Book Reviews

Monopoly's Moment, The Organization and Regulation of Canadian Utilities, 1830-1930, by Christopher Armstrong and H. V. Nelles. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986. Pp. 393.

This is a pleasure to read: well written, theoretically informed, frequently amusing, and always informative.

Canadian utilities are, as the authors note at the beginning, "institutional mammoths." They have played a key role in Canadian development, as well as important roles outside Canada. Not least, utilities have been the "cause" for that quintessential Canadian institution, the "crown corporation." Reminded that larger cities than any in Canada in the 1860s had managed to survive without utilities while a servant class did the communicating and travelling, the authors bring home the message of just how much North American life has been structured by these transportation, communications, and power systems.

The relations between private companies and political bodies are central to this history, and Armstrong and Nelles have detailed the initial development of competitive companies and monopoly buyers; the growth of monopolies and the struggles of civic governments against or on behalf of them; the introduction of regulatory procedures, and the public takeovers.

The method is examination of documents: private correspondence, newspaper accounts, municipal council meeting minutes, and patent laws among them. The pleasure in reading the result is due partly to the lack of dogmatism: the authors are "eager to expose the structural context of events," but also "stress the importance of chance, choice, will, and frequently error and ignorance in the shaping of institutions. Determinism is more obvious in retrospect."

The narrative begins with the technical innovations and business practices of entrepreneurs. The pre-twentieth-century history is one of fiercely competitive inventors who were *par excellence* also entrepreneurs, showmen, and politicians. For a reader who has always thought of Edison as an

inventor, the story of his showmanship is enlightening. The early companies did not always succeed, and some of them obtained municipal contracts only to lose money.

By the end of the century, the utilities were becoming monopolies, but stressed here is the struggle of competitive companies. Monopolies, say the authors, are made, not born. The process took different routes in different regions, influenced by demographics, personalities, the acumen of city councils, and the agility of company managers. Once in place, the monopolies became the focus of collective grievances and gave rise to civic populism. Part III documents the attempts to curb monopoly power, and the machinations of the monopolists against popular discontent.

As so repetitively occurs in the history of capitalism, what is regarded as a violation of free enterprise at one stage becomes a necessity for its survival at another. Prior to 1914, the companies resisted government intervention on ideological (but, of course, more practical) grounds. Three years later, battered by falling revenues, many of them sought renegotiation of their contracts with municipal governments. Various regions, structurally diverse in their class composition, political style, demographic conditions, and industrial base, took different routes out of this. The decentralized government structure in Canada obstructed any uniform solution. Public ownership, co-operatives, regulatory bodies, shields for the companies: all forms were tried somewhere. Hybrid forms developed as well: combinations of crown corporations and private enterprise, combinations that became characteristic of the developing Canadian economy.

In most provinces regulation took the form of a Public Utilities Commission; B.C. was the exception. The political manoeuvres of the B.C. Electric Railway company in the clashes of 1917 over regulation are detailed, including the company's behaviour toward labour leading (intentionally, by implication) to a street railwaymen's strike. Over the next half dozen years, BCER campaigned for a federal charter, lobbied the provincial government against a Public Utilities Commission, and struck a deal with the Vancouver city council to renegotiate its contract. Its political work paid off: no Utilities Commission was established in B.C. The material here is essential information in any history of British Columbia, and is all the more interesting when seen in the context of contrasting as well as similar actions elsewhere.

A good book, then: certainly worth reading just for the fun of it, and worth detailed study for any B.C. historian.

University of British Columbia PATRICIA MARCHAK

Will to Power: The Missionary Career of Father Morice, by David Mulhall. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986.

For the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century, Father A. G. Morice, O.M.I., ruled the northern interior of British Columbia as a missionary "priest-king" from his base at Fort St. James. He physically and mentally coerced his Indian communicants, ignored his missionary superiors, used his authority over the Carrier Indians to extract concessions from the Hudson's Bay Company, and routinely manipulated the regional Indian Agent to his personal advantage. Morice's ambitions stretched beyond local dominance. The priest modelled much of his life after his hero, Father Emile Petitot, who had received public acclaim for his labours among the Dene of the Mackenzie District. Like Petitot, Morice sought the adulation of the intellectual world, writing copious reports of his missionary work, compiling an ethnohistory of the Carrier, and working assiduously on a Carrier linguistic text.

