book. The relationships that the Indians and the European traders respectively had with the environment, and the symbiotic association of the Indians and traders are effectively described. Thompson is very much aware of the importance of technology in changing the life of the Indians. There are illuminating passages on the significance of iron to the Indians, particularly by increasing their efficiency in killing beaver, and on the impact of the horse on the relationships between tribes. The Indians are well aware of how new trapping techniques affect conservation:

We are now killing the Beaver without any labor, we are now rich, but [shall] soon be poor, for when the Beaver are destroyed we have nothing to depend on to purchase what we want for our families, strangers now over run our country with their iron traps, and we, and they will soon be poor.¹²

Thompson is always aware of the close association of man and nature, and has one particularly fine passage where such relationships are illustrated:

these Hills [south of the Columbia river] as I have already noticed intercept the winds from the Pacific Ocean, and receive all the Snow, which obliges all the Animals to go to the eastward, where there is very little snow; and which makes these countries the favorite resort of the Indians and the Deer during winter.¹³

Thompson's personal attitudes come through to the reader when he gives his view on matters such as the influence of the environment on human behaviour. For example:

The country, soil, and climate in which we live, have always a powerful effect upon the state of society, and the movements and comforts of every individual, he must conform himself to the circumstances under which he is placed, and as such we lived and conducted ourselves in this extreme cold climate.¹⁴

¹¹*Ibid.*, 212-3

¹³*Ibid.*, 387

¹²*Ibid.*, 155

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 9

And also:

Their [the Chipwayans] morals are as good as can be expected, they exact chastity from their wives and seem to practise it themselves; they are strictly honest; and detest a thief; and are as charitable and humane to those in want, as circumstances will allow them.¹⁵

Remarks on scenery are limited, although in the course of this long book there are a few comments on landscape, particularly when he is across the Rockies. On the Columbia, he writes:

The country and banks of the river high, bold hills, very rude; with steep cliffs; we could have passed hours in viewing the wild scenery, but these romantic cliffs always indicated danger to us from the stream being contracted and forming whirlpools, very disagreeable companions on a River¹⁶

The occasional light touch in Thompson's writing is evident in the quotation. Nowhere are there sustained passages on the scenic qualities of the different kinds of country seen by Thompson, only occasional outbursts aroused by exceptional scenes.

In contrast to all other fur trader authors, Thompson's approach in essence is regional, and the division of the West into regions is one of his most important contributions to geography. Despite internal inconsistencies in organizing material he builds up facts within each region which are cumulative, and lead to relationships and not just listing. It comes through very clearly that Thompson is an exact scientific observer. This, together with the comprehensiveness of approach, is a great strength of the book and gives a reader confidence. Interest is maintained by Thompson's curiosity about the life of the Indians, speculations on climate, melting of ice, aurora, the role of Providence, and so on. Even though some of this becomes undisciplined description, he is writing in a time and about a region where naive fresh knowledge is a worthwhile contribution. It is, however, Thompson's ability to portray effectively the associations between different groups of people and nature and convey some understanding of a place, which makes his book one of the great regional geographies of this country, better than most of the allegedly regional works we will be examining.

As the exploration of the land continued in the 19th century, many other explorers' narratives were produced providing valuable source material for the many authors who shortly after 1800 began to prepare regional descriptions of British North America. Consequently readers were no longer entirely dependent upon the reports of the explorers themselves for accounts of newly explored lands, but could turn to more general works which commonly contained descriptions of both the settled districts and the areas beyond.

III

Regional Exposition

In the early decades of the 19th century a considerable number of descriptive geography books on various parts of British North America were published.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 107

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 345

These were geographical accounts intended for general readers. I have selected what I consider three of the better ones. These are by men who had lived for a considerable length of time in some of the areas they described and sometimes had travelled extensively as well so that they had adequate first hand knowledge on which to base their accounts, but, naturally, the statistical material available at this time was limited. These regional books were produced while there was still considerable latitude in geographical writing. There was, of course, a demand for a full account of the physical and human features of a region whatever way in which it was presented, but some of these essays in regional geography almost became free romantic approaches to geographical exposition.

Michael Smith, an American who before the War of 1812 lived for a few years in Upper Canada, produced a small volume on that colony published in Hartford in 1813 called *A Geographical View of the Province of Upper Canada* (107 pages), and then soon expanded it into what he called *A Geographical View of the British Possessions in North America* (288 pages) published in Baltimore in 1814. I will discuss the latter. Even on Upper Canada the book is a simple presentation of facts on the area. Smith covers all the conventional topics, and since these will occur again and again I will list them here: Situation and Extent, Surface and Soil, Natural Productions, Agriculture, Climate, Commerce, Animals, Fish, Mines and Minerals, Lakes, Rivers, Indians, Villages, Settlements, Civil Divisions, Districts, Bearings and Distances of Places, Population, Learning, Morals, Religion, Diversions, Manufacturers, Promiscuous Remarks on the Gov't, Curiosities.¹⁷ There is little apparent overall-sequential organization of material or any presentation of interpretive ideas, but at least it is snappy description and not just lists. Smith does not follow the conventional scheme of doing all of physical geography at the beginning, but is more interested in primary resources and so discusses the physical features related to resources first. In contrast to the fur traders who knew the natural features of the country there is very little evidence that Smith had a notion of major terrain patterns.

When Smith discusses learning, morals, religion, and diversions we even get an impression of social geography. Personal impressions of the people in Upper Canada and the author's candid opinions of some matters enliven the book. As Smith goes eastward more and more errors are introduced as he has less and less first hand knowledge to draw on and there are some incredible statements, as this one on the character of Nova Scotians:

Nothing can be said in favor of the morals of the majority of the people of Nova Scotia; like all others whose business of life calls them to mix in large numbers together, they are very loose and impious in their conversation with one another; indeed a stranger is not safe in their company, especially if he will not join them in ways of vanity.

These remarks particularly refer to those who are engaged in the fisheries¹⁸

¹⁷Michael Smith, *A Geographical View of the British Possessions in North America*, Baltimore: 1814, 283-4.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 207

One of the most interesting chapters to analyse is the one called North-West Land. It is a beautiful example of how authors at this time extracted facts from other books and fitted them into their own categories and mode of organization. Smith takes a great deal of material from Mackenzie's *Voyages*, and presents it under incongruous headings such as commerce, manufacturers, learning, morals, religion, etc. Smith nobly tries to use this information correctly but a few ludicrous errors are made. There is no attempt to establish a theme appropriate to the topic, such as, say, that relatively few people live in the north. Unlike the fur traders Smith adopts a "noble red man" interpretation of the Indians which goes contrary to some of the views in the sources he used:

Nature, or the God of nature, has nevertheless, infused into the souls of many of the children of the wilderness, sentiments of justice, humanity, and sobriety, and high respect for their fellow-creatures.¹⁹

This passage shows the power which conventional ideas exerted on authors. Smith would encourage agriculture amongst the Indians to fix them to "our" way of life; that is, our standards are the true ones. He is hard put to find "natural curiosities" in North-West Land, but finally settles for a rapid with special suction, flowers blooming on frozen ground, and the like!

Certainly Smith's book is not at all explanatory and few relationships are seen, but we do get an impression of the conditions of the colony at a formative stage of development. Therefore despite shortcomings, Smith's book is a useful account of the British North American Provinces. It does not have the didactic style of a textbook and is pleasant to read because there are not enough dull facts listed to numb and alienate a reader; though we go from topic to topic, each is so brief that the lack of a clearly apparent thread is not too bothersome. The book is comparable to Jedidiah Morse's famous geographies of the United States on parts of which Smith seems to have drawn. There are no maps.

