



## Spaces In-Between: The Railway and Early Cinema in Rural, Western Canada

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People in small towns and rural areas witnessed cinema across Canada, coast to coast, only a few months after its metropolitan debuts in 1896. Within a year, networks of itinerant showmen had collectively carried their projectors and films by train across the continent to anywhere settled; some individual showmen crossed nearly the span of the continent on their own. Many had a rural focus, just as in the United States and Europe, making one-night whistle stops in towns with populations as small as 200 people—anywhere with a town hall, a rail station, and a newspaper (Moore 2012). One of the first exhibitors to focus on rural spaces in-between cities, Richard A. Hardie partnered in 1897 with railway companies to produce the first films of the Canadian West’s vast prairie and the railways that sped across it. Hardie’s stated aim was to exhibit these films in the United Kingdom to promote immigration to rural Canada, and they are best known in that sense, accompanied by James S. Freer’s lecture ‘Ten Years in Manitoba’ (Canada 1895–1907). Less attention has been given to how Hardie’s films also enjoyed an extensive circuit of exhibitions across the Canadian prairie, giving people who

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had already settled the region a representation of themselves, their landscape, and their railways. In 1902, 'Living Canada' was produced for the Canadian Pacific Railway (the CPR) by Charles Urban's London Bioscope company, again with the express intent of attracting immigrant settlers from the United Kingdom, but the Bioscope also specialized in exhibiting Canada to itself between 1903 and 1905, especially in remote communities in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia (BC). For these and subsequent early filmmaking, histories of Canadian cinema have largely missed or forgotten how a primary audience and public for Canadian films were the people of rural and remote Canada themselves.

This chapter reviews the relation between the railway and rural exhibitions of moving pictures in cinema's first decade in Western Canada, 1897–1905. Canadian early cinema is unique for the central place of railway companies in sponsoring the most prominent and some of the earliest films of Canada and its rural landscape. Railways were the infrastructure that allowed early itinerant cinema to reach rural places, and railway companies also made the rail journey and its landscapes into a spectacle, continually sponsoring the production of artwork, photography, cinema, as well as packaged tourist vistas. The view from the train was a primary way to see and imagine the nation itself. Publicity for nationalist uses of cinema to attract settlers, and better-documented exhibitions in metropolitan cities, have masked how rural audiences were equally important to the success of exhibition strategies for these early Canadian-made films. The young nation gained political independence only in 1867, without initially including the territories that later became Western provinces. From the Rockies to the Pacific coast, BC joined in 1871 on the promise of its own rail link to Eastern Canada, a promise not delivered until 1885. Audiences in Western Canada were largely new settlers to the land and often new immigrants to the country; their communities were spaces in-between cities, where transportation and communication played an outsize role. Cinema's idealized image of their local landscape was inseparable from their own idealized role in furthering the Canadian national project—all facilitated by the railway companies that sponsored the making of films as an extension of making the nation, its landscape, and its citizens.

Rural and small-town film exhibition has often been defined by its precarity under threat from metropolitanism and mass culture. This starting point is a logical extension of the rural and urban divide as a matter of society and community, *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*—a cornerstone of sociological theories of modernity (Tönnies 1957). In common sense and

classical sociology alike, the metropolis' economic and creative centrality comes at the expense of a mental life of anomie and alienation (Simmel 1950). The rural was simultaneously romanticized for retaining genuine communal life and cultural authenticity, even as its people were enveloped by modern capitalism (Bender 1975; Löwy and Sayre 2001). Transposed into cinematic terms, early rural, small-town, regional, and working-class audiences are often taken to be initially vibrant and localized before economic integration with Hollywood distribution leads to cultural homogenization with Hollywood ideology. In his pioneering social history of one town's working-class culture, Roy Rosenzweig (1983: 217) ended with the movies as a symbolic lament for cultural autonomy: 'In the shadows of the movie theatre one can catch glimpses of the waning of the older ethnic, insular working-class culture and the emergence of a new outward-looking working-class culture'. Although the movies provided a new transnational pastime, Kathryn Fuller (1996: 50) noted that in the United States 'urban and small-town exhibitors catered to their audiences' interests in significantly different ways'. Such emphasis on regional diversity and local particularity nonetheless tends to highlight 'qualities that those historical experiences have shared with other locations—from big city to small town—across the nation' (Fuller-Seeley 2008: 9). Focusing on local variations of widespread networks inadvertently privileges the commonality of standardized, direct control through chain theatre management, which loomed large in urban settings, small towns, and peripheral regions alike. As Robert Allen (2008: 22) has observed, 'it has been difficult to see regional or demographic differences as anything other than aberrations or the result of a lag in the pace of modernization'.