The attraction of Father Morice for a biographer is obvious. As an articulate and outspoken egomaniac, he left ample documentation of his activities and perspective; because of his tendency toward controversy, others could not avoid offering comments on his behaviour. This, combined with Morice's numerous publications, provides a substantial basis for a scholarly analysis of the missionary's career. Mulhall is careful not to claim too much for his work, eschewing 'psychobiography' and claiming that he has avoided "both copious comparisons and detailed 'context' descriptions" (p. x). On this latter point, Mulhall is too modest, for one of the strengths of the study lies in his sensitivity to the cross-cultural setting within which Morice worked, and the complex social and economic forces impinging on missionary work with the interior Indians.

Will to Power offers a thorough narrative of Morice's missionary career, with only occasional gaps forced by the lack of documentation, such as when he travelled to France in 1896. Mulhall is at his best in assessing Morice's relationships with the Indians, equally careful in describing Morice's adaptation of the Durieu missionary system as he is in explaining the persistence of Native spirituality with a Catholic framework. Similarly, the priest's effort to dominate the lives of others, including the unfortunates sent by the church to work with him, Hudson's Bay Company officers, and Indian Agents, is well described. There is no hagiography here, but neither is there simplistic criticism of a rather obnoxious and disagreeable man. Mulhall instead seeks to understand the motivation and character of this unusual man. He draws on William Dunning's 'Marginal Man' explana-

tion for the 'non-democratic' behaviour of white leaders on frontier, but modifies this useful model by pointing to the role of personality and social role in determining patterns of behaviour and opportunities for establishing control. One does not come to like Father Morice through *Will to Power*, but the reader does leave with a comprehensive understanding of this most complex individual.

A number of questions remain, however. Mulhall makes no attempt to assess contemporary intellectual response to Morice's scholarly writings (although offering his own assessments of the work). Most of Morice's books were self-published, but there is little explanation given of how the information was subsequently disseminated. Were the books sent to France, or kept within church circles? Similarly, one wonders if contemporaries interested in ethnography consulted his studies or applauded his methodology. Why was Morice denied the intellectual accolades he so desperately sought if, as the author argues, his studies of the Carrier represented such path-breaking work?

More troubling, because of what it could potentially tell us about Catholic missions to the Indians, are Mulhall's inadequate explanations of the church's failure to discipline Morice. The missionary repeatedly ignored his superiors, dealt with subordinates in a cavalier fashion, and displayed little interest in the Christian mission to which he supposedly dedicated his life. His interest was, according to Mulhall, simply in dominating those around him. The church knew of his difficulties, and received numerous complaints about his behaviour, but moved very slowly against him. Mulhall suggests that a shortage of men in the district prevented precipitous action, but that explanation is insufficient. Why did the church retain such a clearly 'unchristian' man in the order? Was there no concern expressed for the impact of the priest on the Indians? Was the Oblate order worried only about maintaining mission stations, or were there other motives? On a different level, what attracted Morice, and other Oblates, to the harsh 'Durieu' missionary system, which was not uniformly adopted within the Oblate order?

In a different vein, it is unfortunate that Mulhall's careful attention to initial Native-missionary contact is not balanced by a similar assessment of Morice's legacy among his Indian congregations. Did his brand of authoritarian Christianity bind the Natives to the church, or did they abandon Catholicism once Morice's grip had been released? The author makes good and careful use of oral testimony to flesh out description of aspects of Morice's life among the Indians, but does not use this same evidence to judge the missionary's long-term impact. The omission is unfortunate,

for the book ends with a painfully sad portrait of Morice, shunned by a church that had finally removed him from a position of power, unrecognized for his ethnographic studies, and ignored by his former charges; it would have been appropriate to turn back to the venue of Morice's power, and to assess the lingering images of the "priest-king" in the northern Interior of British Columbia. It was there, and not in a small Winnipeg home, that the principal impact of Father A. G. Morice's career rested.

The volume reflects the typically high standards of the University of British Columbia Press, but a couple of technical details merit attention. An excellent series of photographs illustrates the text, but they are jumbled together in a fashion that does the illustrations a disservice. More unfortunate is the absence of a suitable series of maps (one is provided) to enable readers to trace Morice's lengthy travels among the Indians.

