consultations sur place par près de 3,000 dans son rapport sur les six premiers mois d'opération afin de valoriser le rôle de la bibliothèque en tant qu'institution de recherche au détriment du service du prêt. Fauteux y établit le nombre de consultations sur place à 18,000 contre 14,000 emprunts, mais le tableau de sa main qui suit cette affirmation montre 15,288 consultations sur place contre 14,860 emprunts (pp. 204, 207). Lassonde n'explique pas l'écart et poursuit en affirmant que '... ces données restent valables pour les années qui suivent' [p. 207]. Pourtant ses propres tableaux montrent un service de prêt à l'extérieur en pleine expansion, le nombre d'emprunts passant de 28,337 en 1915-1916 à 70,996 en 1924-25, la dernière année complète de son opération. Par contre, au cours des mêmes années les consultations sur place baissent de 19,361 à 18,154 (Tableau II, p. 210). Ces chiffres semblent indiquer que le service du prêt était d'une plus grande importance à la bibliothèque que ne l'a admis son Conservateur, et que l'abandon de ce service aurait pu porter un dur coup à la popularité de l'institution. Cette question nous semble mériter une plus grande attention, puisque le prêt à l'extérieur représente un moyen privilégié de bien ancrer la bibliothèque dans la communauté et constitue pour l'historien un indice important de son rôle social.

Ceci dit, l'étude de Jean-René Lassonde représente un bel exemple du genre, riche en détails et basé sur une documentation solide. D'autre part, on doit féliciter la Bibliothèque Nationale pour la conception graphique de ce livre marqué par le grand nombre de plans, d'illustrations et de photos.

LOUIS-GEORGES HARVEY
(Louis-Georges Harvey est professeur au Département d'Histoire de l'Université Bishop's.)


John Richardson's Wacousta; or, The Prophesy (London, 1832) is the fourth scholarly edition to be produced by Carleton University's Centre for Editing Early Canadian Texts (CEECT). Edited by Douglas Cronk under the careful and exacting supervision of CEECT's General Editor, Mary Jane Edwards, the volume provides not only an authoritative text of what Professor Edwards herself has called 'probably our seminal historical novel' but also makes available to contemporary readers for the first time – and at a relatively inexpensive price – the novel that Richardson valued so highly and struggled so hard during his lifetime to have published in his native land. One hundred and thirty-five years after his death, the novel as he wrote it and as Thomas Cadell printed it in London is finally available in Canada and elsewhere.

While this publication ought to be seen as an event in itself, it also stands as a major justification of the purpose of CEECT. Along with the complete three-volume novel based on the first – and authorial – edition, the volume provides students interested in early Canadian letters with a critically edited text that has passed
through six stages of preparation and with an apparatus that includes a lengthy Editor's Introduction, Explanatory Notes, lists of published versions of the novel, and a list of line-end hyphenated compounds in both the 1832 copy-text and the CEECT Edition. There are, of course, those skeptics who will inevitably find fault with such meticulous work; thoroughness is costly in itself at any time. Moreover, in a country where questions about a literary tradition occasionally begin with a dismissal of the proposition that there is a nineteenth-century literary tradition at all, there is further unease. Those, however, who have a deep and serious commitment to the historical study of literary expression in Canada will suffer no such qualms. The CEECT Wacousta is a crucial step forward in the process of recovering and understanding better the precise nature of the works produced and the pressures upon the authors who wrote within and about Canada in the nineteenth century. An informed understanding of ‘tradition’ in part follows from the production of reliable scholarly texts.

The CEECT Wacousta effectively challenges the New Canadian Library edition of 1967 edited by Carl Klinck. Klinck's abridged Wacousta was of course instrumental in making the study of the novel possible, and he was under no illusions himself about the validity of the text that emerged out of McClelland and Stewart's constraints. Notwithstanding a certain unease regarding aspects of Richardson's prolixity, Klinck noted that 'Retrospective scholarship will not be misled by any text published later than 1832.' He based his edition on the 1924 Musson edition which itself, according to Cronk, was the shortest edition derived from the abridged 1833 version of the novel first published in North America by Adam Waldie of Philadelphia in Waldie's Select Circulating Library. It is this legacy of abridgement and distortion that the CEECT edition ably documents and corrects.

