CEECT: Progress, Procedures, and Problems

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At your annual meeting in Toronto in June 1984, Rupert Schieder, speaking to you about the 'Quest for Crusoes: Frustrations and Rewards,' described some experiences he was having as he laboured on a scholarly edition of Catharine Parr Traill's *Canadian Crusoes. A Tale of the Rice Lake Plains*. He was preparing this edition for the Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts, the project I direct. I am pleased today to be able to address you myself about this project, specifically about its progress, procedures, and problems.

Anyone who has tried to carry out serious scholarly studies of early English-Canadian literature has soon discovered that the task is rendered always more complex, and sometimes even impossible, both by the scarcity of the works from this period that are in print and by the quality of the published versions of those that are available. In recent years there have been attempts to ameliorate this situation by reproducing in various forms specific versions of some of these works. One thinks, for example, of the microfiche put out by the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproduction; of the photographic reprints of early Canadian works in the Literature of Canada: Poetry and Prose in Reprint Series published by the University of Toronto Press; of the 'corrected' reprints of earlier editions in the Maritime Literature Reprint Series published by the Ralph Pickard Bell Library at Mount Allison University; and of such discrete reprints as Bruce Nesbitt's edition of Thomas Chandler Haliburton's 'Recollections of Nova Scotia,' the first series of *The Clockmaker* that appeared in the *Novascotian* in 1835-36. As someone who has studied early English-Canadian prose since the 1960s, I am grateful, of course, for all these enterprises. None of them, however, has been other than, or was meant to be other than, a step along the way to the preparation of the scholarly editions that at least

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some of our early prose works so richly deserve. These reprints have been, in the words of a recent reviewer of Dr. Nesbitt's *Recollections of Nova Scotia: The Clockmaker*, the 'John the Baptists' to the 'longed-for Messiahs' of scholarly editions 'to be produced' – and lest you think that I suffer too much from the sin of pride, I assure you that I am still quoting – 'by the Centre for the Editing of Early Canadian Texts.'¹ Let me tell you, then, about that Centre and the scholarly editions of major works of early English-Canadian prose we produce.

In 1979-80 five of us at Carleton – three English professors, Robert G. Laird, Robert L. McDougall, and myself; a history professor, S.F. Wise; and a special collections librarian, J. Jeremy Palin – planned the project that came to be known as the Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts, or, for short, CEECT. In July 1980 we applied to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for a Negotiated Grant to help support the project; we already had generous support from the University. The assessment and adjudication of this application took a full year, but we were ultimately successful. And on 1 July 1981 we received a five-year grant. With this grant we were to hold a conference on editorial principles and procedures, compile an editorial manual, and prepare four to six scholarly editions of major works of early English-Canadian prose for publication. These were Frances Brooke's *The History of Emily Montague*, the work usually called 'the first Canadian novel,'² originally published in 1769; Mrs. Traill's *Canadian Crusoes*, the tale for young people first published in 1852 about which Professor Schieder spoke to you; James DeMille's *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, the fantastic adventure story first written in the 1860s although not published until 1888, when its author had been dead for eight years; John Richardson's *Wacousta*, probably our seminal historical novel, first published in 1832; Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*, her extraordinarily accurate account of her life during her early years in Upper Canada in the 1830s that first appeared in 1852; and Thomas McCulloch's *Stepsure Letters*, first serialized in the *Acadian Recorder* in the early 1820s.

There were many times during the next five years when I thought that we should never get anywhere with the CEECT project. The most traumatic for me was the moment in India when I was within millimetres of losing an eye, but I remember at least one other event almost as clearly: this was the occasion when our very bright, very diligent, and very reliable computer assistant ran down the hall to tell me and Professor McDougall, who happened to be in my office, that her computer program had gone into 'an infinite loop.' Neither of us had a clue what she meant, but the look of horror on her face and the distressed tone of her voice certainly convinced me that all was lost. As for Professor McDougall, it made him even more wary

