

ciere of "Oral Tradition: New England and French Canada." Of the three, that of Luc Lacourciere is the most significant, being a comparison of folksong and folk literature in the two societies and pointing out not only a common heritage of fantastic tales but of songs made up to describe the lives of those who left Quebec for American lumber camps.

This conference did not equal the scholarly attainments of the *Colloque sur l'État des Recherches sur le Canada français* at Laval in 1963. One regrets that a number of scholars who could have made a major contribution were not invited, that the occasion was not used to prepare up-to-date scholarly bibliographies, and that new models of interpretation failed to emerge. Yet it is pleasant to read of a conference seriously attempting to bridge the gap between the layman and the professional.

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ROBERT GOURLAY. — *Statistical Account of Upper Canada*. Edited and introduced by S.R. Mealing. The Carleton Library. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974.

In 1822 Robert Gourlay's *Statistical Account of Upper Canada* appeared. Any reader willing to brave the 1,995 pages associated with the work stumbled across a rather chaotic jumble of matter — relations of Gourlay's schemes for the alleviation of rural poverty in England, material connected with the Gourlay agitation in Upper Canada, extensive descriptions of the history, the statutes, and the state of that colony, vitriolic attacks on those whom Gourlay imagined had wronged him, and so on. Much of this could only have been of peripheral interest to any contemporary reader, though some of it would indeed have been of concern to would-be emigrants to Upper Canada.

Professor Mealing has assumed, quite rightly, that students of Upper Canadian history might find much of value and interest in a severely abridged edition of Gourlay's work. Though his publication is but one-quarter as long as the original, the deletion of repetitious material, of most of the lengthy, and often tedious, footnotes prepared by Gourlay, and of the bulk of the extensive documents found in the volumes published in 1822 account for much of the editing.

Gourlay was driven in the first instance into his stance as a "gad-fly," and thus ultimately into his mad career in Upper Canada, by his desire to find a solution for the rural poverty and distress he saw about him in Britain. In his rather brief introduction, Mealing places Gourlay in the context of British agrarian radicalism, and in his selection of material allows Gourlay himself to present some of his more lucid explanations for the solutions he envisioned for the ills of English society — solutions such as the redistribution of land, the abolition of the poor laws, the establishment of limitations on child labour, the adoption of a single tax on land, the implementation of a general debt reduction, and so forth. Certainly, one can see in all Gourlay's proposals evidence of genuine humanitarian concern, just as one can see in Gourlay's career at large, as Professor Mealing does (pages 2, 11), evidence of a compulsive desire to attract attention. More to the point, it is clear, as the readings suggest, that the realities of an increasingly industrial and urbanized Britain were not within Gourlay's range of vision, as he concentrated almost exclusively on the ills of the countryside.

Gourlay, of course, had a somewhat bizarre career in Upper Canada, and much of the *Statistical Account* dealt, in one way or another, with that career. Here, Mealing's edition contains the material of most obvious interest — Gourlay's three addresses to the resident landowners, documents relating to the agitation of 1817-19, and fairly extensive comments from Gourlay himself about the events in which he was embroiled. From it all, Gourlay emerges as a rather frenetic and mercurial personality — certainly not the man, as Professor Mealing observes (pages 3-5), to weld the various political malcontents of the province into an effective "reform movement."

In many ways Gourlay's great achievement in Upper Canada was his securing of the township reports. Despite the fact that few, if any, responses were forthcoming from certain districts to Gourlay's questionnaire, and despite the fact that some reports received were incomplete or were the product of the labours of one or two interested individuals, the reports are of genuine interest to historians; for they provide detailed, contemporary evidence about conditions within the province. Thus Professor Mealing's decision to reproduce these documents in their entirety (pp. 12-13) is readily understandable (though the subsequent omission of the report from Caistor and Canboro is not). It seems unfortunate, however, that explanatory note 13 has not been included, as that note informed Gourlay's readers that he was editing most of the reports and that information easily "expressed by figures" would appear in tabular form only — surely an important point.

In Mealing's edition there are other omissions with which one might quarrel. On page 55, amidst a discussion of agricultural practices in England, reference is made to the "foregoing Table," but that table is not in evidence. Similarly, repeated reference is made on page 372 to an address to the public by Thomas Clark, but that document, found in the original, has not been reproduced.

Too, this volume contains a number of minor printing errors — most of them typographical. "Uppper Canada" is found on page 104, "Chief Justic" on 345, "perceptions" on 347, "objectionaable" on 355, and "rididulous" on 360. The footnote on page 129 belongs on 130. The entries in the first of the index tumble off the bottom of the page. As well, Hamilton, — rather than adjacent Haldimand, — incorrectly appears on the map of "Townships making Reports." Finally, several errors occur in the system of "cross-pagination" used in the Table of Contents, particularly with reference to the second volume of the *Statistical Account*.

Still, the criticisms made are all minor ones. There is little doubt that Professor Mealing has done students of Ontario's past a valuable service in providing them a readily available edition of Gourlay's *Statistical Account*. Some violence has inevitably been done the original — many of the more vituperative passages have been expunged, the sense of confusion inherent in Gourlay's work has been blunted by the exercise of a practised editorial eye (though no attempt has been made to restructure the work). In any event, the *Statistical Account* emerges from Professor Mealing's ministrations a more comprehensible and readable work.

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