Complaints were frequently made in Nova Scotia that the country was misrepresented in Great Britain, and various writers attempted to remedy this situation. T. C. Haliburton's books of 1825 and 1829 on Nova Scotia do this very competently. In the 1825 volume, *A General Description of Nova Scotia* (200 pages), published in Halifax, Haliburton sticks to the broader patterns of Nova Scotia as a whole, and deals effectively with various important geographical topics. The quality of geographical thinking is good; Haliburton has an intimate knowledge of the province, can be selective, has a sense of history and a point of view, and puts all these together into a good illuminating book. Climate is emphasized in order to correct false impressions about how miserable the weather is alleged to be, and Haliburton even attempts to explain why the climate is cold. There is a good account of the changes which have been taking place in agriculture, including an estimate of the proportion of different qualities of land in Nova Scotia. The section on agriculture is written in a spirit of explanation and interpretation, not inventory. Ethnic groups are considered and their characteristics discussed. One of the most interesting sections is on "Towns and Rivers". The towns are well described. Haliburton comments with insight on the transient

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 116

population of Halifax and other centres, maintaining that the constant movement of people makes it difficult to engender an affection for particular places which "constitutes the very association of ideas which is the parent of the *amor patriae*, or love of country".²⁰ He mentions the British connection and the resulting attachment of the people for Britain, but comes back to the point that the real wealth of Nova Scotia is in the yeomen, not in the people of Halifax, from where accumulated wealth is often transferred to the United Kingdom and lost to the colony. Thus we have here a good appreciation of the influence of a distant metropolis. Haliburton also explains that there are so few towns because the many rivers give farmers good access to the larger centres and their markets, doing away with the need for numerous, smaller service centres. Thus towns, rivers and farmers are associated through commerce.

Haliburton tends to be paternalistic in his interpretations, and his appreciation of the central role of the stalwart landed yeoman reveals his views of the foundations on which a society is founded. Education and the need to educate farmers in order to develop an area are stressed. Haliburton has an understanding of Nova Scotia's situation in relation to surrounding areas and discusses these relationships. The presentation is a blend of much first hand knowledge and much quoting and listing of unacknowledged sources. Through much of the book Haliburton describes the process of development of settlement, and this is a good book to read if you want to learn about the characteristics of a developing area.

In 1829 Haliburton took much of the material from the 1825 book, but recast his approach drastically. It now is a two volume work also published in Halifax called *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*, with the first volume a history (340 pages), and the second, which concerns us, a geography (456 pages). This book retains the good points of the first one and some deficiencies are repaired. In the introduction there is a short but very effective account of the face of the country. The author, of course, had lived through all the seasons, and he takes the elements of topography, terrain, and vegetation in all their spatial variations within Nova Scotia, and the impressions left on man by scenery and combines all this into a fine essay. The main part of the volume, covering 263 pages, is a description of each of the counties. Haliburton gives himself ample space so that he can expand as needed on each area. There is an excellent topographical depiction of each county, and descriptions of soils, development of agriculture, economic activities, and the settlements. Seldom does one get such a feeling of competent geographical writing, although there is often a great deal of historical background mixed in with the geography. In different chapters Haliburton enlarges on what seem appropriate themes; for instance, in the section on Parrsborough he discusses the stages of settlement in occupying an area. Haliburton appreciates scenery, and there are fine descriptions of many "prospects".

The volume concludes with systematic chapters on climate and disease, soil and agriculture, trade, natural history, and so on. Some of these chapters tend to become inventories, but they are useful and informative in the light of the knowledge available on Nova Scotia at that time. The best contribution to

²⁰T. C. Haliburton, *A General Description of Nova Scotia*, Halifax: 1825, 69.

geography in this volume remains the free flowing regional exposition, which makes this a very attractive book. There is a good general map of Nova Scotia and there are some plans.

Joseph Bouchette in 1831 produced a large two volume work on British North America, *The British Dominions in North America* (498, 296 pages), published in London. He was assisted by a few of his sons, and perhaps used some material compiled by William Berczy. It is a very full comprehensive description of the British North American provinces concentrating on the parts Bouchette knew best, Lower Canada and Upper Canada. He also had a little first hand knowledge of the eastern colonies. Haliburton was used as a source on Nova Scotia, and Sir John Franklin's report of his first Arctic exploration supplied material on the northern territories.

In his introduction Bouchette says that the work is a "general consideration of the topography and statistics of the continental section of the British empire in the New World".²¹ Each colony is considered separately, at a level of detail depending on the information available. For further detailed discussion the colonies are divided into sub-regions, and Bouchette gives sound geographical reasons for doing this; he wants to:

afford him [the reader] the means of forming as correct a conception of the roads, rivers, soil, and settlements of the province as the information we command may allow; and the more easily and efficiently to accomplish the task, it may appear proper to adopt separate sections of country, in order to avoid too vague, unsatisfactory, and general description.²²

Many of the dividing lines between regions are continuous ridges, "by which nature itself separates one district from another".²³ The topographical approach is used extensively; Bouchette being a surveyor, we get a full account of each region, with descriptions of situation, grand physical features, administrative divisions, roads, rivers, soil, settlements, the economy, and also of the cultural characteristics of the people.

Bouchette recognizes the importance of the St. Lawrence river as a link between Lower and Upper Canada and there is a separate chapter on the river, connecting the discussions on those two colonies. He says:

The St. Lawrence, originally called the Great River of Canada, or the Great River to mark its pre-eminence, is the indelible link formed by nature between the Canadas, and the source at once of the wealth, beauty, and prosperity of both provinces. In passing, therefore, from the topography of Upper to that of Lower Canada, the description of that splendid river seems naturally to suggest itself as a typical illustration of that link.

²¹Joseph Bouchette, *The British Dominions in North America*, London: 1831, 2 Vols., Vol. I, xii.

²²*Ibid.*, Vol. I, 186.

²³*Ibid.*, Vol. II, 93.

In a later chapter he even says that the St. Lawrence is an essential base for maintaining British North American independence from the United States, perhaps leading to the formation of an independent country associated with Britain:

The St. Lawrence presents to our mind the trunk of a tree that has no necessary affinity with the United States, and seems destined to bear different fruit. It is the prop of a new nation, the avenue to an independent empire, the great highway of a rival, not a dependency; and, therefore, in our contemplation, when that day arrives, which is to witness the British colonial trans-atlantic dominions swerve from the aegis of Britain's protection, it will be to erect themselves into a free, independent, and sovereign state, united with the country that fostered them in their infancy, by ties and treaties of permanent friendship and alliance, calculated to perpetuate reciprocal commercial benefits and consolidate their mutual power.²⁴

The importance of the "Shield" in British North America is not appreciated. Indeed, it is very apparent that little was known of the country north of Quebec until some very recent explorations were carried out just before the book was published, and Bouchette says he actually has to go back to the French period for information, and uses Champlain and Charlevoix as sources! However, the cultivable land at Lac Saint John is mentioned.

There are good descriptions of scenery, and American tourism has begun and is mentioned. The dependence of the colonies on staples for exports is considered, and there is a discussion of trade relations. In the section on the economy of Lower Canada, stages of economic development, first proposed by Bacon, proceeding from the stage of agriculture then on to manufacturing and finally to commerce are described. Important items such as land tenure in Quebec are considered in detail, and the contrast to the British system of land holding is brought out. Bouchette was writing this book at the beginning of the steamboat era and we get a hint of that new form of transportation.

