



**FINDING DIRECTIONS WEST:
READINGS THAT LOCATE AND DISLOCATE
WESTERN CANADA'S PAST**
Edited by George Colpitts and Heather Devine

ISBN 978-1-55238-881-5

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“The Country Was Looking Wonderful”: Insights on 1930s Alberta from the Travel Diary of Mary Beatrice Rundle

Sterling Evans

In the late summer and fall of 1935, Mary Beatrice Rundle, a professional secretary, accompanied her boss (Sir Clement Anderson Montague Barlow), his wife (Lady Barlow), and a colleague (Mr. William Armour) to Canada as part of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry in Alberta. She kept a running diary of the entire trip that lasted from August 24 to December 18, 1935 – nearly four months from beginning to end. She never missed a single day in adding an entry. Seventy-six of those days, or over two thirds of the trip, were spent in Alberta, where Rundle wrote the most detailed accounts of the things she saw and experienced. Thus, from her travel diary we have the chance of listening to her tell the story in her own voice, with her own nuances and inflections (and one can imagine, British accent), and we can gain important insights about Alberta in the 1930s.¹ However, as this chapter shows, Rundle’s diary also reveals how much that she *missed* about Depression-era Canada and Alberta. What she sees, in many ways, is far different from what most other observers would notice, especially the growing unemployment and poverty in the cities, the drought conditions of the southern Alberta farm and ranch lands, and the general economic malaise of the time. Readers here can speculate on the

privileged nature of her trip and how that separates her from larger social and economic realities.

The trip was necessary because the government of Alberta needed to conduct its second ten-year investigation and assessment of the coal mining industry, as dictated by provincial policy. It was Lieutenant Governor of Alberta William L. Walsh who, upon the advice of the provincial minister of trade and other officials, established the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry, which Social Credit Acting Premier Ernest Manning approved in September 1935. The need for the commission and its investigation was not merely for regular institutional data collection and reporting. As Canada's leading coal producer, especially in sub-bituminous and lignite coal, Alberta was enriched at the time with an estimated 1,717 square miles (4,447 square kilometres) or one million acres (404,685 hectares) of subsurface coal beds and seams, although not the entire amount was recoverable. But by 1935, markets for Alberta coal had dropped drastically and the industry was experiencing a variety of difficulties. The decline was striking, as the number of operating mines had dropped from 399 in 1924 to 276 ten years later. Output tonnage had dropped from a high of 7,336,330 tons in 1928 to 4,748,848 tons in 1934, a reduction in net worth of \$23,532,414 in 1928 to half of that (\$12,440,616) by 1934.² Thus, the provincial government was alarmed by the number of closed or abandoned mines and the precipitous decline in production and revenue.

The commission's goal was to investigate "the coal industry in Alberta, both in relation to the circumstances under which it is presently conducted and the possibilities of its future development." Matters under review included cost of production, transportation, distribution, and marketing of coal. Under consideration was "the capitalization, financial organization and cost of management" of the mines, especially to learn if any particular individuals were generating excessive expenses. Significantly, the commission was also charged with investigating "the wages and working conditions, living costs, and conditions of housing and general welfare of mine workers in and about the mines." Finally, there were matters of looking into "schemes" to increase demand and improved marketing for coal, coke, and their by-products.³ The report recommended "schemes for better regulation of the industry," especially in terms of extending markets and "bringing production into relation of consumption." That Ontario had always been Alberta coal's largest market was of special interest to the

commission, which investigated the market, subventions, and “possible further developments” for steam coal and other uses there. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and the United States had always been active buyers of Alberta coal, markets that the commission likewise examined. A particular recommendation was the pushing of coal for more electrical generation in Canada. And the study of industry regulation, including organization of mining operations throughout the province, and comparing Alberta’s regulations with that of other countries and provinces, made up over a third of the final report.⁴

Sir Clement Montague Barlow was the choice for commissioner because of his wide breadth of experience as a public servant in a variety of capacities and as a British government cabinet member. He had practised law early in his career, lectured in law at the London School of Economics, and entered public life when he was elected to the London County Council. He later served in a number of administrative positions in the British government, and was elected from a London riding as a Tory Member of Parliament in 1910. He was created a knight in the British Empire in 1918, a baronet in 1924, and was most well known as minister of labour in the Conservative Andrew Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin governments in the early 1920s. Later, he devoted much of his time to travel: to India, central Africa, South America, Australia, and New Zealand on various kinds of commissions, including his service as Chairman for the Royal Commission on the Location of Industry in 1937. He married Miss D.L. Read (who then became Lady Barlow) in 1934 – just one year before the Royal Commission trip to Alberta. He died in 1951, at which time his baronetcy became extinct.⁵

But who was Mary Beatrice Rundle, this travelling secretary for Sir Montague Barlow, who left such a personal record of the commission’s trip? Thanks to an *Edmonton Bulletin* society column (a regular feature entitled “The Social Round”) about her visit to Alberta that appeared in the fall of 1935, and a letter that Rundle sent to the Provincial Archives of Alberta when she donated her travel diary in 1990, we have a biographical record from which to piece together this important part of her story. The anonymous columnist for the *Bulletin* had heard about the Royal Commission being in town to investigate the province’s coal industry (and the paper had already reported on it and on Sir Montague Barlow and Lady Barlow), but he or she apparently also had heard about the travelling

secretary Mary Rundle and how she would make for an interesting public interest article herself. The article began, “Private lives of private secretaries are not always just notebooks and pencils, and efficiency, plus – there’s time for music, plays, travel, and all sorts of adventure,” a very accurate picture of Rundle’s trip that is corroborated in her travel diary. “Isn’t a trip across the Atlantic, through the forests, and over the prairies of Canada something?,” the article rhetorically asked.⁶

According to her letter and this interview, Rundle was the daughter of retired and recently widowed British Admiral Mark Rundle of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, England. He had “girdled the world time upon time” and was a decorated hero from his service in the Royal Navy during World War I.⁷ Her mother had died “after a distressing disease” very soon before the trip, but Admiral Rundle, she wrote, “insisted that I should honour my undertaking and go to Canada.” She was twenty-eight years old when she made the trip. When the Alberta government appointed Sir Montague Barlow to head the Royal Commission, he requested that he be permitted to bring along Rundle as his personal secretary and William Armour, “Technical Adviser to the Commision [sic]” and “an expert on coal mining.” Rundle wrote that both she and Armour did the photography for the trip, and that she supplemented the travelogue with postcards, newspaper clippings, other documents, and hotel receipts. Rundle’s diary would not only be a journal of the trip, but as she put it, “the record was kept in lieu of writing to family and friends, pages of carbon copy being posted home at intervals.”⁸ It was Rundle’s first transatlantic trip, and her first journey to somewhere as remote-sounding for many Britons as Alberta in Western Canada.⁹

For Rundle this was a working business trip; however, the Royal Commission’s business does not take a central role in Rundle’s travel diary. She separated most of the business of the coal industry investigation from her own personal memoirs and correspondence that she sent home to family and friends. Nonetheless, there are moments that she captured in her diary that give readers a glimpse of the background details of the commission’s work and its meetings. They had a total of twenty-four “sittings” (hearings) for which Rundle took the minutes: five in Edmonton and Drumheller; three in Calgary, Lethbridge, and Blairmore; two in Cadomin; and one each in Coalspur, Brazeau, and Saunders Creek.¹⁰ And they undertook several field trips (that they called “probes”) to the coal mining regions of