Movies can be reduced to a facet of a generalized equating of chain store retailing with mass culture, especially in the 1920s. 'With each year, the "lines of demarcation" between social classes and between the city, the small town, and the farm had become less clear' (Cohen 1990: 100). Gregory Waller's (2005) review of the business rhetoric and advice offered to small-town exhibitors in the 1930s is equally clear that urban and rural, chain and independent, were 'ideological as well as geographical' distinctions. An 'independent' movie theatre was an ambiguous enough term to include locations as distinct as urban enclaves, suburbs, second-tier cities, small towns, as well as truly rural places 'out in the sticks'. Sentimentality for small-town life is an anchor of Americana, and 'within this topos, the local picture show exerts its own particular ideological allure, especially when it is depicted as an inviting, accessible, hometown gathering place

run by an enterprising, neighborly showman' (p. 15). This particular slippage between independence and rural location may be specific to the United States; for rural and small-town European cinema, Judith Thissen (2017: 3) finds 'a much greater and enduring diversity of exhibition practices, distribution strategies and cinematic experiences'. Overall, new cinema histories have taken up the task of grounding analysis in local exhibition contexts but also with a view to comparative frameworks (Maltby 2011). With these calls for local particularly in mind, my focus on early cinema in Canada dispels the notion that an outward-looking orientation to cinema supersedes an earlier, insular community-based orientation. In a region such as Western Canada, which had only recently been colonized for settlement, early cinema could simultaneously be a recognition of local perspectives and also a force for integration into the national and Imperial imaginaries (Grievson and MacCabe 2011).

### THE RAILWAY AND CANADIAN NATIONALISM

Cinema initially followed existing cultural routines before forging its own unique institutions (Gaudreault and Marion 2005). In Western Canada, however, it is crucial to understand how modern settlement predates cinema by only a brief couple of decades. Permanent settlement and colonization of the territory from Indigenous peoples happened only in the late 1800s, as a result of modern transportation and communication technologies (Berland 2009; Charland 1986; Acland and Buxton 1999). In many communities in Western Canada, the first moving pictures came to town in 1897 before there were enough people to support a newspaper. Local performances and community halls came along with settlement, but commercial theatres hosting touring shows become routine only in the wake of railway connections in the 1880s (Hartman 2002). Especially for rural and remote towns, itinerant entertainment signified being 'in the swim' of modernity, acting as a connection to metropolitan hubs, a cultural extension of trade and transportation. While live performance is not usually considered among communication technologies, rural opera houses in North America can be considered pre-cinematic nodes for the circulation of commercial mass culture. Itinerant entertainment routes followed railway circuits and were promoted through newspapers and telegraphed publicity (Moore 2011). The resulting consumer experience spanned a vast territory, and provided metropolitan culture to the hinterland, as if a unified single marketplace (Carey 1983). Performed entertainment can

thus be taken as a form of modern communication built atop the transportation infrastructure and in continuity with later technologically grounded mass culture and broadcast media.

As I detail elsewhere, the natural north-south flow of rivers historically connected the Canadian West more strongly to the Northwest United States than to Eastern Canada (Moore 2013). This was replicated in riverboat and early railway lines, which connected Winnipeg to Minneapolis and Chicago rather than Toronto and Montréal (Galbraith 1957; den Otter 1983; Martin 1976). Railway development on the whole, however, served national interests with development of east-west pathways on either side of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. Transcontinental railway expansion became a dominant concern just as Canada was formed as a self-governing dominion apart from Britain. The Union Pacific first linked the United States Pacific to Atlantic by rail in 1869, just before Manitoba, and then BC, became provinces of Canada. The latter mandated a railway link between the Canadian Pacific and eastern industry. As is well known in Canada, politics superseded market logic to route the CPR entirely within national boundaries north of Lake Superior, becoming a totem of national unity, as well as industrial and political independence from the United States (Innis 1971). The CPR from Vancouver to Montréal was completed in 1885, several years after first building a railway link south to meet existing routes in the United States (Poor 1876–1885).