Population, economic development and commerce are considered in separate chapters apart from the topographical sections, though some information on these topics also enters into the descriptions of the regions. Bouchette thinks that population increase is an indicator of the healthy development of any area. He says:

The subject of population is decidedly one of the most important branches of political economy; and its fluctuations are, perhaps, the best pulse of a state, from the knowledge of which its decline or prosperity may be fairly inferred. It is, however, a subject but too generally neglected in the early establishment of colonies²⁵

This is similar to statements by some modern geographers who also place great

²⁴*Ibid.*, Vol. I, 126; Vol. II, 245.

²⁵*Ibid.*, Vol. I, 107-8.

emphasis on population geography. Bouchette does try and give population figures, relate natural increase and immigration to aggregate figures, and in general, interpret what is happening in the growth of the country.

The book shows what a discerning man with abundant information on at least some areas can do in the way of preparing a good geography. Depending on the nature of his sources Bouchette used different approaches, ranging from reconnaissance descriptions of the Indian territories to a detailed description of Lower Canada. The chapter on Lower Canada includes many statistics and gives an impression that there was a thorough search for information. The best evidence of Bouchette's capabilities can be seen in this chapter. He brings the contemporary spirit of 1830 to bear in his geographical description. We learn of the face of the country, how little is known of the land beyond the precincts of Quebec City, the exploration of that area, the steam packets, the different peoples, the difficulties of collecting statistics, land tenure, the stages of development attained, and so on. However, Bouchette does not really catch the tension between the French and English ethnic groups, perhaps constrained to say little by his special status as a civil servant in the community.

These two volumes comprise a very important geography of British North America, written at a level of competence which makes the work highly thought of even today. Only occasionally is material introduced which might not be considered relevant, such as in the description of the militia with no geographical relationships indicated. There are many excellent maps and plans. This is a very fine geography with the author consciously aware of what he is trying to accomplish, and then showing full mastery of his material in achieving these intentions.

In the 1820s and '30s some regional books on British North America, intended for the general reader, were written in Britain by "arm-chair" compilers which we do not have time to consider here. These include books by R. Montgomery Martin, *History, Statistics and Geography of Upper and Lower Canada*, London, 1838, and Hugh Murray, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of British America*, Edinburgh, 1839, which because of their strength in factual material, clearly presented, are good descriptive geographies. However, they are weak in describing development and process, and do not have full discussions of geographical patterns and relationships, so they are not the equivalent of Bouchette's book. Bouchette's work was not really matched in intent and execution until the period of the first texts and compilations, which followed, was over and done with. During and after this early period of a relatively free and easy approach to geographical writing a more formal style gradually began to assert itself in which inventory became dominant.

IV

Early Texts and Compilations

One of the important needs in British North America in the 19th century as immigration continued, population grew, and more and more territory was occupied, was for accurate information on the geography of the colonies published in a form which could be taught to school children and in another form for the use of the general public. As the school system developed

geography textbooks began to be produced after 1830, with some teachers preparing geographies because they felt that Canadian texts were required in Canadian classrooms. Compilations containing statistics and other factual information were published in large numbers for immigrants and other readers. No official government publications such as the modern *Canada Year Book* were produced, so there was an opportunity for enterprising individuals to put together handbooks and guides to the country.

No study of early geography textbooks on British North America and Canada has been made. I visited various Toronto libraries and examined all the early texts I could find, and selected a few for consideration here.

The earliest textbook I found was by Zadock Thompson, *Geography and History of Lower Canada, Designed for the Use of Schools*, Stanstead and Sherbrooke, 1835 (116 pages). For its time it is a good book, better than many later ones. In his introduction the author says he wants to get beyond memory work, and he strongly advocates the technique of beginning with the familiar home area and working out from there. He says:

It is now generally admitted, that, in acquiring a knowledge of Geography, the pupil should begin at home, with his own neighbourhood, and with those objects which are open to his personal observation.²⁶

And that is how the book is organized. The pupils are asked to draw a map of the home area and from there go on to study the local township and county. A good map of Lower Canada is included in the book.

The text proper opens with a short section on systematic geography, defining townships, counties and physical features, followed by a short description of each of the counties in Lower Canada, which forms the main portion of the book. The county descriptions are very short and tidy, fact filled and marching briskly along. Next is another systematic section on all the physical and human elements of geography, and the work ends with a history of the colony. The text is organized by "Lessons" with questions at the end of each Lesson. Areal distributions within the colony as a whole for any topic are hardly considered and there are few worthwhile generalizations on the province. Nevertheless for a very early text it is a good, although naive book.

In 1843, Thomas Ewing, probably an Englishman, prepared a little textbook, *The Canadian School Geography* (65 pages), published in Montreal, which he says is to provide an alternative to the many imported books, largely from the United States, used in the schools. It is a very short general text covering the world, based on Ewing's *System of Geography* which had gone through 20 editions in Britain. The book contains no descriptive material. It consists of *names* of places, mountains, lakes, bays, capes and rivers, with hardly any room for other information, such as simple population figures. The British possessions in North America cover only four pages, and the only reason the book is included here is because it is both early and a classic example of dull compilation.

J. W. Dawson, who was to become an outstanding geologist and a famous

²⁶Zadock Thompson, *Geography and History of Lower Canada, Designed for the Use of Schools*, Stanstead and Sherbrooke, L. C.: 1835, iii.

Principal of McGill University, was Superintendent of Schools in Nova Scotia when he produced a little geography in 1848 called *A Hand Book of the Geography and Natural History of the Province of Nova Scotia*, published in Pictou. By 1860 it had gone into a fifth edition, 95 pages long. In his introduction Dawson says that students should not have to commit the book to memory, but be taught to grasp the ideas the text contains and express the knowledge in their own words.

There is a short introductory section on Nova Scotia, followed by a short description of every county, each about one and a half pages long. These are good commentaries on physical and human features, including topography, rivers, harbours, soils, agriculture, fisheries, settlements, urban centres and trade. Although necessarily brief they comprise a remarkably complete capsule of each county. Dawson had a personal knowledge of all parts of the province and thus could provide interesting commentaries.

The county descriptions are followed by a systematic physical and human geography of Nova Scotia. This includes a lengthy natural history, which is not geographical because it is just facts with no relationships considered. The book does not contain an adequate analysis of the human geography of Nova Scotia as a whole.

At least the initial regional part of the text must have been very interesting reading for the pupils, and they would have obtained a sound knowledge of the colony. In a sense this is similar to what Zadock Thompson did many years earlier. Dawson's book is better than most textbooks at this time because of its succinct descriptions of the counties, but there is no attempt to examine many relationships so that it still has severe limitations.

In 1860, at the request of teachers, J. D. Borthwick prepared a reader, or resource book as one would call it today, on the British possessions in North America, *The British-American Reader* (288 pages), published in Montreal. In the preface he states:

the pupils have been left in total or at least partial ignorance of the History and Geography, Geology and Botany, Natural History and Productions, Climate and Scenery of those Provinces which truly constitute the "brightest gem in the diadem of England".²⁷

Borthwick in trying to overcome this deficiency reproduces excerpts from dozens of articles and books on a wide range of topics, including climate, vegetation, mines, scenery, cities, native people, prairie fires, etc., etc. Certainly this would have been a very effective teaching aid for teachers who knew how to use it, but one wonders how many teachers would actually have taught this sort of material in the classroom. In any event, in the world of teaching aids there seems to be very little that is new!