Alberta to investigate working conditions and document the technologies in use at each location. Rundle accompanied Sir Montague Barlow and William Armour to most, but not all, of the sites. They visited Tofield, the Drumheller area, Turner Valley, the Rabbit Hill District, the Lethbridge Collieries (controlled by CPR) and other mines in southern Alberta, and a couple of coal mines north of Edmonton. At each, they utilized two questionnaires, one for the “operators” (company management) and another for the workmen (miners). On September 25 at the Henderson Mine near Drumheller, Rundle described a bit about some of the new technology being used to extract coal. “They are using the long wall method here, which is new to this district,” she wrote. “Everything is very mechanised; there are long rows of stalls, but only one pony kept now – for emergencies!” Surprisingly, she related how they did “part of our tour lying flat on a leather belt conveyor” when all of a sudden there was “a slight fall of roof stone.” Sir Montague was injured by a falling rock, causing “quite a nasty scalp wound,” and first aid and a doctor were rushed in.¹¹ Sometimes the commission met with leaders of the miners’ unions. For additional background information on labour issues, Montague Barlow had consulted with officials at the International Labour Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, and with the office of US Secretary of Labour Francis Perkins in the Franklin Roosevelt government.¹²

Although indeed on a business trip, Rundle still had ample time for “delightful adventure” that she relished. She was particularly thrilled to see the Canadian Rockies, but she also enjoyed exploring the various cities she visited, and often commented on the more rural, agricultural sectors of Albertan society as well. Was Rundle’s writing reflective of a growing genre of British women writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Certainly she never achieved, nor tried to emulate, the fame of traveller and writer Isabella Bird – practically a household name in England in these years – who spent years exploring the world, especially Asia, the South Pacific, Australia, and the American West.¹³ Bird wrote more in the style of natural history and adventure writers of that age, and Rundle was hardly as intrepid.

Nor did she venture much into politics or social criticism. The contributors of the volume *At Home and Abroad in the Empire: British Women Writers in the 1930s* suggest that common themes of modernism, colonialism, and critique of empire characterize many of the popular women

writers' works from this period.¹⁴ In her essay on Virginia Woolf, for example, Julia Briggs suggests that there was a sentiment of almost being ashamed of England, and rightfully so perhaps, given the brutal colonial experience in many parts of the world where the "sun never set." And Bonnie Kime Scott posits that similar intents characterized the letter writing of Rebecca West, especially as her construction of a public intelligence became visible in her letters home.¹⁵ As she was not a novelist, or a published writer in any way (although she certainly had a flare for writing), it might be unfair to cast Rundle among this group. In many ways she could be the antithesis of a Woolf or a West; she was from a military household, was not at all critical of the British Empire, did not find fault with the British presence in the Dominion of Canada, and in fact relished the singing of "God Save the King" at all events. Even the final printed report, as it assuredly had to be, was directed to "George the Fifth, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India."¹⁶ Whether Rundle represented the Empire, then, or if she was a neutral player are questions that could be left to individual readers and literary critics. More important here is the way in which she responded to new stimuli around her in a foreign and faraway country, but one so heavily imbued with British history.

In 1930s grand style, Rundle journeyed from her home in London to Edmonton by first class rail and ship. Her route in England took her by train from London to Southampton, where she boarded the luxury steamer *Empress*. Reflective of the times, and certainly interesting in retrospect, was the point that she made of seeing German ships in the port, including the *Bremen* with "a natty little red aeroplane on board, complete with swastika" (August 24). The transatlantic trip to Quebec City took five days, and then after a few days spent each in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto, Rundle and her party took a boat from Port McNicoll, Ontario, to Fort William (now Thunder Bay), Ontario, and then by the Canadian Pacific Railway the rest of the way to Edmonton, with a few days' stay in Winnipeg en route. In Alberta, there were side trips to visit mine sites around the province, as well as time to do some sightseeing in the Canadian Rockies.

Rundle described each step of the way. And as she was a gifted writer, her diary entries read as most classical travel narratives do in beautiful and descriptive prose. They tend to be in the tradition of grand British diction, making careful use of selected words, consummate vocabulary,

and precise and often glowing descriptions, as readers will note in some of the quotations from her diary in the following pages here.

Along this same light, Rundle made a variety of interesting observations comparing life in the Dominion of Canada to that in Great Britain. She liked Ottawa and the area around Parliament, the views of it from the Chateau Laurier, and especially the walks and roads around the Rideau Canal that she found “charming.” “We have nothing like it in England for residential town planning,” she noted. But as if she were writing today, she was amazed at the number of automobiles that people drove in Canada instead of walking, as was more customary in England. On Labour Day, while still in Toronto during the front part of the trip, Rundle proclaimed that “of course the traffic was quite dreadful!” She wrote on September 2, “I have never seen so many cars in one day in my life. There are few pedal cyclists & no pedestrians, and I only saw four motor cyclists all day. The most noticeable thing is the complete absences of signals – hand or mechanical. No-one seems to bother, except at busy crossroads.” By September 22, now in Alberta, she was even more aggravated by Canadian motorists:

The people of Edmonton have forgotten the use of their feet; all the way along the river, I met precisely two girls walking: All this within the City boundary and only a few yards from the main roads and houses by the hundred. It really is pathetic, and must have a serious effect on their health; I notice the inhabitants seem amazed that we walk to the Court House for the sittings of the Commission and it is actually in sight a couple of blocks away – not more than 5 minutes walk: Everyone has a car, and never dreams of walking, even a few yards.

While they were in Lethbridge, there was even less exercise by walking because the court house where they conducted meetings was across the street from their hotel. Thus on September 30 she wrote that because “we get less exercise than ever, I have taken a vow never to use the lift – we are only 2 floors up – and everyone else is following my example!” Later, on October 24, now back in Edmonton, she decided to walk the two miles back to the Hotel Macdonald after a luncheon on a “glorious afternoon” and was pleased that her host decided to join her, proclaiming that it was “delightful to find someone here who walks!” Rundle, Lord Montague

Barlow, Lady Barlow, and others in their party often took walks, even if it was just strolling up and down the queue at railroad depots, to get a little exercise when the weather allowed, and sometimes even when it did not. When the snow and wind came to Edmonton in October and November, there were days when Rundle could only stay out a few minutes, despite her desire to walk. But when the sun returned, cold or not, she was back at her routine. Armistice Sunday, November 10, was such a day, and after attending church services, she and others “went for a good long walk.... it was a glorious morning, but our ears froze!”