One does not wish to end a review of a well-researched, finely written biography on a negative note, but a major puzzle remains. Why are scholars drawn to exceptional individuals within the missionary corps? A biography of Morice is helpful, but one is left knowing a great deal about a unique and unrepresentative character, and wanting to know more about the less flamboyant or controversial missionaries. While biographies such as *Will to Power* and Jean Usher's *William Duncan of Metlakatla* help us understand these highly publicized figures from British Columbia's past, they leave us with a far from complete, and even misleading, portrait of the missionary enterprise. Is it too much to hope that future historians will, while not eschewing controversial individuals, look for more representative individuals or perhaps assess the background, motivation, and impact of the broader missionary corps? Given David Mulhall's ability to handle the multi-faceted Father Morice, it is to be hoped that he will subsequently search for a larger canvas.

University of Victoria KEN COATES

British Columbia: Visions of the Promised Land, ed. and intro. Brenda Lea White. Vancouver: Flight Press, 1986. Pp. 115.

"Vancouver has always seemed," muses Ron Woodall,

> like a city that only dabbles at being a city, its citizens a population that only dabbles at its pursuits. I hasten to add that I consider myself a dabbler. The dictionary will tell you that the term describes a person who does things in a slight or superficial manner. My definition differs slightly. I see dabbling as

slowly getting better at something, at one's own pace, without the imposition of other people's schedules or expectations, and without making a big deal about it.

Such dedicated dabbling pervades this collection of eighteen essays on "what it means to be a British Columbian." Ron Woodall, an advertising consultant (creator of the A & W Root Bear, according to the notes) and painter, takes time to reminisce about his family's arrival in a "God forsaken colourless cul-de-sac in the bush." Brenda Lea White takes time out from magazine journalism and playwriting to create an anthology aimed at the Expo '86 and tourist market. The contributors take time off from their primary writerly obligations to dabble in memoir and autobiography — or pop philosophy: for example, "British Columbia may have its sunshine and its flowers and its gay kitchen curtains, but it is permeated at every level by a mood of desolation, the desolation of a spirit endlessly searching."

Given the lure of dabbling which this book embodies, it's not surprising that the main impression left by the book is that the clichés of place are extraordinarily pervasive and deep-seated, especially that honoured in the book's title — British Columbia as paradise. To say that the primary impact of the book is a reaffirmation of cliché sounds like a very negative comment. And yet it's not, exactly. I came to the book prepared to dislike this element, but the fluency of the writing impressed me. I recognized the commonplace observations — the gentle climate, the swelling growth, the leisurely habits, the impinging wilderness — but the edge of metaphor, a turn of phrase, a shift of familiar context were usually enough to make these fresh, even a bit startling. John Gray writes that "Vancouver was [a] place . . . where people made an effort to maintain creative habits." For George Woodcock, "Vancouver . . . is a city . . . in which good causes can become mass causes." Jack Shadbolt gives us a new angle on his own art, when he notes that "our garden, our woods, relate to my studio as Monet's garden at Giverney did to his." Even those writers who emphasize the ugliest aspects of British Columbia politics and poverty can't resist the paradisical forms: George Ryga, who writes mainly of poverty in a small Mexican village, is writing obliquely of B.C.'s enormous plenty as he agonizes about the "spectre of a slow death within an illusion of wealth and abundance." W. P. Kinsella, who sputters and fumes that "real writers . . . don't give a flying fuck about British Columbia," nevertheless allows that he lives "in British Columbia for only one reason; White Rock is the warmest spot in mainland Canada."

These samplings imply another cliché. This book should have been titled "Vancouver Visions" or "Vancouver and Surroundings." Certainly the interior and the islands get very short shrift. But the emphasis is another aspect of the promised land. Vancouver is desirable partly because it is as much an imperial centre within British Columbia as Toronto is within Canada. That Vancouver's dominance is not much noticed in the book is part of its idyll.

Woodall's definitions of dabbling may also explain why this review is mostly a list of quotations with few transitions. The feeling of the book is of an anthology of mostly journalistic memoirs, occasionally provocative (Gary Cristall's celebration of the creative potential of "political polarization" or Jeani Read's vision of the earth moving), often suggesting topics (Jack Hodgins on Island dialect, Michael Mercer on place names) for more extended essays. But pending such essays, this book that just dabbles at being a book is seldom merely slight because it does reveal a community "slowly getting better at something," at articulating a mythology of mountains and rain, in resolute low key.