than he already was of what he later called 'our Lady of Bits and Bytes',³ and for a long time he was really quite sceptical about computers in editing. Nevertheless, in May 1983 we held a conference on editorial principles and procedures; you will be interested to know that William E. Fredeman, who is also giving a paper today, spoke 'On the Importance of Manuscripts in Editing' at that conference.⁴ In 1985 we published what I called, perhaps somewhat presumptuously, the 'second edition' of CEECT's *Handbook for Editors*; the 'first edition,' more correctly a well-distributed and not badly polished rough draft, had been the focus of the May 1983 conference. The first of our scholarly editions, *The History of Emily Montague*, which I edited, was published in 1985 by Carleton University Press (CUP). Last year it published our edition of *Canadian Crusoes* and of *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder*, the latter edited by Malcolm Parks of Dalhousie University. We are now proofreading the galleys of *Wacousta*, which should be published late this year. *Roughing It in the Bush* is being assessed for Carleton University Press by outside readers. The text of *Step-sure Letters* is established, and its editor, Gwen Davies of Mount Allison University, is preparing the explanatory notes and the introduction. So, absolutely, and certainly in comparison with other, similar, long-term projects, we have done very well.

In fact, we were all feeling optimistic enough in the spring of 1985 to apply for yet another five-year grant from SSHRC. This time we competed for a Major Editorial Grant to prepare scholarly editions of six more works of early English-Canadian prose. These were Rosanna Eleanor Mullins Leprohon's *Antoinette De Mirecourt*, an historical novel set in Montreal just after the Conquest, first published in 1864; William Kirby's *The Golden Dog*, perhaps our most important historical novel, and certainly my favourite, first published in 1877; Richardson's *The Canadian Brothers*, his sequel to *Wacousta*, first published in 1840; Julia Catherine Beckwith Hart's *St. Ursula's Convent*, 'the first Canadian work of fiction written by a native-born Canadian and published in what is now Canada'⁵ in 1824; Mrs. Traill's *The Backwoods of Canada*, a collection of her letters home, first published in 1836; and Haliburton's *The Clockmaker*, Series One to Three, published between 1835 and 1840. Although the amount of money we requested was reduced in a couple of potentially catastrophic ways, once again we were successful. So, officially on 1 September 1986, we began our second five-year plan.

We still, of course, have not yet completed the first year of this second grant, but I shall give you a brief progress report anyway. *Antoinette De Mirecourt*, the first of the new series of editions we began to prepare, has come along remarkably well. The text is edited, the explanatory notes are being verified, and the editor, John Stockdale from Université Laval, has

done most of the research for the introduction. All this, given some of the adventures we have had with the other editions, seems almost too good to be true; it is possible that we may have this edition published next year. We are also making good progress on *The Golden Dog*, but it is a very difficult text to edit and, especially, to annotate. Its editor, Elizabeth Brady, recently submitted a list of about one thousand potential explanatory notes; we shall, of course, shorten the list, but for various reasons – Kirby's erudition, his habit of quoting, the nature of his material, etc. – the number of annotations will still be enormous. We have begun to collate *The Canadian Brothers*, and its editor, Donald Stephens from the University of British Columbia, is researching its publishing history and mapping out what needs to be annotated. We are collating the 1824 edition of *St. Ursula's Convent*, which is being edited by Douglas Lochhead, one of your society's most distinguished members. We are waiting to microfilm *The Backwoods of Canada* until we exhaust the possibility of locating a copy of the first edition that has changes written in it in Mrs. Traill's hand. She probably intended to make these changes in an edition of the work that may have been planned for publication, but was never published, in the 1890s. In the meantime, as editor both of *The Backwoods of Canada* and of Mrs. Traill's letters, Michael Peterman of Trent University pursues information about her life and works. Before we can decide what versions of *The Clockmaker* are authorial, and therefore what versions to microfilm, its editor, George Parker, your vice-president, has to do more research on the early editions, particularly those published by Richard Bentley, and on Haliburton's role in them.

Even from this brief sketch, it should be clear that our editions are prepared neither quickly nor easily. One main reason for this is that they are scholarly editions. Each has, therefore, a critically edited text. It has, first, a text that has been established after all the extant versions of the work in manuscript and printed forms have been thoroughly examined and their authority determined, and after one of these versions has been chosen as copy-text. And it has, second, a text that has been emended according to a clearly defined set of principles. Each scholarly edition has also apparatus that describes the extant versions of the work, justifies the choice of copy-text, explains the emendations, and documents in various ways the history of the work and the theory and practice of its editing.

