

Book Reviews

From Hudson Bay to Botany Bay: The Lost Frigates of Lapérouse, by Russell C. Shelton. Toronto: NC Press, 1987. Pp. 228; 60 illus.

In January 1788, the French frigates *Boussole* and *Astrolabe* entered Botany Bay, a week after the "First Fleet" under Arthur Phillip had arrived. The French ships were under the command of Jean François Galaup, Count of La Pérouse. After refitting his ships he put to sea and disappeared. The first traces of the ships were found thirty-eight years later in the islands of Vanuatu. The evidence suggested, and later research has confirmed, that the ships had been wrecked on the reef surrounding the island of Vanikoro.

La Pérouse's account of the voyage which ended on the reefs, as well as the story of his life, has been published. Less well known is the story of the salvage efforts starting in 1958, which produced many artifacts and elucidated the history of the wreck. Shelton has brought all these subjects together in his book, illustrated by pictures and maps he has assembled from many sources. The book covers the birth and education of Lapérouse (the orthography chosen by the author for the explorer's name) and his career as a naval officer from 1756 to the time he set out on his last voyage. One episode in this career was his 1782 raid on the forts in Hudson Bay owned by the Hudson's Bay Company.

Lapérouse's journals of his Pacific voyage were sent to France — some from Kamchatka, carried across Siberia by the expedition's Russian interpreter; some from Macao; and the rest from Botany Bay. The journals were published in France and translated into English in 1797. Shelton has summarized and paraphrased Lapérouse's narrative to produce an easily readable story of the voyage — a voyage which filled in many blanks in the map of the Pacific.

While visiting Melanesia in 1826, an Irish sea captain, Peter Dillon, heard stories and saw evidence of two ships that had been wrecked many

years earlier. The following year he landed on Vanikoro, recovered some wreckage, and saw the remains of one of the ships on the bottom. Other expeditions followed, confirming that this was the place where Lapérouse was wrecked. There were stories of survivors living for years on Vanikoro and neighbouring islands, but all had died before Dillon's first visit.

In 1958, what is now Vanuatu was called the New Hebrides, governed by a French-British condominium. An expatriate New Zealander named Reece Discombe lived in Vila, where he conducted a salvage business, having become one of the pioneers of free diving with the recently developed "aqualung." Discombe promoted and participated in a diving expedition organized by Pierre Antonioz, the French Resident Commissioner. This was the first of a number of expeditions that have identified the wrecks and recovered many artifacts.

Shelton has used published sources for that part of his book dealing with the eighteenth century. His acquaintance with Discombe has given him the material for the somewhat sketchy account of the discoveries since 1958. His choice of material from Lapérouse's journal has produced a rounded account, although it cannot be all things to all people. For example, readers interested in ethnology will need to go to the original. He is not well acquainted with European history. He describes Louis XVI as the son rather than the grandson of Louis XV, and he speaks of the Duke of Wellington as "reigning supreme" in England in 1828. In fact Wellington's tenure as Prime Minister lasted only two years before he was forced out of office because of his refusal to introduce a Reform Bill.

Although there is a bibliography in the book, Shelton does not footnote his sources, even when they are direct quotations. This can be puzzling. His quotation of Lapérouse's low opinion of the natives in Alaska does not appear in the 1797 English translation of the explorer's journal and is at variance with it. Of course, Lapérouse might have saved his real thoughts for his correspondence. Still, one would like to know whether this is so and, if it is, whether there are other discrepancies.

Shelton quotes Lapérouse as saying, "Let care be taken not to commit the compilation of [the journal] to a man of letters." Shelton is not a man of letters, but he has recorded two remarkable feats: the voyage itself and the uncovering of the evidence of Lapérouse's fate. He has done this in a way that should appeal to general readers, and goes some way in presenting the tale (again to quote Shelton quoting Lapérouse) "in such a manner as I myself [Lapérouse] would have wished to do."

The Adventures and Sufferings of John R. Jewitt, by Hilary Stewart.
Toronto and Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987.

