

Book Reviews

W. A. C. Bennett and the Rise of British Columbia, by David J. Mitchell. Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983. Pp. ix, 464.

David Mitchell is the biographer W. A. C. Bennett deserved. Mitchell called upon Bennett in 1976 hoping to extract some material for an article from the retired and somewhat resentful former Premier. Bennett, who Mitchell describes as one who always had to have his way, drew him into a series of interviews and managed to demolish Mitchell's image of him as a "ten foot ogre." With the publication of this book, Bennett posthumously has got his way once again. No student of post-1945 Canadian history can ignore this book or its subject, although both the book and its subject will make most readers uncomfortable.

The book's flaws are numerous. Typographical errors abound, as do pretentious quotations and allusions, and the author's copy of *Bartlett's Quotations* must be badly worn. The research is extensive but uneven. Mitchell has conducted an extraordinary number of interviews and has done so skilfully. Nevertheless, his use of secondary works and primary sources beyond British Columbia is negligible. The biography relies mainly upon the interviews with Bennett and his colleagues. The distance between biographer and subject is exceedingly small, and the tone is excessively chatty and sententious. By the end of the book, the reader knows that the subject has captured the biographer, and the mediation which the skilled biographer offers both to subject and reader thoroughly breaks down.

Despite these flaws, this book does reveal a great deal about Bennett and is most valuable as an historical quarry. The portrait which emerges is not what Bennett would have relished nor what Mitchell had hoped to sketch. Devoid of ideals and fearful of ideas, Bennett's politics seem to have had little purpose apart from his drive for power. What did Bennett believe beyond the simplicities of "It Couldn't Be Done," a poem he recited throughout his life which celebrated action without

meaning and whose triteness would have embarrassed Samuel Smiles? Very little, it seems. Mitchell, for example, claims that Bennett valued "loyalty" highly and that he often said: "If you expect loyalty, you must give loyalty." But to whom was Bennett loyal? Certainly not to his coalition colleagues, not to the Conservative Party, and not to Social Credit ideals. Mitchell suggests that personal loyalty was "important" to Bennett in discussing the Robert Sommers scandal. Yet one paragraph earlier (p. 253), Mitchell argues that Bennett's "incredible" escape from the Sommers scandal was accomplished through the deflection of "any criticism over the manner in which the case was handled in the direction of the attorney general." Loyalty, it would seem, took unusual forms. This is also true in the case of Bennett's ancestors and his heirs. He claimed he was of UEL background although he was not. W. A. C. seems to have been jealous of his son Bill Bennett's political success. He spent his sad last years being "extremely critical" of his son's government, surrounded by "cronies and a variety of hangers-on" but without friends whose intimacy he had never wanted or needed. Power was enough; seemingly it was all.

Mitchell does establish that Bennett was an able financial administrator and that he had extraordinary political intuition. He is not so convincing when he implicitly argues that the "rise" of British Columbia was largely a Bennett accomplishment. What Bennett's leadership did affect was the relationship of British Columbia politics, society and economy to the rest of Canada. In the 1940s the linkages between British Columbian business, political and bureaucratic élites and those on the other side of the Rockies were remarkably strong. In the following decades these linkages have become attenuated. Many factors, of course, influenced this development, but Bennett's tendency to stand outside and, indeed, distrust traditional elites and behaviour is certainly most important. Bennett's purposes are unclear; his influence is not.

University of Waterloo

JOHN ENGLISH

The Reins of Power: Governing British Columbia, by J. Terrence Morley, Norman J. Ruff, Neil A. Swainson, R. Jeremy Wilson and Walter D. Young. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1983. Pp. x, 342.

