and government policy and their exclusion from formal roles in business and government, created gender-based differences in their economic and social opportunities and in the decisions that women and men made” (p. 142). Yet they further conclude, “Given the quite different circumstances of single and married women and quite different opportunities for resident and non-resident proprietors, it is not possible to assess whether female proprietors managed their estates differently from male proprietors” (p. 147). While the authors make the case for a certain level of representativeness by selecting four women whose experiences span almost the entire era of proprietorship in Prince Edward Island, the uniqueness of each story leaves the reader wondering about the existence and nature of “patterns” of female proprietorship. Of the four subjects, who was most typical: were “lady landlords” more likely to be married, widowed, or single? How many actively managed their own estates? How many were absentee landlords and how many resided on the Island? How many wrote letters to either the Island or the imperial government?

As a collective biography of four “lady landlords,” this is a fascinating book. It provides invaluable insight into the possibilities estate ownership afforded women, and it is suggestive of the ways in which women’s approach to landlordism may have differed from that of their male counterparts. But we are not told precisely how or why these particular four women were chosen. Is it significant that, of the 57 estates expropriated under the 1875 Land Purchase Act, theirs were among just eight that exceeded 10,000 acres? Despite such questions, the stories of these four women are intrinsically interesting and uniformly intriguing. Lady Landlords of Prince Edward Island is a meticulously researched and engagingly written book. Through a case study approach, this volume makes a signal contribution to the growing body of historical literature on women property-holders. It offers insight into the gendered dimensions of property-holding during an age when property conferred status as well as independence, on women as well as on men.

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In his 1993 presidential address to the Canadian Historical Association, Phillip Buckner criticized the separation between Canada and British Empire in recent history-writing. As Buckner explained, the separation had grown since the 1960s when Canadianists took a decidedly nation-based approach to their research, while historians of Empire became decidedly uninterested in the “White Dominions” of the Empire. Canada and the British Empire is Buckner’s latest attempt to reintroduce the British Empire to Canadian history, thereby mending this historiographical divergence. Focusing on the role of Empire in Canada, and especially attitudes in Canada toward “Britishness,” the important
thread running through these chapters is this: until the 1970s, British North
American (and later “Canadian”) society was characterized by a dual loyalty to
(and sometime tension between) the British Empire and Canada. The implication
of this dual loyalty, argue the authors in this volume, is that the story of Canada
must not be separated from its identification with, and position in, the British
imperial project.

The volume’s 14 chapters are divided into two sections. The first six chapters
provide a chronological narrative of the relationship between the Empire and
British North America up to the 1960s. This is the strongest section of the
book. The first chapter by John Reid and Elizabeth Mancke on the pre-1780s
period makes a particularly interesting argument that connects Nova Scotia,
Newfoundland, and Rupert’s Land to a single process of commerce-led settle-
ment. Other chapters in this opening section explain how the dual loyalty to
Britain and Canada was a constant theme from the 1830s rebellions through to
the 1980s. The United States casts a large shadow in each of these chapters; as
John Thompson notes, the United States was Canada’s “Other” and a reason to
retain its connection to Britain. The second half of the book is comprised of the-
matic chapters covering the Empire as it related to Newfoundland, migration,
Aboriginal peoples, French-speaking Canada, women, economy, and law. Two
themes animate this section: the fact that “Britishness” remained important in
Canadian society until at least the 1960s, and the suggestion that the Empire
appears somewhat de-centred when viewed from the perspective of Canada. As
with any project as ambitious as this, there are important themes that deserved
more sustained attention. Although discussed briefly in some essays, full chapters
on religion, environment, class and status, military service, masculinity, and inter-
colonial relations should have been included in this volume. Many readers will
also be frustrated by the volume’s tendency to focus on the perspectives of elite
men and women in central and eastern Canada. At times, one is left wanting
more about how the everyday lives of people from the North and the West, and
in the fur trade, the factories, and the military, interacted with Empire.

The central strength and weakness of this book is its focus on the role of
“Britishness” to the development of Canada between 1815 and 1960. Some chap-
ters use this idea of “Britishness” and the dual British/Canadian loyalties to make
fresh interpretations of established periods and themes. Buckner’s chapters high-
light how Canadian nationalism and “imperial enthusiasm” rose after
Confederation in 1867; Thompson explains how Canada expressed “imperial sen-
timents” even as it became more independent of Britain in the 1930s, while Adele
Perry notes how Canadian feminism was linked to high imperial sentiments
through organizations like the Imperial Order Daughters of Empire. In a particu-
larly revealing example of dual loyalty, Philip Girard explains how Canadian legal
culture was created by blending a faith in “British justice” and made-in-Canada
solutions to legal issues.

Unfortunately, the links between “Britishness” and Canada are not always so
clearly articulated. J. M. Bumsted’s chapter on the years immediately before

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Confederation could have been written without reference to the Empire, while the chapters on migration recognize that migrants came from Britain, but not what “Britain” meant to them and how they undertook the complex task of articulating their identities as “British” or “Canadian.” While these and other chapters list examples of how symbols of “Britishness” — mainly the monarch, the flag, and the anthem — were retained by people in Canada to identify with Britain, it is not always clear what these symbols meant to them. At some points, “Britishness” is equated with the right to self-government; at other times it is linked to an imperial and paternalist impulse to bring civilization to the world. Too often, no specific meaning is attached to “Britishness.” Without clarification of this term, the meaning of the relationship between Canada and the British Empire often remains hidden behind a vague allegiance to symbols.

Another problem with the focus on “Britishness” is that it overlooks the question of how the global connectedness of Empire shaped Canada’s past. While chapters discussing international systems of trade skilfully show how regions of Canada like Newfoundland, the Maritimes, and the West were somewhat at the mercy of the commercial interests of London merchants, the bulk of the chapters fail to examine how the networks of Empire were causal forces in Canadian history. Sarah Carter’s chapter on Aboriginal peoples compares the plight of Canadian Aboriginals to the Maori and Aborigines in Australia, but does not link the two regions. A sensitivity to the imperial connections between Canada and the rest of Empire might have allowed Carter to speculate on how events in the Cape Colony had a direct effect on the administration of Native peoples in Canada in the 1830s, or how the 1840s enthusiasm for free trade in the Empire likewise weakened the will of London to protect Aboriginal land in Upper Canada. Carter might have also explored the ways Aboriginal people like John Brant and Peter Jones used these same imperial networks to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people. Like the authors of many other chapters, Carter references the Empire and “Britishness” without unpacking their meanings and implications for the people — Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal — in Canada.

This is a beginning, not an end, to the study of Canada in the Empire. Buckner and the authors should be congratulated for bringing this discussion to light and providing us with several new questions and themes about Canada’s connection to Empire. We must hope that, as more students are trained to think comparatively and with a sense that Canada was in part a creation of the British Empire, the ideas introduced here will be fleshed out with greater specificity. These future works should pay particular attention to the way “Britishness” was understood by people across the regions and communities of Canada and how the connectedness of Canada to Empire shaped the colonies, the dominion, and the nation we know today.

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