In subsequent years textbooks continued to expand and change, although to what extent there were significant improvements requires thorough scholarly investigation. Additional material was introduced on the various regions of Canada, usually presented in inventory-like short descriptive paragraphs; facts

²⁷J. D. Borthwick, *The British-American Reader*, Montreal: 1860, vii.

on physical geography were simply and clearly described; and more distribution patterns were studied, facilitated by the many added and greatly improved maps. However, conceptualization, generalization, and the study of relationships were still at a minimum right into the 1900s, because this was still the era before the introduction of university-level texts on Canada.

We now turn from textbooks to statistical and descriptive compilations on Canada. These are textbooks for adults as it were. Two of the most famous are those of Robert Gourlay, *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*, London, 1822, and W. H. Smith, *Canada Past, Present & Future*, Toronto, 1852, but there were many others. For discussion here I have selected J. S. Hogan's prize essay, *Canada*, Montreal, 1855, prepared for the Paris Exhibition Committee of Canada.

Hogan's 86-page pamphlet contains a great deal of information on all the elements which go to make up Canada, without, however, organizing the data by area or seeing many interrelationships, so it is not really a geography. There is an almost endless list of topics: rivers, lakes, growth of population (contrasted to that of the United States), progress of agriculture (also contrasted to that of the United States), climate, education and moral progress, etc., etc. Hogan is best on internal communications, which is his longest and most thorough section. He compares the canals of the St. Lawrence with the Erie Canal and discusses the role of railroads. A critical transformation was going on in transportation facilities in Canada at this time and Hogan catches this process at work. Excellent maps illustrate the pamphlet.

Many more pamphlets of a similar nature were put out, telling us a great deal about the country but it is a rare pamphlet indeed which has any overall structure, a beginning and an end. These pamphlets are something more than gazetteers because they contain useful descriptive sections but they are not geographies. They are too compartmentalized to make easy reading, and little is done in sufficient depth to be satisfying. One of the most important attributes of a good geographer is to know when to stop or to expand — these men rarely do, and therefore little is emphasized, little is shaped.

V

Searching For Relationships

There was concern in British North America in the mid-19th century that serious rifts existed between various segments of the population, and there was also some awareness that new relationships were emerging between different areas because of changes in communications and changes in staples. Much of this discussion was carried on in pamphlets similar to Hogan's *Canada*. Little on these matters reached the geography texts, but in some books there is an indication that authors are beginning to grapple with how to present more adequate information and fuller explanations on the nature of the country. Unfortunately, these books still do not manage to incorporate the sort of insight into Canadian geography that is contained in a work such as Lord Durham's *Report*. I want to look at the *Report* briefly to indicate the sorts of ideas that were available in print, waiting to be picked up by men writing geographies of British North America.

Lord Durham's *Report on the Affairs of British North America* (119 pages) came out in London in 1839. It is an important report for geographers because it analyzes many essential processes influencing geographical patterns in British North America. Durham understands that the migrations of people across the Atlantic also involved a transfer of cultures, and is fully aware of the distinctive societies which developed in British North America. There are many discerning comparisons of the British and French Canadian peoples, remarks on the problem of nationalities, and the slowness of acculturation. The importance of education in the acculturation process is recognized.

The report is oriented towards the farmer and immigration, rather than to commercial and industrial exploitation. That is, the myth of the land underlies the interpretation of resources in the book, and great opportunities are seen for agriculture. Concern is expressed over the population movement between Canada and the United States, usually at the expense of Canada.

The shadow of the United States is apparent throughout the *Report* and the relative lack of economic development in Canada is deplored. We are informed that Americans have been responsible for some development in the Maritimes, which otherwise would have been stagnant, and that Halifaxians have a greater willingness to invest in the United States than in British North America.

It is very revealing that Durham considers that there is an absence of regional unification in Upper Canada, and that only local loyalties exist. There is no unifying river to help bring about a wider regional identification. The role of the St. Lawrence as a unifying link between the colonies is brought out and it is suggested that a railroad would probably lead to a general union of all the colonies in British North America.

Many points of importance in geography are not commented on, such as the possibilities of developing timber and mineral resources and the necessity for conservation measures. Nevertheless the *Report* raises issues such as suitable land policies, development of communications, clash of ethnic groups, and regionalism, which are at the heart of understanding the geography of Canada today, and which could have been taken up by geographers in the 19th century. This was a public document available to all who were writing on the geography of the country, but many of the ideas were around a long time before they were picked up by others.

C. G. Nicolay in 1847 produced a small book, *British Colonies in North America: Canada* (252 pages), published in London for immigrants and settlers by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Most of the material is similar to that in other books produced at this time, such as the topographical descriptions of various regions, but the strength of the book lies in some of the basic geographical concepts which are presented, occasionally revealing considerable insight.

In the first section of the book Nicolay recognizes the continuation of north-south natural features across the United States – Canadian border. But the major natural districts he defines are much too large to allow scope for adequate discussion of physical geography. Also early in the book he stresses the need for the development of Canadian resources and says that what is needed is energetic immigrants from the mother country to develop them. The concept of challenge and response is expressed. Central to Nicolay's thinking is a concern

with the quality of both settlers and human institutions because they play such a critical role in the development of potential resources. Cultural differences between groups are brought out, with a certain amount of bias shown towards the British in the way their virtues are extolled.

This introductory material is followed by a short historical section and then a descriptive topography of Canada. The topography has everything thrown in: rivers, settlements, cities, commerce, transportation, agriculture, ports, etc. in a well written, clear exposition. The St. Lawrence river receives considerable attention, but Nicolay gets involved in topographic descriptions of the adjacent land and does not see the river as the functional axis of British North America. There is a fairly good account of the geology of Upper Canada, and the climate is poetically described, with the quality of the atmosphere and the march of the seasons given better treatment than it normally receives. Nicolay has very acute observations on the factors which go into the perception and appreciation of scenery.

The book has severe limitations. Nicolay is good on abstract statements, such as the human factors involved in resource development, but his economic geography is weak. Agriculture is poorly presented and there is nothing on staples or commerce. When it comes to amplifying economic matters Nicolay becomes dominated by topographic description. He is capable of identifying major geographical themes but he does not drive them home by relating empirical data to his concepts. Nevertheless throughout the book are scattered occasional sophisticated generalizations, never found in the compendia characteristic of this time. Facts are presented, but subordinated to themes the author wants to develop, and the presentation is clear with an economy in expression which goes with good writing. Thus on balance this is one of the better geographies of this period.

Examples of books which give a comprehensive geographical portrayal of a region within British North America are Abraham Gesner's *New Brunswick; With Notes for Emigrants*, London, 1847 (388 pages), and Alexander Munro's *New Brunswick; With A Brief Outline of Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island*, Halifax, 1855 (385 pages).

Gesner, a geologist, wrote widely on many subjects, including a number of monographs which are geographical in nature on parts of the Atlantic region. In *New Brunswick* there are introductory chapters on history of settlement, face of the country, rivers and lakes, and Indians. Then there is a county by county regional geography of the colony; each county is covered in about five to ten pages, emphasizing topographical description, resources, population and settlement. Gesner sees relationships, is good at general interpretation, and the contents of each chapter are well integrated. Selected major problems are singled out for further discussion, such as why Fredericton is stagnant whereas Saint John grows.

The county geographies are followed by chapters covering the entire colony on roads, railways, economic activities, trade, population, the social state of the colony (i.e. cultural geography), geology and natural history. In the chapter on agriculture the relationships of farming to the physical side of soils and climate are emphasized, rather than the areal patterns of production and trade, revealing the strengths and limitations of Gesner's approach. He says that the exploitation

of resources in New Brunswick proceeds in eras. Gesner is writing during the timber era, and although he recognizes the timber industry's incompatible relationship with farming, he is not critical of the industry because he suggests the agricultural era will come.