It seemed a good idea at the time — to probe social democracy in power, to study the rapid turnover in government of the Social Credit

and New Democratic parties and to try to fill the void in political knowledge about British Columbia. Of the last aim it is worth noting that up to the appearance of this book British Columbia shared with Alberta the dubious distinction of having its political institutions and processes among the least studied in Canada. And in that part of the B.C. Project's execution which has resulted in this multi-authored book, the idea deserves commendation, though not uniformly so since some parts of *The Reins of Power* are better than others. Yet the total enterprise — the analysis of a provincial political system's evolution through the decade of the 1970s — constitutes a major achievement, and if there are weaknesses they do not detract greatly from the accomplishment of producing the first major survey of B.C. politics. Like the preaching of Dr. Johnson's female divines, the wonder is not that it is done badly but that it is (or, in this case, has been) done at all.

There is an introductory chapter and eight substantive chapters; the titles of the latter are "The Legislature," "The Premier and the Cabinet," "Political Parties," "The Public Service," "Managing the Public Service," "Courts and Cops," "The Provincial-Municipal Relationship" and "British Columbia and Canadian Federalism." There are two appendices, one a table of "General Election Results, 1933-79" and the other a list of "Premiers and Cabinets, 1952-82," but no footnotes, though there are endnotes basically bibliographical in substance, and, in spite of the claim in the Preface to extensive data collection resulting from this research, minimal evidence of empirical data in the text. (The claim, on page 15, that there are only two provincial legislatures with fewer members than the B.C. House is, in fact, wrong: there are three, while Manitoba's was the same size in 1981 and New Brunswick's one member larger.) Each chapter is written by different authors or sets of authors, and while there is some repetition of facts and disparity in writing styles, the integrity of the book is not undermined by its multiple contributors. Skill in presentation partly accounts for this unity, but so too does the clarity of the project's framework: the tripartite division of the previous decade into Bennett, Barrett and Bennett periods and the requirement to provide, for the first time in most instances, institutional and political histories of the subjects being discussed.

In addition to some rich analyses of segments of the province's political system, strong unifying themes are present as well. Primary among these are the following: up to and through the W. A. C. Bennett years British Columbia was governed by a full-time ministry and a part-time opposition because the executive had necessarily to be strong to deal with

the province's huge area and scattered population, while the legislature was given few tools to perform the tasks of enforcing accountability that parliamentary bodies are supposed to perform; as a result, administrative innovation was more evident than political innovation, and this had the further consequence of delaying the development of a competitive party system, which once it appeared nearly half a century ago aligned itself along an axis of socialist versus anti-socialist sympathies; of equal lineage to these intra-provincial unities has been British Columbia's "permanent" agenda in its relationship with the federal government, one moulded less by the economic dominance of the province's natural resource industries than by the exceptional proportion of those resources which enter international and interprovincial trade and therefore make British Columbians unusually sensitive to federal government policies.

The identification of these themes is necessary before the import of developments in the 1970s can be fully appreciated. For, as the authors of *The Reins of Power* demonstrate, during that decade British Columbians witnessed a remarkable transformation to their province's politics. Illustrative of the changes was the evolution in leadership style under the three Premiers from one based initially on paternal authority through fraternal or collegial rule to technocratic management, while the public service, which began the decade remarkably careerist at its senior levels, grew over the next ten years, as the result of a proliferation of boards and committees, increasingly politicized. Legislative modernization arrived at the same time in the form of a regularized oral question period, a Public Accounts Committee chaired by a member of the opposition and more active standing committees, with the unanticipated result (and in contrast to other jurisdictions) of creating a stronger opposition than had existed before.

But these changes were only the most publicized tip of the political iceberg. Professors Swainson and Ruff in their excellent chapters on the public service, provincial-municipal relations and on British Columbia and Canadian federalism provide much more evidence of the changes which alternation between Social Credit and New Democratic governments wrought and, of equal or even more value, why these changes and not others occurred. For example, Professor Ruff notes that the NDP in British Columbia was far less concerned with planning in the sense of the old Saskatchewan CCF and more concerned with achieving specific policy objectives. As a result the Barrett government was both more conservative when it came to institutional reforms than Bill Bennett's was to be later (central agency reforms were a Bennett II experi-

ment) and yet less rigid in the matter of jurisdictional questions with Ottawa than that of W. A. C. Bennett (which used federal-provincial confrontation to advantage).