Hilary Stewart's new book is based upon an actual journal kept by a maritime fur trader, John Jewitt, during his two-year captivity among the Yuquot. It was originally published in 1815 and has long been regarded by researchers of the Northwest coast as an important historical record of the social and economic life of the Yuquot at the height of the maritime fur trade. Jewitt, as a slave to the Yuquot chief, Macquinna, had a unique opportunity to observe the seasonal and daily activities of his household. His observations of their subsistence practices, traditional trade, and warfare reveal a society with a sophisticated fishing technology as well as extensive trade networks and political alliances. Such insights have been important to scholars in reconstructing the prehistory of a flourishing Northwest coast people before the advent of the sea otter trade.

As well as its historical contribution, the narrative is also an exciting story of danger and intrigue. It was a popular adventure story when first published and to date there have been over twenty editions in print. None, however, has been as well annotated or illustrated as this edition. Hilary Stewart has written several informative books on the peoples of the Northwest coast by combining research in archaeology, ethnology, and botany with extensive illustrations of their material culture. This visual format has had great public appeal, and in the same fashion she has produced this new edition of John Jewitt's narrative in the hope that readers today will enjoy the story as much as did those of two centuries ago.

The author has divided the book into three parts. The first, *Beginnings*, sets the stage for the narrative itself by introducing the history of the region at the time of Jewitt's captivity. Included are speculations on Jewitt's personality as well as on the cause of Macquinna's attack on the trading vessel.

The second part consists of the *Narrative* itself. Here the footnotes enhance the text by adding information of the material culture, subsistence practices, and social organization of the Yuquot as known through ethnographic records. In some cases a footnote is added to correct Jewitt's misunderstanding of Yuquot behaviour as well as geography and local marine and plant life.

The last part, *Endings*, is a short summary of Jewitt's life after his return to civilization. It includes details of his subsequent marriage, the literary successes of his narrative, which spawned both a play and song, and his commitment to peddling his books from town to town. As an added interest

the author has included the oral history of the Yuquot that tells of Macquinna's activities after Jewitt had been rescued.

Throughout her book Hilary Stewart has added maps, historical documents, and personal letters written by Jewitt and his family. Included in this edition is a list of related readings and a comprehensive index.

One reservation I have about this book is that the author fails to place the narrative within the context of the literature of its day. Jewitt's narrative was part of the "captive genre" that had vast appeal to the public of the early nineteenth century. The narrative was in fact a joint collaboration between Jewitt and his publisher, Richard Alsop, who helped to embellish the journal in order to appeal to popular readership. Hilary Stewart notes this embellishment in her footnotes but maintains that the narrative is an authentic account of Yuquot life. Some scholars would not agree and point to the many aspects of the narrative that are inconsistent with other historical sources, as well as later ethnographic research. This, they believe, is a product of the narrative's role as a popular literature.

Hilary Stewart hopes Jewitt's narrative will provide additional insight into the history of British Columbia's indigenous people. She missed, however, a golden opportunity to educate the public about the biases in historical material. She is right in stating that "research is such a hoot," but it is more of a hoot when one makes explicit some of the difficulties that may be presented by the historical records themselves, thus providing even more insight into the history of indigenous people, for it permits some understanding of the European view of them.

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LORAIN LITTLEFIELD

Sappers: The Royal Engineers in British Columbia, by Beth Hill. Ganges, B.C.: Horsdal and Schubart, 1987. Pp. 182; illus.; maps; index.

Few British Columbians, and probably fewer Canadians, appreciate the impact of a small body of Royal Engineers of the early colonial life of this province. In this charming book Beth Hill sets out to describe the work they did in the formative years of the mainland colony and, by liberal use of the diaries and letters of the engineers themselves, she succeeds in giving a first-rate, lively, and interesting account of this remarkable body of men.

The first small group of Royal Engineers came out to help determine the boundary between Canada and the United States. They arrived at Esquimalt in the summer of 1858 when the Fraser River gold rush was

underway. Governor Douglas called upon them almost immediately to "show the flag" both in Victoria and at the gold diggings on the Fraser. With that accomplished, they then started their work for the Boundary Commission. Working in isolation and in rough terrain, theirs was a tiring and sometimes dangerous task that was finished only after three years of hard and exacting work.