In the CEECT editions, the description of the work's composition and publication, the justification of our choice of copy-text, and the explanation of our emendations are chiefly found in an 'Editor's Introduction,' particularly in that part called 'The Text.' The documentation can be found mostly in the concluding apparatus. It contains a list of emendations; a list of line-end hyphenations of compound or possible compound words in the

copy-text as they have been resolved in the CEECT edition; a list of line-end hyphenations in the CEECT edition as they should be transcribed in quotations from this text; a record of differences among versions of the work that are authorial, or that form part of the history of the transmission of authorial readings in the text; and an appendix or appendices of material relevant to the text. In the case of *Wacousta*, for example, the text of the DeWitt and Davenport edition first published in 1851 is based on the incorrect and unauthorized American edition of 1833, an edition that its author had publicly rejected; Richardson nevertheless wrote a new introduction for the DeWitt and Davenport edition, an introduction, furthermore, that provides information about the sources of, and inspiration for, the novel. Since the only authorial edition, the first edition first issued in 1832, is our copy-text, and it already has an introduction, we have placed the 1851 introduction in an appendix.

According to 'The Center for Scholarly Editions [CSE]: An Introductory Statement,' an article published in *Publications of the Modern Language Association* in 1977 that is probably one of the most influential statements about these editions, if you critically edit the text of a work and provide the information about the editing process that I have just outlined, then you will have produced an acceptable scholarly edition. In fact, because of the state of knowledge about early Canadian authors and their works, we decided that our editions should also provide more material than, and different kinds of material from, that suggested by the CSE. Thus, our 'Editor's Introduction' attempts to place the work in an historical context in terms of its author's life and times and the times of the events portrayed in the work; it also deals in some detail with the reception of the work when it was first published; and it summarizes more recent critical approaches to the work. We have 'Explanatory Notes' that annotate people and events mentioned in the work, identify direct quotations, and, occasionally, literary allusions, and define obscure diction. We provide a bibliographical description of the copy-text and other authoritative versions, and we list and describe, in a digressive, but still fairly elaborate manner, all the known published versions of the work. The inclusion of this kind of apparatus is the other main reason why the preparation takes a long time and is difficult.

There are roughly six steps in the preparation of our scholarly editions. The first, and in many ways the most important, is the research stage. Ideally, of course, the editor, when he or she begins to prepare the edition, should know just about all there is to know about the author and his or her works. By choosing editors who had already published articles on the authors whose works we were editing, we got as close to that ideal as possible. Still, there is a great deal of new research and verification of old

research to be done, and we all do it: general editor, members of the editorial board, editor, research assistants, graduate student assistants, and anyone we can interest in our problems. Your president will tell you how enthusiastic I was when she phoned me last fall to let me know that she was teaching a course in bibliography and that she had students who had not only heard about our project but were willing to help us fill bibliographical lacunae about our works. I could not wait to get to Toronto to meet those students. And because of her study of editions of *The Backwoods of Canada*, Judy Donnelly, one of Professor Fleming's students, has presented us with a problem that may or may not be easily solved and helped us avoid a serious error in the way that we might have edited Mrs. Traill's letters. In fact, what I have learned from this and other experiences is that eternal vigilance with respect to my own and others' research is one key to the attainment of quality in these editions.

The second stage, the preparation of the critically edited text, is reached only after all the extant versions of the work have been examined, their authority at least hypothetically established, and their relationship to one another at least tentatively known. This stage involves microfilming and photocopying multiple copies of the copy-text and other authoritative versions; numerous oral, visual, and mechanical collations; double-entry of the copy-text and probably the other authoritative versions on a computer; collation by the computer of these versions; the emendation of the copy-text; and the verification and reconsideration of the decisions made about the establishment of the critically edited text. Some of these procedures take a long time; none of them is without potential for error and changes of mind. When Professor Schieder spoke to you about *Canadian Crusoes*, I am not sure how far he had travelled down his own road to Damascus, but it was during the preparation of his speech for you in 1984 that he decided that we had not edited Mrs. Traill's work as judiciously as we should have. Fortunately, the versions of the work we needed were still in the computer, so we edited it again. Somewhere we still have our first edited text of *Canadian Crusoes*, which some of you may have preferred because it is shorter and, in some ways, more grammatical and more polished in its style. Professor Schieder was right, however, in his conversion, and as a result, you have a more authorial, if stylistically more ragged, critically edited text in the CEECT edition of *Canadian Crusoes*.