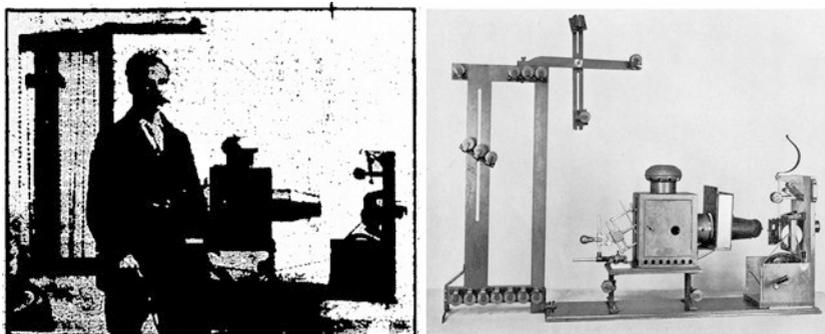
Western territories played an essential role in completing Canada as a nation, both geographically and culturally, although the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel as a border between Western Canada and the United States remained all too obviously an artificial construct, despite the completion of the railway (Stuart and Taylor 2005; Thompson and Randall 2008). Gerald Friesen (1987) cites the policy cornerstones of treaties to colonize Indigenous peoples, establishment of the Northwest Mounted Police (the iconic ‘Mounties’), construction of the CPR and its advantageous protective tariff, and settlement through immigration. Altogether, these government-controlled institutions were meant to establish distinctly Canadian economic and cultural ways of living north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. Regulating rather than preventing trade across the international boundary, Canadian national policy constantly moderated the economic and cultural reach of modernization. Commodities and mass-marketed consumption were often free to move across the border, especially commercial amusements, except when policy encouraged overtly nationalizing alternatives. Friesen pointed to institutions that explicitly facilitated a national policy through repressive state apparatuses: policing, subsidy, tariff, treaty, and settlement

(Althusser 1989). A potentially more complex question is how the national policy on the prairies was also instituted through ideological state apparatuses—sticking with the traditional Althusserian scheme momentarily. Tracing the circulation of early cinema highlights the tension between national and regional ideals within the cultural sphere. At stake in the emergence of the cinema and mass communication infrastructures was how Canada was a nation whose very boundaries and territory were continually re-established through popular culture and civic communication.

### MANITOBA REPRODUCED: R. A. HARDIE'S PRAIRIE FILMS AND THEIR PRAIRIE AUDIENCES

The earliest filmmakers in the Canadian West formally pitched their use of film and lectures to promote the region to prospective settlers. Without self-important rhetoric, they also used the films to entertain the people of the West with images of their landscapes. These earliest Canadian filmmakers were, in part, helping to constitute a nascent national public by providing the signifiers of a novel common culture. Nationalist imperatives were thus combined with the logics of local recognition and economic boosterism relied on by producers of 'local views' and 'tourist vistas' elsewhere (Johnson 2010; Toulmin and Loiperdinger 2005; Brégent-Heald 2015; Peterson 2006).

Although Edison and Lumière photographers had come to Canada to film Niagara Falls, perhaps the first moving pictures made by a Canadian were scenes of Manitoba by Richard A. Hardie, a showman who had debuted an Edison Vitascope in Winnipeg in 1896 (Moore 2012). A year later, he successfully pitched a scheme to regional government and railway executives to use moving pictures to promote immigration to the Prairies. Hardie had purchased a new Kinetoscope projector of his own in June 1897 and began exhibiting moving pictures at Winnipeg's summer parks (see Fig. 5.1). In the Manitoba moving picture field, he already had competition: an Anamatagraph owned by William McCarthy, who partnered with a theatrical troupe, the Cosgroves, and set out across the main CPR line to bring the first moving pictures to towns in the Northwest Territory of Assiniboia (the present-day province of Saskatchewan was created in 1905). The show proceeded into Alberta (itself not yet a province until 1905) but without venturing to the cities of Calgary and Edmonton. The return leg of the tour solicited only meagre attendance and disappointment that the pictures were repeated from their previous visit. If repeated views of moving pictures were already a problem, Hardie would offer a new set of films soon enough.