There is much to praise in this book, particularly the broadened perspective it brings to the subject of provincial politics. One of the difficulties of studying another province's politics is to find information that does not concentrate on the legislature, political parties and elections, no matter how important these may be. All of that is here, but there is much more. It is a pity, though understandable, why interest groups are ignored except as they make tangential appearances. The inference to be drawn, however, is that interest group activity in British Columbia pervades and parallels party activity. Perhaps their study is another part of the B.C. Project's research plans. One can only hope so. As it is, *The Reins of Power* enlightens and instructs. One would be querulous to ask for more.

University of Saskatchewan

DAVID E. SMITH

Indian Art Traditions of the Northwest Coast, edited by Roy L. Carlson.
Burnaby, B.C.: Archaeology Press, Simon Fraser University.

Indian Art Traditions of the Northwest Coast is a collection of papers which, in their original form, were presented at a symposium entitled "The Prehistory of Northwest Coast Indian Art" at Simon Fraser University in 1976. The volume, like the symposium before it, is dedicated to Erna Gunther, and one of the papers, Wilson Duff's, is also dedicated to Viola Garfield.

The contributors to this volume are archaeologists and ethnologists, linked by shared experience and a common interest in Northwest Coast Indian art. In this volume all are looking at art in the context of traditional Northwest Coast culture and prehistory.

To understand the nature of the book it is important to have a sense of its organization. There is at the beginning a summary by Roy Carlson of current research in Northwest Coast prehistory, and this is followed by three papers: a discussion by Bill Holm of the formal characteristics of a series of pieces, moving from prehistoric to nineteenth century and discussing the characteristics of regional styles and the relationship between two-dimensional and sculptural forms; a paper by Wilson Duff, which encourages the reader to go beyond the consideration of North-

west Coast art as a reflection of social and religious principles, or as purely decorative form, to consideration of art as a system of generating and thinking about deeper meanings; and a paper by Wayne Suttles, which explores meaning in central Coast Salish art, relating artistic expression in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to four key features of Coast Salish culture: the vision, the ritual word, the ancestors and wealth. In this discussion Suttles also considers an issue which has been raised elsewhere, i.e., the apparent paucity of forms of art produced by Coast Salish people in comparison with forms produced by peoples of the northern and central coast.

These three papers are followed by a section in which authors present overviews of prehistoric art according to category or region: Doris Lundy: rock art; George MacDonald: the northern coast; Roy Carlson: the central coast; Charles Borden: the Lower Fraser region; Ar-noud Stryd: the mid-Fraser and Thompson River area; and Richard Daugherty and Janet Friedman: Ozette. There is a final concluding section by Carlson which summarizes developments in form and themes in interpretation of meaning.

Form and meaning are the themes of this book, and each of the papers has been written with both in mind. The three papers by Holm, Duff and Suttles present issues and problems for considering form and meaning in the context of what can now be known of prehistoric graphic and sculptural expression. The authors presenting data from site excavations and observations of rock art are careful to integrate datum and context of discovery and to enunciate in each case the possibilities suggested and the limitations imposed by this context.

There is always a tension between the impulse to speculate, to act on the infinite possibilities suggested by a piece, elements of whose form connote pieces separated from it by thousands of years, and the academic necessity of building up a measured, cautious and necessarily incomplete picture of the record. Ultimately, the emphasis of the papers which present data is on description, on presentation of form rather than on interpretation of meaning. Of the authors, MacDonald and Stryd offer the most extensive commentary on possible meaning. MacDonald, particularly, discerns links between the prehistoric material and the shamanic inventory of protohistoric Tsimshian culture. This is material which can be discussed in the context of a time sequence which indicates *in situ* cultural development over a period of nearly 5,000 years and development of artistic forms over at least 3,000 years. In this paper

MacDonald outlines elements of an argument which he later developed more fully in his contribution to the Duff memorial volume.