There are great variations in quality from one part of the book to another. A few chapters are poorly organized, such as the one on fishing, but on the other hand there is a good chapter on New Brunswick trading policies and external trading patterns, and Gesner is unusually good on the social life of the colony, making effective use of contrast. There is a fine description of the hard life in the timber camps. Gesner knows the province well enough that he can combine facts and ideas fluently, and he is comprehensive. Many facts are sensibly related to one another, which is good geographical writing, but change and development tend to be emphasized at the expense of describing and explaining internal patterns of distributions. This is a common failure of books at this time. However, Gesner rarely goes too far in discussing process and so does not end up doing economics or sociology to the neglect of describing place. He occasionally writes with emotion, when he describes scenery or the seasons, and also has some ironic comments, so that it is an interesting book to read.

Alexander Monro, a New Brunswick surveyor, prepared a book on the Atlantic region as an answer to erroneous information written about the area. All the colonies are dealt with, but New Brunswick is described in most detail (259 out of the 385 pages) so I will concentrate on that colony here.

The book is roughly similar in general organization to Gesner's. In the introductory systematic section a few more topics are included than in Gesner, as Monro covers physical geography, economic activities, roads, railways, ship-building, history, geology and revenue. He makes some effective generalizations. Lumbering helps the farmer on the frontier because it provides a local market — Von Thunen in reverse as it were. Monro quotes a despatch from Lord Elgin in this regard:

The bearing of the lumbering business on the settlement of the country is a point well worthy of notice. The farmer who undertakes to cultivate unreclaimed land in new countries, generally finds that, not only does every step in advance, which he makes in the wilderness, by removing him from the centres of trade and civilization, enhance the cost of all he has to purchase; but, that, moreover, it diminishes the value of what he has to sell. It is not so, however, with the farmer who follows in the wake of the lumber-man. He finds on the contrary, in the wants of the latter, a steady demand for all that he produces, at a price not only equal to that procurable in the ordinary marts, but increased by the cost of transport from them to the scene of the lumbering operations. This circumstance, no doubt, powerfully contributes to promote the settlement of those districts, and attracts population to the sections of the country, which, in the absence of any such inducements, would probably remain for long periods uninhabited.²⁸

²⁸Alexander Monro, *New Brunswick; With a Brief Outline of Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island*, Halifax: 1855, 181.

Monro thinks that New Brunswick could become a great manufacturing centre because of the raw materials and water power it possesses, and has penetrating remarks on what it would take to make the colony a manufacturing centre. This advice is exactly similar to that which is given today: people should buy locally, governments should support industry, businessmen should be more aggressive, there should be less criticism of local endeavours, and the young should be taught skills.

In the middle chapters there is a county by county regional description of the colony, where rivers, agricultural districts, roads, and settlement are described. Monro manages to convey a sense of dynamism in this section; of areas growing, declining, or remaining stagnant. Advance is possible, although man must be energetic if a competency is to be secured. One of the problems of doing regional geography in the traditional way, county by county, is revealed here. After Monro describes the counties along the Saint John river he has a summary description of the river basin as a whole. He would have been more effective, and could have generalized more if he had used the larger region in the first instance. Monro shows that he is aware of the larger geographical units in New Brunswick, but it is not his mental set to organize material in that way.

Monro sees a great potential on the forest frontier of New Brunswick, for example in the Restigouche area, where agricultural exploitation simply awaits settlers and capital. Of course this has not happened. The chapters on New Brunswick end with systematic sections on statistics, public land and surveys, education, literature, and religion.

Monro does not write as well as Gesner. The style is pedestrian, with the exception of a few illuminating phrases such as "the land, as a whole, is of a light, dry and hungry cast".²⁹ Inventory of facts takes precedence, but some of the essential processes of change are caught so that the modern reader has an adequate base for understanding New Brunswick as it existed at that time. There is a good map of the Maritimes in the book.

The Reverend G. Rowe prepared *The Colonial Empire of Great Britain, Part I, — The American Colonies*, London, 1864 (165 pages) as a text for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. He wanted to make geography more attractive than the statistics and unconnected statements which he says usurp the name of the subject, and in order to do this he suggested that there should be more emphasis on physical geography:

For the purpose of clothing these dry bones it seemed best to rely upon *Physical Geography*, because it allows numerous interesting observations to be arranged into groups, themselves the members of a system. Thus, the geology of a country determines the main features of its surface; the latter chiefly govern its climate; and, again, the character of its vegetation and of its animal life is in agreement with the conditions of its climate and its soil. Lastly, all these divisions of the subject are intimately related to the products of the country, and the pursuits of its people.³⁰

²⁹*Ibid.*, 196.

³⁰G. Rowe, *The Colonial Empire of Great Britain, Considered Chiefly with Reference to its Physical Geography and Industrial Productions, Part I. — The American Colonies*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1864, v-vi.

There are no chapters on the systematic geography of British North America. Rowe goes directly into regional descriptions of the different colonies, starting each with an account of its physical geography. The physical geographical subdivisions in some areas, such as the Province of Canada, are not very clearly described because of inadequate data, making it difficult to follow the presentation. Other problems are that the physical descriptions vary in scale, depending on the amount of information available, and the criteria used in differentiating physical regions are not spelled out. The physical sections are succeeded by descriptions within each of the regions of the major resource industries, population, commerce, manufacturing and trade, but again there are great variations in detail. Rowe says little about railways, although he is aware of canals, and he is weak on population, and has no separate section on cities so that the urban geography is poor.

There is a lack of local knowledge and occasionally of discipline in this portrayal of British North America, yet this is a clearly written book with a sense of attack in its style. Rowe has been true to his aim in getting away from lists and descriptive statistics. He has a sense of pattern, of distribution, and conveys a feeling of how factors are associated. By emphasizing physical geography and the resources related to it, he has allowed cultural and urban geography to suffer. But he has done considerable researching and collating, brings out some patterns in physical geography, and space relations are stressed in his approach so that this is a more invigorating and a much better book than most of its contemporaries.

The books considered in this section represent serious attempts to write general descriptive and interpretive geographies. Despite all their deficiencies they serve to indicate some approaches which might be effectively used in the future, with detail, generalization and explanation fruitfully combined. However, this did not happen because in the remaining decades of the 19th century factual material and interpretive themes were by and large not effectively amalgamated within single books — either one approach or the other was stressed depending on the author.

VI

Fulsome Compendia

In the latter part of the 19th century very detailed geographies of Canada began to appear as more and more government agencies began to compile data which was readily available to writers, and as British publishers made efforts to get more material on the geography of Canada into print. One aim was to prepare what in effect were almost handbooks of accurate information. Beginning in the 1870s the new territory of the young Dominion of Canada was being explored by government scientists, and publishers thought it advantageous to engage some of the very men who were doing the scientific work to write these books.

A. R. C. Selwyn, Director of the Geological Survey of Canada, prepared the section on Canada in Stanford's, *North America*, London, 1883 (347 pages on Canada), in their *Compendium of Geography and Travel Series*. Selwyn's approach is traditional, and as one might expect from a geologist, physical geography is

stressed. The coasts and mountains are described, with a little geology included, but not in a comprehensive systematic treatment. Next is a long account of the major drainage basins of Canada, including all the main rivers and lakes. Lengthy quotations are used to describe the rivers and the lakes they drain. Consideration is given to the agricultural potential of some of the basins and where appropriate the development of other natural resources as well. Thus the regional description of Canada is organized by river basins, not by provinces or economic regions, a rather restrictive format.

