

Although the first volume of *Canadian Papers in Business History* foresaw a continuing series of essays, the preface to the current volume makes no such reference. That suggests a continuing need to search for appropriate ways to sustain research and debate in Canadian business history in collected, systematic fashion. Capitalism in Canada cannot be understood in narrowly national terms, but it is important to have Canadian examples of, and variants on, the wider patterns of business history.

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George Emery — *Facts of Life: The Social Construction of Vital Statistics, Ontario 1869–1952*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993. Pp. xv, 243.

George Emery has written a book that will be of "vital" interest to anyone seeking to use the techniques of historical demography to construct a portrait of past populations. His book addresses the very significant problems researchers face in using historical vital statistics as a basis for analysis. As well as identifying the problems, Emery, in a series of five meticulous case studies, suggests ways of both estimating the statistical error and "correcting" or "adjusting" for it. He further reminds us, "Because statistics are cultural phenomena, they require social interpretation, not mere technical correction" (p. 3).

A prologue, two more general chapters, and a concluding chapter provide the broader context and effectively encase the specific studies. Perhaps it is because the context is so compellingly evoked that the contents enclosed by the outer shell might leave some readers feeling vaguely dissatisfied. On the whole, the analysis in the case studies tends to focus on the problem of "technical correction", sometimes at the expense of the more significant problem of "social interpretation". Moreover, none of the case studies encompasses the entire period. The first, which focuses on the problem of revising defective mortality statistics, does deal with data for Ingersoll for the period from 1880 to 1972; the remaining four deal exclusively with the twentieth century. Thus, readers hoping for insights concerning the nineteenth century will be disappointed. Nevertheless, this is a highly useful book, for the author's approach to the interpretation and revision of historical statistics is innovative and pathbreaking.

In the opening chapters the reader is caught up in what Emery refers to as "the statistical movement", emanating first from England and Massachusetts. The evolution of civil registration in Ontario, from the Registration Act of 1869 to 1950, is outlined in an interesting way. Yet the explanation for Ontario's adoption of a civil registration law in 1869 as a by-product of nineteenth-century capitalist industrial economic development (p. 29) is not altogether convincing. Although it may have had the fastest growing and the most spatially integrated economy in the country, even Ontario had not undergone significant "capitalist industrial develop-

ment" by 1869. Similarly, the author's assertion that "On an immediate level, [the Registration Law] responded to anticipated changes in social and environmental conditions, such as the aggravation of public-health problems in cities" (p. 30) may be challenged. Who anticipated it? Not, apparently, Ontario's doctors, for we also read that "medical lobbying was not in evidence in 1869" (p. 26). Thus, while the explanations offered are thought-provoking, the reason why Ontario was so advanced in the area of civil registration remains, at least for this reader, elusive.

The five case studies deal with different but interrelated problems faced by researchers seeking to use available vital statistics to provide a portrait of birth and death in past populations. The case study of "Death in Ingersoll, 1880-1972" effectively demonstrates that by using civil registration in conjunction with other sources, such as cemetery records and death notices in local newspapers, a researcher can overcome the problem of incomplete mortality registration, at least for the period after 1880. The following chapter, a companion piece which addresses the problem of incomplete birth registrations, outlines a complex four-step method for estimating accurate birth registration data. While readers uninitiated in statistics who have carefully followed each step of this technique may feel somewhat betrayed upon discovering that the author's findings "accord with Kuczynski's", published in 1930 (pp. 96-97), historical demographers will appreciate the methodological sophistication of the rigorous test carried out by Emery, which does indeed "strengthen the empirical basis" for Kuczynski's "largely intuitive" judgements (p. 96). Moreover, because each step is carefully explained, the method could be replicated for other provinces. All readers will also find Emery's discussion of the reasons for and reliability of late birth registrations particularly useful. The imperative for late registration was a highly practical one: to demonstrate eligibility to receive old age pension benefits. Clearly, this has significant implications for historians who are interested in all those who were born, not merely those who survived to age 65.

Emery takes up some aspects of this issue in the following chapter, a discussion of the implications for historical demographers of the varying definitions of infant deaths and stillbirths. Not only did definitions change over time, but culture influenced definition as well. Because Roman Catholics considered baptism "a necessary condition of the admittance of a human being into heaven" (p. 106), in Quebec many infants who would have been classified as stillborn in Protestant Ontario were classified as live births and baptized. As a result, infant mortality in the first day of life appeared much higher in Quebec than in Ontario; conversely, Ontario appeared to have a higher proportion of stillbirths. This anomaly continued well into the 1930s.

Mothers of babies also come under scrutiny in a case study that focuses on maternal mortality. Emery attempts to determine the extent to which fatal pregnancies were attributed to other causes. He provides convincing evidence to indicate that "provincial totals for the puerperal-state class of deaths missed 17-27 per cent of ... pregnancy-related deaths" during the period between 1920 and 1935 (p. 136). The reasons for such omissions were varied. Physicians differed in their interpretations, the design of death certificates determined the information recorded, and sometimes physicians sought to protect patients and their families from social

stigma by concealing the actual cause of death. Perhaps most important, in cases where two or more causes of death were reported, officials were required to select only one "underlying" cause for classification (p. 136). Revision of a form or modification of the instructions to doctors who completed it could thus affect the nature of the information recorded. When bureaucrats themselves recognized the need for such revision, problems could quite often be readily solved. The development of such a solution underlies the analysis in the final case study, which considers the problem of where births and deaths were reported. With the rise of the hospital, for example, an increasing proportion of the population were born and died outside their community of residence. Until the introduction of an effective residence question on birth and death registration forms, the statistics collected did not necessarily reflect the actual number of births and deaths within particular communities. Although the Dominion Bureau of Statistics introduced a question on the mother's "usual residence" on birth registration forms in 1920, a similar addition to death registration forms came only in the 1930s. The implications for demographers are obvious. Yet, Emery argues, this is mainly a problem for those who wish to determine accurate mortality rates for specific localities and does not affect the accuracy of provincial rates (p. 154).

The strength of this book lies in its clear methodological approach. The problems addressed in the case studies are ones many of us who have used historical vital records have faced. As a result of this book, Canadian historians who accept historical statistics at face value will do so at their peril. Even vital statistics are not free of gender, class and ethnic biases. Emery has reminded us to take into account the particular milieu in which the statistics were collected. Those who oversaw and those who undertook collection of the data were very much products of their own time and place. Vital statistics, like any other form of historical "data", were, as Emery demonstrates, "socially constructed".

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Greg Marquis — *Policing Canada's Century: A History of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993. Pp. xv, 459.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police figure prominently in the popular imagination as the quintessential Canadian police force. Municipal and provincial police, however, predate the RCMP by a generation and collectively employ more personnel. Less glamorous and generally ignored by historians, they have played a crucial role in the criminal justice system. Greg Marquis' book, *Policing Canada's Century*, surveys the history of Canada's most important police lobby, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP), known as the Chief Constables' Association of Canada until 1954.

Beginning with an overview of nineteenth-century policing that includes American and British — especially Irish — influences, Marquis chronicles the reaction of police chiefs to social change, the rise of new institutions, reform movements,