'A textual history of Wacousta raises issues not only about Richardson's art, but also about current views of nineteenth-century Canadian literature,' wrote Cronk in 1977. In pirating the 1832 edition, Adam Waldie had the novel altered and abridged to make it suitable for his domestic and moralistic American audience. Some 20,000 words were cut and Richardson's language and occasional moments of lasciviousness were cleaned up. In the same essay, Cronk added that 'Waldie destroys Richardson's perfect balance, violates the realism of the language, changes Richardson's attitude towards sex, upsets the theme and philosophy, undermines the dramatic impact, and alters almost beyond recognition the characters and the plot. Most of all, Waldie changed the pro-Canadian, pro-British, attitude of the novel.'

It is certainly as excessive to speak of Richardson's 'perfect balance' as it is to argue for alterations 'almost beyond recognition.' One notes then with some admiration a certain chastening, a more convincing objectivity as it were, in Cronk's 'Editor's Introduction' to the CEECT text. Under Edwards's direction, pertinency is maintained while overstatement is reduced. Wacousta – the real Wacousta – is, in fact, a difficult, curious and charged novel, that in its proper three-volume format is also a prolix, leisurely, often redundant piece of writing. It might well be argued that Richardson badly needed an editor in 1832. Not finding one with Thomas Cadell, the wrong kind found him in Philadelphia.
The result was a bowdlerizing and distortion that Richardson deemed 'imperfect' and sought to correct. While his efforts in Upper Canada in the 1830s and 1840s came to nought, the CEECT edition now allows students to measure those alterations and their long-term effects.

A glimpse at Volume One may, for instance, be suggestive. The original novel's first volume contained ten chapters. The Waldie legacy reduced that to eight. It cut the introductory chapter in which Richardson placed careful emphasis upon 'understanding the localities' ('the features of a country so little interesting to the majority of Englishmen ...' [p. 3]), the politics of border relations, and his own sense of the originality of his project. Repetitious to some extent (in the light of later details) and marked by rhetorical flourishes, the chapter nevertheless demonstrates Richardson's keen sense of the need to blend fact with fiction and to anchor his romance in the solidity of important, but overlooked, historical developments.

The second sequence Waldie (and Klinck) dropped involves an integration of Chapters 8 and 9. Two sections of consequence are thus lost. In the first, the officers of the garrison informally discuss Colonel de Haldimar's action in sentencing Frank Hallowell to death. Richardson is masterful here in his control of the vernacular of the off-duty officers. The 'somewhat thoughtless' Captain Erskine may well be right in asking Blessington, 'Did you remark how displeased the colonel looked as he bungled through it?' [p. 114].

A 'loud and piercing scream' [p. 119] then draws the officers out of the mess to find the irritated governor in the grasp of an agitated young woman. Ellen Halloway in a crazed state of mind violently implores mercy for her husband, her 'white and polished bosom' exposed by her struggles. It is a stunning moment for the officers and the reader, caught as they are between voyeurism ('the involuntary tribute rendered by nature unto beauty' [p. 121]) and the pathetic. It is at the same time a mark of Richardson's patterning that the scene prepares for later events at the bridge, measures Ellen's maddening grief (thus preparing the reader for her curious liaison with Wacousta), and provides a glimpse of Charles de Haldimar's character in his attempt to placate the grieving wife. Without such scenes, much is missed. The CEECT edition gives readers at last a reliable scholarly edition that not only explains itself clearly but restores to us a book that challenges us to know it better.

NOTES
2 Ibid., p. 22. Professor Edwards notes that the average cost per volume in the series is approximately $16,000.
3 John Metcalf argues in What Is A Canadian Literature (Guelph: Red Kite Press, 1988) that there is little of a literary tradition in Canada prior to the 1960s. Wacousta is one of his favourite points of attack. Though provocative, Metcalf's polemic is disappointingly thin in its knowledge as well as its substance.


These volumes are the first five in a series of editions of early Canadian long poems, intended to make easily accessible for further study works that the editor considers to be important and worthy contributions to the tradition of the long poem in Canada. Included amongst the five is one work that has been long out of print and has never been issued in a modern edition, Adam Kidd’s The Huron Chief; two works that have been issued in modern editions, Thomas Cary’s Abram’s Plains, and J. Mackay’s Quebec Hill, but are again unavailable or incomplete; and two works, Archibald Lampman’s The Story of an Affinity and Isabella Crawford’s Malcolm’s Katie, that have been included in recently published collections of the poets’ works or in anthologies, but only in corrupt or unauthorized versions. The series, a production of the Centre for Canadian Poetry at The University of Western Ontario under the capable direction of D.M.R. Bentley, has the virtue of both consistent and scholarly treatment of the chosen poems. As such it demonstrates, along with several other editorial projects in Canadian literature, a conviction that Canadian literature and culture generally cannot be adequately studied and assessed without authoritative editions of key works.