The main body of Royal Engineers, over 200 all ranks, started to arrive late in 1858 under the command of Colonel Moody. They had numerous duties. They provided the colony with skilled men capable of surveying, building roads and bridges, laying out townsites, and acting as a military force which could be called upon to enforce law and order in the mining camps.

Their activities extended primarily from New Westminster, their headquarters base, to Barkerville and beyond. Aside from the short-lived Ned McGowan's "war" early in 1859, they were rarely used in a strictly military sense. Their main job was constructing roads into the Interior as the gold strikes moved from the Fraser into the Cariboo. They surveyed New Westminster, Yale, Hope, and Port Douglas, and started the first outline site of present-day Vancouver. They were the equivalent of a Lands and Works Department for the mainland colony as well as a government printing office. They built barracks, schools, churches, and government buildings, but most of all they built roads that enabled the miners in the Interior to bring their gold out and their supplies in.

By 1863 the great Cariboo Road had been completed, the Fraser River bridged at Spuzzum, and the main artery of the transportation system of southwestern British Columbia established. In that year also the British government decided to withdraw the force, but allowances were made to grant 150 acres to those engineers wishing to remain in the new colony. Most of the N.C.O.s and men decided to stay and after disbandment they became farmers, surveyors, carpenters, constables, printers, construction workers, etc.

One of the very good aspects of this book is the liberal use the author has made of the diaries and journals kept not only by many of the engineers but also by others in the colony who used the roads being built by them at the time. She has brought life to what could have been a dull recounting of the engineers' work. The book deserves to be widely read, for it gives a lively view of pioneer work in colonial British Columbia, which is all too rare in our libraries.

The Buildings of Samuel Maclure: In Search of Appropriate Form, by Martin Segger. Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1986. Pp. 274; illus.

It is always easier and more rewarding to write a favourable rather than an unfavourable review of a book. I found this review very difficult to write. Martin Segger set a number of tasks for himself in *The Buildings of Samuel Maclure*. He wanted to plot the development of Maclure's style — as the book's subtitle suggests — by showing the influence on him of the Victorian Queen Anne style, the Elizabethan revival, the Rustic style, the Chicago School, and the work of British architect C. F. A. Voysey, among other styles and architects. He wanted to give short descriptions of as many Maclure houses as was possible. He wanted to devote separate chapters to well-known features of Maclure's buildings such as the garden and the hall. Had Segger woven these themes into a biographical narrative he might have succeeded in writing a coherent book, but he wanted to do so many other things as well. He wanted to devote long passages to detailed discussions of Maclure's Victoria and Vancouver contemporaries. He wanted to address a learned audience, referring to the "Cary Castle Controversy" and to R. B. Bayne's 1894 lecture on local architecture with little explanation of the significance and meaning of these things. At the same time he wanted to instruct the uninitiated as to the evolution of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architectural styles and movements. He also wanted to write about the upper stratum of Victoria society, the local arts and crafts movement, and many other things which related only tangentially to his subject.

Segger had little in the way of letters, diaries, or other Maclure writings on which to draw. He therefore relied heavily upon the reminiscences of Maclure's delightful daughter, the late Catherine Maclure, for autobiographical material. A sizeable *lacuna* nonetheless remained, and the author's inability to fill it has resulted in a hodge-podge of unrelated information, unsatisfactory portrayal of the central character, and a lack of overall focus. One comes away from the book admiring Segger's capacity to gather detail but questioning his ability to relate these details to one another and to a central theme.

But all is not lost. There is one short section in *The Buildings of Samuel Maclure* that is admirable. It is the discussion of Captain M. H. T. Hodgson's home "Kitsuksis," constructed in Alberni in 1913. Here we have a splendid mingling of the biographies of Captain and Mrs. Hodgson, of the landscape in which the house was built, and of Maclure's blending of local materials and setting with his clients' needs and with his own imaginative

expression. The discussion is enhanced by superb interior and exterior photographs and drawings of “Kitsuksis.” The only omission — as in all the author’s work — is in the paying of attention to local craftsmen and the part they played in carrying out Maclure’s plans.

