

Book Reviews

Indian Education in Canada. Volume 1: The Legacy, edited by Jean Barman, Yvonne Hebert and Don McCaskill. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986. 180 pp. \$13.50 paper.

Indian education, in its every variation, was sometimes deemed a failure. The handmaiden of the Dominion government's policy of assimilation, it was intended ultimately to eradicate any distinctions between Indians and whites. Other government programs participated — creation of reserves, prohibition of certain ceremonies and costumes, restrictions on alcohol and other protectionist devices — but education was given the major share of the burden. This ostensible goal of total assimilation was never achieved, neither by day schools nor boarding schools nor any other refinement. At school children were taught to disdain Native culture and then were sent home to it. An imprecise curriculum, divided between the classroom and practical chores, failed to prepare Indians for life in white society and left them poorly equipped to adjust back to the reserve. Indian Act amendments in 1906 aimed at more rapid assimilation; the education policy announced in 1910 claimed Indians were incapable of rapid assimilation. Reserve lands were made available for sale to whites, resulting in smaller reserves, just when educators decided that Indians were not suited to off-reserve life for the moment. The problem is that "the problem" was never properly defined, and so there were no consistent policies to address it.

Today assimilation has been abandoned as a policy goal. Indian control of Indian education, following the National Indian Brotherhood's initiative, has been accepted in principle by federal authorities, and most bands now exert full or partial control over reserve schools while special programs enhance the teaching of Native culture. The principles are established; only the policies remain to be articulated, and that requires a painstaking analysis of the underlying problems. It is to this process that the volume under review contributes. Appropriately sub-titled "The Legacy," this book not only demonstrates the failures, inconsistencies and

cruelties of past policies but also traces their accumulation and their consequences which linger today as the chief problem to be confronted. The rejection of the 1969 White Paper was an eloquent warning against ignoring the historical dimensions to Indian policy. The editors of *Indian Education in Canada*, committed to Indian control as a "vehicle for the advancement and empowerment of aboriginal peoples," are determined that the current programs should not flounder for similar causes. This is "public history," the essential adjunct to policy-making. Presumably the editors' second volume, "The Challenge," will explore the most promising policy options available. "The Legacy" is the prerequisite.

The individual chapters succeed very well in illustrating the intricacies of the Legacy. One of the most fascinating is Jean Barman's case study of All Hallows school in British Columbia, 1884-1920, where changing treatment of and relations between Indian and white girls exactly duplicated national policies. Another intimate study, by Diane Persson on Blue Quills school in Alberta, 1931-1970, offers a similar prism through which to view the general directions in Indian education over the succeeding period. These moving accounts, relating experiences of students themselves, are of inestimable value in keeping people at the centre of the policy review process. Equally successful, but different in format and intent, is Cornelius Jaenen's overview of "francization" in New France. By showing that every assimilationist experiment introduced after 1867 — day schools, reserves, boarding schools, even enfranchisement — had been attempted before, Jaenen provides a persuasive argument for the careful consideration of past experience before new programs are implemented.

The volume as a whole does not entirely match the success of its chapters. The editors have been too modest, perhaps, for their collection is capable of a greater contribution than their introduction allows. Designed "to facilitate discussion," the book could be used to influence policy planning more directly. This would require some different packaging, or at least a more explicit presentation of the message and its implications in an introduction or conclusion. An effective format for advocacy scholarship remains a challenge for public historians and others anxious to spread their knowledge beyond academic circles. In the meantime the evidence contained in this volume deserves to be brought forcefully into the public arena. It will indeed facilitate discussion, and it illuminates vital aspects of the problem that must be addressed.

Webb, Melody, *The Last Frontier: A History of the Yukon Basin of Canada and Alaska*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1985. Pp. 416.

At last the border has fallen. The 141st Meridian, the dividing line between Alaska and the Yukon Territory, has been a formidable barrier to scholarship. Although the districts have much in common as regards both geography and history, few historians have ventured from one to the other. Academic fear of the barrier has created a serious problem, for on such wide-ranging issues as the fur trade, the gold frontier, the construction of the Alaska Highway and post-war concern for continental defence, the two jurisdictions were intricately linked. On others, including political evolution, Native policies, federal government programming and post-Gold Rush economic development, their paths diverged significantly, providing excellent opportunities for comparative analysis.