The Barlows and Rundle attended the Anglican church most of the Sundays of the four months they were in Canada (Lord Montague Barlow’s father was a clergyman), missing only when they were in transit from one city to another, or when using the day to catch up from all the goings-on of the previous week. On Sunday, September 15, at the Pro-Cathedral of All Saints in Edmonton, Lord Montague Barlow even “read the lessons.” Rundle mentioned that it was “Harvest Festival” Sunday; “We ploughed the fields and scattered.” But being in Alberta in the 1930s, she noticed that church attendance was quite robust compared to that in England. For example, on that Armistice Sunday Rundle mentioned that she was glad they had gone early to the cathedral, getting seats in the lieutenant governor’s pew next to the mayor of Edmonton, as by 11:00 “it was packed and people ‘turned away,’” and noted that “they surely go to church in this country!” It was a “packed church, including a large detachment of Mounted Police in their scarlet uniforms; they really are the best turned-out lot I have ever seen.” As noted above, she was always delighted to hear and partake in the singing of “God Save the King” at church services and elsewhere in Canada. In fact, on that particular Sunday, she wrote that the anthem had been sung “with more strength and unity of feeling than I have ever heard before.” But she seemed bemused that the next day, Monday, November 11, was a day off for Armistice Day. “Another public holiday – any excuse is good enough in Canada!,” she wrote.

Rundle likewise observed the difference between federal leadership elections in Canada and Great Britain. Her trip in 1935 corresponded with the end of the Tory government of R.B. Bennett and the election of a Liberal majority under William Lyon Mackenzie King. On Election Day (October 14) she noted Mackenzie King’s “thumping majority at the expense of poor Mr. Bennett” (who had treated her so kindly in Ottawa earlier on

the trip [see below]), and observed that “it was all very peaceful – very unlike election day at home.” In Alberta, she witnessed an even more dramatic political turning point, as it was in 1935 that voters overwhelmingly abandoned the United Farmers of Alberta (in power since 1921) to elect the Social Credit Party under the leadership of evangelical radio preacher William “Bible Bill” Aberhart. She seemed a bit bemused, and somewhat concerned, with the “recent amazing elections” that favoured Aberhart, “who is to try out his Social Credit Scheme,” she observed on August 31.¹⁷ People were still talking about the “enthusiasm at the recent provincial election” and how that “was most unusual here [in Alberta]” with many residents who voted “who have never done so before” (September 14), and indeed Social Credit had won an absolute majority in 1935 with 54 per cent of the vote, picking up 53 of the 64 seats in the legislature, and as historian Alvin Finkel has written, “transforming the province’s political landscape for generations to come.” This election in Alberta, as Finkel has asserted, gained “international attention” as the “first electorate in the world to elect a government committed to social credit.”¹⁸

Overall, however, Rundle was critical of the new Alberta government, thinking she had gotten “a very good idea” of the “rotteness of political life here,” she wrote after having a luncheon on October 24. Another socio-political difference became more apparent to her in Alberta as well – that being the limited consumption of alcohol. While Albertans had rescinded their seven-year experiment with prohibition (1916–23) by plebiscite twelve years earlier, to Rundle it still seemed like a “dry land.” Apparently most dinner parties she and the commission members attended refrained from serving preliminary cocktails. But on October 26, she seemed relieved to have a “nice dinner and drinks (for once in this dry land)” at Government House. Her father may have known of this curiosity about Alberta, having made sure to give her a big flask of brandy for the trip, which she occasionally tapped into.

Despite these minor points, Rundle was thrilled to be in Canada and ebulliently described the many beautiful sights that she saw on the trip around Quebec, Ontario, and especially Alberta. Like many people visiting the Prairies, she was struck by the light – “a brilliant light [that] made a never to be forgotten picture” (September 22). She marvelled in Edmonton a few days later how the “light in the woods across the [North Saskatchewan] river was lovely.” Overall, the “country was looking

wonderful” with “trees just beginning to turn,” she observed on a day trip in mid-September to visit a strip mine near Tofield. At dusk in southeastern Alberta, she wrote about “the most beautiful sunset I have ever seen,” and outside of Calgary, “a most gorgeous sunset, with satanic cloud formations over the Mountains” (September 26, 29). Similarly, she described Drumheller’s setting near the Red Deer River Valley badlands as “set in a strange pocket of weird hills.... The formations are most peculiar, not to say sinister.” The mines they needed to visit were at the end of “this weird valley,” indeed a “valley of desolation” characterized by “weird rock formations” (September 25–27). Dinosaur Provincial Park in this badlands region would not be created for another twenty years, so she did not have the opportunity to visit, or comment upon, the paleontological resources of southeastern Alberta.¹⁹

But it was the Canadian Rockies that really captivated Rundle. Her “first thrilling sight” of the mountains was en route from Drumheller to Calgary on September 28, estimating that they were still 100 miles away. Even from her Calgary hotel window, the mountains were “superb.” On October 2 she and her party ventured to Crowsnest Pass, observing the continental divide and the surrounding valley, all of which she found “very scenic” at the 4,300-foot (1,311-metre) elevation. Returning to Calgary, she was enthralled with the view of the Rockies with fresh snow, describing them as “a shining white glory from tip to toe – the most wonderful sight I have ever seen” (October 9). Later that month, they travelled to Banff National Park. October 11 was a “day of thrills! the beauty was quite indescribable,” especially with the looming snow-capped peaks. Because of its eponymous name, she was especially taken with Mount Rundle, with its stunning view from the Vermilion Lakes. At one point (October 11), she bought “some postcards and a big photograph” of the mountain. That evening must have been beautiful: “We walked on the bridge over the River Bow – and behold it was a full moon, standing over Mt. Rundle, and the mountain and the moon were reflected in the river – one of the most lovely sights I have ever seen.” She was delighted as well with Bow Falls, the various hot springs in the area, Lake Louise – and amused with the name of Kicking Horse Pass that they crossed en route, Lake Emerald (“a glorious spot, where the lake really is emerald green” [October 12]), and the wildlife. It was Rundle’s first time to see elk, which she described on October 11 as “terrific thrills”:

It is the mating season, and they are supposed not to be safe, but we were all right in the car and stopped to watch them. There were about 8 females and calves on one side of the road, with a magnificent stag in charge, and a solitary female on the other; she was calling to a distant stag, which we could hear roaring in reply; she was not a bit frightened, and came within six or seven yards of the car.

At the end of her Alberta stay, and on the first leg of her trip home traveling from Edmonton to Calgary (November 24), she admitted her love for the mountains: "I had been so hoping for a last sight of the Rockies, and was not disappointed, for we watched the sun set behind them across 90 miles of snow – a very wonderful and never-to-be-forgotten picture."

At the same time, Rundle recognized that Alberta in the 1930s was not solely a Rocky Mountain scenic paradise. Drumheller, for her, was a "dreary little mining town" that was "smothered in coal dust" (September 23, 26). She was thankful that other coal-mining communities like Hardieville, Stafford, and Coalhurst were "favourable [in] comparison with awful Drumheller" (October 1). She tired quickly on the "tedious" train ride to Lethbridge. Her party had to fight "horribly dusty" roads along the Oldman River to tour the collieries there. Indeed, the "dust was frightful," to the degree that Rundle developed a sore throat on more than one occasion, and recognized the symptoms as "dust colds," as Albertans referred to them (but was relieved to find in local pharmacies her favourite Boots Iodized Lozenges from England, which provided considerable comfort). She recognized the hazards of mining life, and mentioned in her diary on October 2 that her party passed by "the sliding mountain" that "sent down ... crashing ruin" on the town of Frank in 1903. The rock slide, she noted, killed about 100 people and buried them and their homes 500 feet (152 metres) deep in debris, where they yet remain. "I hated the place," she admitted, "and felt scared each time we had to pass it." She also noted that the mountain was continuing to erode, causing people to worry about a "repeat performance before very long" – and again, "due to the mining operations underneath the mountain."²⁰