Sono Nis Press is to be congratulated for producing so handsome a volume and the author for amassing so many informative photographs. It is a pity, however, that the reader does not see the complex character Segger tells her Maclure possessed but is instead swamped by unrelated references, unimportant detail, and, again, a general lack of focus.

Vancouver

MARIA TIPPETT

Eyes of a City: Early Vancouver Photographers 1868-1900, by David Mattison. Vancouver City Archives Occasional Paper No. 3 (1986). Pp. 75; illus.

Historical photographs are often presented casually, as curiosity or illustration. Such treatment, according to Vancouver City Archivist Sue Baptie, “squanders the photograph’s true potential.” In her Foreword to *Eyes of a City*, she explains that the book is “intended to provide context and explanation” so that familiar images may be appreciated in a “new and richer light.” To this end, *Eyes of a City* succeeds. The images chosen for reproduction are not new ones, but what separates Mattison’s publication from so many nostalgic visual romps through Vancouver’s past is its obvious respect for the photograph as historical document.

Eyes of a City is an exploration of early Vancouver through the photographs that have managed to survive. It is also a tribute to Vancouver’s early photographers. In his eleven-page Introduction, Mattison points out that knowing who took a photograph, how, and why is as important as the subject content. He goes on to survey the photographers “who focussed their cameras on pre-1900 Vancouver” — not just the professionals but also the tourists, the amateurs, and the journalists. In the first few paragraphs, Mattison attempts to set the context of the history of photography and to explain the dearth of early photographs (pre-1860) of Burrard Inlet. Here he has some difficulty, offering a hodge-podge of information, some inappropriate or incorrect in the context of the Pacific Northwest. In the final paragraph of his Introduction, Mattison undermines his own arguments with the dubious and contradictory conclusion that “the only proof a photograph contains is that of its own existence.” However, he quickly moves from general nineteenth-century developments to specific Vancouver

photographs and photographers, an area where he is clearly more at home.

A brief page-and-a-half text introduces each of the seven sections, four devoted to the major photographers of nineteenth-century Vancouver: J. A. Brock & Co., the Bailey Brothers, Trueman & Caple, and S. J. Thompson. Mattison examines the motives and achievements of these early commercial landscape photographers and their portrayal of the city. Additional information includes a two-part bibliography listing reference materials about nineteenth-century urban photographers and photography and photographic history books about Vancouver, an Appendix of Vancouver Commercial Photographers and Studios 1886-1900, and an Index well referenced by photographer but otherwise rather idiosyncratic. Firmly focused on Burrard Inlet, *Eyes of a City* might have profitably given greater consideration to the rich photographic legacy of nearby New Westminster as the root of later photographic developments in Vancouver. The reproductions, not unexpectedly for a modest publication, are frequently flat and lacking in detail in the shadows. The format is pleasing, with images and explanation closely juxtaposed. Caption information is excellent and could only have been improved by the inclusion of the original photographic process.

Mattison crusades for the "photograph as document," emphasizing the importance of context and intent for a proper understanding of historical visual records. For example, using the example of "City Hall in a Tent" and "Real Estate Office in Big Tree" he demonstrates how time and memory can transform images, from hoax into cliché and from re-enactment into icon. Mattison speaks directly to and about the photographs, describing their content, pointing out details, setting up comparisons. The information presented to the reader in *Eyes of a City* is conveyed by a balanced mix of text and image. Mattison's strength lies in his presentation of fact; he is thorough in his research and careful in his attention to detail. Therein lies the strength of *Eyes of a City*.

National Archives of Canada

JOAN M. SCHWARTZ

Malcolm Lowry: Vancouver Days, by Sheryl Salloum. Vancouver: Harbour Publishing, 1986. \$9.95.