But until now, these opportunities have been missed. Melody Webb is deserving of hearty congratulations for ignoring the boundary line, integrating the history of the Canadian and American portions of the Yukon River valley, and thus illustrating the need for even more work of this type. As with most pioneering works, this one has some serious deficiencies, but the approach is so novel and the presentation so interesting that these shortcomings can be at least partially forgiven.

Webb's approach is environmentalist, and unabashedly Turnerian. In an historiographical age when Turner's frontier thesis is often given short shrift, Webb adopts it as the interpretative basis for her study. It is not, however, entirely effective. The various frontiers — fur trade, mining, exploration, military, missionary, settlement, transportation — are dealt with successively, as Webb attempts to establish the idea that progressive waves, one building on the other, swept through the Yukon River valley. The suggestion is misleading and forces an artificial chronology on the region. It is also incomplete. Turner's frontiers dealt with white, developmental themes, and traditionally ignored issues like Native-white relations, the evolution and impact of government policy, and the effect that national images of the North had on regional development. Few historians continue to use Turner's ideas as the basis for their scholarship; Webb's book illustrates why that is so. To the extent that the book succeeds, therefore, it is as a narrative rather than interpretive piece.

The book's strengths lie in the early chapters — fur trade, missionaries and early mining frontier — when the destinies of the American and Canadian portions of the Yukon River valley were truly interwoven and

when the artificial nature of the boundary line was clearly in evidence. The research is concentrated on this period, and the author is obviously most comfortable with this material. Webb provides perceptive characterizations of many of the key participants and several less well-known figures, and presents a solid narrative of the pattern of development. From the chapter on the Klondike Gold Rush to the end of the book, however, the coverage is less complete and the descriptions less satisfying.

There are several problems with the latter stages of the book. Major developments are presented in an extremely cursory fashion, while less important — one can say nostalgic — aspects of regional history are covered in much greater depth. The construction of the Alaska Highway during World War II, an event which reshaped the pattern of northern life, merits only four pages; the entire final chapter, in contrast, is devoted to a panegyric on trapping in the twentieth century. This emphasis — misplaced, in my estimation — is understandable given Webb's Turnerian contention that the northern environment created a regional character on the final frontier. The resulting image, one that Alaskans and Yukoners have adopted as their own and developed as the basis of their tourism industry, does not provide an accurate assessment of contemporary life in the Yukon River valley. The trapping frontier is an odd, and even misleading, place to end.

As the book progresses, Webb also loses sight of the balance between Canadian and American developments. In many chapters, brief discussions of Canadian developments are appended to more complete descriptions of events on the American side of the boundary. She suggests, for example, that the opening of the Alaska Railroad in 1923 undermined river transportation. While that is true for major sections of the interior of Alaska, her superficial description of Canadian riverboats fails to illustrate their continuing importance until the 1950s, when roads, not railways, undermined their function.

The imbalance can be traced through to Webb's research. Evidence of thorough research in American archives (although here again the emphasis is on the nineteenth century) is not balanced by similar work in Canadian institutions. An extensive listing of published and government sources on American topics stands in contrast to incomplete coverage of important Canadian materials (she has also not used some of the most valuable interpretive works, especially those by Thomas Stone). Even more inexplicably, she examined eighteen newspapers but ignored publications from two of the most important Yukon River communities, Dawson City and Whitehorse. While the available material on the Yukon

is admittedly incomplete, Webb could have easily strengthened her work by taking advantage of what has been done and by examining more documentary and secondary sources on the Canadian side of the border.

Melody Webb's *The Last Frontier* must, even with its weaknesses, be loudly applauded. Like the Yukon River pioneers she so clearly admires, Webb has ventured where few have dared to tread. In doing so, she has illustrated the need to look more closely at the Yukon River valley as a geographic and historic unit. This book should awaken other historians to the need for more comparative work on the Yukon Territory and Alaska.

University of Victoria

KENNETH COATES

More Deadly than War: Pacific Coast Logging, 1827-1981, by Andrew Mason Prouty. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985. Pp. xxvii, 252; illus. \$30.00.

