enterprises. In this connection he rightly stresses the great economic and social importance of the development of hydraulic power on the Lachine Canal with the resulting concentration of new industry, new urban development and a new, largely English-speaking, labour force.

The Lachine Canal development, created by government engineers for the benefit of private industry, is only one example among many cited by Professor Tulchinsky of a close and congenial relationship between the Montreal business community and the provincial government, regardless of party. Here he takes issue with some existing Canadian economic theory by contending that the role of government went well beyond the kind of "defensive expansionism" alleged by Professor H.G.J. Aitken. While Professor Tulchinsky has not explored the back room lobbying activities of Montreal businessmen or businessmen-politicians, his conclusion is that such lobbying was really scarcely necessary, since governments were naturally favourably predisposed to business interests. All governments of the time, he says, believed that they had a duty to stimulate economic development, not in order to "defend" Canadian business against competitors but because such action, taken in the name of "progress," was "desirable and right" (p. 104).

It is always possible to quibble over small details — (where, for instance, is "Appendix A" referred to on page 47?) — or to wish for more information on peripheral matters such as land speculation and mining promotion, or to suggest qualifications to some of the more general conclusions. But such minor carping aside, *The River Barons* is an important and valuable book, important in its own right but also because it is an illustration of some precepts that Canadian historians would do well to keep in mind: that an economic approach may well be the most satisfactory single avenue to an understanding of general history; that however worthy and absorbing the study of mass transient populations may be it is still more enlightening to investigate the activities of the relative few who persist; and finally, that careful, detailed studies of manageable areas of the past like *The River Barons* must always be done before we can afford the luxury of sweeping overviews and sweeping theories of Canadian development.

J. K. JOHNSON,
Carleton University.

* * *

DAVID B. KNIGHT. — *A Capital for Canada: Conflict and Compromise in the 19th Century*. Chicago: Department of Geography, University of Chicago, 1977. Pp. xvii, 341.

DAVID B. KNIGHT. — *Choosing Canada's Capital: Jealousy and Friction in the 19th Century*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Carleton Library No. 105, 1977. Pp. xi, 228.

As David Knight correctly argues in the introduction to *Choosing Canada's Capital*,

> Even though geographers have a long standing interest in capital cities, they have ignored the Canadian seat of government question, perhaps because, until recently, most of the work in the now rapidly developing field of Canadian historical geography has focused on patterns and processes of rural settlement and landscape change. Canadian historians have neglected most of the details as well as the full sweep of the capital issue, even though the issue occupied

> public attention for many years and was extremely devisive [*sic*] for the body politic. (p. 3)

The two volumes under review here go a long way towards providing valuable insight into the complex and vexatious issue of the seat of government question during the period 1841 to 1867. Professor Knight has sifted through more than two hundred votes recorded on the issue in the Canadian Legislature and analyzed decision making in a six-level hierarchy (Queen, British Government, Governors General, Executive Council, Legislative Council, and Legislative Assembly) to provide the reader with a detailed account of the reasons behind the six moves of the Canadian capital during the period in question (from Kingston to Montreal to Toronto to Quebec to Toronto to Quebec to Ottawa). The two volumes complement each other. *A Capital for Canada* is a more or less traditional analysis of the entire issue, while *Choosing Canada's Capital* is an annotated guide to the relevant primary sources relating to the seat of government question.

Professor Knight completed his doctoral degree in geography at the University of Chicago. It has been a long-standing policy of that department to publish dissertations as monographs in its research paper series. *A Capital for Canada* represents just such a publication and as such it contains many of the problems associated with most Ph.D. theses. The writing is uneven in quality and the volume could have used tighter editing. For example, I counted almost three dozen typographical errors in the text. Nevertheless, these relatively minor criticisms should not be allowed to overshadow the positive contribution that the book makes to our understanding of a very complex series of events which influenced the history and geography of Canada.