University of British Columbia LAURIE RICOU

Solidarity: The Rise and Fall of an Opposition in British Columbia, by Bryan D. Palmer. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1987. Pp. 120. $6.95 paper.

Was the Solidarity movement that burgeoned in the summer and fall of 1983 in opposition to the Bennett government's restraint program betrayed by the social democratic and labour leadership? Could a general strike have been carried off successfully, forcing Social Credit to retreat on most or all of the twenty-six measures introduced? Could the politicization that would have resulted have helped move the province's labour movement and the province more generally in a more socialist direction? The answer to these questions, argues Palmer, is yes.

Let me begin with the strengths of his essay. Palmer writes with verve and commitment, bringing to bear a detailed knowledge of the events in question and a more than passing acquaintance with the history and class character of twentieth-century labour movements, both in North America and in Europe. If Trotsky's theme of "the revolution betrayed" is applied altogether too mechanistically and, in my opinion, inappropriately to the B.C. situation, it is also fair to recognize that it is precisely the broader,

world historical perspective of Palmer's Marxism that makes his *Solidarity* the highly coherent and readable volume that it is.

Yet those very strengths turn into weaknesses the moment we re-examine the events of July-November 1983 in the cold light of day. Were there really "hundreds of thousands of people marching in protest rallies" (p. 9)? Was the result of the 1983 provincial election "indecisive" (p. 52)? Were elected strike committees, implicitly modelled on the *soviets* or *Räte* of the Russian and German revolutions (p. 93), ever a serious option in the political climate of B.C. (and North America), where the "broad left" as Palmer terms them are but a tiny minority of the population and indeed the labour movement as a whole? What Palmer fails to recognize, in his almost theological obsession with "betrayal," is that the 1905 and 1917 scenarios are not really appropriate to the very different battles faced by B.C. labour in 1983. If there have been revolutionaries in this province in the past five years, they have been of a neo-conservative, not Marxist-Leninist, disposition. Solidarity was an essentially *defensive* reaction to the most serious direct attack on organized labour and the post-war social contract that we have seen in Canada. It was the new right that was aggressively attempting to shift the goal posts on such things as human rights, tenant rights, and collective bargaining with the full backing of the machinery of state which it controlled. Extraparliamentary opposition was the one and only weapon that remained in the hands of labour and the left — a weapon that could at best wrest certain concessions from a bloody-minded government, but could not really force it to change course.

While there is room for legitimate debate as to whether the Kelowna Accord settled matters all too cheaply or whether Solidarity's leadership might not have pressed harder for concessions on the Human Rights Commission, it is quite another matter to overestimate the material and political support that could have been garnered in an all-out confrontation with the Bennett government. Palmer downplays the internal tensions within the trade union and teachers' groups that were out on strike, the strong inclination on the part of many in the rank-and-file for a settlement, the power of both law and the media to muzzle and discredit any untoward radical developments, and the inevitable counter-organization on the right that would have accompanied an escalating general strike. The Solidarity leadership did not misjudge the political situation in the province by putting real limits on just how far it would use the strike weapon.

Palmer's unrelenting sarcasm, directed particularly against "labour bureaucrats" such as Art Kube and Larry Kuehn, and his revolutionary holier-than-thou tone, recalls nothing so much as the impossibilism of the

Socialist Party of Canada of the beginning of this century. If only the trade union leadership had been more revolutionary and class conscious, if only the social democrats had not pooh-poohed any and all militancy, if only the Communist Party and others in the "broad left" had not played up to the B.C. Fed leadership, how different things might have been. Perhaps. But in the short run, Solidarity did provide a lesson in extraparliamentary opposition to neo-conservative policies without parallel in the English-speaking world. B.C. labour, too, has continued to weather on-going attacks from Social Credit, and not without considerable dignity and backbone, as witness the one-day general strike organized by the B.C. Federation of Labour on 1 June 1987 against Bill 19. And the example of coalition-building that the Solidarity movement pointed to remains a more lasting legacy for the Canadian left in the late 1980s and into the 1990s than the echoes of proletarian revolutions-past that underlie Palmer's essay.

Vancouver PHILIP RESNICK

British Columbia Prehistory, by Knut R. Fladmark. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1986.