In May 1987, the first International Lowry Symposium was held in Vancouver; to coincide with this conference, and to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the publishing of Lowry's most famous novel, *Under the Volcano*, Harbour Publishing released *Vancouver Days*, the first one-

book study of Lowry's years in Vancouver (1940-54), where Lowry and his wife Margerie lived in a seaside shack near Dollarton in North Vancouver (where he wrote *Under the Volcano* and most of his other posthumously published works). The Dollarton area no doubt affected Lowry deeply. He loved the sea, the feeling of being perched in a shack where the waves at high tide would wash under his floor. At the end of the day he could see the diffused lights of the city and the flares of the refinery across the water, and be happy that he could live apart from them. Sheryl Salloum has put together a series of recollections from individuals who knew the Lowrys when they lived there, combined with photographs of people and places they knew; she has done a very good job with the available material and has interviewed many people who remember those days.

When I have walked the path that led to their shack, particularly in the early spring when the foliage is new and fresh, I felt the Lowrys' spirit, palpable. Malcolm was able to catch the spirit of the place, its beauty and its quality of paradise which he describes so perfectly in "Forest Path to the Spring," for me still his best work. We have all read the stories, heard the tales, of that Dollarton world. I attended the symposium in May and did not read *Vancouver Days* until later. The combination makes me now feel that Lowry's life is a sad little story, about a man's troubles in a sad little shack on a beach with equally sad little shacks surrounding it. The couple in question is headed by a hard-drinking, self-serving man who, when he writes, writes well his internal, and eternal, soliloquy for the world; the wife appears to be something else instead. She serves the husband, initially appears to match him drink-for-drink, and she does her damndest to make the situation such that he will write, for she feels that he has something important to say. It appears, therefore, that we are engaged in observing yet another portrait of the artist as a not-so-young man, who has his own personal demons so that he cannot always fulfil himself in either his work or his marriage; not far into the book we are prompted to ask the question that is fatal to works of biography in any form: "Why?" We have glimpses of Lowry's writing which for him was autobiography, which is after all self-indulgent forgiveness; we hear of his kindness, his humour, his rage, his using of others. There is simply no nourishment left for us in this particular subject matter; it lacks the boon of fresh information, nor does it even provide fresh insights into old information. How dreary the Lowrys' story is, how narrow the range of emotions they permitted themselves, and their friends, to express!

Sheryl Salloum outlines Lowry's time in this area for the first time, and the contradictions in the man come through extremely well. He is and will

forever be a paradox. Though he was able to catch the flavour of the forest and the sea in British Columbia, he remains forever British and it is unfair, I think, to adopt him as a Canadian. Lowry loved his Eden, but as Salloum points out, his childhood and background were always with him. Salloum says he was "introverted, theatrical, dispirited, waggish, charming, churlish, powerful, vulnerable, sober, bacchanalian, generous, self-possessed, mystical and ingenious," and she illustrates this very well.

Many of the memories here are available elsewhere, memories of people who are honest in their recollections of him but often tell us more about the speaker than of Lowry. They ring true, like the bell that tolls for all of us, in the memory of our friends. But often there is a gloss of hindsight, of making those moments more than what they were — but be that ever so. What particularly charmed me about the recollections here was the memory pieces of Gloria (Newton) Onley and Norman Newton. In Gloria's memoir of Lowry shines not only the voice of an extremely articulate woman, but also the soul of a compassionate human being of integrity. When she says that "When I saw Malcolm he wasn't at his most lovable" and illustrates that succinctly by saying he was vomiting, unable to shave or wash himself, believe it. Her response to looking after Lowry for a few days tells us a great deal about Gloria but much more about Lowry:

He was so mired down in his condition, I wished for an antidote to magically cure him. The next morning, with naive good will I picked a flower from the garden around the coach house and brought it to him. It might have been a narcissus, it might have been a daffodil; it was a fresh, beautiful spring flower. He took it with a wry smile and said something half-chagrined, half-charming. I felt terribly young, and very unsuccessful in my symbolism.