The third stage is the preparation of the apparatus for the scholarly edition, including the composition of the headnote for each section of the concluding material. In all the editions the introduction is by far the most substantial piece. Officially it is the responsibility of the editor, but the general editor spends a good deal of time going over drafts, looking up sources, and figuring out ways to express difficult points clearly and suc-

cinctly. What reads most simply in these introductions, in fact, is often the passage that has been most worked over, and that passage is usually the one that contains the information most familiar to the editor and the general editor. I cannot tell you how many times I wrote 'The Text' part of the introduction to *The History of Emily Montague*. Its first draft, which had by then been laboured on by me, by Professor McDougall, who was acting as general editor for this edition, and even by Michael Gnarowski, the editor of Carleton University Press whose office at that point was next door to mine, went to the Press's readers. One of them, an experienced editor and a very senior scholar, thought it was fine; the other, an equally experienced editor, although not quite so senior a scholar, said, 'OK, now that you've written out all *you* needed to say, it is time that you wrote *only* what the reader wants to hear.' I was devastated, but I decided he was right. So back I went again, and again, and again, until I got a version that I thought my most demanding critic would approve. The pattern I finally found, moreover, has stood us in good stead for the later volumes, for 'The Text' part of the introduction continues to be very difficult to get exactly right.

The fourth stage of the preparation of our scholarly editions is that of assessment. As I hope that I have suggested, these editions are being constantly assessed, and reassessed, from the time that they are begun, but the formal process occurs when we turn the edited text and the supporting apparatus over to Carleton University Press for submission to its readers. In some ways that is a very nervous time; in others, it is exhilarating. I know that we have laboured diligently to do a good job; I realize that in the pause that comes at that point, we can all go on with other matters; and I have confidence that when the readers' reports come back, their comments and criticisms will serve to make our good editions even better. So far, each of the three readers that the Press usually has found for each edition has focussed on a different aspect of what we have done. My philosophy about readers now is that they may not always put their finger on exactly what is amiss, but if they do mark a passage, they are usually right that something is wrong with it.

The fifth stage is that of printing. For a long time I ignored this stage, but as we actually arrived at it with *The History of Emily Montague*, I realized just how crucial it was. For a text in galleys, pages, final pages, corrected final pages, corrected corrected final pages, and 'blues' looks different from all previous stages. It also looks different at each of these stages of printing. I am very grateful, then, that we have a publisher who has enormous patience and a printer who shares our desire for perfection. New aspects of the text, and / or its design, suddenly leap out, and, despite the best efforts of everybody, 'gremlins' do creep in. By proofreading an average of perhaps ten times between the magnetic tape that goes to the printer

and the production of the actual copies of our edition, we get almost the perfectly composed text.

The sixth stage of preparation is that of publication. And although you will realize the apparent illogical nature of the previous sentence, you will appreciate that one's image of the result of what one is trying to do influences in important ways all that one does. When we planned these editions, we discussed several aspects of their form of publication. Jeremy Palin was particularly concerned that they meet the highest standards of design and durability. Michael Gnarowski was concerned about price. All of us felt strongly that we did not wish to put in all this time and effort for the relatively few scholars for whom our editions would be available if they were only bound in cloth for libraries. It was not easy to reconcile these disparate demands of excellence and popularity, and we are still working out some of the practical problems they raise. But more than other books produced by Negotiated and Major Editorial Grants sponsored by SSHRC, and therefore paid for by the taxpayers of Canada, we have succeeded in publishing a good quality product at a reasonable price. Jeremy Palin is the main force behind the clean design and the low-acid paper; Michael Gnarowski is responsible for the price of both the casebound and the paperback and the fact that their contents are identical; I shall take most of the responsibility for the colours of the paperbacks.

Before I summarize some of the problems we face in preparing these editions, let me make a few further points about our procedures. First, as you must have gathered, we do use the computer to help us prepare these editions. It speeds up our collations, which are undoubtedly one of the most time-consuming processes of the preparation; it provides us with accurate and complete data about different versions of the same work; it allows us to act as compositors of our texts and thus control aspects of the design and gain a high degree of accuracy. We use the computer, in fact, for thirty-two processes in the course of preparing these editions, and we have seventy programs that were especially written to run these processes.

Secondly, although I have described these six stages as more or less sequential, they frequently overlap. Our typesetting of each edition begins when the typists enter the copy-text on the computer in the second stage. Our proofreading of the edition begins then too. We enter each copy-text twice, each time by a different typist, and we then run a program that compares every character line by line and that will not continue unless each version entered by each typist is identical. At that point we figure we correct about 98 percent of new compositorial errors out of the text we have entered. And, of course, the research for the edition continues long after the first stage.

