

Forever Green, by Hector Allan Richmond. Lantzville: Oolichan Books. Pp. 220, including 16 pages of black-and-white photographs. Paper-bound. \$9.95.

Forever Green is the story of one of Canada's pioneer forest entomologists. Hec Richmond's life work extended through a period of more than fifty years of active participation in his profession and took him through the forest regions of Canada from coast to coast. He was honoured by being made a Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Forestry. In this book he recounts his personal experience since his first part-time job in the Entomological Branch of the Provincial Department of Agriculture in Vernon as a fifteen-year-old in 1917.

The author combines an anecdotal personal biography with a candid examination of the evolution of Canadian forest use. To the forest entomologist it is a history of his discipline since the days when forests were deemed inexhaustible and indestructible; an account of pioneer entomological surveys, at first on horseback and later behind the wheel of a series of unco-operative automobiles that constantly overheated and lost oil; and the encapsulated opinions of a senior entomologist on issues of moment in insect control. By the conservationist it will certainly be read as an appeal for the preservation of the wilderness experience, for Richmond looks back to an earlier era of pristine landscapes and does not hesitate to express his views on the need to conserve non-industrial values. But for the general reader there is a *raconteur extraordinaire's* recall of wilderness travel before the days of four-wheel-drive vehicles and helicopter landing pads, and of the people and animals that were part and parcel of the experiences of his field explorations, for, instead of dwelling on the somewhat monotonous details of entomological survey he concentrates rather on episodes that enlivened the everyday life of a field scientist earlier this century.

He writes of his early life as the son of a Scots immigrant cowboy and rancher on the Cimarron River in Oklahoma and later in the Willamette Valley and as a boy on a farm at Vernon; and of the Okanagan and Kalamalka Lakes before the days of motels, pollution and Eurasian milfoil; of the debacle of an ROTC cavalry review at Oregon State College when sabres became entangled with fence posts; of a camp alongside the famous Lorna trestle on the Kettle Valley Railway — and of his climbing the trestle and of the apprehension of a murderer from Kelowna; of a summer-long honeymoon-cum-bark beetle survey, complete with pack-train and young bride, on the trails of the Stoney Indians along the length

of the east slope of the Rockies; of crossing the Saskatchewan, Brazeau and Southesk rivers in flood and of shaky aerial cableways; of the human tragedies of abortive attempts at agricultural settlement in the Queen Charlottes; of illicit distilling of rum from molasses spiked with arsenic for grasshopper control and the subsequent demise of Three-Finger Slim, the distiller; of the plugging of leaking radiators with oatmeal and flour; of Tsougae, a cat with a lust for tobacco; of housewarmings in the Nicola Valley, and other dances elsewhere that ended more violently; of loggers' pet pigs; of mass nocturnal visitations of mice; of insect surveys from the deck of a fish boat; of wolves, cougars and tame grizzly bears; of ramshackle hotels and ramshackle hotelkeepers; of forest rangers, and helpful but reticent Indians; of winning the Irish Sweep; and one of the best bear stories I have ever encountered, which not only resulted in a change in the federal provisions for car insurance but is distinguished by being enshrined in the record of the federal *Hansard*.

Hec Richmond was a member of the investigative team that considered the environmental impact of the Kitimat smelter development and the flooding in Tweedsmuir Park, when it transpired that the outcome had already been decided before the enquiry was made, and is trenchant in his criticism of the then provincial government's disregard for the many park assets, its recreational potential, its timber and its salmon stock. He finds inexcusable this mockery of the oft-flaunted concept of multiple resource use, is antipathetic to hydro dams and does not hesitate to nail his colours to the mast when he states that such developments show that it is necessary for responsible citizens to act to protect natural resources from being given away or destroyed for political or monetary gain, and for the preservation of the wilderness heritage that has contributed much, albeit largely unrecognized, to the Canadian psyche. To Richmond resources belong to the people and irreplaceable heritages are indeed irreplaceable.

While, as a realist, he recognizes that much of the wild country he has known and enjoyed cannot remain undisturbed, he asks that natural resources be handled by people with imagination and an appreciation of values other than monetary and believes that only a concerned and informed public can effect wise use and also the preservation and perpetuation of irreplaceable values. In the past there was always the other side of the mountain. Today there is no other side — in fact there is scarcely enough to go round — and he looks to the dawn of an era of intensive management and public participation in resource management decisions.

But also, in contrast to much of what one hears today, when we seem to be surrounded by fragile ecosystems *all* on the verge of imminent destruction, Richmond reminds us of the resilience of nature, of the cycle of death and life, of decay and growth, of destruction and recovery — of the dynamic workings of the natural order. In his view the insect attacks that decimate our forests at regular intervals are part of that natural process of renewal.

After a career divided between service to government and service to industry, Richmond defends the much maligned public servant and the administrative efficiency of government, which he states is equal to that of the private sector and even surpasses it, while he contrasts the more transient professional in industry who moves from company to company, as opportunity for personal advancement presents itself, with the dedication, loyalty and high degree of personal involvement of the government career professional.

While quibbles could be made regarding the editing and arrangement of Hec Richmond's book, it may best be considered a personal testament to a life of professional service and may well find its place alongside Martin Allerdale Grainger's *Woodsmen of the West* as one of the few personal records of the days, unfortunately still with us, when Canadian forestry was struggling to find itself.

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