Once again, Knut R. Fladmark succeeds at a new undertaking — contributing a public-oriented book entitled *British Columbia Prehistory*. In his own words, "This book is an attempt to make some of the richness and fascination of British Columbia's ancient past more accessible, although I hope that it will also be of interest to professional archaeologists and their students . . ." (ix). He succeeds by combining the abundant "shadow literature" of the numerous obscure archaeological reports and theses from British Columbia into a brilliantly prepared book of broad/general and professional quality. He states his strategy best by introduction: "On our tour we will glimpse a mosaic of dynamic landscapes filled with shifting glaciers, rising and falling oceans and changeable forests. In these settings, a kaleidoscope of human life — men, women and children, artists, warriors and mystics — will appear, flicker and vanish with the march of years" (2).

The tour involves at least 12,000 years, contributing well developed descriptions and illustrations from ninety years of B.C. archaeological results. A highlight is the small fictitious vignettes that place us on location at different time periods of British Columbia's rich human past. My main regret is that the vignettes are not longer! They are very well written and

teasingly intriguing. These stories reveal the actual setting like no descriptive text of scientific writing can.

As with his previous works, Knut Fladmark carefully considers the role of environmental dynamics in establishing the human context through time on both the Northwest Coast and the Interior. Some minor alternatives can be suggested as to how this might have been explained differently. One can argue that the emphasis on cultural changes may be too closely linked to specific environmental factors, in conjunction with "stabilized" sea levels (57) or "cultural adaptations to the maturing resources of ocean, river and forest" (142). Some alternative explanations could stress the importance of (a) changing population dynamics (as he notes, with a historic population density among the highest in North America); (b) increasing territorial circumscription; and/or (c) pressures placed on resources through time. However, as Fladmark correctly states, "our window on the past can sometimes be so clouded that perception of a 'true' picture may depend more on opinion," and "archaeology is full of competing theories and dogma . . . ," "often the best that archaeologists can do is to suggest a number of alternative ideas, any one of which could be 'right'" (4).

Contrary to his interpretation, I would place less emphasis on salmon as a factor in explaining the long-term, overall Northwest Coast cultural evolution. My reasons for this can be explained in relation to the "alternative" view it gives of hafted microlithics "mounted in cedar-splint handles as fish-knives" (68) at a site I direct, the Hoko River archaeological wet site. In discussing the Middle Period, Fladmark notes how "intriguing" it is that quartz crystals were apparently used for utilitarian tasks in the Middle Developmental Stage, since in historic times they were associated with potent spirit powers. This leads to the suggestion that "perhaps prehistoric quartz-crystal fish knives actually had an implicit sacred significance in honouring the soul of salmon" (68). However, hafted microlith knives mostly had vein quartz cutting edges, though the quartz-crystal microblades did have evidence of fish blood residue on their edges. But, *most important*, the main fishery at Hoko involved processing halibut/flatfish, and only in a minor way was salmon caught from the camp. The main point is that salmon, as a resource, is too commonly given great importance on the Northwest Coast, when this emphasis may actually be a relatively recent phenomenon on the overall prehistoric Northwest Coast, and based on our own bias toward the good taste of salmon!

Fladmark clearly points out the three coastal variants of Northern, Central, and Southern lithic assemblages found as early as 10,000 to 8,000

years ago on the Northwest Coast. He recognizes intriguing Northern and Southern similarities in the Middle Developmental Period of Northwest Coast prehistory. To some degree, perishable artifacts from Southern wet sites also demonstrate this trend of similarity to the north. The general continuity of the three regional variants seem very deep rooted, long lived, and well represented.

Coming to the end of his tour, Fladmark documents well the resulting Northwest Interior and Coast cultural complexity, having developed a "maximum utilization of their environment" (29). He then follows with the important consideration of "colliding cultures" (141) of the Euro-american contact period. He questions which culture "will be seen to have shown greater wisdom" (141). The reader is shown that the history of hundreds of generations of past Northwesterners, as revealed by archaeology, "teaches us" (144) the invaluable wisdom developed during the past 12,000 + years and how we "must come to appreciate and protect the ancient past . . . as part of our collective heritage and a source of pride for the future" (145). Through his latest book, Knut Fladmark begins revealing the collective wisdom of hundreds of generations of past Northwest Elders for the present-day peoples.