And of course, Rundle alluded often to the weather – the "bitter" wind and cold for which Western Canada is famous. En route, Winnipeg as early

as September 8 was already “bitterly cold and wet ... most unpleasant.” For the most part, however, autumn of 1935 was mild. She noted in Lethbridge on September 30 that “the weather has been perfectly wonderful – brilliant sunshine every day, and delightfully warm and yet fresh. Everyone says they have never known such a good fall, so Canada is being kind to us.” But winter came quickly. Coming from Great Britain, she had never before experienced the kind of frigid temperatures that Alberta can, and did, have that year. She described “a terrific wind that got up in the night” in Calgary on October 8, and the early fall snow that fell in Edmonton that day. The below-zero temperatures (still using Fahrenheit) later that month affected Lord Barlow’s rheumatism, she remarked, and in November there were days that were so cold she could barely take her daily walk, quickly having to turn back to the hotel. But she also related how she knew she was not experiencing the depth of winter in Alberta. “Of course 10 degrees above is comparatively warm here,” she wrote on October 28, “where for three solid weeks last winter the mercury never rose above 40 below.” She also recognized that as cold as it was in Alberta, it seemed even colder upon her return through Ontario in December, as many Canadians would attest. On December 5 she posited that “it is very cold here; though the temperature is only about zero, it feels bitter, and we find it more trying than 20 below in dry Alberta.”

Rundle observed the province’s ranching business (including “hobby” ranches), noting those breeds of cattle she could identify, and farming, especially during the harvest, which seemed to interest her. “We watched them reaping barley with two teams of fine horses – four to each binder,” she noted on September 18 near Tofield.²¹ And of course there was discussion and description of coal mining, since that was the primary purpose of the trip. On September 18, for example, she described the strip mine they visited near Tofield – her first time to see such a mining operation. “It is an expanse of 200 acres,” she began, with “a seam of coal 7’ thick, and a depth of 8’. . . . All they have to do is to take off the surface dirt, and then scratch out the coal.” More recent, of course, was the developing oil and gas industry in Alberta. The Royal Commission was not charged with investigating this aspect of resource extraction in the province, but Rundle made mention of it a couple of times, especially when her party travelled to Turner Valley on October 9. She witnessed the “host of derricks” and the “gas burning in huge flares.” Oil had been discovered in Alberta in

1902, but not until 1914 in the Turner Valley area, and was going strong there when Rundle made her visit.²² But the party never actually got to the town, as the muddy roads were just too impassable. “We simply had to crawl, and slithered about all over the place,” she explained. After having gotten their car “completely stuck” in the deep mud, she and the others got out “and pushed the car fore and aft, like tugs at a liner, with the desired result,” although they turned back there instead of trying to get on into town. Rundle did not seem too disappointed about missing Turner Valley, as “the smell even where we were was pretty strong!”

All of these things combined to make the seventy-six days she spent in Alberta a great experience for Rundle, and she grew quite fond of the province and its people. On November 22, the day before she and her party left to return to England, she wrote, “Our last day in friendly Edmonton – very sad.” By mid-October she had ceased marking the mileage of the trip (mile 6,750 in Banff National Park), but since that point she would have possibly accumulated another 7,000 or so miles, making it nearly a 15,000-mile (over 24,000-kilometre) journey from beginning to end.

Rundle’s travelogue not only provides accounts of the places and people she encountered along the way but also gives an insightful glimpse into the times – of life in Alberta and across Canada in the mid-1930s, especially the life of the upper classes. The first-class travel by steamship and rail was luxurious – emblematic of that golden era of elite travel – and was accompanied by exquisite meals and silver service. When travel was by automobile, she spoke of riding in Packards, Buicks, and Nashes. Meals and dining, such as the banquets with the British High Commission, the lieutenant governor, and Prime Minister Bennett in Ottawa, and the many luncheons, fashionable teas, and official dinners held en route, were often extravagant affairs. But Rundle observed that the events could be exhausting, and not always pleasant, as she noted on September 1 at a country club luncheon where she was forced to share a table with a “very dull” couple from Australia, and September 3 in Toronto, when one women’s luncheon was “a most tedious affair!” There were even more events in Alberta, with members of Edmonton’s and Calgary’s high society and politicians, that often weighed heavily on her. In Edmonton, a tea with a group of “educationalists” was “not a very inspiring affair.” Another tea on October 21 included conversation with an “objectionable English couple,” and a dinner on November 17 became “a rather sleep-inducing evening.”

Conversation at these events at times centred on the problems of the wealthy. At the October 3 luncheon in Crowsnest, Rundle noted that the community's nine-hole golf course was characterized with "browns" instead of greens since "they can't get grass to grow properly up there," and that the hostess complained "of the difficulty of getting 'help' – nothing but mainly not-too-clean miners' daughters." Sometimes she herself was frustrated with the maid service at the Hotel Macdonald. "The chief snag about this hotel," she mused on September 12, "is that the servants work on a rota system, and you never have the same maid or waiter more than once for some considerable time."

This kind of class-consciousness (sometimes tinged with racism) popped up here and there elsewhere in the journal. While still in Ontario and visiting Niagara Falls (September 2), she and her hosts went across to the US side, but on the way back into Canada she complained, "We had to go through immigration examination and were bullied by a horrible dago." Travelling from Crowsnest to Calgary (October 6), she described how "there was an enormous R.C.M.P. on the train, escorting a wretched little prisoner with a wooden leg; we all wondered what he had done, but didn't quite like to go and ask!"

At the same time, Rundle, and often Lady Barlow too, belied their upper-class ways and seemed to enjoy a more common Alberta lifestyle. They both often did their own sewing, darning, and ironing. They discovered a quick and inexpensive cafeteria in Edmonton (their first time to visit one) in which to eat, and became regular customers. They were good sports about having in-car picnics when on road trips throughout the province when there were just no restaurants available. Rundle even helped to push the car she was riding in out of deep mud when it got stuck on the way to Turner Valley. She befriended the staff at the Hotel Macdonald, to the degree that there were "almost tearful farewells" when their stay was over. She made sure to buy the telephone operator a gift of fine chocolates for all of her help with things related to communications for the Royal Commission. And she had befriended the elevator operators so much that on November 24 she wrote, "One of the lift boys said to me in tones of deepest gloom, 'You know, you may never come back again,' and although I protested, the gloom remained profound."

In so many ways, Rundle's travel diary gives strong hints on the role of women in the 1930s, and in this way can add a degree of gender analysis to

the discussion here. Both she and Lady Barlow performed what could be considered “typical” women’s household chores, including darning socks, ironing clothes, and sewing. She mentioned that she was glad that she had taken her knitting with her on long train and car trips to keep her busy. On September 12 she noted, “I have been darning stockings in Lady Barlow’s room, while she ironed; a most domestic scene.” She also frequented the lending library to get books, and occasionally went to the YWCA in Edmonton. And although it is doubtful that Rundle drove a car – she never did on this trip, at least (and if she had a licence in England, probably would not have appreciated the driving on the right-side of the road in North America), but a Miss Christie from Calgary, their host when in that part of the province and with whom Rundle had become a very close friend, drove them all over the Prairies and Rockies.²³ On that particularly muddy and slippery road (“a layer of mud over frozen ground”) en route to Turner Valley on October 9, Rundle remarked, “Miss Christie is a marvelous driver, and we weren’t a bit scared” – in the face of many stereotypes of women and women drivers, still a less common phenomenon in the 1930s.

