While I enjoyed reading The French Hotel and believe the University of Nevada Press should eventually publish it, I do not think the manuscript is a finished one yet. The anecdotal reminiscences appropriately recreate a forgotten Carson City. The tone is fitting, too, a nostalgic blend of understatement, poignancy, comedy, and tragedy. What is wrong with the manuscript, however, is the fact that not all the details are presented consistently, not all the anecdotes seem to fit.

Obvious mistakes are easily corrected. Two pennies or three, on p 33? Chaps or boots? The author changes his mind on p 111, then forgets the change on pp 135, 160, and 223. And the top of p 229 sounds contradictory.

Less easily handled, perhaps, are the incidents and anecdotes that this reader, at least, finds inconclusive and/or inappropriate. I feel that the frog episode ends too quickly on p 185; something more should follow. Likewise, the killing of the lamb episode makes its point somewhat too abruptly to explain why the lamb needed to die.

Two other episodes completely puzzled me. One takes place in the capitol, on pp 50–53. The author needs to clarify this adventure. Why did it happen? How is it significant? How does it contribute to the reader's understanding of Pete? Or to Pete's maturation? The other troubling episode takes place on pp 148–157, and involves Pete's imagination. The only unrealistic and inexplicable event in the book, it just doesn't fit (either with Pete's characterization or with the tone of the whole). If the author means to interject a fable, he needs to clarify his purpose here. I, however, would much rather see new incidents substituted for a fantasy that, as it stands, does not further the narrative appreciably.

I realize that this detailed criticism may sound rather discouraging, so let me repeat what I said at the outset. I like The French Hotel. I especially like its design and the way the incidents weave together into a revelation of character, of family, and of an era from the past. Indeed, I would favor a commitment to publish the book, provided the author will make necessary modifications. I do not, however, believe the current manuscript is ready for publication. The French Hotel needs substantial reworking first.