

*The Western Interior of Canada : A Record of Geographical Discovery 1612-1917.* Edited and introduced by John Warkentin. Carleton Library No. 15. McClelland and Steward Ltd., Toronto, 1964, 310 pp.

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with the impression that North Dakota is a potential industrial giant because of its rich coal deposits.

The cartography in both of these texts leaves much to be desired. Small, excessively reduced dot maps constitute the greater part of the cartographic presentation in Wills' North Dakota text. In the only population map of the state, urban population is spread evenly, along with rural population, over the county in which the city is situated (p. 115). Fantastic! The map of mineral resources (p. 201) is equally ill conceived. The best maps are those of physiography (pp. 32 and 34), soils (p. 50), drainage pattern (p. 59), and transportation (pp. 245-248). There is no map of vegetation nor of the agricultural regions so well illustrated in the chapter on representative farms. The maps in Lantis' volume on California are more impressive cartographically, but the subjects which are covered by maps are limited. The city maps are not very useful; they do not show built-up area, for example. The appendices contain an excellent series of maps, but most of them are too small. Each of these books badly needs a map of cities by proportional circles with the names of the cities indicated. (Lantis has an excellent dot map of California population (p. 466), but this does not serve the same purpose.) And most of all, both books are lacking in synthetic maps showing more than one kind of thing on the same base in order to bring out relationships and integrations. Since a region is characterized by the distinctive combination of features within it, synthetic maps are a must in good regional geography.

The photographs in both books are abundant and generally well chosen, with the exception of a considerable number of Lantis' illustrations which are oblique air photos with the subject at such a great distance that little can be discerned about it. For a lithoprinted volume at such a modest cost, the excellent array of photographs in Wills' book is to be highly praised.

#### *Conclusion*

The reviewer has attempted to evaluate the two state geographies under consideration with reference to the methodology of regional geography. The methodological points raised are not intended to be exhaustive; they are merely those which the strengths and weaknesses of the books under study call to mind. Aside from their merits and shortcomings from the methodological point of view, each of these texts has outstanding practical value. Although Lantis' book gives little about California as a whole, it is a gold mine for the geographer, student, or layman who is already familiar with the personality and broad regions of California and desires to learn the character and details of the several small regions of the state. This book is ideal for the traveler, professional or layman, who desires to voyage about in California, book in hand, and see for himself in the field the things so lucidly described and explained in this handsome volume. The Wills book, on the other hand, will not in the least serve this purpose. Its value is to give the state-wide picture and to show the statistical position of North Dakota in the nation as a whole. Both represent a store of information about their respective states.

John M. CROWLEY

### L'EXPLORATION DE L'OUEST CANADIEN

#### **The Western Interior of Canada: A Record of Geographical Discovery 1612-1917.**

Edited and introduced by John WARKENTIN. Carleton Library No. 15. McClelland and Stewart Ltd., Toronto, 1964, 310 pp., \$2.95.

In recent years we have seen a major growth in the numbers of paper-back books on aspects of geography. One of the most interesting for a Canadian reader is one in The Carleton Library by John Warkentin. Professor Warkentin, a native of Manitoba but now of York University, has carefully and appropriately introduced selected excerpts from the journals and papers of explorers who travelled in the Prairies Provinces in the period 1612 to 1917. The descriptive notes of the earlier explorers were usually brief but later more scientific observers wrote at length about specific features of the physical environment. The length of the passages quoted reflects this difference.

There is a continuity in theme that holds the reader's interest. This is due in part to the excellent background comments by Warkentin and partly to the selection of passages that focus upon the development of some of the popular concepts that are now widely held concerning the physical geography of the Prairies. The recurring mention of these makes one wonder what the current thought on each might be. Unfortunately, some of these concepts are of only marginal validity today and should not have been given the stress and implicit acceptance they have received.

The impression that the Prairies have three steps (steppes) or levels is widely held. The greater part of the Prairie usually included is in parkland and forest, not steppe, thus this part of the concept is slowly disappearing from popular use. The three step or level aspect is not much more correct because the descriptions concerning boundaries, elevations, surficial materials and related soil and vegetation patterns apply only in the south and with numerous exceptions and qualifications even there. The earlier explorers and fur traders did not see these « levels » because they are not present in the central and northern plains. Some explorers found « plateaus » where we now see « high plains. » This is partly a matter of vantage point — they travelled largely within the deeply incised valleys and we travel on roads and railway lines that have been located to avoid the valleys.

The reader is left with the impression that glaciation in the Prairies followed the textbook patterns of Eastern North America and that the observers of Prairie patterns gradually accepted these views. The work of glacial geomorphologists such as Gravenor, Bayrock, Kupsch, Christiansen and Stalker in the last decade has confirmed some of the differences observed by G. M. Dawson. He was wrong about the area not having been covered by ice but the very large amount of ponding against dead ice in the later stages of deglaciation resulted in many of the distinctive forms he did find.

Many of the explorers commented on the short frost free season of the more humid areas and the aridity of the drier areas. They were not as wrong about the region as might be suggested. These areas are productive today in large part because varietal improvement of cereal grains has reduced frost free season requirements from well over one hundred days to between sixty and eighty days and technological improvements have enabled us to utilize limited moisture supplies far more efficiently than was possible one hundred or so years ago. Some of the techniques involved (e.g. summerfallowing) have, if anything, been oversold in the Prairies.