Some of these stereotypes were based on fables and superstition. The most poignant example of this surfaced on September 20 when the party was investigating the Rabbit Hill mining district. But while Rundle was doing some photographing of the mine, she was discouraged from descending into it because of her gender. “Mr. Armour refuses to consider Lady Barlow or me going down a mine,” she explained, “as the way it is considered very bad luck for a woman to do so; consequently we walk very delicately in the vicinity of coal.” Nonetheless, a few days later (September 25) at a mine near Drumheller, she did descend. She said she was “diffident about going down” and “did not want to be a nuisance,” but this time “everyone was insistent.” Thus, “down I went, wearing a proper miner’s cap and lamp, and enveloped in an enormous makintosh!” No bad luck seemed to have come to anyone there from this act. But, at the next stop on September 27 at the A.B.C. Mine, it was back to superstition dictating policy (and events?). Her story:

I did not go down this time. I should record that Mr. Armour thinks it frightfully bad luck for women to go down a mine, and was much against Miss Christie and I going down the other day. An accident is supposed to happen within 24 hours,

and sure enough, Sir Montague got a rock on his head, and the next morning Mr. Heeley, the local mines inspector, was badly kicked by a pit pony – one for each of us! So this time I sat in the car and knitted!

The anecdote is provided in her diary, we can suppose, more out of Rundle being bemused by the coincidence than by her actual belief in the cause and effect. Further, on October she made an important and telling point when discussing the coal mines at Crowsnest. She related what a workers' union representative told her about the history of the mines in that area: "He was most interesting ... [and] he told me he thought the whole plan would have collapsed long ago if it had not been for the grim determination of the women." Readers of her diary could use a bit of expansion on this point, although that is where she dropped it. We can suppose, however, that the wives and women of the early mining camps there were the bedrock support for the men's work, made sure they were fed and clothed, perhaps helped with the finances and record keeping, and generally were community builders in supporting stores, schools, and churches in the area. Nonetheless, superstitions die slowly, as a similar incident earlier confirmed that not all of Albertans were living cosmopolitan lives quite yet. On September 15 Rundle reported that Edmonton was hosting a large convention of "men from all over the Dominion who suffered amputation as a result of the War [World War I]," and that it was "very sad to see them all." "They want us all to dine with them on Wednesday," she seemed excited to say, "but there is doubt if it is 'done' for ladies to accept!" The women in the party thus were not allowed to attend.

Rundle may also have been frustrated, bemused, or even miffed from time to time with these stereotypes about women, or at least about her, during this period. After an invigorating outing in Banff National Park on October 12, for example, she wrote that William Armour "said he could see I had a good time at Banff, and that I looked a 'different lassie.'" She responded in her diary, "Query; what on earth did I look like before?"

Her good nature and keen (and sometimes, sharp) sense of humour were evident in how she described a couple of comical things that happened to her at the Hotel Macdonald. First, on September 12 she mentioned that the night before she "could not find her pyjamas anywhere," necessitating a "frenzied search" in the morning that still "failed to discover them."

The next day she was relieved to declare the missing items found: "My pyjamas have returned to the fold, having gone down to the wash with the bed-linen." But the same night, an even more curious and humorous incident occurred: "I had a BEAST in my room last night, having foolishly left some window open at the top, where it is not screened. It chased me until 2:00 a.m., and left me utterly unnerved; I don't know what it was, but it was awful. Never again!" She even used her sense of humour to deal with the kind of bitter winter cold that she was unused to. On October 28, she related the following anecdote from her room at the Hotel Macdonald in Edmonton that illustrates her good nature on the subject:

I woke up at 8:30 this morning to find it still snowing and bitterly cold. I hopped out of bed to turn on my radiator, and then huddled under the clothes in my woolly dressing gown for ten minutes to warm up. I did some work until about 12 and then ventured out, and it was cold – thermometer only 10 degrees above zero, and a bitter north wind blowing. I slithered along to the library and then bought some snow boots at the Hudson Bay, and then home as fast as I could, with a frozen face!

She stayed inside the rest of that day, "feeling very thankful that I had no engagements." Sarcastically, she then related the forecast for the next day: "'Cold; some snow and wind;’ thoroughly cheerful."

Cultural points that pop up in Rundle's diary also reflect the 1930s in a variety of ways. Like many Canadians, she enjoyed shopping for things she needed at Hudson's Bay Company stores. Rundle was also fond of going to the movies, often writing about the films she had seen and the actors in them, sometimes very critically. She saw a couple of Shirley Temple movies on the trip, including *Baby Take a Bow* (that she thought "rather sickly") and *Curly Top*. Grace Moore's *Love Me Forever* was a "rotten film," but she liked *Barbary Coast*, as well as Will Rogers in *David Harum*, which was "excellent and most amusing." In Edmonton she and part of the Royal Commission group went to see the "colour film" *Becky Sharp*. And as any good student of British literature would point out, "It is of course based on 'Vanity Fair' and faithful to the book on the whole, though Thackeray's [*sic*] share in it is not acknowledged at all." In Calgary she and others in the

party “went to the pictures” to see George Carliss in *Cardinal Richelieu* – “not very good we thought.”

Live theatre was also a very keen interest of Mary Rundle, especially given her experience with it during her time at Harrogate Girls’ College in her youth, but there were few opportunities to see plays while on this trip to Alberta. One exception was the chance on October 26 to see a production of Eugene O’Neill’s *Ah, Wilderness*, which Rundle asserted had “never been done by amateurs before.” She gave a mixed critique, which also gives a glimpse of theatre production in Alberta in the 1930s: “It was excellently acted, but terribly long; we didn’t get out till 12:45 a.m.! There were ghastly waits of about 20 minutes between each scene while the scenery was being shifted, during which I had to keep His Honour amused!”

She also enjoyed learning about historical events in Western Canada. For example, at a dinner in Edmonton on September 18 she ended up sitting next to Mayor J. Clarke, “who turned out to be ‘Fighting Joe’ from the Klondike.” It ended up being “a most amusing dinner” in which she got to hear all about Dawson City and the Gold Rush of 1898. But apparently she was less interested in sporting events, as there is no record of her attending any football or hockey games while in Alberta. However, in Toronto (November 30), on the return trip home, she and members of her party went to see the Maple Leafs play the Montreal Canadiens. “We only stayed for two-thirds of the match,” she admitted, “it was terrifically fast and very thrilling, and I should imagine one gets tremendously keen if one knows anything about the game.”

A final cultural moment mentioned in Rundle’s diary is also representative of this time period and worthy of mention here. On November 7 she noted that renowned evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson (a Canadian originally from Ontario, but based out of her Angelus Temple in Los Angeles since the 1920s) was in Edmonton for a revival meeting and was staying at the Hotel Macdonald. “Aimee Semple McPherson is here for a couple of days evangelizing, and is staying in the hotel,” she wrote, “but so far I have not spotted the lady!” It would have been interesting had Rundle attended one of the evangelist’s revivals (especially with her more staid Anglican perspective), as McPherson at this time was still in her rebuilding phase of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel after her supposed death or kidnapping and miraculous re-appearance in

the Arizona desert in 1926.²⁴ But according to Rundle, in Edmonton, “She seemed to have had a lot of heckling at her meeting here last night.”