Some of you may have noticed a rather long note in *Canadian Crusoes*

that identifies some lines of poetry by John Malcolm. The story behind that will illustrate one of the more peculiar problems we have faced. Rupert Schieder, aided by numerous friends and colleagues and by the research assistants who read enormous amounts of early nineteenth-century poetry, tried for almost five years to identify the lines,

Oh, were their tale of sorrow known,
&'Twere something to the breaking heart,
The pangs of doubt would then be gone,
And fancy's endless dreams depart.⁶

Needless to say, none of us found the source of these lines. Professor Schieder's one consolation was, however, that Mrs. Traill had quoted them in one of her unpublished works that existed in a manuscript at the Public Archives of Canada (PAC). He decided, therefore, that probably they were lines that Catharine had written herself, possibly at the time that the fiancé of one of her sisters disappeared in a shipwreck. We wrote a note to that effect; because we were what you might call fudging the note, it was fairly long. There is probably a maxim somewhere that says that the longer the annotation, the less certain is its writer's knowledge about its subject. Anyway, it was this note that stood until last summer when *Canadian Crusoes* was on its ways into 'blues.' One day, when one of the research assistants, trying to identify people and events mentioned by Mrs. Moodie in *Roughing It in the Bush*, was reading through a run of the *Cobourg Star*, she suddenly came upon a poem called 'Lines on the Loss of a Ship.' The poem contained Mrs. Traill's lines, but its author was one John Malcolm. We immediately ran to ask Michael Gnarowski to stop the 'blues,' and to give us a chance to find out more. Our last-minute search involved phone-calls to the British Library, the office of the PAC in London, a fast tour of libraries in Toronto by Professor Schieder, and, at last, the dismaying discovery that the only copy of the one volume by the poet that probably contained the earliest – and most relevant – version of the poem was held at the University of Western Ontario, but that its copy was unavailable because it was stored in a part of the building that was under construction. By the time we found out all this a month had gone by, and both the publisher and printer, as well as, needless to say, the editor and the general editor, were getting impatient. Finally, we decided that we could wait no longer. So, basing my revision on the data we then had available, I rewrote the note. Because the book was in 'blues,' I had to make sure that the revised note took up exactly the same amount of space as the old note. Consequently, in *Canadian Crusoes* you will find a rather discursive discussion of lines that ordinarily we should have annotated in a few words.

Problems like this one are rare. Our real problems are more general, and more serious. Time, as you have undoubtedly all surmised, is a major problem. These scholarly editions take a long time to produce, even with the help of computers and with the energetic and efficient cooperation of all members of the team charged with their preparation. In the 'Editor's Preface' to *Canadian Crusoes*, Professor Schieder speaks of the 'quest for *Crusoes*' that 'almost obsessed' his life for five years,⁷ and he was officially retired when he began his research. Although they would probably not choose such a strong word as 'obsessed,' the other editors – to say nothing of the general editor – could express the same feeling. These editions take years even if everything goes reasonably well. But everything seldom does go all that well: editors sicken, change jobs, or lose interest; the works they are editing turn out to be much more complicated than anyone ever expected; the research assistants at CEECT leave, and the new ones have to be trained. When we were planning the project, we tried to take into account some of these inevitabilities, but their reality is always different from, and therefore more difficult than, you expect.

Money is also a headache, especially now. From 1981-86, our SSHRC grant amounted to an average of about \$90,000 a year. In 1985-86, for example, the last year of the grant, we received \$98,000 from SSHRC. With that money we hired a secretary / wordprocessor and two research assistants; we helped pay for a part-time graduate student assistant and a part-time undergraduate student computer assistant; we bought computer time; and we subsidized travel by the editors, chiefly to bring them to Ottawa to work on their texts. For roughly \$16,000 each, then, we supported to a greater or lesser extent six scholarly editions. That may still sound like a lot of money, but you should know that in 1985-86, under the same Negotiated Grants program, the CORPUS project for editing French-Canadian texts received \$315,772; the Dictionary of Old English, \$255,000; the Shakespeare Music Catalogue, \$231,328; the Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, \$264,000; the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, \$998,000; the Bertrand Russell Editorial Project, \$346,289; and an OISE project on the Development of Bilingual Proficiency, \$272,314.⁸ To get an idea of the total amount of each grant, you should multiply these figures by at least five; if the project has had more than one Negotiated Grant, you should multiply, of course, by more. Each of these projects has its own needs, structures, and justifications, and most, though not all, have, as far as I can tell, achievements to their credit. But, please, when you talk of money, presumably the Canadian taxpayers' money, as some assessors of our application did, and as some reviewers of *The History of Emily Montague* have done, do some comparison homework, perhaps particularly from the point of view of national cultural imperatives.