Washington State University DALE R. CROES

Lights of the Inside Passage, by Donald Graham. Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1986. Pp. 269; illus.

Lights of the Inside Passage is a passionately written, popular history of the lighthouses of British Columbia's Inside Passage — a stretch of water which extends some 900 kilometres from the Gulf Islands and Georgia Strait in the south to the Queen Charlotte Islands and Dixon Entrance in the north. This is Graham's second volume. His first, *Keepers of the Light*, dealt with lighthouses of the south coast of British Columbia and the west coast of Vancouver Island.

The author, himself a lightkeeper, has spent a decade on various west coast lights. He left his position as Saskatchewan's Cultural Conservation Co-ordinator in 1976, drawn in part, he admits, by the romance of lighthouses. While the realities of the lights have since tempered his youthful enthusiasm, Graham's writing abounds with emotion and sentimentality. He speaks of keepers "out on the lights, watching the Aurora run wild across another winter sky" or facing a winter gale hunkered down inside

"while logs crunch and grind on the rocks below and wind whines up the stovepipe like a violinist going up the E string."

While on the lights Graham became aware of how little was known about those who had come before. He set out to bring to life the stories of these forgotten men and women. As he sorted through a century's accumulation of faded letters, diaries, and files, he was shocked by what he read: "Sometimes as disaster and death piled so high, I pushed away from the table, angry and depressed, leaving as much venom on paper as ink."

To overcome the reader's disbelief as to what was endured, Graham decided to draw "heavily on the rich reserves of the keepers' own experience." He has documented twenty-one stations, beginning with the construction of the Active Pass light on Mayne Island in 1885 and concluding with Triple Island or "Little Alcatraz" built in 1921, forty-seven kilometres west of Prince Rupert. Unfortunately, the histories of six other northern lights were lost in the 1960s when a marine agent thoughtlessly ordered the burning of "outdated files." The book's final two chapters bring us to the present. They respectively describe the keepers' long struggle to improve their wages and working conditions and the danger posed by lighthouse automation, which would render keepers obsolete and jeopardize the safety of mariners.

Because the book's protagonists are for the most part a long-suffering lot, pitted as they were against the vagaries of insensitive government officials, remote storm-lashed outcroppings, poverty, isolation, and so forth, it is difficult to criticize the book without seeming somewhat callous. I am reminded in this regard of Stephen Potter's advice in *Lifemanship*. He suggested that one could completely disarm a prospective critic by dedicating one's book "To Phyllis, in the hope that one day God's glorious gift of sight may be restored to her."

I stand disarmed — at least as far as the lightkeepers are concerned. But not so for the book.

Paradoxically, its greatest strength, the generous use of anecdotal material, ultimately becomes its weakness. While the harsh experiences of the lightkeepers and their tales of misery touch and instruct us, we are left with a nagging doubt. Do Graham's selections tell us the whole story? While some mention is made of keepers who found contentment on the lights, most, according to the author, suffered a terrible existence. Is this true? Or was it true only for some locations? Or was this wretchedness a byproduct of a particular era? The author confides: "Happy people do not make history." I disagree. People make history regardless of their

emotional state. The historian's task is always to search out the truth, for truth is essential to history.

When Graham speaks of "the horrifying history of a forgotten people," of marine agents co-authoring "a long, dark chapter in Canadian history, inflicting hardships few Canadians could even contemplate," with Ottawa guaranteeing keepers a "life on the mudsill of society," the reader could be forgiven for thinking that not since the antebellum South has slavery been so fashionable. The truth is that while lightkeepers' wages *were* low and social benefits *were* non-existent, their lot was certainly no better or worse than most workers in turn-of-the-century Canada.

In 1889, The Royal Commission on the Relations of Capital and Labour reported widespread exploitation in the manufacturing industry. In particular, it noted inadequate protection from belts, pulleys, and steam engines; crowded and unhealthy conditions; widespread child labour; frequent unemployment; lack of compensation for industrial accident victims; workers forced to eat at their work post; and lack of job security.

By not placing the lightkeepers' struggle within the larger context of Canadian labour history, Graham leaves the impression that somehow these "exiles" on the shores of British Columbia were singled out for inhumane treatment.