The title seems appropriate for a study in historical geography but one doubts that it will appeal to people of the Prairies for other purposes. To many, the words « Western » and « Interior » suggest remoteness. The region under discussion is actually South Western Central Canada. Would the term « Eastern Interior of Canada » appeal to residents of Toronto and Montréal who live in the outer extremities of South Eastern Central Canada, somewhat farther from the center of Canada than the area under discussion?

The full bibliography is very informative but the maps leave much to be desired. Four small maps showing the location of some topographic features and of selected routes of explorers seem to be inadequate illustration of the work of some of the most able map makers Canada has known. Portions of maps by Pond, Thompson, Palliser, Tyrrell and many others would interest most readers.

Professor Warkentin has prepared a most useful introduction of the historical geography of the Prairies. This is a fertile field for further research, particularly now when many of the pioneer settlers of many parts of the region are still with us. Some of the most interesting possibilities lie in reconstructing the geography of particular places at particular times. This task will be done increasingly by graduate students and staff in the rapidly expanding Geography Departments of the region (e.g. there are now 43 grads in Geography at the University of Alberta in Edmonton). The work of these geographers in filling in gaps in our knowledge and in improving geographical concepts concerning this region will continue the work begun by the explorers whose observations have been so ably surveyed by Professor Warkentin.

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## UN ATLAS AGRICOLE DU QUÉBEC

MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE ET DE LA COLONISATION DU QUÉBEC, Conseil des Recherches agricoles. **L'Agriculture du Québec. Documentation cartographique.** Préparé sous la direction de Marcel BÉLANGER, 58 planches, Québec, 1965.

L'agriculture du Québec fait vivre seulement 10% environ de la population totale de la Province. Cependant, son importance spatiale et historique dépasse de loin son importance démographique et économique. C'est pourquoi le géographe lui consacre une part importante de ses efforts. Efforts disproportionnés avec l'intérêt du sujet, diront les économistes. Pourtant, l'agriculture est une des composantes essentielles des paysages étudiés par le géographe. Elle constitue même un champ d'action idéal pour mettre en pratique la synthèse géographique puisque, de la pédologie à l'économie agricole, les faits s'enchaînent souvent étroitement.

Pour étudier l'agriculture du Québec, et du Canada en général, le Recensement du Canada fournit une documentation relativement fouillée sur les questions agricoles. C'est à partir de cette source que monsieur Bélanger a élaboré sa *Documentation cartographique sur l'agriculture du Québec*. L'ouvrage se présente sous un format  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$  pouces, avec couverture cartonnée et reliure métallique à spirale. Les cartes sont à l'échelle du  $1/3,000,000^e$  environ, et ne figurent que le Québec méridional en dessous du parallèle  $50^e$ , l'agriculture étant quasiment inexistante au-delà. Les chiffres ont été recueillis et cartographiés sur la base des divisions de recensement dont les limites correspondent sensiblement à celles des comtés provinciaux. La majeure partie des cartes ont été établies d'après les chiffres de 1961, sauf pour les cartes d'évolution dont certaines remontent jusqu'à 1871. Aucun commentaire n'accompagne les planches, hormis une très brève présentation de la Documentation et un appendice qui donne la référence des sources utilisées pour chaque carte.

## LE CONTENU DE L'ATLAS

Le travail comprend trois parties :

- Aspects démographiques et économiques : 21 planches ;
- Utilisation du sol : 29 planches ;
- Cartes de synthèse : 8 planches.

La première partie traite de l'importance absolue et relative de la population agricole, de son évolution de 1931 à 1961, avec plusieurs cartes montrant les détails de cette évolution. Une planche illustre l'évolution de la population rurale de 1871 à 1961. Les variations du nombre des exploitations agricoles de 1956 à 1961 font l'objet de deux autres planches. On trouve aussi des données relatives à l'âge moyen et au travail hors-ferme des exploitants, ainsi qu'au mode de tenure. La main-d'œuvre agricole est traitée sur deux cartes. La valeur de l'élevage et son évolution de 1931 à 1961, la spécialisation laitière et le nombre de tracteurs terminent cette première partie.

La deuxième partie aborde l'importance et l'évolution du domaine agricole, la taille des exploitations ainsi que les variations de cette taille de 1931 à 1961. Vingt-quatre autres planches concernent la représentation des divers types d'utilisation du sol d'après les statistiques : surfaces défrichées et non défrichées, boisés de ferme, surfaces en culture, en pâturage, en foin, en avoine, fruits et légumes, etc. . . . Pour chaque donnée, l'auteur illustre l'importance absolue et relative des surfaces, ainsi que leur évolution de 1931 à 1961.

La troisième partie, constituée, selon l'auteur, de cartes de synthèse, traite de la structure des exploitations agricoles, des dominantes de l'utilisation du sol, et de divers types de densités relatives aux vaches laitières et à la population agricole.

La plupart des cartes présentées utilisent la méthode des aires colorées, avec une gamme de hachures et de pointillés en noir. Des chiffres, placés au centre de chaque comté, accompagnent le figuré. Certaines cartes de répartition, en chiffres absolus, sont construites à l'aide de points de comptage répartis uniformément sur toute la surface des comtés. Pour presque toutes les cartes, la représentation est limitée au territoire municipalisé du Québec.