Postulating meaning is trickier in regions where the data are less rich and the sequences less straightforward. Suttles' paper is a model of exposition of the relationship between Coast Salish belief and artistic expression, but it also suggests the enormous difficulties and complexities involved in elucidating the relationship between aesthetic expression and belief, even where the time depth is very limited and ethnographic data exist. Ironically, the writers who are most cautious in regard to discussion of meaning are Daugherty and Friedman, whose Ozette materials are perhaps more fully contextualized and more consistently related to the protohistoric culture of the region than the data at the disposal of any other contributor. Carlson, summing up, concludes that while it is possible to see in the data evidence of concern for crest development and secret societies, the themes that are probably most consistently represented are belief in spirits and shamanic curing.

The search for meaning is endless and the conclusions endlessly debatable. The archaeological record can much more certainly offer data on the development of form. One signal value of this book is in bringing this material together, in giving pieces known through other formal and informal presentations a context that comprises the known time depth and spans the length of the coast.

For a work of this kind there can be no suggestion that the last word has been written in regard to either data or interpretation. In archaeology, perhaps more than in any other discipline, there is always the promise of fresh discovery. More generally, the possibilities suggested by Holm and Duff cannot be fully addressed at this time, and they remain to be addressed in another volume and probably in several volumes.

This is a useful and stimulating book. It is pleasantly laid out, and illustration and text are integrated in each paper so that the argument can be followed without flipping pages. It is a collection of scholarly papers in archaeology and ethnology, but the writing is clear and it will be a valuable source of information for specialist and non-specialist alike.

Alaskan Maps: A Cartobibliography of Alaska to 1900, by Marvin W. Falk. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1983. Pp. xxiii, 245, cloth \$62.00. ISBN 0-8240-9132-9.

This volume in the Garland Reference Library of the Humanities is an important bibliographic reference for those interested in the historical cartography of northwest America. It represents the culmination of eight years of information-gathering by the author in connection with his position as Arctic Bibliographer at the University of Alaska. The search involved work not only in America but also in Europe, notably in Britain at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge.

As initially conceived the project was to have included a listing of all Alaskan mapping, but for reasons of time and cost, unpublished manuscript maps and maps published after 1900 were excluded. Although the focus is upon Alaska, many of the listed maps include parts of adjacent areas; hence this volume has general relevance to all the lands about the North Pacific.

The author's guiding principle is reader-access to at least a copy of the original map; consequently the most commonly available reproductions are chosen for citation. Individual listings consist of the following basic elements: an identifying number (consisting of the year of publication, followed by a number within that year); the map title and map maker; place and date of publication; and map size. Additional information is provided concerning original source (if the map is part of a book or atlas) and reference to sources in which the map has been reproduced. If a given entry has been included in one of the previously published bibliographies of the area, appropriate mention is made. A number of the citations are accompanied by brief, descriptive comments that this reader found helpful. One wonders why such annotation was not more extensively and systematically applied.

In addition to the map listings, Falk has included a short, selective bibliography referencing over 100 publications that deal with various aspects of the cartography of northwest America. These include some articles in the periodical literature as well as books and monographs. It is inevitable that such a bibliography should include some items at the expense of others, and that it should invite questions about the basis for selection. In general, however, the inclusion of the selective bibliography is likely to be helpful to researchers, even those who have some familiarity with Alaskan mapping. The author makes no attempt to sample the extensive general literature on travel and exploration to and within

Alaska, relying upon Wickersham's *Bibliography of Alaskan Literature*, 1927, to provide the basic coverage.

An alphabetical index takes up the last 43 pages of the work and a random checking of names, features and publication titles suggests that the indexing system works very well. Indeed, the indexing scheme for the whole volume is simple and effective — a boon to any user.