The history of western North America's timber industry is a story of work-related injuries and deaths. Typical of the "carnage" are three turn-of-the-century fatalities in Washington state: James Burns, a timber faller, killed instantly when crushed by a falling tree limb; Hjalmar Anderson, a 15-year-old boy, "horribly mangled" by sawmill machinery; and G. W. Davidson, a hooktender, crushed to death between two logs. Like thousands of other men who held the region's most dangerous occupations, they were the "human victims" of an industry "more deadly than war."

In exploring this theme of physical injuries to woodsmen in California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, Andrew Mason Prouty adds an important new perspective to Pacific coast forest history. His case rests on evidence drawn from timber journals and the abundant, but mostly untouched, Workmen's Compensation records, as well as government reports, personal reminiscences and novels. After providing a highly evocative description of life in isolated, all-male logging camps into the 1920s, Prouty details logging technology as it evolved through the hand, bull and highlead logging eras. This descriptive background serves as a foundation for the book's core, a chapter documenting the potential hazards at each stage in the timber production cycle from the initial falling of trees in isolated forests to the manufacture of lumber and shingles in mills. A concluding chapter summarizes Workmen's Compen-

sation data on timber industry deaths and injuries, indicating that 3,390 loggers and 860 mill hands lost their lives in British Columbia between 1917 and 1980.

Three influences shaped Andrew Prouty's perspective on forest history. First, he was born in Vancouver, B.C., graduated from high school and college in Seattle, and worked for two years at a logging camp near Campbell River, Vancouver Island, in 1936-37 before returning to Washington state. Thus he brings a practical realization of the trans-border character of west coast industrial history. In addition, his maternal grandfather, John O'Brien, had been a boss logger in Minnesota, while an uncle and great-uncle had toiled as forest workers. Finally, after being ordained a Catholic priest in 1946, Prouty lived for eleven years in the logging town of Morton, Washington. He later entered the University of Washington's graduate program in history and in 1982 completed a doctoral dissertation, of which *More Deadly Than War* is a slightly edited version. This family background and personal experience helps explain the book's insightful portrayal of the loggers' work environment. It also accounts for the volume's overriding tone of moral outrage. In Prouty's view, the "disgraceful recklessness and disregard for human life so characteristic of the timber business" throughout history shame forest companies and unions alike; historians also stand accused of ignoring the subject.

Unfortunately, judgemental language and emotional fervour are no substitute for careful analysis. Prouty seems uncomfortable with broader generalizations or theoretical perspectives and never gets beyond supporting his main point, often with graphic detail, that forest work has been bloody and dangerous. For example, he offers tantalizing suggestions about why workers and unions focused mainly on living conditions and wages while ignoring safety, but does not explore the question systematically. And he explicitly refuses to compare accident rates across the international border between B.C. and the three American states. Prouty is uncertain whether he is studying only loggers (suggested by the title and chapter 3) or both loggers and millworkers (p. xvii and chapter 4). In addition, his description of the relationship between technology and safety concentrates on the period from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, though the book's statistics extend to 1981. We learn little of logging society or technology in the era of trucks, chain saws and wheeled skidders.

Prouty's discussion of British Columbia's forest safety record is also disappointing. Focusing on Washington state, he treats the Canadian

industry as ancillary to the American. Limiting his British Columbia research mainly to the *Pacific Coast Lumberman*, Workmen's Compensation statistics and a couple of novels, he leaves unexplored other potential sources such as B.C. government reports and Department of Labour records, industry and union manuscript collections, and oral histories. He ignores entirely the development of forestry in B.C. from the mid-1930s to the early 1970s, thus overlooking the implications for workers' safety of profound technological changes in, and decentralization away from the coast of, logging and milling after the Second World War. Prouty states that much is known about labour turmoil, the struggle for unionism, and conservation in Pacific Coast forest history (p. xvii); in fact, we know very little about these subjects for B.C. Statements that British Columbia had a better accident prevention rate in the woods after 1916 than did its American counterparts, and that available literature suggests greater emphasis on safety and accident prevention in B.C. (p. 161), are also unsubstantiated.

