

[...]he was young enough to see a great country move into its destiny. It was what he felt inside himself, as a Canadian who had lived both in the United States and England. Canada at present was called a nation only because a few laws had been passed and a railway line sent from one coast to the other. In returning home he knew that he was doing more than coming back to familiar surroundings. For better or worse he was entering the future, he was identifying himself with the still-hidden forces which were doomed to shape humanity as certainly as the tiny states of Europe had shaped the past. Canada was still hesitant, was still ham-strung by men with the mentality of Geoffrey Wain. But if there were enough Canadians like himself, half-American and half-English, then the day was inevitable when the halves would join and his country would become the central arch which united the new order.<sup>113</sup>

MacLennan's 'paean of praise' is, of course, not as direct, naive and even crude as the optimistic rhetoric employed by Robert G. Haliburton more than two generations before. In Montréal in 1869 he had praised *The Men of the North and Their Place in History*,<sup>114</sup> and had celebrated the young country briefly after Confederation, also advocating a renaming of British North America as 'Norland'. The eldest son of the author of the Sam Slick narratives had extolled the muscular strength of the new Confederation and had linked its future to the invigorating climate and the favorable racial composition of its settlers, who had allegedly mainly come from the northern parts of Europe and had drawn on its desirable gene pool. Thus the early wave of nationalism after Confederation did not favor continentalist visions and assumptions but trusted in the favorable effects of the climate and the desirable qualities of a homogeneous immigrant population. For many Canadians of that era the venerable theory of climate in its then current form and distinct racial notions provided

<sup>113</sup> *Barometer Rising*, chapter 'Monday Night', p. 218.

<sup>114</sup> On the context of Robert Grant Haliburton's speech see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867 - 1914*, Toronto, 1970, esp. pp. 50-5.