One of the real strengths of *A Capital for Canada* lies in Professor Knight's careful and extensive use of primary sources. He skillfully employs a remarkable array of contemporary materials to document debates, decisions, and public reactions relating to the seat of government question. Among the more important sources consulted were the *Journals* of both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, the personal papers and records of the Governors General and the important politicians of the period, and a good cross section of the newspapers published in British North America between 1841 and 1867. Dr. Knight is to be congratulated on the manner in which he weaves information from these sources into his narrative.

As an historical geographer, Knight displays more than a passing interest in the spatial aspects of the seat of government question. This interest is made manifest at a variety of different levels. For example, considerable attention is paid to boosterism and booster literature in this monograph. Many cities vied for the title of capital or "metropolis" of Canada between 1841 and 1867. The most serious contenders were Bytown/Ottawa, Quebec, Montreal, Kingston, and Toronto, each of which served as the capital of Canada at some time during this era. The local press and interested individuals boosted the prospects of each place, a process that is well documented in this volume. Knight's analysis of the way in which the term 'central' could be manipulated by the boosters is particularly revealing. Ottawa was considered to be central within Canada; Quebec was central in Canada East, but would be central within the country as a whole if federation with the Maritimes was achieved; Toronto was central within Canada West, but would become central within the entire nation if the Hudson's Bay Company lands in the West were annexed. Other locational attributes associated with the individual candidates included distance from the U.S., the commercial nature of the city, the availability of buildings and land and the cultural mix of the population. On many of these counts, Ottawa proved to be the most acceptable place.

Spatial patterns were also evident with respect to the politics of the seat of government question. Sectional (Canada East vs. Canada West) and regional patterns were nearly always evident in the votes recorded in the Legislature on this issue. Knight analyzes these patterns through the interpretation of more than sixty carefully constructed maps. As he concludes, "for the most part, members in the House spoke and voted from local or regional and sectional standpoints, not political party persuasion" (p. 305). In fact, he is able to demonstrate that definite support regions existed and persisted for the contending cities (pp. 311-13).

From a strictly historical standpoint, Knight provides the reader with a useful view of the important political events of the era, (such as responsible government and Canada-U.S. relations) especially as these related to the seat of government issue. Moreover, he cuts through and sorts out the tangled web of legislative motions and amendments relating to the issue of the location of the capital during this period in Canadian history. As we all know, Ottawa eventually emerges as the capital of Canada. What Dr. Knight tells us most convincingly in this book is that the selection of Ottawa was neither easy, obvious, straightforward, nor the solitary whim of Queen Victoria.

A Capital for Canada is not without some minor flaws. The analysis of the impact of the capital function on the various centres in which it came to rest is quite vague. Knight provides very little hard data concerning the effect of the capital (and loss of the capital) on population, rents and land prices, and the local economy. More than newspaper accounts are needed here, especially in the concluding section of the book (p. 304). It is always useful to attempt to assess the reality of the images and expectations of urban boosters.

Though *A Capital for Canada* should have wide appeal for those with even a passing interest in the years leading up to Confederation, *Choosing Canada's Capital* is a much more specialized volume. As I noted earlier, it is an annotated guide to the primary sources bearing upon the various decisions pertaining to the seat of government question. This collection of documents is organized chronologically and the volume includes a useful index to the documents presented. My only reservation about this book is that the introductions to the various sections are sometimes a bit too sketchy. As a result, this volume does not stand by itself in the same way that *A Capital for Canada* does.

To conclude, David Knight has provided us with a useful and informative analysis of the Canadian seat of government question in the years before Confederation. The two books under review here are highly recommended to historians and geographers alike.

Michael J. DOUCET,
Ryerson Polytechnical Institute.

* * *

HEATHER GILBERT. — *The Life of Lord Mount Stephen.* 2 tomes. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1976-77. Pp. 314, 442.

Dans ces deux tomes, Heather Gilbert raconte la vie de Lord Mount Stephen, magnat de la finance et père du Pacifique canadien. Le premier volume, intitulé *Awakening Continent*, est une mise à jour de la version originale parue en 1965, elle-même issue d'une thèse de doctorat dirigée par le professeur Gerald Graham. Il examine la carrière proprement canadienne de George Stephen. Le