While ultimately unsatisfactory as a work of historical interpretation, *More Deadly Than War* draws attention to a significant but overlooked part of our industrial past. It leaves a profound impression of the risks that timber industry workers have endured for more than a century. In so doing it charts a course for future research in the field of forest history.

University of British Columbia

ROBERT A. J. McDONALD

This Is My Own: Letters to Wes & Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-1948, by Muriel Kitagawa, edited by Roy Miki. Vancouver, B.C.: Talonbooks, 1985. Pp. viii, 302.

This collection of writings on Japanese Canadians is really three books in one: an extended essay by Roy Miki, the editor, on the life and times of Muriel Kitagawa; the real meat of the book, her letters to her brother Wes, a University of Toronto medical student, between 12 December 1941 and 29 May 1942; and a selection of her published and unpublished writings from December 1941 to 1948. Kitagawa was a gifted writer. Although she wrote quickly and without much opportunity for revision, she is always clear, frequently forceful and sometimes poetic. Historians will appreciate the perceptive contemporary and retrospective reflections of a well-informed and articulate Nisei and vivid descriptions of the daily worries of a young mother in the uncertain months after

Pearl Harbor; literary scholars will discover the origins of many of the writings of "Aunt Emily" in Joy Kogawa's novel, *Obasan*.

In his introductory essay, Roy Miki used Kitagawa's own work, the *New Canadian* (the Nisei newspaper) and secondary sources, notably Ann Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism* (1981), to trace the events after Pearl Harbor from the Japanese-Canadian point of view. Alas, his biographical sketch of Kitagawa is so brief it leaves the reader curious. What happened to Kitagawa's mother and sister, who were stranded in Japan while visiting in 1941? More importantly, Miki remarks that after 1949 Kitagawa's interests turned away from the war years, but he does not reveal why this occurred or why she abandoned her autobiography. His own involvement in the Japanese Canadian redress movement undoubtedly explains his interest in property losses and his belief that for "racist politicians," "the uprooting of Japanese Canadians from the West Coast was *the* opportunity to confiscate and liquidate their properties" (p. 62). It also reflects Kitagawa's observation that her house "was lost through injustice" (p. 229).

Indeed, both in her letters to the custodian of Japanese property, who was selling her family home despite her protests, and in her reflective essays, Kitagawa links her desire for compensation with a demand for justice and equality. Reparations, she wrote in 1945 or 1946, would be "the outward symbol acknowledging the loss of our rights" (p. 229). In the 1930s Kitagawa was one of the young Nisei who campaigned unsuccessfully for the full Canadian citizenship they had learned about in school. The line, "This is my own, my native land" from Walter Scott's poem, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," which she memorized in Grade 8, became her theme. Though her disillusionment increased as she saw the indignities of her people being "finger-printed, card-indexed, corralled and driven to scatter far and wide" (p. 235), her loyalty to Canada never wavered. Indeed, she was so much a British Columbian that in January 1942 she complained of the province's inadequate defences and of the "People east [who] are so 'bomb remote' they don't realize our danger" (p. 86).

For Kitagawa, the root of the problem was racial. Though some whites, especially those in regular contact such as her high school English teacher, the milkman and neighbours, remained friendly, she saw anti-Japanese agitation as "rank race persecution" (p. 88). She observed that the strength and weakness of the Japanese Canadian community "lay in a communal solidarity that was an offence in the sight of the anti-Japanese

elements" (p. 218), but noted the divisions within the community. She refers to inter-generational conflicts over dating and marriage customs, but she saves her venom for Nisei "hotheads" who wanted to grab power even though they lacked experience and especially for the "little Napoleon and his henchmen" — that is, Etsuji Morii and associates, who worked with the B.C. Security Commission and who, allegedly, accepted bribes in return for such favours as permits allowing individual Japanese to delay their departure from the coast. These divisions are more fully analyzed in Miki's introduction.