Emphasis in the systematic chapters continues on geology, physiography, climate and vegetation, Selwyn once again making use of lengthy quotations. This is followed by a relatively perfunctory treatment of mines, canals and railroads, and even skimpier sections on manufacturing and trade. People are dealt with briefly under a few headings such as numbers, physique, visitors, art, which passes for population and cultural geography. There is a separate section on cities, describing their growth, townscapes, and major economic activities.

This is a carpentered book, not closely integrated, and the material does not flow from one section to the next. We seem to start afresh with each new topic. Much space is taken up with the river basin descriptions, which remain depictions of what one can physically see rather than analyses of the human activities in the region. Economic patterns are quite inadequately described and few relationships are drawn anywhere. Selwyn has trusted too much to lengthy quotations so that he is no longer in as close control of the material as he should be. Human geography does not get the descriptive treatment, let alone the analytical treatment, which it deserves.

By and large this is a pedestrian work by a man who could have done much better. On occasion Selwyn is interesting, as when he describes the landscape of a settled part of the country and suggests that the British sportsman and artist should visit Canada. The reader's attention is also held by the literary quotations and by flip comments; we seem to have an austere man of science relaxing with a casual task, which he does not quite consider worth serious attention and thorough analysis. Stanford's supplied fine coloured maps for the book.

Fourteen years later, S. E. Dawson, an Ottawa civil servant, prepared a new book on Canada in the Stanford Series, *North America: Canada & Newfoundland* (705 pages), also published in London. In his introduction Dawson says that he will stress physical characteristics, since they are important factors in the formation of a people, and that historical background will also be included. In the end result there is abundant material on human geography.

Dawson starts with a 100 page compendium on the physical features of Canada as a whole, and the rest of the book consists of descriptions of the major regions of Canada. These regions normally are provinces, although Dawson introduces the Atlantic provinces with a section on Acadia and there is a short preamble to Quebec and Ontario called the St. Lawrence Province. The northern regions are basins such as Hudson Bay and the Arctic Coast. Quebec is divided into seven sub-regions, but such a breakdown is not attempted elsewhere.

Each major region is well described under the usual physical and human geographical categories. There is abundant reliable information, well presented,

but there are no major analytical interpretive themes to lend direction to the discussion. Occasionally good generalizations can be found, as when Dawson recognizes that the completion of the C.P.R. makes Montreal a metropolitan centre for the whole country. The quality of the economic geography varies; for instance, in a few sections agricultural patterns are not clearly presented. This is a vast book, and suffers from excessive description and little dynamism. Perhaps one reason for Dawson's failure to identify a few main themes or problems is that history is separated from geography — hence there is no sense of process in the geographical sections.

Despite my criticisms this remains an acceptable geography of Canada when used as a handbook. It is better organized and contains much more information than Selwyn's work. There are many excellent maps and photographs so we are entering the modern era of geographical publication, and the title is honest — it is a huge compendium.

The excessive length of Selwyn's and more particularly Dawson's book is "achieved" when an author does not have clear cut themes which help him decide what should and what should not be included in a geographical work. This is a problem in geography and these two compendia are excellent examples of what happens when writers on geography do not exercise sufficient control in selecting material, especially as more and more government reports were published and the data available became overwhelming.

VII

Interpretive Works

In the years between 1890 and World War I a number of interpretive, often provocative, books on Canada were published. These cast a great deal of light on the geography of the country, even though all these books were usually not geographical in intention. The authors examined such questions as whether Canada could continue to exist next to the United States, especially in the face of internal problems arising out of ethnic diversity and regionalism. I have selected four of these books for consideration.

In 1891 Goldwin Smith wrote *Canada and the Canadian Question* (325 pages), published in Toronto. He questioned whether Canada, divided into four distinct regional entities by physical geography, and with Central Canada divided ethnically, could survive on a continent where its closest geographical and economic associations were with the United States. He put it very plainly: was it not almost inevitable that Canada would be absorbed into the United States, since the various sections were more closely related to adjacent parts of the United States than to one another. Smith posed essentially geographical problems; regionalism, national unity, and the holding together of the country. Of particular interest to a geographer are his descriptions of the various regions of Canada and the ways in which the regions are related to the central administration in Ottawa, to Europe, and to the United States.

Smith considers Quebec first. This is not so much a description of Quebec, as it is an interpretation of the role of the church in maintaining French Canadian identity and the resultant relationships with the British. A few characteristics of Quebec emerge; the life of the habitant and the lumberman; the strong out

migration to New England with only a weak flow to Manitoba; the decline of the British in Quebec; the outpost of English in Montreal; and the shift of commerce to Toronto. There is little on the general physical and human geography of Quebec. Only those human features are considered, which can be used in assessing the special status of Quebec in Canada and in analyzing the play of social and political forces in the country.

The chapter on Ontario is very different. Smith recognizes that Ontario is still a farming area despite the efforts of legislators to encourage manufacturing through the imposition of the tariff, and he mentions the timber and mineral resources of the north. He is aware of the diversity of Ontario, but does nothing with internal patterns of production, resources, staples, population, transportation facilities, commerce, and towns and cities, and conveys no sense of the geographical patterns which exist within Ontario. On the other hand a few of the cultural elements are analyzed; Smith describes the population characteristics, the beliefs of people, and the basis on which their attitudes were formed. He thus stresses what we can call the social and cultural geography of Ontario, providing an excellent insight into the way of life in the province before industrialization, as interpreted by an expatriate Englishman. Smith comments on the yeomen farmers, religion, literature, schooling, architecture, labour, welfare, art, appreciation of scenery, urbanization, the failure of the rich to assume social responsibilities, and so on, always seeing many relationships, but he moves so quickly that he does not necessarily prove their existence. Many of these features are analyzed succinctly by contrasting them to English life. Smith abstracts effortlessly, and gives us an insight into current social geography from *his* particular point of view. He says that despite the fact that steam and the telegraph have annihilated distance they have not annihilated the parish steeple, i.e. the local community. What he is really trying to end up with is an insight into "regionalism" — a statement on "regional consciousness" — bringing together all the cultural factors that in his view enter into this. This is good cultural geography, and provides an excellent interpretation of one aspect of the regional geography of Ontario after Confederation.

There are some insights in this chapter which transcend the province of Ontario, such as the remark that "social unity" is gone in the growing cities, and that there is no participation in municipal affairs by the leading men who now live in the suburbs. This complements his repeated assertions that the rich in North America do not have or undertake community obligations. Indeed, Smith commends the way the yeomen perform their duties in elected local offices; in Britain by contrast these county obligations are filled by the gentry.

The chapters on the Maritimes, Prairies, and British Columbia are perfunctory. Smith says that if the North West fills up with settlers, the centre of political and administrative power in Canada will shift westward. In the section on British Columbia he presents some biased racist views of the Indians. This reflects a bit of the superiority and condescension which can be found in other parts of the book.

In a chapter entitled "Fruits of Confederation," Smith has a number of penetrating things to say about the essential differences between various regions of Canada and how difficult it is to bring them together, even with a unifying force such as the Canadian Pacific Railway. The tariff has only served to

exaggerate existing differences; there is little interprovincial trade; and there is strong regional consciousness in certain areas within the country. He discusses the relationships of selected sectional interests to federalism, emphasizing the special position of Quebec. This is a brilliant chapter throwing light on how difficult it is to unify a diverse country such as Canada. In these pages are many scintillating observations: the C.P.R. is a "suppression of geography and nature"; there is no evidence that Confederation has increased the bonds between regions; "Without commercial intercourse or fusion of population, the unity produced [in Canada] by a mere political arrangement can hardly be strong or deep"; the importance of local identity;³¹ and so on. Earlier he had said "that Quebec at the present day, though kindly enough in its feelings towards Great Britain, is not a British colony, but a little French nation."³² Smith is carrying on an argument against Confederation; he is a skilful writer and debater and makes his case without hesitation, so one must scrutinize his writing with care.