I feel sure that it was a narcissus. Poor Malcolm.

Along with Gloria's fine writing is that of Norman Newton, whose flair for rhythm in his prose, his use of language, makes me want him to write more. His perception of Lowry, his story of his time with him, is the most revealing, most well written, and for me the most perceptive part of the book. His last paragraph bears repeating:

The effect on my "life" was similar to that of witnessing and to some extent participating in a tragic event which offers a brief but powerful perception of spiritual realities which are normally hidden to us. It is tragic because it involves tragic pride, a desperate storming of precipices which are meant to be climbed one foothold at a time. I think of Malcolm as dying in some remote and terrible wilderness which most of us know nothing of, a place he himself had chosen. But when I think that he was enabled to find a universal meaning, even a tortured beauty, in this fate I think of what I shall call, without theological presumptions in this case, "redemptive mercy."

Sheryl Salloum acknowledges this dichotomy in her collection of memories. These recollections are as varied as Lowry's personality, and as she says, "The passage of time has sometimes dimmed, sometimes sharpened these memories, but Lowry the man and Lowry the artist remain unforgettable — both powerful, both an enigma."

Turning to the production of these recollections, I am grateful for the opportunity to praise the exceptionally strong and subtle interweaving of Sheryl Salloum's hand in this book. She says she admires Lowry's work, yet she does not strike a single falsely sentimental note from start to finish in a book that could teeter constantly on the verge of sentimentality — of those who could claim that they knew Lowry better than they did. There are, of course, other things I would like to see: for instance, some memoir from Esther Birney, who years ago regaled me with stories about Lowry; I hope that she is one of the contributors who preferred to remain anonymous, but if that is the case, some of her richly funny stories are missing. Dorothy Livesay's memories, particularly of Margerie, are clear and distanced, and she makes Margerie appear to be the stronger person I am positive she was, when at the symposium it seemed to be fashionable with some critics to downgrade her not only as a person but as a writer and collaborator and listener. When I met her years ago, she was a charming and intense woman and devoted to Malcolm's memory. I liked her, as William McConnell obviously liked her; this book helps with that perspective. It would have been interesting, too, to have a memoir from David Markson, the story about his visit with the Lowrys when Markson was a young student in New York and travelled across the continent to meet the man who was becoming a great influence on his own work.

But these complaints are picayune. Salloum has done an excellent research job with her material. The photographs are well chosen, the material nicely integrated. The variety of the material she has selected leads the reader to a firmer understanding of Lowry's method of working, his view of himself and of his world. It is that understanding, rather than judgement, of Lowry as one of the most innovative writers in twentieth-century literature that makes this book a valuable contribution to the enigma that is Lowry. If the book had done everything that I would like it to do, then it would be a different book. As it is, it helps fill in gaps about this man who once lived in British Columbia; the research and handiwork are admirable.

After Bennett: A New Politics for British Columbia, edited by Warren Magnusson, R. B. J. Walker, Charles Doyle, and John DeMarco. Vancouver: New Star Books, 1986.

This book is a collection of critiques and proposals on aspects of the economy, society, and politics in British Columbia from the perspective of the contemporary left. It was written partly in response to circumstances and events in B.C. politics since the introduction of the "restraint" budget of 1983, and partly in response to charges that the programmes of the left are stale and inadequate for a society in the late twentieth century. The major theme throughout the book is the renewed importance for the left of democratic values and the challenge to a participatory, democratic society posed not just by capitalism but also by centralized bureaucratic state structures. Addressed to the general public, it is a useful primer on the issues and constituencies that concern socialists.