The internal splits, of course, were part of the general confusion and sense of helplessness which pervaded Japanese Canadian society in the months after Pearl Harbor. "There is a pall of ignorance and fear and uncertainty which arouses defiant resistance and plain mulish balking" (p. 109), she explained to her brother. Kitagawa declared her determination "to survive" the evacuation in March 1942. After the war she pondered that "some good came out of the evacuation, not because the evacuation was good, but because the people had in them the guts to make good after misfortune" (p. 228). Her writings demonstrate that despite her "guts," she suffered from confusion and a sense of helplessness after she learned that the Japanese would be "forced to move out from our homes . . . to where we don't know (p. 89). Her personal circumstances were complicated by the arrival of twins in January 1942. Requests for disposable diapers, apparently unavailable in Vancouver but required for the inevitable journey, punctuate musings about where she should go. Should she endure separation from her husband by taking the twins and their two older siblings to one of the ghost towns? Should they go as a family to one of the self-supporting settlements? Should they join brother Wes in Toronto even though the journey would be costly and, from afar, her husband would not easily get back to his old desk at the Bank of Montreal in Vancouver after the war? Eventually, through Wes and his friends at Carlton United Church, the Kitagawa family found a place in Toronto. Alas, neither Kitagawa's writings nor Miki's introduction provide much information on their life in eastern Canada.

Though the reader is left wanting to know much more about the Kitagawa family, this volume is a fine addition to the growing body of literature by and about the Japanese Canadians. Kitagawa was unusually articulate, but she was not the only Japanese Canadian to keep a written record of the war years. One hopes the appearance of *This Is My Own* will encourage similar publications and, especially, translations of diaries

and memoirs written in Japanese. Such writings, even if they are not as poetic as Kitagawa's work, would provide additional insights into one of the most tragic events of modern Canadian history, the removal of the Japanese from the coast and the confiscation of their property.

University of Victoria

PATRICIA E. ROY

Farming the Frontier; The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846, by James R. Gibson. Vancouver: U.B.C. Press, 1985. Pp. 264.

"Canadians," James Gibson writes, "should not forget that they were dispossessed of part of their rightful Columbia heritage, a heritage whose economic potential in general and agricultural possibilities in particular were initially and successfully demonstrated by the Hudson's Bay Company," (p. 205). Such a conclusion reflects a persistent resentment of the British assessment of geo-political realities on the west coast of North America in the mid-nineteenth century. With the signing of the Oregon Treaty in 1846 the northern boundary of the United States, the 49th parallel, was extended to the Pacific. This extension involved the surrender of British interest in a substantial area north of the Columbia River. The Oregon Treaty, therefore, marked the failure of the attempts by the HBC to secure the integrity of its operations in the Cordillera: henceforth new solutions would be required. It is the first of these points, the structure of HBC activities before 1846, which provides the major focus of Gibson's study.

The area west of the continental divide posed serious problems for the new HBC which emerged from the merger of 1821 — problems sufficiently serious to require personal investigation by Governor George Simpson in 1824, 1828 and 1841. Looming above even the unresolved issue of political sovereignty was the question of the profitability of the fur trade. "Everything," Simpson observed on his 1824 visit "appears to me on the Columbia on too extended a scale except the Trade" (p. 16). Simpson's fertile but parsimonious mind generated a variety of solutions to these difficulties, but two were of particular importance for Gibson's study: a push for self-sufficiency in the Columbia Department and a quest for diversification beyond the strict confines of the fur trade.

The first of these solutions involved the elaboration of agricultural production in the Cordillera, thus reducing the costly importation of

foodstuffs. Efforts in this direction took two principal forms. First, agriculture at and around the established HBC posts was expanded. Minimally this involved the cultivation of vegetable gardens, but, given the topographic, climatic and edaphic variability of the region, a good deal more was possible in some areas than in others. The most favourable locations were on or near the Columbia River, and south of the 49th parallel (Ft. Vancouver, Ft. Colville). At these locations agriculture included the cultivation of cereals and the raising of livestock.

The success of "post" farming and the agreement to supply the Russian-American Company (RAC) with foodstuffs prompted the HBC to adopt a second approach to agriculture in the Oregon Country. This took the form of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company (PSAC). Nominally a separate company, but owned by the HBC, the PSAC operated agricultural establishments at Cowlitz and Nisqually, both south of 49°N. The production of these farms, the former primarily arable and the latter pastoral, was geared towards export markets (Alaska, Hawaii and Britain). Agricultural production, then, was also a part of the diversification of HBC activities in the Oregon Country. Lumber and salmon were also being exported by the 1830s.