We need not concern ourselves in detail with the rest of the book, which is largely history and political science. When Smith finally, in the last chapter, looks at what form of government is best for Canada he looks at these alternatives: Dependence, Independence, Imperial Federation, Political Union with the United States, and Commerical Union with the United States. He favours the last. The debate is more on political-economic lines and fixed ideological positions than on factors arising out of geographical reality, although on examining various alternatives he occasionally relates back to fundamental geographical circumstances. But it is not the mainstay of Smith's analysis.

From this book we get a sense of process, of what is going on in Central Canada, but no sense of pattern. Smith is excellent on the interests of the sections versus national interests. Geographers do not normally consider the practical political and economic impact of regionalism within a country; this is brilliantly analyzed and provocatively presented in this book, and often wrong headed. For a volume not intended as a geography, the book has an excellent coloured map of selected physical features of Canada.

In 1895 George Parkin, a Canadian educator, was the author of *The Great Dominion* (251 pages), published in London and composed of letters on Canada prepared for the *London Times* in 1892, '93, and '94 when he was that newspaper's chief correspondent in Canada. In the introduction Parkin pays brief homage to physical geography by sketching the changes in natural conditions in Canada, from south to north, and east to west, but in the rest of the book he concentrates on current problems of Canada, emphasizing broad national issues.

The main problem faced by Canada in the 1890s according to Parkin is development of the North West. We are presented with a good impression of the contrasting conditions for settlement within the West, woven around the potential for immigration. Parkin believes that the filling in of the West will complete the cohesion between Atlantic and Pacific Canada. The classes of settlers who will do well are discussed, and this is where some racism begins

³¹ Goldwin Smith, *Canada and the Canadian Question*, Toronto: 1891, 204, 213

³² *Ibid.*, 97.

to show in Parkin's belief that some people are better than others. He shows insight when he suggests that Winnipeg will not grow to the extent of Montreal or Toronto because it does not have immediate access to navigation. Parkin is not only conscious of the demographic changes which will take place in Canada as people migrate from the East to the prairies; he also suggests agriculture will have to change in the East in response to this new competition. Thus he sees the regions of Canada in an interrelated national context.

Parkin does not underestimate the importance of communications in the study of Canadian regions; he thinks that transportation systems are essential for the unification of the country. He examines the role of the C.P.R., fully aware that space relations in Canada are fundamentally affected by the recently opened railroads. He brings out that in various parts of the country the C.P.R. is feared as a monopoly controlling trade and development. The future importance of corporations in Canada seems to be anticipated when he talks about the management of the C.P.R. and says "Canada has never before had so much business energy concentrated in a single corporation."³³

Coal was the most important source of energy in Canada at the time Parkin was writing, and he analyzes the availability of that resource in the different parts of the country and the significance of its distribution for military purposes and for economic development. Hydroelectric power is not mentioned as yet.

Parkin then turns to eastern Canada which he emphasizes is the most important part of the country. He thus differentiates between what is the centre of gravity of Canada, the East, and those parts of the country where there are pressing current development problems, such as the emergence of the West. In defining the importance of the East, Parkin distinguishes factors which we would now consider the hallmarks of metropolitan dominance, although he does not use the term. He also discusses the tariff, and the beginnings of industry, but does not quite catch the coming importance of manufacturing, tending to stress commerce.

Parkin does not believe in areal continuity in organizing his material, and follows the discussion of Ontario with a description of the Maritimes. He describes the faltering economy of that region, and does not hesitate to refer to the apathy of the Maritimers.

Quebec is dealt with much as Goldwin Smith looked at it — the role of that unique province in Canada. Selected aspects of the distinctive qualities of Quebec are considered in relation to French Canadian nationalism and provincial rights. Parkin writes from an English point of view, and is somewhat intolerant and prescriptive. He is prepared to allow a special character to Quebec in Canada, but in a spirit of resignation, wishing that the French Canadians would adopt more advanced English ways and "throw themselves more heartily into the tide of Canadian progress."³⁴

Parkin catches the essence of British Columbian regional identity. His chapter on that province is very good on the development process, with the ruthless exploitation of resources brought home convincingly. Most effective is a comparison he makes with the prairies; British Columbia is portrayed as the region

³³G. R. Parkin, *The Great Dominion, Studies of Canada*, London: 1895, 51.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 156.

of potential resources, dependent on big capital for exploitation, and only then will there be a need for labour, whereas the prairies is the place where a poor individual homesteader can make a farm and a life for himself and family.

The regional descriptions conclude with a section on northern Canada. Parkin differentiates the southern areas, where there are possibilities for agriculture and economic development, from the more isolated northern regions. His description dates badly because it is written just before the era of pulp, hydro, vast mining developments, and tourism, and he does not anticipate these too well. Fur is still dominant in the discussion, and the proposed Hudson Bay railway route receives ample attention.

Parkin ends the book with two thematic chapters. Trade is discussed, with the author concluding, contrary to Goldwin Smith, that Britain will remain a more important trading partner for Canada than the United States. He discusses labour in Canada, particularly the reasons why there has been so little unrest. Climatic determinism is brought in as a factor; the weather encourages quick work and leaves little time for agitation, and the winter climate has squeezed out the tramp and swagger class. In a discussion of education he brings out the need for vocational training. He describes the political structure of Canada, and concludes that Canada must remain part of the Empire.

This book, like Goldwin Smith's, is an excellent insight into the Canada which existed prior to the great industrial era. Parkin identifies the main geographical problems, thematic and regional, and explores them. The land is still important, and to some extent Parkin is dominated by the agrarian myth, although we are made aware of other factors at work, for instance, he says that large cities bring problems. The regional interpretations are very well done. Few attempts are made to describe the internal geographical patterns within regions; Parkin instead captures the main themes of change in each area. The volume is comprehensive in approach, but not without biases. The ethic of progress underlies the book, and in guiding Canada to this goal, Parkin says that the English have shown their worth, and other groups such as the Latins have lagged. But Parkin emphasizes that progress in Canada is deliberate and cautious, so that the slow advance of the country will not distort the creation of an ideal society intimately associated with Britain that is envisaged by him. Oh, happy man, that he can tread such a fine line!

Parkin writes in a lucid style; sentences, paragraphs and chapters flow easily as in good journalism. Facts and statistics are incorporated neatly and well in the running narrative. One gets the impression that geography is dynamic; that Canada is a functioning area and not a static crystallized entity. Excellent coloured maps accompany the volume.

In 1907 a French geographer, André Siegfried, was the author of *The Race Question in Canada* (343 pages), published in London, a translation of the French edition published in Paris the previous year. He defines Canada's chief problem as the existence of two leading races (ethnic groups) in the country, although the emergence of the new West, and Imperial and American relationships are also discussed. The book is really a study of Canadian thought and behaviour at the turn of the century, through culture and political institutions.

