

largely went into giving the company the strength to withstand the post-war recession. And anyway, we see, Flavelle probably gave away more than he earned personally from this source at the time. Nevertheless, Bliss concedes, Flavelle became the most widely hated "war profiteer." After all, amid the war trials — of loss of life and sacrifice — for so many other Canadians, how could Flavelle expect understanding for the piling up of vast profits, even if achieved perfectly legally? As Bliss puts it, "A man who wanted and was thought to be a credit to his generation of businessmen did as much as anyone to bring that generation and its value into disrepute" (p. xii).

A Canadian Millionaire is a superb achievement. It is a business study that is neither an embarrassing apology for, nor a simplistic denunciation of, past practices. No doubt individual company studies could provide fuller treatment, from several perspectives, of the various enterprises. But enduring capitalistic success always has rested in the end on the special qualities of mind and nerve possessed by individuals responding creatively to the challenges of particular circumstances and opportunities. We understand that better now because Michael Bliss has conducted a delightful tour of the "life and business times" of Sir Joseph Wesley Flavelle.

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JOHN HERD THOMPSON. — *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978. Pp. 207.

The Canadian social history series is, in the inelegant words of the publisher's blurb, "devoted to in-depth studies of major themes in our history, exploring neglected areas in the day-to-day existence of Canadians." Previous volumes have dealt with business history, the poor, education and women's history, all qualifying as "neglected," or, to be more accurate if not even more inelegant, "hitherto relatively neglected" by the masters of the Canadian historical tradition of economic, political and especially political biographical studies. Clearly, however, times are changing and newer and sometimes younger historians now have a valuable format for expression of their work within the format of this series.

The specific volume under review here explores and, I hope, inaugurates yet another aspect of this broadly conceptualized social history. J. H. Thompson has written a regional history that synthesizes the politics, economics and social development of the western prairie region of Canada in the period of World War I. His theme is clearly drawn. Here was a relatively new society, geographically remote from the European holocaust of 1914-18, inevitably and profoundly affected through political and economic ties as well as the many complex links of kinship and loyalty of the people of the region with Europe.

Transcending specific references to time and place the study of the impact of war upon society provides examples of the foolish as well as the wise aspects of human character. Here the author is not found wanting. In the first "Innocent Enthusiasm" (a chapter heading) of the first few months of war a few sober and prophetic warnings appeared of horrors barely imagined that were to come. *The Voice*, the Winnipeg labour weekly noted: "Those of the great majority think that it is brass bands, braid and feathers, and the throwing out of the chest, but if you have ever seen the regiments of militia on parade you will notice that the stretcher-bearer section is there" (p. 24).

Against this may be contrasted the not very fictional characterization of the Rev. Barry Dunbar's sermon in *The Sky Pilot in No Man's Land*, by Ralph Connor (the pseudonym of the Rev. C. W. Gordon, a western Canadian Presbyterian minister and popular author), who advised his Edmonton congregation that "it is a war of souls, but the method of settlement is not that of reason but of force — a force that finds expression through your bodies. Offer your bodies — those living bodies — those sacred bodies — offer them in sacrifice to God" Connor, cited by Thompson, p. 38).

As one who has worked in many of the same materials used by Thompson in an earlier period of my own career, I followed with fascination the author's supporting of his flowing narrative with comprehensive references to sources, including generous citations of colleagues in the field. My own memory was reawakened to the emotional impact of seeing frequent casualty notices in the newspapers of relatively small communities. Despite the well organized and seemingly universal imposition of government censorship to maintain optimism, promote recruitment and omit the gorier aspects of great battles, the steady flow of these notices, often accompanied by youthful photographs, must have had a cumulative impact upon readers at the time and also impressed Thompson just as they impressed me. Sad to tell, more recent manifestations of the same phenomenon have added to my collection of *déjà vues*.

Beyond the personal aspects of social history, Thompson uses the appropriate sources to present and analyze the development of this region in this period in collective terms, treating the prairies as the quasi-colony of a quasi-colony, he summarizes the economic impact of the war as follows:

The war's high prices bought temporary prosperity to prairie agriculture, but the scramble for short-term profits led to increased levels of debt, costly damage to the land, and continued overdependence on wheat to the detriment of a more balanced agricultural development. Western Canada's urban areas did not share the full measure of the temporary prosperity, and, as we saw the wartime demand for munitions provided them with little opportunity to industrialize. While Central Canada became more and more urban and industrial, the West remained both rural and agricultural (p. 71).

There remain only two further major themes. First, the extraordinary mix of cultures that, at least as shown on maps showing land distribution, created what was truly an ethnic mosaic. War created new social problems here. The predominantly British and eastern Canadian anglophones dominated the society but, despite the relative lack of number of francophone Canadians, the numerous Germans and Ukrainians and others from the polyglot empires of eastern Europe complicated loyalties, employment, education, internment, citizenship, the franchise and conscription (particularly in the crisis period of 1917). Here again, Thompson clarifies these complexities in most exemplary fashion.

Finally, the idealism of the war period affected a number of domestic reform movements of the time, notably prohibition and women's suffrage. A subordinate issue here also was the movement for the initiative form of direct democracy, derived from the influence of various of the United States' "progressive" state governments. In western Canada, however, this became linked to the prohibition question and was of transitory significance, as in the long run, was prohibition itself.

In general, therefore, this is an outstanding and comprehensive study in a small book. The editor and publisher might now consider similar studies of other regions of Canada focusing upon critical periods of history.

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