The book is in two parts; one is concerned with the economy, the other with a variety of social and political issues. The essays on the economy are divided into three sections. The first, on economic revival, includes a critique by Michael Lebowitz of the individualist assumptions of neo-conservative economists and two pieces on the weaknesses of and strategies for B.C.'s resource-based economy, one by Mel Watkins and the other by Thomas Gunton. Gunton in particular suggests a number of interesting strategies that, although eclectic, tend to resemble economic management approaches we are familiar with in other social democratic systems. The second section on the economy is concerned with new and more democratic alternatives to corporate power. Warren Magnusson proposes the expansion and decentralization of the non-profit public sector, Wes Shira describes some community-based economic projects, and John Richards makes the case for worker participation in management. The lively debate between Richards and John Calvert which follows Richard's proposals is one of the most interesting parts of the book. The final section on the economy, although entitled "Resources and Development," is more restricted than one might expect, limited to articles on agriculture by Alan Drengson and John Warnock and on the Stein Valley and resource development by Mike M'Gonigle.

Throughout the essays on the economy, there is an apparent tension between the characterization of corporate power which seems to require powerful countervailing structures on one hand and the decentralization required for effective democratization on the other, between the external economic forces that impinge on B.C. and the capacity for effective reforms

within B.C. These tensions, although recognized, are not always effectively resolved.

The second part of the book begins with a section on government. Philip Resnick makes some interesting observations on the ambivalent relationship between the state and socialism, both historically (in Europe) and in contemporary B.C., and then calls for an extension of the public sphere but not the state sphere. What appears to distinguish the two is localized democratic control of the former and centralized bureaucratic control in the latter. Norman Ruff then argues that while the Social Credit government has created centralized policy centres with decentralized administration, more "relevant" policy emerges only through feedback from administrators to the policy-making process. Magnusson continues the decentralization theme by arguing the virtues and importance of powerful local governments, and Dan Gottesman concludes this section with an argument in support of aboriginal self-government.

The next section on culture and society begins with a critique of the mass media by Robert Hackett, Richard Pinet, and Myles Ruggles. The mass media, they argue, inhibit popular democracy by creating and reinforcing "dominant definitions of social reality" that discourage participation and de-emphasize dissent and conflict and they do so because of the consequences of commercialism. In an essay on culture, George Woodcock describes the lack of support from both government and the community for producers of culture in B.C. and argues that artists should expect some status and style of life "commensurate with their services" but not of a sort as to produce complacency. Gordon Bailey, on education, criticizes the notion that it is politically neutral in either curriculum or in its teaching procedures and on health care; John DeMarco and Donna Heughan argue that the costs and ineffectiveness of the current system are attributable to the medical model in which individuals are treated for illness after it has set in.

In the final section of the book, on politics and social movements, R. B. J. Walker argues that the problems with democracy in B.C. rest in part with the divorce of politics and everyday life. Christine St. Peter describes feminist proposals for equality of the sexes and suggests a reform of politics to include the extension of "womanly" values of community and caring to the public sphere. Josephine Schofield, in an essay on the poor, describes the dimensions of poverty in B.C., organizations for the poor, and the problems facing such organizations. Finally, Elaine Bernard, discussing organized labour, proposes that in the face of challenges from technology and

its own weakened economic position, labour's most effective tactics lie in finding allies, not in stopping production.

While the central theme of democracy and decentralization is apparent throughout, the essays in this book suggest some diversity of approach. For example, some are clearly less uncomfortable making accommodations with the existing system. More direct debate on such issues would have made for more lively reading. As might be expected in a book of this sort, there is considerable repetition of themes and proposals, and the style occasionally becomes excessively rhetorical. Although the title of the book suggests that its major thrust is proposals for change, for this reader its strength is more apparent in the various analyses of contemporary British Columbia. Overall, as a book directed to the general public, it is a welcome addition to the debate on alternate visions for B.C.

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LYNDA ERICKSON

British Columbia: Its Resources and People, edited by Charles N. Forward. Western Geographical Series Volume 22. Victoria: Department of Geography, University of Victoria, 1987. Pp. xxiii, 433.