Yet the very success of these operations in the Columbia Department had some unintended consequences which, in due course, contributed to the denouement of 1846. The most significant of these was the opening of the Willamette valley to settlement. This flowed into the south bank of the Columbia and had always been viewed as prospective American territory. The HBC, therefore, had largely ignored the area, but it proved attractive to the retired Company employees who were the initial settlers. Their success and the quality of the environment contributed towards the Willamette valley's becoming the principal destination for the growing influx of American settlers during the 1840s. These new immigrants, with their political preferences, were in a substantial majority by 1845, "when up to six thousand (settlers) occupied the valley" (p. 135).

Two other groups were participants in the early agricultural frontier of the Oregon Country: missionaries and Indians. Neither, by Gibson's account, were very successful in this endeavour. The Indians, already greatly reduced in numbers by 1840, were prepared to adapt agriculture to their migratory round of activities rather than adopt an agricultural lifestyle. The missionaries were perplexed by such a preference and confounded by their own attempts at farming, in part by unfamiliar environments.

Gibson's study is a logical extension of his previous work centred on

the operations of the RAC. He is, therefore, well placed to examine the interaction of the fur trade and agriculture in the Oregon Country. Moreover, as he points out, the study fills an important gap in the existing literature. "Farming the Frontier" assembles, in a clear and straightforward manner, a body of detailed information on agriculture and the fur trade. As such it is an important contribution and will be required reading for anyone seriously interested in the operation of the fur trade in the Cordillera.

Yet the rather narrow focus of Gibson's study leaves this reader with the sense of an opportunity not fully grasped. Despite the solid empirical foundation he has established, Gibson has not pursued some of the broader, and intriguing, issues which his study raises. One obvious topic concerns the nature of the cultural divide created (or perhaps confirmed) by the Oregon Treaty. Did the agricultural developments and the social forms in which they were embedded, as described by Gibson, have any lasting impact upon the development of American society in the Pacific Northwest? More significant, from a Canadian and British Columbian perspective, is the question of the lessons learned by the HBC and the British government from the events which culminated in the Oregon Treaty. Surely there was more involved than the recognition of a lost heritage. How far, for example, did the loss of the Columbia help to shape colonial society as it developed, once again, around the fur trade and agriculture on Vancouver Island? To ask such questions is to ask for a different and more ambitious study than that undertaken by Gibson. "Farming the Frontier" provides some of the information necessary for a re-assessment of our understanding of economy and society in the Cordillera before the gold rushes. Let us hope that Gibson will not be content to let matters rest here.

Vancouver

BOB GALOIS

"We Were the Salt of the Earth!" The On to Ottawa Trek and the Regina Riot, by Victor Howard. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1985. Pp. 208; 43 illustrations.

The Canadian Plains Research Centre is to be complimented for bringing out a book that marks the fiftieth anniversary of the On-to-Ottawa Trek in 1935, and author Victor Howard (a.k.a. Victor Hoar) for producing a popularly written though closely documented account of

these events. *"We Were the Salt of the Earth"* is the first monographic study of any aspect of unemployed movements in Canada during the depression, and as such is to be welcomed. Students and teachers will find his extensive quotations from newspapers, police reports and government documents useful, and the general reader will be given an undiluted taste of the flavour of the times. Specialists will be disappointed by the absence of a historiographical discussion or an argued thesis — the subtitle is accurately subtitled "A Narrative" — but some readers will find the book controversial indeed. Veterans of the left-wing activity of the 1930s, and those who celebrate its memory, may be positively irked by Howard's treatment. Certainly he has left himself open to criticism or misrepresentation as a result of an idiosyncratic writing style which is a cross between traditional narrative, Pierre Berton and John Steinbeck.

