



characters in 'their geographical and even their meteorological setting.' Our historians do not argue about the amount but the kind of influence geography has had on our history — whether it has been the north-south pull of North American regionalism or the east-west thrust of the St. Lawrence and Saskatchewan river systems and the Laurentian Shield.

Precisely because life has been so bleak and minimal for so long in so much of Canada, the frontiers, far more than in the United States, have been dependent on the metropolitan centres of Toronto and Montreal and Europe. A visitor to pioneer Saskatchewan in 1907 remarked at the strange sight of a sod hut with a big Canadian Bank of Commerce sign on it, open for business. The essence of the Canadian west is in that image. Organized society usually arrived with the settlers or ahead of them—not only the branch bank manager, but the mounted policeman and the railway agent, the missionary and the Hudson's Bay factor. Dawson City at the height of the gold rush had its sins and shortcomings, but even here lawlessness was not one of them. Violence and terror do not yet stalk the subways or the streets

of darkest Toronto.

Among peoples as different as the Métis and the Doukhobors, the community and its custom was the dominating force in western settlement. Even the most self-reliant Protestant pioneer in Canada West or Alberta was never quite a Davy Crockett or a Daniel Boone. From the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 to that of the C.P.R. and the dozens of modern Crown corporations, the large, centrally planned enterprise, dominating its field and supported by government regulation, has been typical of Canadian development. As the historian William Morton says, Canada, in contrast to the United States, is founded on the principle of allegiance rather than social contract, on the organic growth of tradition rather than on an explicit act of reason or assertion of the revolutionary will. The B.N.A. Act sets up the objectives of peace, order, and good government, rather than those of life, liberty, and



the pursuit of happiness. The fact and principle of authority is established prior to the fact and principle of freedom. In the British tradition of monarchy, parliament, and law, specific liberties are carved out within the ordered structure of society.