**Fig. 5.1** Richard A. Hardie with his Projecting Kinetoscope in 1897 (*Winnipeg Free Press*, 20 August 1921) and a reference image of the machine ([www.victorian-cinema.net/machines](http://www.victorian-cinema.net/machines))

In Winnipeg early in September 1897, Hardie pursued his latest venture: Manitoba moving pictures. Hardie hired Edward Amet, the Magniscope builder from Illinois, to come to Manitoba to make a first set of films and teach the tricks of the trade. Few of the pictures are mentioned specifically, but they included the Winnipeg and Brandon fire brigades racing down city streets, sidewalk crowds, trains racing towards the camera, and plenty of wheat being harvested, including Manitoba Premier Thomas Greenway at work in his own fields. The films are well known for later being exhibited in the United Kingdom by James S. Freer as an immigration and settlement promotional tool (Morris 1992: 30–33). One small-town report of Hardie's filming states the case clearly: 'Many [local] citizens will walk across the lime-lit sheet to the entertainment and instruction of thousands to whom Manitoba was merely a name, and whose ideas as to its residents were summarized in the general idea that it was inhabited by scalp hunting savages' (*Carberry News*, 3 September 1897). The irony is that the films toured domestically first and more extensively than in Britain, serving the same ideological ends for those only recently settled. Having a local encounter with cinema, and having local scenes filmed, was thus here at the very beginnings of filmmaking in Canada linked to becoming modern and civilized—a way of marking how this part of Canada was now settled by people other than Indigenous, First Nations communities.

The films debuted in Winnipeg in September 1897 for officials from the CPR and local government, while it remains unclear whether or when Hardie gained their direct financial backing. The debut exhibition was

attended by General Manager Whyte and others from the CPR, alongside Mayor McCreary and other politicians. Hardie ‘presented half a dozen remarkably life-like pictures in the harvest fields and stockyards of prominent farmers. Chief amongst them was a presentation of (Manitoba Premier) Hon. Mr. Greenway’s farm, with the familiar burly form of the premier actively engaged as a harvest hand and attending his stock. CPR trains under full speed were also reproduced ... with a view of the Jubilee procession in London and a number of other life-like scenes’ (‘Manitoba Reproduced’ 1897). Even here at their political debut, the films were part of a mainstream, variety programme, not yet integrated into the immigration lecture later given in Britain by Freer.

In September and October 1897, Hardie now partnered with the Cosgroves and toured across the same CPR main line as McCarthy had travelled weeks earlier but now stopping at more towns and bringing the first moving pictures to the cities of Edmonton and Calgary, with a rest in scenic Banff before returning to Manitoba. Since these were still among the earliest exhibitions of moving pictures in the region, it may be surprising to learn how seldom local commentary reported that some of the pictures depicted scenes from Western Canada. The films were part of a commercial, variety programme in a rural region that only had itinerant entertainments, where cinema was still a novelty supplement to routine amusements. Hardie’s films showed the prairie and its scenes to the people of Western Canada but through entertainment and linked to commercial leisure. On returning to Manitoba, Hardie and the Cosgroves completed an extensive tour of the province, appearing in a couple of dozen small villages, with populations as small as just 200 people, often just one night each before moving to the next stop.

At the end of 1897, just as Freer heads to England, Hardie and Cosgrove severed their partnership and began competing. Each set off on another tour across the Prairies—this time in winter—each with his own brand-new Kinetoscope, each with copies of the Manitoba local films, and each with his own variety acts in support, disparaging the other as a mere copy. Hardie’s Ideals and the Cosgrove Company recklessly scheduled shows just days apart from each other, and even played in Edmonton simultaneously, to the amusement of the local press and the confusion of the public. Perhaps they struck a truce, as they forged different paths after this, with Hardie returning to rural tours of Manitoba while the Cosgroves travelled over the Rocky Mountains for an extensive tour of BC. An American show had brought the first moving pictures to BC in Nelson in

January 1897, but Cosgrove's Kinetoscope was the first to arrive on the coast via the CPR. Hardie's first films of the Canadian West were shown widely across the region and beyond for several years. Hardie and Cosgrove each used them as part of their commercial variety programmes throughout 1898 and into 1900, and at least one set of them ended up part of a programme G. H. and E. L. Ireland toured coast to coast in Canada and across the Southern United States in 1901 and 1902. The Manitoba films were perhaps still part of their programme when the Ireland Brothers toured the Caribbean in 1903.