Even though for five years we have had one of the cheapest projects, and even though we asked for roughly the same budget for the next five years when we applied for the Major Editorial Grant, in the general budget cutting that now goes on at SSHRC, our budget for 1986-91 was slashed. Specifically, we were denied one of the two full-time research assistants in each of the five years. Because one research assistant really cannot support six books, we have somehow to overcome this problem if we are to continue producing scholarly editions. One consequence is that in the last year I have spent a great deal of time applying for money from other government agencies and foundations with some, although limited, success. Another consequence is that at whatever stage we are in 1991, this general editor's stint as bag-lady and worrier-in-chief ends.

Constant worry about time and money, however crucial they are, is in the end self-defeating; there are more interesting problems. Let me summarize four. The first is bibliographical. Bibliography – enumerative, analytical, historical, descriptive, and textual – is a difficult subject. With the exception of such well-known teachers of bibliography as Professor Fredeman at the University of British Columbia and once Douglas Lochhead, and now Desmond Neill, at the University of Toronto, our Departments of English have not, and still do not, pay much attention to the subject, if they teach it at all. Neither students nor most professors, therefore, know, or care, much about it. When we began to prepare our editions, there was, for example, William F.E. Morley's *A Bibliographical Study of Major John Richardson* (1973), and there was Elizabeth Brady's 'A Bibliographical Essay on William Kirby's *The Golden Dog, 1877-1977*,'¹⁹ both published by the Bibliographical Society of Canada. For the other authors there were not even checklists of primary material or secondary sources. We were forced, thus, to build the bibliographical foundation of most of our works ourselves.

It has not been an easy task. Books remain uncatalogued. Catalogue entries do not always reveal what they should. Reporting of holdings to the Canadian Union Catalogue is incomplete. And computers – despite the faith expressed in them by systems librarians – often make retrieving information even more difficult than it was when the main idiosyncracies involved in cataloguing were those of people more or less interested in books. Whatever success we have had – and our success has not been inconsiderable – has been due chiefly to the cooperation of individual librarians, mostly in Special Collections divisions of universities and public libraries in Canada. In numerous phonecalls these men and women have listened to my impassioned pleas for books and other information. They have allowed their rare books to travel to Ottawa for microfilming. They have used their information networks to supplement ours. I wish to

take this opportunity to thank you all; my special thanks go to those wonderful librarians in La Réserve at the National Library. Over the years they have aided all my efforts and plotted with me how best to wrest books from the sometimes apparently unwilling and uncaring world.

The second problem is editorial. In our training of scholars in Canadian literature we have neglected all kinds of bibliography. But perhaps we have neglected textual bibliography most of all. There are reasons for this. Until relatively recently most literature on the subject dealt with works far removed in time and place from the British North American provinces of the nineteenth century. Most editing had to do with drama, specifically Shakespeare, and some poetry. That situation has now changed, and there is a large and growing body of literature on the theory and practice of editing more recent works and many more actual scholarly editions to analyse. When we were planning our project, for example, we were particularly helped by, and impressed with, the scholarly editions produced under the auspices of the Center for Editing American Authors sponsored by the Modern Language Association and the abundant literature that these editions had spawned. Our project, however, was one of the first to deal with Canadian literature and the first to deal with early English-Canadian prose. We had to train ourselves as editors of these works, and we had either to invent our own procedures or to adapt those of others, who, even if they were working in Canada on American or British authors, were usually dealing with at least somewhat different printing and publishing situations.