A cartobibliography of this scope is a large undertaking, and one that would have required a great deal of time and meticulous care in its preparation. While a comprehensive listing involving the identification and location of all maps bearing upon Alaska can never be complete, this volume must be considered a major attempt. It adds substantially to what is available in Phillips (*Alaska and the Northwest Part of North America*, 1588-1898, published in 1898) and Wagner (*Cartography of the Northwest Coast of America*, published in 1937). As well, it includes relevant items from Efimov's *Atlas of Geographical Discoveries in Siberia and North-western America, XVII-XVIII Centuries*, published in 1964. The inclusion of maps published to 1900 is itself a help to researchers and cartophiles. The increasing torrent of official and other maps published in the last decades of the nineteenth century is attested by the fact that the author lists 17 entries for the year 1888, 34 entries for 1891 and 84 entries for 1897.

In *Alaskan Maps*, Falk has made a significant addition to the literature and has given us a most helpful guide to historical maps of Alaska. It is costly, especially considering that only the preliminary matter is typeset (the remainder being in a reduced typewriter face) and that the only illustrations are six page-size, black-and-white map reproductions. Nevertheless, this book is an indispensable tool for those who are seriously interested in accessing the cartographic heritage of northwest America.

University of British Columbia

A. L. FARLEY

The Box of Daylight, by Bill Holm. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1984. Pp. 147; illus.

The Box of Daylight is the catalogue of an exhibition of Northwest Coast art held at the Seattle Art Museum. The show was organized by Bill Holm; the 219 objects exhibited were selected from private collections in the Seattle area. The bulk of the book consists of photographs of each work of art along with descriptive notes by Holm. There is also a

brief introduction by Holm and five short essays on specialized topics by other authors. Eighteen colour photographs show the most spectacular works in the exhibit. The quality of the works exhibited is high, and one is impressed with the strength of private collections in the Puget Sound region. Holm chose well.

The book is not, however, a balanced or general introduction to Northwest Coast art, for inevitably an exhibit must reflect the strengths of the collections from which it is drawn. About 35 per cent of the exhibit is Tlingit, and over 70 per cent of the exhibit comes from the northern part of the culture area (Tlingit — Haida — Tsimshian). The exhibit is mostly of nineteenth-century work; only about 10 per cent is twentieth century. There are a few eighteenth-century and three archaeological objects as well. The art of Salishian speakers is poorly represented. This is ironic, given that most of the collectors who contributed to the exhibit live in locales where the Salish once lived, but this no doubt reflects the widespread bias towards the "northern" style.

The most important part of the book (aside from the fact that it is always useful to have photographs of previously unpublished works) is the descriptive notes by Holm. Indeed, they are among the best such notes that I have read. The notes would have been even more useful had Holm included more references. There are some references, but students (and others) would certainly have benefited had Holm tied the objects seen here even more thoroughly into the published literature.

The five supplementary essays are on "Style and Meaning in the shamanic art of the Northern Northwest Coast" (Aldona Jonatis), "Reflections on Northwest Coast silver" (Nancy Harris), "Tlingit spruce root basketry since 1903" (Peter L. Corey), "Anonymous attributions: a tribute to a mid-nineteenth-century argilite pipe carver" (Robin K. Wright), and "Toward more precise Northwest Coast attributions: two substyles of Haisla masks" (Alan R. Sawyer). All these essays draw their primary illustrative material from the exhibit, which somewhat limits their scope. From a scholarly point of view the most useful of these essays are those by Wright and Sawyer which tackle specific problems in art history. The reader with less specialized interests will find the essays by Harris and Corey useful introductions to silver and Tlingit basketry respectively. Jonatis' essay is an unfortunate example of the sort of speculation that shamanism often inspires.

The catalogue is organized by type of object (rattles, masks, baskets, and so on). This allows easy comparison of similar pieces and enables notes on neighbouring objects to strengthen each other, but it makes it

more difficult to get an idea of local styles. It also reinforces the inevitable tendency to view each piece in isolation, removed from the rich context of objects, uses and meanings in which most of the items in the exhibit were once situated. Two relatively early photographs (circa 1900, 1909) that show two of the exhibited pieces more or less *in situ* do remind us that these were once things with a purpose (ceremonial or practical) and not simply objects for viewing in a museum. Holm's notes, good as they are, cannot free the pieces exhibited here or the reader (viewer) from the confines of the museum. Thus, although a good catalogue, this book does not escape the limitations of the genre. Nevertheless, those with a strong interest in Northwest Coast art will value this book, both for its photographs of largely unfamiliar objects and for Holm's excellent notes.