Hardie's Manitoba films are best known through their better-documented exhibitions in the United Kingdom, where they were accompanied by lectures entitled 'Ten Years in Manitoba' by James S. Freer (Morris 1992; Eamon 1995). Indeed, Freer has long been assumed to be the filmmaker, although he was not brought aboard until December 1897, months after the films had already been exhibited across the Prairies ('Manitoba in the Kinetoscope' 1897; 'Scenes for England' 1897). The reported explanation for bringing aboard Freer was his experience as an 'expert stereoptician' and lecturer, his prior career in the press in England, and especially his own story of immigrating in 1886 to become a Manitoba farmer. Freer had been angling with the Department of the Interior to tour Britain with his stereopticon for a few years already. After receiving modest support in November 1897, Freer had already planned his travels when he sent a telegraph to the Minister in December, just days before departing: 'Provincial Government adding kinetoscope to outfit' (Canada 1895-1907). One of the reasons the Minister was hesitant to support Freer was a shift away from using lectures in Britain to encourage settlement. Arnold J. McMillan, British representative for Manitoba immigration, had just vacated his position to instead recruit labourers for the Yukon gold rush and BC mining camps. McMillan had travelled between Liverpool and Winnipeg annually since 1886, escorting new settlers he recruited through a lecture and lantern-slide circuit across the United Kingdom—exactly the tool Freer was going to use but now adding cinema. Remarkably, McMillan's lectures were sometimes also entitled 'Ten Years in Manitoba' but most often called 'Living in Canada'. Freer was an established lecturer who could deliver a similar lecture with autobiographical authority, having lived exactly a decade in Manitoba himself. Is it nonetheless possible Freer used McMillan's existing script and followed his existing circuit? Is it even possible Freer was amongst McMillan's first group of 150 settlers in 1886?

Such speculation aside, Freer's lecture was delivered auspiciously in London at the Imperial Institute, after first speaking in Lincoln and Norwich and continuing elsewhere (*St. James Gazette*, 9 March 1898). In the case of Hardie's early made-in-Canada films, the urban-rural divide mirrored foreign-domestic distinctions. Freer's debut as mouthpiece in the Imperial capital contrasted drastically with Hardie's own earlier exhibitions handling the apparatus in Western Canada. Close to home, the films' official rhetoric was secondary to their being part of the novelty of commercial entertainment with the Cosgroves and a variety of other films. Only when used in the United Kingdom did their exhibition fit their intended purpose as publicity for the work of railways and government in settling new immigrants as farmers. Education and civic improvement were not yet called into action domestically to manage the contradictory goals of nationalism. Freer returned to the United Kingdom with the Manitoba films twice more, in 1899 and 1902, although with diminishing returns, in part because he was employing many of the same films, now five years old. Freer's last tour coincided with the production of a new series of made-in-Canada films sponsored by the CPR, which focused especially on Rocky Mountain railway journeys. Coincidentally adapting McMillan's other lecture title, 'Living Canada' also had an extensive exhibition circuit across Western Canada with a special concentration on the mining towns in the interior of BC.

#### 'LIVING CANADA', AS EXHIBITED IN WESTERN CANADA

The CPR was the conduit for the varied worldwide interests in the Canadian West. The company gained from an increased profile of the region's resources and opportunities, both increasing its symbolic role, attracting investment, or actually transporting immigrant settlers, resources, consumer goods, or tourists. Competition from another Canadian railway may have been a factor to spur the CPR to sponsor a new set of scenic films of Western Canada. Its Eastern Canadian rival, the Grand Trunk Railway, had profitable direct links to major cities in the United States, including the shortest route from Chicago and Detroit to the Atlantic seaboard. The Grand Trunk sponsored its own moving pictures in 1900 of Eastern Canadian landscapes and vistas to promote American tours of scenic Montréal and hunting trips in the Muskoka Lakes north of Toronto. These films were used for several years at various industrial and sporting exhibitions. In 1905 and 1906,

the Grand Trunk even used these films and other exhibits to promote Canadian tourism on a rail-bound mobile theatre, sent across the United States to attract tourists to visit Canada.