Pioneering is not unexciting; without a well-documented set of rules and regulations for accomplishing various editorial tasks, one feels freer to imagine and invent. I suspect, for example, that our sense that we had no firmly-established precedents was one reason why in 1979-80, when we planned the project, we decided to computerize it, despite its being then, compared to now, the dark ages of computing in the humanities. But not all one's imaginings can be turned into practicalities, and not all inventions function. So, disappointment and disillusion seem inevitable. One of our more madcap schemes, which seemed like a brilliant idea at the time, had to do with proofreading. Someone in Computing Services at Carleton got interested in the possibility of developing a 'voice box' that would read back to us the text as we had entered it on the computer. The theory was that one person would listen to the box read the text on the computer while he or she compared what the voice said with an actual copy of the text that had been entered. The advantage was supposed to be that with this technological aid, one person could do a job that normally took two or more. We went along with this experiment for a number of weeks, and it was not entirely unsuccessful. But we all decided that it had to be aban-

doned when we realized just how slowly the box read and how strangely it pronounced syllables; it did not read words at all. Besides we were driving our less computer-oriented colleagues crazy by our funny sounds, especially when we had the box pronounce their names as they walked by.

The third problem is critical. Some reviewers and critics still prattle on about 'definitive' editions; few editors dare. They know just how much judgement and choice are involved when a text of a scholarly edition is established. I have already given the example of our two critically edited texts of *Canadian Crusoes*. But we have also faced alternative choices in the copy-text of *Roughing It in the Bush* and of *Stepsure Letters*. Although Carl Ballstadt, the editor, and I chose the 1852 edition as our basic copy-text of Mrs. Moodie's work, a choice that seemed to us the most legitimate, we could have chosen the 1871 edition. After Professor Davies and I had chosen a copy-text for McCulloch's letters, a particularly difficult choice, we still had to work out principles of emendation for this text that emerged logically from the data we had and satisfied our critical sense of the work. One person I consulted about our editing problems with the *Letters* was G. Thomas Tanselle, who made some very useful suggestions. In the end the editor and I have chosen another way, which, we think, is more suitable.

Finally, there is the problem that I shall call intellectual. The literature of scholarly editing speaks confidently about life documents – diaries and letters, etc. – of authors and their friends, records of publishers and printers, reviews and notices culled from newspapers and other periodicals, manuscripts, printer's copy, marked-up galleys and other items from the printing process of a book, multiple copies of many authoritative editions, and copies carefully corrected and revised by the author. In fact, of course, few works come with all this paraphernalia. And that probably is fortunate. But there is a medium point between having too much and barely enough. And because of the way in which early Canadian works were published and the manner in which our early documents were destroyed, it is often extremely difficult to find enough of the material that would allow us to be absolutely certain about such matters as the author's proofreading of galleys or his or her approving of editorial changes. As it is, using enterprise, imagination, and computer technology, we gather all the data that we can. Then, thinking in terms of 'probabilities' and 'possibilities,' instead of 'certainties,' we cautiously edit the text and prepare its apparatus. And, at last, we present our 'reliable' editions to the public.

When your president contacted me about this talk, she said, 'Well, Mary Jane, you are setting the standards, so you just tell us what they are.' I hope she realizes now why I demurred and chose to describe CEECT's progress, procedures, and problems. Since each of our works, except for two, has a

different author, each in a sense imposes its own standards in so far as these concern principles of editing. What we impose on each text is accuracy and care, and what we include in each edition is the record of what we have done to the text and why we have done it, an account of the work's composition, printing, publishing, and reception in so far as these are known, and an indication of its importance for Canadian culture. Each of the CEECT scholarly editions, then, is a specific history of one work in early Canadian literature; together the CEECT scholarly editions form a more general history from which larger theories about early Canadian culture, particularly those having to do with authorship, printing, and publishing, can be drawn.

NOTES

- 1 Richard A. Davies, 'Clockmaker,' *Canadian Literature* No. 112 (1987): 124.
- 2 Carl F. Klinck, Introduction to *The History of Emily Montague* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1961), p. v.
- 3 Robert L. McDougall, 'A Place in the Sun,' *Essays on Canadian Writing* No. 30 (1984-85): 112.
- 4 An edited version of this paper was printed in *Public Workshop on Editorial Principles and Procedures*, ed. Mary Jane Edwards (Ottawa: CEECT, 1983), pp. 19-34.
- 5 Douglas Lochhead, Introduction to *St. Ursula's Convent; Or, The Nun of Canada*, by Julia Catherine Beckwith (Sackville: Ralph Pickard Bell Library, Mount Allison, 1987), p. 1.
- 6 Catharine Parr Traill, *Canadian Crusoes. A Tale of the Rice Lake Plains*, ed. Rupert Schieder (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1986), pp. 20 and 257 (for explanatory note).
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
- 8 I have taken these figures from the SSHRC *Annual Report 1985-1986*, pp. 60-61.
- 9 *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 15 (1976): 24-48.