Although Rundle’s travel diary represented life in the 1930s in a variety of ways, what is also significant is what might be considered *missing* about Canada and Alberta during this time. Most surprising is that there is no mention at all in Rundle’s diary of the Great Depression, or how it was affecting Canadians, especially as 1935 was directly in the centre of the economic malaise. In fact, reading the diary, with its narrative of first-class travel and accommodations, and with description of new houses being constructed, and plenty of automobiles – many of them large, fancy models – motoring around the province, one might have no idea at all that times for a majority of the people were tough. Historian Hal Rothman has written about this phenomenon of tourists being presented with an artificial experience in Las Vegas, Nevada, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and at ski resort towns in the Rocky Mountain West.²⁵ Although Alberta was not as touristy as those places, some of Rothman’s conclusions apply here. Despite much of what Rundle witnessed, Albertans were, in fact, as Alvin Finkel has written, experiencing how the Great Depression had an “immense impact on the entire Canadian economy,” and how it was “particularly disastrous for export-dependent provinces such as Alberta.” A collapse in international grain markets hit Alberta farmers hard, and the mining industry suffered because of the lack of money available to buy Albertan coal or other minerals. Unemployment was high in the province, and federal authorities even deported some 2,500 immigrants. By 1935, an average of 14 per cent of the residents of Edmonton, Calgary, and Lethbridge were on relief. It was this kind of economic plight, as Finkel has explained, that “created the political space for radical political movements in Alberta,” and gave the fundamentalist Aberhart and his Social Credit Party the chance to succeed.²⁶

Only occasionally does Rundle mention that other dominant feature of the 1930s in the Prairies: drought. The lack of rain, causing the driest years since weather records had been kept in the region, combined with such natural disasters as wind and dust storms and grasshopper plagues, compelled historians to refer to the thirties as the worst decade in the history of the Prairie Provinces. As Gerald Friesen has explained, the dust storms began in 1931 and grew steadily worse by 1934 when “soil began to blow in mid-June, to destroy gardens and crops.” The year 1935, when

Rundle visited, was only slightly better for farmers, but the next year was a “disaster [with the] coldest winter in history [and] the longest, hottest summer yet,” with the winds causing “desert-like conditions.”²⁷ One of the few times that Rundle alluded to what surely must have been these very visible conditions was on October 4 when she complained about her “dust cold” and how there was “no getting away from it; the dust from the roads hangs over the valley like a perpetual mist, as there has been no rain for weeks.”

Likewise, First Nations people are basically absent in her account. This could perhaps be due to the few opportunities afforded her to see many Indigenous people, as most of her time was spent in downtown Edmonton. And the Royal Commission had no business on any First Nation reserves. At only one point, on October 9 when south of Calgary at the EP Ranch, does she mention this population: “Two full blooded Indians rode in while we were there, one on a lovely little brown pony, and the other on a stocky little grey beast. We tried to talk to them, but they were not very communicative.” Given their location, it is most likely they were members of Treaty 7 nations, perhaps Nakoda (Stoney) First Nation, or Piikani (Peigan), Tsuu T’iina (Sarcee), Kainai (Blood), or possibly Siksika (Blackfoot Confederacy).²⁸ Rundle did not show any curiosity on the matter, but perhaps more than others in her British party, as she wanted to visit with the two whom she encountered here. First Nations across the Prairies in the 1930s were suffering tremendous economic and environmental hardships. The devastating drought had adversely affected farming and ranching on Treaty 7 lands (southern Alberta), without much attention from Ottawa, as the Bennett government focused primarily on business and economics during the Depression. The overall economy put a slump on prices for primary products (especially fish and furs) from First Nations lands, and, as historian Olive Dickason has written, put “Indian producers on welfare rolls.” Dickason also pointed out that there were valid “fears that the Great Depression would drive hordes of whites into the bush” and onto reserve lands.²⁹

Because Rundle was part of a commission investigating the coal mines in Alberta, however, she does mention the hard times experienced by miners and their families.³⁰ For example, on September 23, while touring the Drumheller area, Rundle noted that they went to look at the “housing conditions in Newcastle and Nacmine” and were “horrified at what we saw.” She described how there were “hundreds of small shacks ... huddled

together in large ‘camps,’” that there was “no running water supply except from a communal tap in the middle of the camp, and no sanitation except what the people choose to arrange for themselves.” Worse, she offered, “What the conditions must be like during the winter, I don’t like to consider.” “I believe the cold is very severe in this valley ... and in the summer they have dust storms.” We are left to wonder, however, if these living conditions were standard for the industry or made worse because of the plight of the Depression. On September 25 they travelled to the Rosedale Mine, where miners were on strike (although she does not discuss the reasons for the job action), and where miners’ quarters were leased to them by the company.³¹ She did mention a strike in the works at the mine, and wrote that the workers’ housing and conditions were deplorable there. The tour they were given suggested that the accommodations “were pretty comfortable and spotlessly kept,” but, as she added, “we were only taken into carefully prepared and selected houses.” They inspected the bathhouse there as well, but although Rundle took “feverish notes,” she didn’t allude in her diary to the conditions that they observed. There is barely any mention at all of any of the miners themselves, who in 1935 numbered nearly 10,000 in the province.³²

The Alberta government, however, did in fact commission Sir Montague Barlow to investigate the working and housing conditions in the province’s mining districts. Montague Barlow wrote that the commission “made personal examination of the provision made for the health and welfare of the mining community, including housing, sanitation, water supply, pithead baths, etc.”³³ But the report on these matters was contradictory in some ways. Although Montague Barlow admitted that there had been “numerous complaints” by miners about their living conditions, especially regarding the “insufficient accommodation” of the wash-houses, he tended to side with management, arguing that management was “taking steps to improve” the conditions. In regard to housing, he admitted that the conditions were similar to those reported by the commission ten years earlier, but that some complaints now seemed “exaggerated,” as he thought “houses were reasonably adequate,” with running water, and with some having access to adjacent land for gardens. Sanitation standards, however, were not adequate. “There leaves much to be desired,” he wrote, “especially in Drumheller.” He noted that in many mining camps there were only “small outside privies” and “no provisions for the removal of waste.” In

conclusion, he advised that “a determined effort should be made to improve the housing and living conditions throughout the mining districts.” When coal had been first discovered in some of those areas, the camps were “remote” and “meager,” but now “efforts should be made to raise the general standard.” He also noted that “non Anglo Saxon miners” in some mining communities lived in the “barest of shacks.”³⁴

Montague Barlow did not go into specific recommendations or make harsh demands of the coal companies or of the province regarding the remedy for these conditions. The same was true for his stance on wages and earnings, where he again appeared to side with management on the issue. He noted that few miners in Alberta’s smaller pit mines were union members, and left it to the provincial minister of labour to “take steps” to deal with complaints about minimum wage earnings. For the times, with decreases in demand for coal, he maintained that there were overall too many coal miners in the province. The work was just too seasonal, as there was less demand for coal in the summer. Thus, Montague Barlow advised that the provincial minister work to regulate the situation, but did not give suggestions on how to do so.³⁵ Rundle did not engage in these kinds of political musings in her own writings, but did mention that some mines were soon to be closing, making no reference as to whether the closures were due to the Depression or if the coal seams had been spent.