Whatever the motivation, the CPR arranged a new series of updated and better-quality films in 1902, later called ‘Living Canada’, produced by Charles Urban’s renowned London Bioscope Company. As has been recounted several times by historians of Canadian cinema, leading camera operator Joseph Rosenthal was sent to Canada along with two other Bioscope representatives, Guy Bradford and Cliff Denham (Morris 1992; Eamon 1995; Braun and Keil 2008). In addition to being a leading producer in the United Kingdom and worldwide, the London Bioscope had just become well known in Canada with the fantastic success of its iconic Imperialist patriotic shows ‘Our Navy’ (first exhibited in Halifax on 17 June 1901, touring for six months) and ‘Army Life’ (first exhibited in Toronto on 14 April 1902, touring for five months). Rosenthal, in particular, was by then famous for his filming of Boer War scenes in South Africa in 1900 (Bottomore 1983). Rosenthal and the others began filming in Quebec in August 1902 before heading west to Winnipeg and on to Vancouver in October, back to Toronto in December, and spending the winter of 1903 in Montréal. Anticipation for the trade and tourism that accompanied this global publicity followed Rosenthal as he traversed the country. News of his imminent arrival in Winnipeg noted that ‘the intention is to give the people of the Old Country a true idea of Canadian life’ and that Rosenthal had been photographing Montréal streets with ‘first picture depicting the landing of a party of emigrants at Quebec’. His time in Manitoba would be spent on ‘tour through the farming districts, one of the principal objects of his mission being to obtain a complete story in pictures of the story of life in the “granary of the world”’ (‘Canada Cinematographed’ 1902).

Of special interest, however, were pictures of BC, such as ‘the Fraser River Canyon, taken from a moving train (which) when exhibited will last twenty minutes. It is declared to be one of the finest moving pictures ever presented’ (*Toronto Globe*, 18 December 1902). And indeed, this particular scene had prime attention when the films had a special debut at London’s Palace Theatre (‘Across Canada by Bioscope’ 1903). ‘By the invitation of the representatives of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, a large number of ladies and gentlemen had the pleasure of witnessing a series of animated pictures of scenes on the route of the railway’. Of special note was the part ‘devoted to the railway runs in the mountains, the ride through the Fraser River Canyon being one of the finest, as well as the

longest ever photographed without a break' ('Scenery of the Canadian Pacific' 1903). The 'Canadian and Pacific scenes' then continued as an advertised feature on the Palace variety bill for at least five months until June, with the appearance of new scenes featured again in November and December 1903. For up to a year, Canadian-made films found a prime spot in the Imperial capital.

The series was named 'Living Canada' when it had its domestic debut in Montréal on 15 June 1903, around the time it was included in Urban's 1903 catalogue. Scholars have focused on its domestic reception in Toronto and Montréal, with attention to its Imperial ties and continued production of 'local views' in both cities (Braun and Keil 2008; Steven 2003). As important, Bradford embarked upon more extensive exhibitions in Western Canada between 1903 and 1905. After Montréal, the show next opened on the Pacific coast in Nanaimo, BC, followed by dates in Victoria and Vancouver, initially accompanied by Rosenthal, who spent August 1903 photographing more scenes of BC's beautiful landscapes. The local press in Vancouver were excited for the publicity: 'Already Mr. Rosenthal has secured beautiful negatives of the return of the fishing fleet... also a very fine panorama of the Fraser river taken from the deck of the steamer as she ascends the mighty stream, now such a scene of life and activity ... With all these interesting views to exhibit, the bioscope should prove a decided success as a BC tourist guide' ('B.C. Bioscopic Scenes' 1903). Not merely patriotic, the reception of 'Living Canada' in BC was piqued with local pride at seeing the prominence of its own territory.

Local proximity was key to the review in Victoria, which noted 'many animated pictures of British Columbia life, including a striking series of pictures portraying the logging industry on Vancouver Island. The fellers were shown bringing down the giants of the forests, the logging roadways, and the running of logs and the lumber engines with their long line of mighty 'toothpicks'—all portrayed as the scenes occur every day not many miles distant from Victoria' ('Excellent Views' 1903). The Vancouver press hyped how 'the Western province promises to be well represented in the gallery of Canadian views ... Local scenes will figure prominently on the programme, and the magnificent grandeur of the Rocky mountains will be one of the chief features' ('Views of B.C.' 1903). A panoramic view of Vancouver actually ended the programme of more than 30 views, from Quebec to BC, with a few Imperial scenes from London interspersed.