University of Victoria

LELAND DONALD

British Columbia: Patterns in Economic, Political and Cultural Development, edited by Dickson M. Falconer. Victoria: Camosun College, 1982. Pp. 407; maps.

For many reasons history teachers ought to welcome *British Columbia: Patterns in Economic, Political and Cultural Development*. The articles in it, the cover tells us, were selected "to provide a focus on the *studies approach* into the broader aspects of development." Sections on economics, politics and culture complement those on history. Students were directly involved in the compilation of the volume, for the editor, Dickson M. Falconer, History instructor at Camosun College, received grants for student assistance in its production.

Close inspection of this new reader on British Columbia reveals, however, more points to question than to praise. A new volume on the province from a multi-disciplinary studies approach might, to be sure, have been a good idea given clear definitions and careful planning. But the preface's description of the "*studies approach*" as involving a combination of "crucial basic historical, along with the critical, contemporary and complex aspects of the subject for evaluation" is not a sufficient explanation of the editor's principles of selection. Nor does the editor's acknowledgement of the inspiration given by the journal *BC Studies* absolve him of the editor's responsibility to state a purpose and follow it through.

Although several of the historical articles have individual merit, the editor does not preface or complement them with an essay on regional geography. Maps are included, but they present problems of their own. The frontispiece map is only an outline, while a "map of Vancouver 1860's" introduces Norbert MacDonald's "A Critical Growth Cycle for Vancouver, 1900-1914."

The choice of economic and political articles is uneven. Margaret Ormsby's classic essay on "Agricultural Development in British Columbia" (1945) appears in the same section as Derek Pethick's simplistic narrative on H. R. MacMillan. Edwin Black's "The Politics of Exploitation" (1968) is included, but so is Elizabeth Forbes' journalistic (1979) "How B.C. Women Won the Vote." Was some subtle humour intended in the choice of the piece on foresters and feminists? Perhaps not. Falconer allowed Forbes and Pethick to write introductions for their own work, introduced Ormsby's himself and let Black stand on his own.

The suggestions for further reading appended to each selection raise further questions. In the case of Black's article there is a full two-page list of recent material in *BC Studies*. Why weren't one or two of these items reprinted in this general reader? Surely the students who will use it should be told why the term "The Premier" still means W. A. C. Bennett. This, at any rate, would be at least as useful to them as Sydney Jackman's description of how Bill Smith became Amor De Cosmos.

The bibliography at the end of *British Columbia: Patterns in Economic, Political and Cultural Development* is drawn mainly from *BC Studies* articles and reviews. It fails, however, to mention two collections of readings on British Columbia's past (*Historical Essays on British Columbia* edited by J. Friesen and H. K. Ralston, and P. Ward and R. McDonald's *British Columbia Historical Readings*); the whole Tantalus series of Geographer's papers; and Camosun College's own production of an index to the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*! In a volume obviously intended for student use, eighteen pages of references to *BC Studies* articles ought to have been condensed. Mention might have been made of the preceding sources, or of regional journals such as the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* and *BC Historical News* and national periodicals such as the *Canadian Historical Review*. A bibliography on general studies of British Columbia should also include the Provincial Archives *Sound Heritage* series and the National Museum — National Film Board *Canada's Visual History* slide sets.

This review must be summed up with a few more questions. In this general studies reader on British Columbia, where are the Indians, the

picket lines and the harbours? If this is a community college production, where are articles by instructors or students? Nelson Riis' essay on Walhachin settlement in *BC Studies* 1973 would have provided the former, and his students' work in their periodical *BC Perspectives* could have been used for the latter. How, one must conclude by asking, did this volume receive funding from the Canada Studies Project of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and from the British Columbia Heritage Trust? Where are their boards of review?

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