All of these points reflect quite well the hard times of mining in Alberta in the 1930s. Despite coal being the province’s “primary energy industry” in the beginning of the twentieth century, its decline had already started in the mid-1920s due to the postwar recession, high freight rates for shipping, stiff competition from coal mines in Germany, Great Britain, the United States, and Saskatchewan, and the advent of hydroelectric power in the Prairies. Likewise, discoveries of rich reserves of oil and natural gas in Alberta in the 1920s signalled even greater competition in the domestic energy market in Alberta and in the export market elsewhere in Canada, especially to Ontario, which had once been Alberta’s biggest coal customer. Thus, production fell from a high of seven million tons in 1923 to less than half that amount by the 1930s.³⁶ By the time of the Depression, as historian Bradford Rennie has argued, coal mining in the province was “non-re-munerative,” with some operators making only a “hair-thin profit” and others actually losing money. So, although “no-one could have foreseen it, the old order of coal was passing; the industry teetered on the precipice of

a long decline.”³⁷ And decline it did. Despite a brief wartime boom during World War II, between 1948 and 1967 coal production dropped by 50 per cent, and by 80 per cent in value, when Japan was Alberta’s only “viable export outlet” for coal.³⁸

The decline that started was manifested in ways that hit the mining community hard in Alberta. Often the mines were only open a few days a week and only part of the year, wreaking havoc on household economies dependent on the mining wages. Worse, economic constraints caused operators to cut corners on safety, a situation that resulted in thousands of work-site accidents and injuries each year, and as Rennie stated, with “frighteningly common” fatalities.³⁹ All of these conditions created a scenario ripe for union activity in Albertan mining communities. In the 1910s and 1920s the One Big Union (OBU) was active throughout the province. The OBU promulgated a major strike in 1919 in Drumheller, where labour relations were “particularly hostile,” an action that was partly in sympathy with the Winnipeg General Strike earlier that year.⁴⁰ Strikes, backed by the Mine Workers of Canada (after it broke away from the United Mine Workers of the United States), continued for the next two decades, “unruly and sometimes bloody,” as Rennie described them, although Mary Rundle made no mention of violence at the job actions that took place during the commission’s visits in 1935.⁴¹

Rundle’s four-month work trip and adventure to Canada ended on December 18, 1935. She gave only scant attention in her travel diary to the final couple of weeks of travel in Quebec, the Maritimes, and the ship journey home to England. Hence, the journal seems to have a somewhat abrupt ending, but she devoted much of her time on the return trip in eastern Canada furiously typing up the final Royal Commission reports, which ended up being 110 pages. One can imagine that so much tedious work, as well as the fatigue of travel and living out of trunks, left her exhausted and not prepared to add too many details to her diary at the end of the trip. Her last entry is written with Britain getting nearer. “Had another bad night, but felt much better and got up at 11. Arranged about landing card, changing money, etc., and feel that England is almost in sight; indeed, by the chart we are nearly there. It is a beautiful day – sun and blue sky – but the incessant rolling goes on.”

Mary Rundle’s life largely returned to normal upon her arrival home. She continued working as a professional secretary, and two years later was

back in the employ of Sir Montague Barlow for the Royal Commission on the Location of Industry located in the Treasury of Whitehall in London, one of the services for which Sir Montague Barlow became best known. However, two years later, duty called – this time to her country. In 1939 she left Sir Montague Barlow to join the Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS), where she served for the next nine years and became a supervisor, the third-highest ranking possible for that organization.⁴² Following military service she worked in London as a secretary to the managing director of the Metal Box Company until her retirement in the early 1960s. She lived the rest of her life in a cottage in Outgate on Lake Windermere in England’s Lake District. She never married, a condition that most certainly allowed her to travel to Western Canada with the Barlows, to be a member of the WRNS for so long, and to pursue her career as a professional secretary. Thus, Rundle lived a long, full life, enjoying her centenary birthday party hosted in her honour at her Lake District home, and dying at age 103 on September 29, 2010.⁴³

Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Elizabeth Jameson, commentator for the panel “Transnational Migrations and Political Networks” at the *Directions West* conference, for her insightful and helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this chapter, and George Colpitts and the anonymous reviewers for their wise advice and suggestions in readying the conference paper for this volume.

The travel diary is unpublished, but is in its original typewritten manuscript in the Provincial Archives of Alberta (hereafter PAA). “Trip Diary of Miss Mary Beatrice Rundle, Secretary to Sir Montague Barlow, former Minister of Labour in the United Kingdom, Heading the Royal Commission Appointed to Investigate the Coal Industry in Alberta, Aug. 24 to Dec. 18, 1935,” PAA, 90.245.
- 2 Montague Barlow, *Report of the Royal Commission Respecting the Coal Industry of the Province of Alberta, 1935* (Edmonton: A. Shnitka, King’s Printer, 1936), 7–9.
- 3 The act to establish the commission is Order-in-Council (O.C.) 1088/35, and is signed by both Lieutenant Governor W.L. Walsh and Acting Chairman (Premier) Ernest C. Manning; PAA, accession PR1990.0245.
- 4 Barlow, *Report of the Royal Commission*, 1–2, 4, 10.
- 5 Biographical information gathered from the obituary for Sir. A. Montague Barlow, “Life of Public Service,” *The Times Picayune* (London), 1 June 1951.
- 6 “The Social Round,” *Edmonton Bulletin*, 19 October 1935. Rundle included a copy of the article after page 36 of her travel diary, the copy from which this and the subsequent paragraphs are gleaned.
- 7 Ibid.