Over the last thirty years human geography has moved one full turn in the evolutionary spiral of a discipline. In the 1950s regional geography was in full swing. During the 1960s and 1970s abstract theory was in vogue. Now, in the 1980s, geographers are calling for a "new" regional geography, one that combines both the specificity of place with the generality of theory. Such a combination, it is argued, allows an integrated account of place, one in which difference and distinctiveness emerge. Unfortunately, the regional geography portrayed in *British Columbia: Its Resources and People* is generally of the old kind. It defines British Columbia's uniqueness by a mass of facts and figures arranged according to the time-honoured categories of Relief, Climate, Vegetation, Industry, and so on. But missing is any sense of integration and synthesis, any sense that British Columbia is a distinct and different place.

For the most part the eighteen essays that make up the volume focus on B.C.'s resources, broadly defined. In fact, the title of the book is a misnomer. People are conspicuous by their absence in many of the essays. In addition, one must also question the comprehensiveness of the volume. For example, although there are three essays on tourism, there are none on manufacturing (sawmilling and pulp and paper each get only two pages of

text in Edgell's essay on "Forestry") or office employment. Furthermore, the social and cultural geography of the province get short shrift, addressed only by two essays.

The historical geography of British Columbia, however, is better represented. The first essay, Forward's "Evolution of Regional Character," provides thumbnail historical sketches of eleven sub-regions within the province. Unfortunately, these offer only fragments of that regional character, not an integrated portrait. Gilmartin's "Key maps of British Columbia's past" that follows is the best essay in the book. Unlike many of the contributors she does not allow clumps of statistics (or maps) to submerge the story she tells. She nicely demonstrates how the symbols engraved on the maps are symbolic of a wider European outlook and knowledge of the New World.

The next three essays on the physical geography of British Columbia are competent but for the most part unexciting (Foster's "Landforms and Natural Hazards," Tuller's "Climate," and Edgell's "Vegetation"). Foster's essay would be improved if he had discussed the broader context of natural hazards, while Edgell's essay was overfull of lists and lists of lists. Tuller's piece, though, was clear, straightforward, and used examples well.

The primary resource industries are discussed in the following six essays (Edgell's "Forestry," Wood's "Agriculture," Ross's "Mining" and "Fisheries," and Sewell's "Water Resources" and "Energy Resources"). Sewell's two essays were animated, although Wood's contribution came alive when he discussed some real family farms. The problem, and this was endemic to the whole collection, was the lack of any larger theoretical framework that explained the things at hand. The character of the province was continually squashed flat by the weight of statistics, tables, figures, and maps that were used to describe it.

The following three essays on tourism (Dearden's "Marine-Based Recreation," Downie's "Land-Based Recreation," and Murphy's "Tourism") were adequate, although for the most part uninspired. Murphy's essay was particularly disappointing given his other good work on this topic. It focused only on public policy, ignoring the most intriguing questions about tourism within the province (What makes a tourist place? What is the nature of the tourist experience?). The social and cultural geography of the province is dealt with by Wood's "Population and Ethnic Groups" and Lai's "Chinese Communities." Wood's essay turned into an examination of the province's quality of life, a curious turn given that the essay's supposed focus is ethnicity and demographics. Lai's essay was a straightforward historical narrative, attributing the historical discrimination

against the Chinese community in the province to economic factors. Such an attribution, however, goes against recent studies in social geography that argue that racism should also be seen as a cultural phenomenon.

The final two essays deal with urbanization. Forward's "The Urban System" is an overview of the development of B.C. urban hierarchy, but it is confused by the imposition of the current Census Metropolitan Areas onto historically earlier urban systems. For example, in the period 1870-91 Forward shows that Vancouver was the province's second most populated city, but this is not because the currently defined Vancouver was large but because of New Westminster's population size, which now falls within the C.M.A. Finally, although Porteous's "Single Enterprise Communities" provides a glimpse of life in a resource town, he uses questionnaire data from the early 1970s, and he too quickly moves away from the experience of resource towns to discuss public policy.

In summary, although *British Columbia: Its Resources and People* does have some interesting essays that might be used for undergraduate, and certainly high school, teaching, the volume does not meet the editor's goal of illustrating "the distinctiveness of British Columbia within Canada . . ." (p. iv). There are only fragments here — fragments that require sensitive integration if British Columbia's distinctive character is to emerge.

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