

urbaine, on y apprend que les élus municipaux n'eurent d'autres choix que d'harmoniser leurs rapports avec la compagnie Bell, et de souscrire à l'entrepreneurship de ses dirigeants durant les années 1920.

Par la richesse de son questionnement, l'ouvrage de Claire Poitras ouvre de nouveaux horizons en histoire urbaine et en histoire sociale des télécommunications. Les lecteurs de la revue seront certainement ravis d'y constater un intérêt

manifeste pour la culture matérielle, en parcourant les passages consacrés à la modernité architecturale des bâtiments de la compagnie Bell (p. 141-159), et ceux réservés à l'évolution du design des appareils téléphoniques (p. 222-228). Ces mêmes lecteurs risquent toutefois de rester sur leur faim s'ils s'attendent à y retrouver des explications détaillées sur les techniques de transmission et de commutation téléphoniques.

NOTE

1. Voir à ce sujet : Michèle Martin, « Rulers of the Wires? Women's Contribution to the Structure of Means of Communication », *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 12.2 (été 1988), p. 89-103.

Mark Kingwell and Christopher Moore, *Canada, Our Century: 100 Voices, 500 Visions*

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Kingwell, Mark and Christopher Moore; photo research and visual narrative by Sara Borins. *Canada, Our Century: 100 Voices and 500 Visions*. Toronto: Doubleday, 1999. 512 pp., 512 illus., cloth, \$50, ISBN: 0-385-25893-3.

Canada Our Century is essentially a picture book but one with a difference. Besides presenting five-hundred well-captioned black and white, duotone and full-colour photographs, it also contains "100 Voices" — primary texts from some of Canada's most well-known writers, politicians, public figures as well as public documents. Each of these quotations is preceded by a brief introductory paragraph.

Mark Kingwell's six-part introduction entitled "Canada in Focus: Six Notes on How Worlds are Made," deals with trends that have emerged throughout the twentieth century and looks at the development of photography as a part of everyday life and its use by Canadians in capturing "an artificially preserved slice of reality" and feeding our need for nostalgia. He notes that each photo captures about $\frac{1}{10}$ of a second which means that the five hundred photos in total capture less than a minute of elapsed time! Each of the ten sections are introduced by Christopher Moore's "reconstructed voices of each decade," fictional first-person accounts that set the tone for each decade.

The photographs however, are the essence of the book and they have been drawn from thirty-seven archives, libraries and museums from across the country. They represent most aspects of Canadian life and focus on events, activities and people which shaped Canadian life over the century. It is not surprising therefore that the largest number of photos deal with each of the two world wars and Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Other themes that are well represented are the arts, elections, immigration, industries, disasters, sport (especially hockey) and the Depression. Many of these photos will be well known to the reader but others provide a refreshing glimpse of Canadian life in the twentieth century.

Although they are organized chronologically the juxtaposition of some photos reflect the similarities and inherent contradictions that marked the century. A 1915 photo of poppies is given more meaning by its placement across from a victim of a German gas attack. The challenges of the Arctic are reflected in a photo of the unearthed skulls of victims of the Franklin Expedition that are shown opposite a photo in death of Albert Johnson, the Mad Trapper of Rat River. Images of Elvis Presley, John Diefenbaker and Oral Roberts are also spread across two pages, representing the charismatic effect that each had on different elements of a generation in the 1950s and 60s. The contrasting images of Sue Rodriguez and

Karla Homolka present life as a precious commodity that can be destroyed by disease and by evil. International Women's Year is noted by two pages containing photos of eight prominent Canadian women. A series of images showing Prime Minister Jean Chrétien giving the "Shawinigan handshake" to poverty protestor Bill Clennett are appropriately placed over a photo of Danielle House, the Miss Canada who lost her crown after "she bopped the new girlfriend of her old boyfriend." The photo captions are full of interesting and useful information that expands our knowledge of the people, places and events portrayed in the photographs.

The "Voices" both complement the photographs and expand on the information provided in the captions. Not only do we have, for example, a photograph of Marshall McLuhan but we also have a quotation from his 1964 essay entitled "Murder by Television." Photos of labour unrest are given voice with J. J. McLachlan's vivid account of police brutality during a Cape Breton coal miners' strike in 1923. These quotations are especially effective in our understanding of the numerous writers and performing artists that are well-represented.

Christopher Moore's first-person accounts accompanying each decade provide a well-written, creative and at times humorous look at Canadian society. The first three decades deal predictably with an immigrant, a soldier in the First World War and an industrial worker. The 1930s, however, are seen from the perspective of a Saskatchewan town manager whose job is to help the poor and needy and his frustration at not having adequate resources to do so. The 1970s are represented by an EXUSO volunteer who begins the decade promoting "rural socialism" in northern British Columbia. He ends up a civil servant working for the assistant deputy minister of Energy, Mines and Resources and living with a lobbyist and her child in Ottawa's trendy Glebe district. Especially topical is the

1980s account of the Italian immigrant mother lamenting her married daughter's decision to have "a little Filipina" do her house work and care for her child while she and her husband pursue their careers. Despite her sister-in-law's disapproval, she seems more accepting, however, of her son Johnny who brings home "his friend...a nice Italian boy."

Students of material history will find this work of some interest. In many of the political photos the subjects are obviously playing to the camera or to the electors. Many of the group photos, however, provide a glimpse of the fashions of the time and of domestic and industrial settings. Trends in clothing can be traced through images of immigrants, workers, soldiers, politicians and those taking part in political rallies, demonstrations, sporting events and various types of work. Whether it's a Toronto textile mill in 1902, a school class in 1942, a lunch counter in 1956 or the singers who recorded "Tears Are Not Enough" in 1985, many of the five hundred images provide at least a "taste" if not a detailed look at Canada's material history. The lists of photo and literary sources and the index enhance the book's usefulness as a reference source. The \$50 price tag is not out of line for a photo book of over five hundred pages, especially with the complementary text.

On its own, *Canada, Our Century* provides the general reader with an appreciation of the wide range of Canadian events, activities and personalities throughout the twentieth century. Many professional historians, however, may tend to criticize it for its popular and chronological approach. Nevertheless, for Canadians a century from now, for whom Canada in the twentieth century is the story of a distant, unrecognizable past, and for whom books themselves will be an oddity, this work will provide a lasting, albeit general, account of who we were and what we did in what Sir Wilfred Laurier called "the century of Canada."