The study in the post conquest period uses a larger group: 899 in 1805; if domestics are included, the total is 1,578. The age, duration and salaries of the apprentices in this period resemble closely those prevalent in the pre-1760 period. (This is true as to salaries only if the currency noted on p. 143 is *pounds* rather than *livres*. We are not told.)

In the chapter on the "Social Conditions of the Apprentices" ethnic-cultural data is provided. For example, 60.6% of the parents and 54.3% of the apprentices of British origin could sign their names; the respective statistics for the French are 15% and 19% (p. 164). The anglophone masters, while perhaps more literate, are also, by implication, the more onerous masters for 67% of the desertions by apprentices were from British masters. As the author notes, inasmuch as the British population was 16 to 18% of the total, this percentage takes on a greater significance.

As is obvious, and as can be expected, much of the data furnished by the authors is of a quantitative order. From this, qualitative inductions and deductions are made, of more or less value. Table XVIII, p. 177, is one example, the most flagrant, of the dangers and pitfalls of that leap from the quantitative to the qualitative. For the first and only time in a table, sailors appear. Of the 202 desertions, 136 are British and 66 are French. Of the 136, 84 are sailors. If we remove the latter, the British desertions fall to 52 and the French remain at 66. The authors' qualitative judgement that there were more desertions from British than French masters is suspect on two grounds: the inclusion of a previously unheard of classification, and the question of whether these desertions were from a British-Canadian captain or ship owner.

Hardy and Ruddel are aware of the limitations of their documentation. As well, they insist that they are offering what is but the first stage of a more profound study. In terms of averages, age, salaries, duration, etc., they succeed in providing a great deal of information. It would have been more relevant if the context of their study had considered the broader socio-economic setting, in particular, normal hours of work by artisans in the periods considered, rates of production, and prices. Levels of expectation or the nature of consumer habits would also have assisted the reader in placing their data within a context.

One misses, as well, the leaven of life: humour, tears, happiness. These young people, apprentices, lived, no doubt, hard lives. Did their elders and masters, whom bailiffs would summons at seven in the morning, revel in some kind of arcadia? Life, it has been said, is short, nasty and brutish or, as some would have it, British. Human beings, be they members of the elite or of the working class, are more than statistics. One might even venture to say, that the current statistical bias of some parts of Canadian historiography is leading us to perdition: more and more on the less and less significant. The elites both quantitatively and qualitatively, at least, are interesting.

Cameron NISH,
Concordia University.

* * *

GERALD J.J. TULCHINSKY. — *The River Barons: Montreal Businessmen and the Growth of Industry and Transportation, 1837-53*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977. Pp. xiv, 310.

The River Barons is a detailed case study of a particular set of urban businessmen during a limited time period which offers new and challenging

interpretations of the history of the "Empire of the St. Lawrence". Drawing upon a commendably wide range of sources, Professor Tulchinsky analyzes the composition and behaviour of the Montreal business community during a period of marked and rapid change in a series of interconnected studies of shipping, railways and industry. Though the book is concerned primarily with transportation and industry, a running biographical commentary demonstrates the extent to which its subjects were (or were not) involved in other financial or commercial ventures, or in social, charitable and political activities.

Throughout the book and in chapter two in particular, Professor Tulchinsky has enlightening points to make about the national or ethnic composition of the business community. His most dramatic assertion, which is documented at length, is that French Canadians, far from being "characterized by reticence, unwillingness to invest and accept the controls of joint-stock ventures" (p. 181) were in fact "as aggressive and flexible in business as other Montreal businessmen" (p. 67). Indeed his evidence would suggest that one or two French Canadians, such as Joseph Masson and Augustin Cantin, were more "aggressive" than most of their contemporaries, of whatever origin. This does not mean, as Professor Tulchinsky makes clear, that French Canadians always competed successfully on common ground with other businessmen, but that they operated instead in areas of enterprise and in geographical regions which were different from those exploited by English-speaking entrepreneurs; even this generalization applies only to transportation and not, with one or two exceptions, to industry. Nonetheless the range of French Canadian business activities which he has found is impressive and casts a good deal of doubt on previous views, notably those of Professor Ouellet, about the nature of the French Canadian "mentalité".

Of interest too is Professor Tulchinsky's estimate of the important role played by American businessmen, who, though they also seem to have formed a kind of segregated group, were by virtue of American "know how," capital and contacts "probably the second most significant national group" (p. 11) (next to the Scots). He contends however that the American role was ultimately a declining one in a business community "committed to the metropolitan mercantilism of Montreal" (p. 234), committed to a struggle for independence from and even dominance over the major Atlantic ports of Boston and New York. He argues, in a provocative and persuasive conclusion, that this "metropolitan mercantilism" did not represent incipient Canadian nationalism or loyalty to the mother country. Nor did the business community feel any mystical bond with "the river" or "the Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence". "The merchants," he writes, "had never been nationalists and never would be — unless it was in their economic interest" (p. 236). Hence "Montreal merchants had always been continentalists" (p. 237). The "high drama" of the Annexation Crisis then, in Professor Tulchinsky's interpretation, was no strange aberration in a pattern of staunch British loyalty but a natural and rational business proposal, based upon the expectation of "substantial economic benefits" (p. 237).

Professor Tulchinsky's work also offers some useful insights into the "Merchants against Industry" controversy both by demonstrating that there was some overlap, particularly between merchants and the transportation field, and by suggesting reasons why merchants (and bankers) usually did not move into, or invest in, industrial enterprises. Here again he opts for common sense rather than for global theory. Their motives, he believes, had little to do with "mentality," colonial or otherwise, but with a lack of capital or expertise and an unwillingness to break long standing habits of short term investment. Commercial and financial reluctance however, as he shows, did not prevent the rapid growth of industry in the 1840s, as an addition to rather than as an outgrowth of existing

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