Having expressed my reservations about the book, I believe nonetheless that Donald Graham has achieved one of his stated purposes. He has made a strong case against automating the lights. I know the need to keep the lights staffed. I was raised on the west coast of Vancouver Island, and while at university I spent summers working at a number of lighthouses. The fishermen quoted in the book are right: "If men leave the lights other men will die."

Graham's book adds a useful chapter to the history of Canada's west coast. If, in addition, his work helps reverse the trend toward lighthouse automation, he will have rendered all mariners a great service.

Toronto DAN CURTIS

Gordon Shrum: An Autobiography, with Peter Stursberg, edited by Clive Cocking. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986. Pp. xvi, 158.

This portrait is like Gordon Shrum: brisk, clear, forthright. Shrum loved doing; one could even say, "il aimait à faire faire" — he loved getting things done. Larry MacKenzie, UBC's President, 1944-1962, roundly

asserted that Shrum was "the best expediter" that he had ever seen. Powerful, energetic, decisive, abrupt, Shrum could not have been an easy man to live with; he was a driver; he drove himself and all those around him. He had few soft hypocrisies; he said what he thought. As co-chairman of B.C. Hydro and Chancellor of Simon Fraser, he was always in hot water from some frank opinion and a too-vivid mode of rendering it.

One need not expect Shrum's autobiography to be allusive, reflective, a thing of lights and shades, of patterns held in apposition and juxtaposition, of ironies. There isn't much of that; it's a good story, vigorously told. Shrum was too much the man of action to have bothered with words; they were simply tools to him. His reminiscences are not written, they are taped. Their quality is partly Shrum himself, partly good editing.

Shrum preferred to do business by telephone; letters were too slow. W. A. C. Bennett could be the same way. In May 1963 he phoned Shrum at B.C. Hydro (where Shrum was busy with the Peace River project) and said, "I want you to be the chancellor of the new university of the Fraser Valley. Select a site, build it and get it going. I want it to open in September 1965." Shrum, for once, hesitated. Bennett quickly noted it. "Maybe, Dr. Shrum, you'd like to take a little time and think it over." "You know, Mr. Premier," Shrum replied, "if you want it by September 1965, I haven't very much time to think whether I should take it or not. I'll take it and I'll get on with it right away." Simon Fraser University opened in September 1965.

With such a man, not much given to introspection, the autobiography coming straight off dictation, the light is bound to be a little flat. Like skiing on a cloudy day in high mountains, you don't make out the shadows. There is only passing mention (pp. 145-46) of his two wives, from both of whom Shrum separated. His marriages are, one suspects, a strange, sad story; there is another side to Shrum unrevealed.

Shrum was capable of wonderful acts of selflessness. In 1925, when he decided to leave Toronto, he had two offers — one from the University of Manitoba at $2,800, the other from U.B.C. at $2,500. He intended to accept the better one, but a married colleague begged to be given the chance to take more lucrative Winnipeg. Shrum was a gentleman, and single, and thus chose U.B.C. He never regretted it. Shrum's appreciation of Larry MacKenzie, a president of whom he at first disapproved, was open and generous, 10 May 1946:

Your energy, courage, imagination and unselfishness have won the loyalty and support of everyone both on and off the campus. Only those of us who

were here before you arrived can have any real appreciation of the transformation which you have effected.

These sidelights on Shrum are not in his autobiography. There is that dimension missing, which is no one's fault. The idea of getting Shrum to do his reminiscences was excellent; the editing is impeccable; but, except for Peter Stursberg's brief, lively introduction, we do not see Shrum in the round, and probably cannot, unless there are Shrum Papers. One fears there may not be; there remains an uneasy suspicion that with this straightforward book we have got all of Gordon Shrum that we are likely to get.

What comes forcibly upon one is this fate, as one may call it, of Shrum who did his business quickly and expertly, by telephone. So did Larry MacKenzie; but MacKenzie also kept records; the telephone did not create the biographical hiatus for him that it may well do for Shrum. Larry MacKenzie left 200 feet of archives, for historians to write a biography. That was, of course, intended. Shrum may well have shrunk from that coyness about papers and records — about, in effect, fame. His autobiography is singular in its artlessness, carrying its own translucent demonstration of Shrum's rather solitary voyage, his sensibility imposing its own silence, and however northern, or chilled, he found solace in doing the world's business supremely well.

Dalhousie University P. B. WAITE