- 8 Mary Rundle to Keith Stotyn, Esq., Senior Archivist, Manuscripts, 6 May 1990, PAA, PR1990.0245. Information on Armour is from Barlow, *Report of the Royal Commission*, 4.
- 9 “The Social Round.”
- 10 Montague Barlow, *Report of the Royal Commission*, 4.
- 11 All direct quotations are from “Trip Diary of Mary Beatrice Rundle,” PAA, 90.245. To avoid citation repetition, for reference purposes each quotation in the body states the date the diary entry was made without needing to re-flag it in a footnote.
- 12 Montague Barlow, *Report of the Royal Commission*, 4, 6.
- 13 See Isabella Bird, *The Englishwoman in America* (London: John Murray, 1856), or Bird’s arguably most famous work, *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1879; reprint, London: Virago, 1986). For analysis, see Robert Root, *Following Isabella: Travels in Colorado Then and Now* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).
- 14 Robin Hackett, Freda Hamer, and Gay Wachman, eds., *At Home and Abroad in the Empire: British Women Writers in the 1930s* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2009).
- 15 See Julia Briggs, “‘Almost Ashamed of England Being so English’: Woolf and Ideas of Englishness,” in *At Home and Abroad*, 97–118; and Bonnie Kime Scott, “Rebecca West: Construction of a Public Intelligence through Letters of the 1930s,” in *At Home and Abroad*, 187–202. For further examples of this kind of British Empire critical writing see E.M. Forster, *Howards End* (1910; reprint, New York: Longman, 2010) and Forster’s *A Passage to India* (1924; reprint, New York: Meiers, 1979).
- 16 Montague Barlow, *Report of the Royal Commission*, 3.
- 17 Some of the standard works on Aberhart and Social Credit include Alvin Finkel, *The Social Credit Phenomenon in Alberta* (Toronto: University Press of Toronto, 1989); Lewis H. Thomas, ed., *William Aberhart and Social Credit in Alberta* (Vancouver: Copp Clark, 1977); and John J. Barr, *The Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of Social Credit in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974). For a reassessment, see Alvin Finkel, “Alberta Social Credit Reappraised: The Radical Character of the Early Social Credit Movement,” in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 661–81; and Finkel, “1935: The Social Credit Revolution,” in *Alberta Formed, Alberta Transformed*, ed. Michael Payne, Donald Wetherell, and Catharine Cavanaugh (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, and Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), 490–512.
- 18 Finkel, “1935,” 491.
- 19 For more on this region, see Brian Noble and Glenn Rollans, *Alberta, The Badlands* (Toronto: Reidmore Books, 1981); Philip J. Currie and Eva B. Koppelhus, eds., *Dinosaur Provincial Park: A Spectacular Ancient Ecosystem Revealed* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); Chuck Haney, *Badlands of the High Plains* (Helena, MT: Farcountry Press, 2001); and Sterling Evans, “Badlands and Bones: Towards a Conservation and Social History of Dinosaur Provincial Park, Alberta,” in *Place and Replace*, ed. Leah Morton, Essylt Jones, and Adele Perry (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013), 250–70.
- 20 For more on the Frank landslide disaster, see Karen Buckley, *Danger, Death, and Disaster in the Crownsnest Pass Mines, 1902–1928* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004); Monica Field and David McIntire, *On the Edge of Destruction: Canada’s Deadliest*

- Rockslide* (Crowsnest Pass, AB: Frank Slide Interpretive Centre, 2003); and Frank Anderson, *The Frank Slide Story* (Calgary: Frontier, 1979).
- 21 Most farmers in Alberta in the mid-1930s were still harvesting with binders, as combines were used only on the huge wheat ranches that were owned by large conglomerates located elsewhere. Thus, the scene of binders harvesting wheat and other grains, and the rows of stooks neatly organized in the fields to await threshing, became iconic symbols of rural Alberta and the Prairie Provinces in general. For more on the history of wheat farming in one particularly important place for the wheat industry, see Paul Voisey, *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988). For the history of such harvesting in the region, see Thomas D. Isern, *Bull Threshers and Bindlestiffs: Harvesting and Threshing on the North American Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990). On how the Prairie Provinces were connected to a larger North American complex because of the use of binders and the twine they required, see Sterling Evans, *Bound in Twine: The History and Ecology of the Hennequen-Wheat Complex for Mexico and the American and Canadian Plains, 1880–1950* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007).
 - 22 For a complete telling of this Turner Valley history, see David Finch, *Hell's Half Acre: Early Days in the Great Alberta Oil Patch* (Victoria: Heritage House, 2005); and Laura Golebiowski, "Oil Discovery in Turner Valley: Press Reactions," *Alberta History* 55, no. 3 (2007): 20–28. The really large Alberta oil reserves were not discovered until 1947, when the oil industry really developed, and it has remained an important part of the Albertan economy ever since. See Doug O'wram, "1951: Oil's Magic Wand," in *Alberta Formed, Alberta Transformed*, vol. 2, 566–87.
 - 23 British Columbia held out with left-hand side of the road driving until 1922, when provincial leaders opted to change the rules to right-hand driving, mainly in order to lure American tourists to BC during Prohibition. See Stephen L. Moore, "Refugees from Volstead: Cross-Boundary Tourism in the Northwest during Prohibition," in *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-Ninth Parallel*, ed. Sterling Evans (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 248–49.
 - 24 For further information, see Daniel Mark Epstein, *Sister Aimee: The Life of Aimee Semple McPherson* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994); Edith L. Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1993); and Thomas Lately, *Storming Heaven: The Lives and Turmoil of Minnie Kennedy and Aimee Semple McPherson* (New York: Morrow, 1970).
 - 25 See, for example, Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000); and *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2003).
 - 26 Finkel, "1935," 492–93; quotation is on 491.
 - 27 Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 386–87. See also James H. Gray, *Men against the Desert* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978); and David C. Jones, *Empire of Dust: Settling and Abandoning the Prairie Dry Belt* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1987).
 - 28 On Treaty 7, see Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Sarah Carter, Walter Hildebrandt, and Dorothy First Rider, *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996).

- 29 Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Time*, 3rd ed. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2002), 309, 382.
- 30 For discussion of early coal mining in Western Canada, see D. B. Dowling, *Canada Department of Mines Geological Survey: The Coal Mines of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Eastern British Columbia* (Ottawa: Canada Department of Mines, 1909); and James White, *Power in Alberta: Water, Coal and Natural Gas* (Ottawa: Canada, Commission on Conservation, 1919). For a survey of mining operations in Alberta by the early 1960s, see John Duncan Campbell, *Catalogue of Coal Mines on the Alberta Plains (Research Council of Alberta Preliminary Report)* (Edmonton: Research Council of Alberta, 1964).
- 31 For more on labour history and strikes in Alberta, see Tom Monto, *Solidarity and Anger: History of the Alberta Labour Movement* (Edmonton: Crang, 1989); and sections on Alberta in Judy Fudge and Erick Tucker, *Labour before the Law: The Regulation of Workers' Collective Action in Canada, 1900–1948* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- 32 Number of workers is from Barlow, *Report of the Royal Commission*, 53. For further discussion, see Warren Caragata, *Alberta Labour: A Heritage Untold* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1979); and Tom Mitchell and James Naylor, "The Prairies: In the Eye of the Storm," in *The Workers' Revolt in Canada, 1917–1925*, ed. Craig Herron (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 176–231.
- 33 Barlow, *Report of the Royal Commission*, 4.
- 34 Ibid., 57–58.
- 35 Ibid., 56, 53.
- 36 Data as reported in Bradford Rennie, "From Idealism to Pragmatism: 1923 in Alberta," in *Alberta Formed, Alberta Transformed*, vol. 2, 446–47. Barlow reported similar findings in his *Report of the Royal Commission*, 5, 9.
- 37 Rennie, "From Idealism to Pragmatism," 447.
- 38 Max Foran, "1967: Embracing the Future . . . at Arm's Length," in *Alberta Formed, Alberta Transformed*, vol. 2, 620.
- 39 Rennie, "From Idealism to Pragmatism," 447.
- 40 David Bright, "1919: A Year of Extraordinary Difficulty," in *Alberta Formed, Alberta Transformed*, vol. 2, 427. See also Mitchell and Naylor, "The Prairies: In the Eye of the Storm."
- 41 Rennie, "From Idealism to Pragmatism," 448.
- 42 Rundle to Stotyn, PAA, PR1990.0245.
- 43 Later biographical information is derived from the obituary for Mary Beatrice Rundle that was in *The Daily Telegraph* (London), <http://announcements.telegraph.co.uk./deaths/ass833/rundle-mary-beatrice-cbe> (accessed on 8 August 2011).