I dwell on the reception in the cities of Victoria and Vancouver to provide description that is lacking when the show played smaller BC towns without daily newspapers. Bradford toured 'Living Canada' across the BC interior, not surprising given the emphasis on BC's scenery and resource industries. He toured to mining and logging towns such as Kamloops and Revelstoke, on the CPR main line into the Rockies (see Fig. 5.2), then down to Nelson and Cranbrook in the Kootenay mining region's Crow's Nest Pass southern route of the CPR, and eastwards into Alberta.

The BC resource towns Bradford visited with 'Living Canada' were not exactly rural in terms of small population, but they were remote in terms of geography. Like the small prairie towns visited by Hardie and Cosgrove five years earlier, the railway was the lifeline of mining and logging boomtowns' economy and society. 'Living Canada' represented the mountainous landscape's significance to the people who lived within it. A second tour in the

Fig. 5.2 'Living Canada', exhibiting 'ranching scenes, logging scenes, harvesting, King Edward's visit to Paris, The Delhi Durbar &c. &c.' (*Revelstoke Herald*, 13 August 1903)

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winter months early in 1904 again began in Vancouver on the Pacific coast, spending nearly the entire month of February in the mountains of BC before heading eastwards to Winnipeg. Bradford took the opposite trip nearly a year later, travelling westwards into BC for the Christmas holidays of 1904, now also stopping in Greenwood and Grand Forks right along the 49th parallel bordering the United States and circling back eastwards a month later. Bradford's fourth and final tour of BC and Western Canada happened in the fall of 1905, touring full circle from the Calgary southwest to Vancouver and back to Lethbridge, with stops in the usual Rocky Mountain towns both directions along the way. Although 'Living Canada' played to great success for weeks in Ottawa, Montréal, Toronto, and other cities in Eastern Canada, only in the BC Rockies did it repeatedly focus on a geographically remote audience, not coincidentally the same people whose livelihoods were actually depicted in the scenic, rail-bound tour.

## CONCLUSION

A few themes are constant when the exhibition in Western Canada of Hardie's Manitoba films and Bioscope's 'Living Canada' is considered alongside their better-known exhibitions in the United Kingdom and metropolitan cities in Eastern Canada. First of all, it is crucial to note how the rhetoric and ideology motivating its production and sponsorship by the CPR is marginalized and secondary when shown to a local audience living within the depicted landscapes. Touring as a profit-seeking itinerant outfit like any other, and exhibiting in commercial theatres and town halls, amusement supersedes the presumed logic of civic education. National and colonial political economic interests were paramount when Freer lectured on immigration in the United Kingdom, notably removed from the commercial context of ordinary amusements. Although 'Living Canada' was included on Urban's commercial catalogue, the Imperial context remained central when the films were viewed in England. Patriotism or British colonial pride came to the forefront when 'Living Canada' was exhibited in Toronto and Montréal, but the shows were special occasions and held in venues that were distinctly civic institutions rather than commercial theatres, already booked for entire seasons as part of the big-time touring routes integrated with the United States. Ultimately, films of Western Canada were more fully integrated into routine amusement when exhibited in rural towns in Western Canada in an ordinary context as itinerant entertainments. The educational context subsided, and perhaps the regional appreciation for the landscape was heightened.

Rural, remote Western Canadian audiences living in the spaces in-between perhaps saw their daily lives reflected in these moving pictures of nearby landscapes—all the more so for the films being sponsored by the CPR, which had facilitated their own arrival and integration into the dominion and empire. Such conflation of education and entertainment illuminates how the problem of culture and nationalism in Canada has consistently been tied to communication technologies that stitch the vast landscape and its far-flung rural towns into a loose fabric. In Canada, land and space is a problem to overcome—the barrier to nationhood, rather than its source—and communication was the solution, first via fur traders’ canoes, later via railway and telegraphed news, with cinema ushering in mass media in the twentieth century. Transcontinental rail lines established the imagined community of Canada on east-west terms as an overtly political counterpoint to regional markets’ north-south flows with the United States. Cinema was implicitly appended to railways’ national policy by showmen riding the rails, filming the rails, and returning by rail to exhibit those films to rural audiences.

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