There is little of what is normally considered geography in this book. However, the work is important to geographers because Siegfried stresses fundamental

characteristics of the cultural and social background of the country, which should be brought out in all geographical studies of Canada. He starts with a high level of abstraction and does not look at the roots of Canadian institutions and their relationship to local conditions, but takes them as given and immediately proceeds to examine ethnic attitudes. Siegfried is interested in how cultures are preserved and gives a full analysis of the means adopted by the Roman Catholic Church in maintaining the existence of the French Canadian people as a group in a continent dominated by people of British origin. In contrast to Goldwin Smith, Siegfried is much more successful in describing the character of the French than that of the English Canadians. He discusses the importance of the education system in determining the character of the people, and examines the relations of Canada to Britain, France, and the United States in the light of the existence of two ethnic groups with different national sentiments.

Selected historical problems and contemporary politics are dealt with in some detail, but the geographical patterns of Canada are not. Indeed, rudimentary comments on the Canadian economy are made only when Siegfried discusses the absence of a Third Party and how this is related to class structure and the working man. In his concluding section, Siegfried is very much aware of the international play of forces and the existence of an American peril, but thinks that Canada will probably remain within the British Empire as a distinct country, not surrendering any autonomy. In the book as a whole he identifies many of the problems which will remain basic to the geography of this country, treating them pungently in an assured analytical style.

In 1911, J. D. Rogers wrote a book in the Historical Geography of the British Colonies series edited by Sir C. P. Lucas, *Canada – Part III, Geographical* (302 pages), published in Oxford. Rogers was a don at Oxford and I'm not sure that he ever visited Canada. It does not matter greatly because it is a book written in a scholar's study. Unlike many other works of that ilk this is not just compilation; it contains marvellous generalizations, insights, asides, abstractions, provocative metaphors and witticisms on the nature of Canada.

Rogers has a special conception of historical geography; in essence it studies the occupation of an area by man: "When that process [settlement] was complete, when the outline was apparently filled in and intelligible, historical geography stops; for subsequent elaborations and permutations belong to history or some other kindred science."³⁵ I disagree fundamentally with this definition of historical geography, but for our purposes we will examine Rogers' work on his terms.

Canada is divided into regions, given special names, The Far East, Core of Canada (the Shield), Middle East, Middle West, and Far West. In each region he starts with the history of settlement, in which full measure is allotted to the different ethnic groups. This account of settlement is very meticulously done. It is organized geographically, with the major patterns of occupation clearly analyzed. Rogers recognizes that urban centres assumed important roles right from the beginning of Canadian settlement, a factor only realized recently by most Canadian scholars. He next analyzes how nodes of settlement are

³⁵J. D. Rogers, *A Historical Geography of the British Colonies, Canada – Part III, Geographical*, Oxford: 1911, 180.

connected, and what forces lead to infilling and the continuous occupation of land in favoured areas.

A thread running through the book is a consideration of the strategy of establishing linkages and communications lines in newly occupied areas and analyzing the resulting spatial interactions. Rogers is astonishingly modern in his thinking on communications, using what is in effect the concept of corridors of development. Railroad development in Ontario "doubled or trebled the great through waterway of the St. Lawrence, and Simcoe's great through roadway from Montreal to Windsor and Sarnia. . . ." ³⁶ His insight into Ontario is also revealed in this sentence: "The St. Lawrence was still the presiding genius of Ontarian development." ³⁷ In the West he recognizes the importance of the railroad as a formative force: "The new power was creative, conjuring up towns from nothing, and scattering men from nowhere in its wake." ³⁸ He sees mobility as a fundamental factor in Canadian existence, the essential basis of the functional unity of the country: "for in Canada movement east and west, west and east, rather than rest, is the first law of life." ³⁹

Much of Rogers' thinking rests on the idea of interaction, with his concepts often highly abstracted. New Brunswick, for example, is seen as a number of bonds or linkages between Quebec and the sea. He also thinks in geometrical terms. Quebec is characterized by linearity, Ontario is triangular, and the West is an oblong. As new corridors are developed, the spatial geometry changes. The anticipated effect of the new transcontinental railroad west of Quebec is described in the following metaphor:

It is said that hitherto the middle east has been like a row of one-storied houses in Quebec Province, and of two-storied houses in Old Ontario, with two or three scaffolds and ladders erected to an unbuilt upper storey, and that the time has now come to build a still higher storey all along the upper ends of the scaffolds and ladders. The metaphor is not quite exact, for it can hardly be expected that the living places along the new track will be continuous with themselves and with the old track. Along the old track nothing is so striking as the continuous civilization which lines the valley of the St. Lawrence up to Lake Superior ⁴⁰

The first settlement phase and the accompanying forces of movement and the earliest linkages are emphasized by Rogers to the exclusion of all other geographical considerations. There is nothing on early pioneering experiences, subsistence, and early trade. Economic geography suffers particularly. Agriculture and manufacturing are ignored, and so indeed is traffic flow despite all the emphasis on mobility. Indeed, the linkages are abstract, idealistic and geometric.

Much of the book is couched in the most involuted prose. Rogers is verbose; his phrasing is picturesque, often teasing. For instance, he uses puns in summing up the exploration of the North:

³⁶*Ibid.*, 178.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 230.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 115-6

³⁷*Ibid.*, 178

³⁹*Ibid.*, 187.

... the names which are written on these shores are human names, and names which speak from spirit to spirit and eloquently perpetuate no mere succession of events, but an heroic tragedy in which Intrepid and Resolute Investigators pursued Discovery through regions of Sunshine, but also of Erebus and Terror and Fury, until their Enterprise and Resolution were rewarded with Victory.⁴¹

The edge of the Shield is referred to as "the rock-row," and "the mysterious line of rock;" Brockville and Kingston at the edge of the Shield "are so to speak in the sunshine beyond the cloud."⁴²

Despite its eccentricities the book is extraordinarily valuable because Rogers has great insights on nearly every page, which provoke further thought. Despite his run-on sentences, Rogers paradoxically strips things to essentials. With its emphasis on abstraction, spatial interaction, and almost schematic model-building, the book is very forward in approach and is indicative of much modern geography. It is exasperating but stimulating, showing what contributions can be made from a speculative scholar's study. No geographer writing on Canada since Rogers has dared to think in quite such an abstract style. Numerous maps showing settlements and communications lines are in the text.

The four books we have examined in this section are not complete geographies. Smith was concerned with north-south trending physiographic regions, and their effect on the relationship of Canada and the United States, and with sectionalism; Parkin stressed regionalism in Canada and external relations; Siegfried the two peoples and internal and external relations; and Rogers the occupation of the country, and the functional unity of Canada in its relationship to communications. All of these factors are fundamental to the understanding of Canadian geography and it is in their insight into these matters that these authors made a substantial contribution to the study of the subject.

Conclusion

In this brief account of 19th century geographical literature some themes run all the way through. British North America is a huge area and from the time of Alexander Mackenzie to J. D. Rogers writers were concerned with communications. The development of resources is a vital factor in any geographical study of Canada and many authors emphasized relations between man and environment. Attempts to define regions and characterize them are found in almost every book from Hearne to Nicolay, Rowe, Parkin and Rogers, and once again this is done in response to the huge size of the country in an endeavour to achieve manageable units for analysis.

For a time in the mid-19th century it appeared that an effective way of integrating basic facts of Canadian geography with generalizations and explanatory concepts would be achieved. To a limited extent this was accomplished in Parkin's *The Great Dominion*, but on the whole the inventories and the interpretations tend to go their different paths and appear in separate books.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 28.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 101, 153.

Modern geographers are still endeavouring to attain an effective integration of substance and concepts, and that is where good geographical writing becomes an art. There are many lessons to be learned in what to do and what to avoid from the writers we have examined; a great geographical interpretation of Canada still remains to be written.

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