I take, as an example, the treatment of women's activism in support of the Trekkers in Vancouver on pages 60 and 61. Entirely non-analytical, it is viewed only through the prism of male factionalists and cynical authority:

"I have never seen so many women running around. One would think it was election night" [Vancouver cop] . . . Saturday, 28 April. The women of the CCF have been at it for two days, preparing for the great rally in the Area, arranging the programme of speakers, drafting their colleague, Sarah Colley, as leader of the parade to the auditorium, handing out tags, circulating a petition which calls for humane treatment of the camp men [Howard writes] . . . "Again the CCF leaders proved themselves masters of manoeuvres and sent Mother Colley to [Relief Camp Workers Union Leader and Communist Smokey] Cumber to ask him for the head of the line for the women. Cumber agreed . . ." [The RCMP version of events].

Were the women merely cyphers? Really we do not know.

Howard's narrative does succeed in carrying the reader along through the depression background, political context and dramatic events of the Trek itself, which are at once far too complicated and, in broad outline, too well known to recapitulate here. An apparent scepticism towards the motives of both the Communist Party and the CCF (as well as Grits and Tories) is tempered by a real sympathy toward the unemployed themselves and a respect for their "grassroots" movement. The last three chapters of the book, however, dealing with the Regina Riot, show one of two things: either Howard's belief that the Red-led unemployed were to blame for much of the mayhem, or the inadequacy of the semi-documentary semi-journalistic approach to history.

A vast dossier exists on the civil disturbance at Regina on 1 July which

claimed the life of at least one participant: plainclothes city constable Charles Millar. The *raison d'être* of this dossier was to shift the responsibility for Millar's death from the shoulders of the RCMP to the backs of the unemployed and their "Bolshevik" leaders. Howard draws, like a court reporter, on this official dossier, without playing the role of cross examiner. It makes for plenty of bloody detail, but a rather one-sided story. Does Howard honestly believe that the strikers were stockpiling stones and otherwise preparing themselves for the unprovoked RCMP assault on the Market Square, where the main evidence rests on the testimony of a constable who claimed to have overheard a relevant conversation, but who "has not reported the conversation he has overheard and will not think to do so for several days to come"? Does he believe that Millar was bludgeoned by a striker armed with a piece of cordwood, then shot at as his ambulance sped away ("the only time that evening when someone other than a constable fires a gun.")? The informed and careful reader can make up his or her own mind on the evidence presented; beware the conclusions drawn by others.

Popular violence and state violence, communist and socialist agitation in the streets — these are unfortunately not favoured topics in Canadian history. Perhaps it was necessary for an American, Victor Howard, to bring them to our attention. Despite its flaws, *"We Were the Salt of the Earth"* is recommended reading for British Columbians. Fifty years after the famous Trek, the rate of unemployment is roughly where it was in 1936 or 1937, and holes in the modern safety net are yawning wide. If normal political channels fail once more it is safe to assume serious trouble on the horizon.

Simon Fraser University

ALLEN SEAGER

Matt and Jenny in Old Vancouver, by Terry Stafford. Illus. Terry Stafford. Fort Langley, B.C.: Children's Studio Books, 1986. Pp. 72, \$5.95.

I find it particularly daunting to be asked to review a book such as Terry Stafford's that specifically announces that it is aimed at children from grades 1 through 6. One solution, of course, is simply to say that a good book is a good book, whatever the age of the reader. A more reasonable solution, however, is to consult a member of the audience for whom the book is written. I chose the latter course and discussed it with a second-grader, Emma Dawson-Halpern.

Stafford's book chronicles the adventures of two children, Matt and Jenny, who are mysteriously transported from a Vancouver museum of 1986 to old Vancouver of 1886 and a series of adventures that conclude with the great fire of that year.

Emma found the book interesting but confusing. She wasn't quite sure how or why the children were suddenly in old Vancouver, and she was particularly worried about the fate of the children whose place they took. She also said that she wished that there had been more about old Vancouver; the pictures of Indians and school rooms just didn't look much different. But, she concluded, it was never a boring book: there was always something interesting happening. Overall, she deemed it a good book but not a great one. She also said, however, that she thought she'd like to learn more about Vancouver, maybe even visit a museum. I suspect Terry Stafford would be quite pleased.

Vancouver

J. KIERAN KEALY and EMMA DAWSON-HALPERN