

Book Reviews

The Northern Review, vol. 1, no. 1.

For centuries, Canada's northern regions have held a certain fascination for scholars of diverse disciplines, but it was not until 1947 that *Arctic* appeared as the first academic journal devoted entirely to study of the far north. Some forty years later, a new scholarly publication, *The Northern Review*, was added to the ever-growing list of northern periodicals. The first issue is a handsome piece, complete with a beautiful Ted Harrison painting on its front cover. On the inside, readers will be delighted to discover that the contents indeed are worthy of such a splendid presentation. But is there truly a need for yet another periodical on northern Canada?

Two of the editors, N. Alexander Easton and Aron Senkpiel of Yukon College, ask the same question. In their opinion, the *Review's* existence is justified for several interrelated reasons: the increasing number of northern-based scholars requiring a publication outlet, the need for a multidisciplinary emphasis in northern studies, the fact that the *Review* is produced in Canada's own "north of 60," and the growth of northern-based institutions of higher education, notably Yukon and Arctic colleges. Central to their argument is the premise that previous scholarly studies and publications have originated from southern academic institutions and derived from experience provided through research and travel subsidized by government grants. According to Easton and Senkpiel, most northern scholars are denied equal access to financial assistance "because they do not work for a university, and many lack doctorates." It is their hope that "the *Review*, by assuming the responsibility of publishing northern scholarship and by demonstrating the scholarly abilities of northerners, can help change this and, thus, contribute in a modest but significant way to this very special part of the world." On the other hand, the presence of a third editor, former Yukon resident Kenneth Coates, now teaching at the University of Victoria, seems to indicate more than a symbolic link and tolerance of

southern academics and their institutions. However, the rationale for a new journal is certainly credible, and hopefully this new endeavour will be a first step of many towards integrating the efforts and knowledge of all scholars to the optimum benefit of both "north and south."

The subsequent articles are indeed multidisciplinary and of exceptional quality and interest. Julia Cruikshank of Yukon College describes the changes in methodology now employed in ethnographic research that offers new insights into the cultural traditions of the indigenous peoples of the north. Arguing that conventional methods employed by southern anthropologists tended to reinforce the assumption that acculturation was inevitable, Cruikshank points to the fact of cultural persistence as proof of the need for new approaches involving full collaboration of northerners. Southern university-based research is no longer adequate, she maintains; only intensive on-site field work can provide a legitimate base for analytical comment.

Reflecting a genuine effort to balance the multidisciplinary objective with a multi-regional perspective of the north, the next article focuses on archaeological pursuits in the Mackenzie Valley and is followed by the history of Nunavut and the Inuit fight for self-government. The former, by Charles Arnold, senior archaeologist at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, is an informative up-date on attempts to preserve the remains of 500-year-old Siglit villages in the Mackenzie Delta; the latter, by Peter Jull, former research director and policy advisor for the Nunavut Constitutional Forum, gives one of the most forceful arguments in defence of the political goals sought by the Inuit of the eastern Arctic. "It is not an off-the-shelf theory from a university or from consultants, or a vague dream," writes Jull, "but a practical evolution in community sentiment. It combines the experience of Canadian constitution-making . . . with the hopes and needs of a distinct population in a unique physical territory." Citing the *Brundtland Report*, Jull warns that the Inuit are no longer dependent upon the vicissitudes of Ottawa but are steadily gaining support from those with like concerns and experience throughout the world, as well as among members of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference.

Editor Kenneth Coates offers an equally compelling argument for a re-examination of the Yukon Indians. Employing an ethnocentric interpretation of history, Coates artfully relates a century of adaptation to Euro-Canadian influences, suggesting that the native Indian population have proved their lasting commitment to "harvesting and a mixed economy" and that their priorities should be those of the government in all future initiatives. The concluding article by Nicholas Tuele, chief curator

of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, explores the inspiration behind Ted Harrison's vibrant portraits of the Yukon through a moving biographical journey into the artist's past. Book reviews and various items of interest to northern scholars round out this first volume of what promises to be an innovative and exciting addition to the growing collection of academic publications. *The Northern Review* is off to an impressive start — it is hoped that future numbers will match the calibre of the first.

Trent University

SHELAGH GRANT

The Central Okanagan Records Survey, compiled and edited by Kathleen Barlee. SSHRCC Canadian Studies Research Tools. Co-investigators: Duane Thomson, Maurice Williams, Kathleen Barlee. Kelowna: Okanagan College Press, 1988. Pp. vii, 123.

British Columbia historiography, like the development of the province itself, has long suffered from a tendency to equate its southwestern tip with the larger entity. The location of the three established universities and of major archives in Vancouver and Victoria has exacerbated the propensity for scholars and their students to research and write from a limited perspective.

The recent decision to establish degree-granting institutions at other locations across the province will hopefully ameliorate the situation, but so will the publication of such useful bibliographical tools as *The Central Okanagan Records Survey*. Kathleen Barlee cannot be too highly commended as compiler and editor, and Duane Thomson and Maurice Williams as fellow investigators, not only for initiating the project but also for bringing it to successful conclusion in so accessible a format. Whether a potential researcher be an established academic, a student, or a member of the general public, he or she will have no difficulty in using this attractive, readable volume to determine the existence, nature, and location of potentially relevant material.

The Central Okanagan Records Survey is divided into four principal sections. The first details the classification system by which materials are organized in the volume, in effect the nature of the institution in which they are located. These range widely from such expected entities as cities, museums, and school districts to much more innovative locations including hospitals, Indian organizations, businesses, religious institutions, and private collections. Another section contains the address of each institution,

including regular hours if any, copying facilities and phone number. Examination of this list indicates that the overwhelming majority of materials are to be found in Kelowna, the remainder almost all within easy commuting distance.

The second section details each individual set of records. Entries contain inclusive dates, physical size, type of material, restrictions if any, a detailed summary of contents, possible finding aids, and any other useful information. This section makes clear that the history of the Okanagan fruit-growing industry is just waiting to be researched and written. Also included are such diverse and tantalizing items as the reminiscences of Lady Aberdeen's daughter, the financial records of a Chinese store at Yale from 1869 to 1884, and the minutes of a theosophical society during the First World War and of a Buddhist temple from 1933 to the present. The last major section, and possibly the most important, is a detailed index by subject and name.

The lesson of this bibliographical tool should not be lost on us. If we are properly to fulfil our mandate as scholars of British Columbia, it is insufficient just to squirrel together the source materials most useful for our own private purposes. We have a responsibility also to ensure their accessibility to the broader intellectual community. Such agencies as British Columbia Heritage Trust and SSHRCC, through its Canadian Studies Research Tools programme, have provided the financial means to do so. Such publications as the *Guide to Labour Records and Resources in British Columbia* (Louise May, comp. Vancouver: Special Collections Division, UBC Library, 1985), the *Vancouver Centennial Bibliography* (Linda Hale, comp. Vancouver: Vancouver Historical Society, 1986), and, most recently, the *Union Catalogue of British Columbia Newspapers* (Hana Komorous, comp. Vancouver: B.C. Library Association, 1989) provide exemplars of what can be accomplished. *The Central Okanagan Records Survey* proudly stands in this tradition.

University of British Columbia

JEAN BARMAN

A Communist Life: Jack Scott and the Canadian Workers Movement, 1927-1985, edited by Bryan D. Palmer, Committee on Canadian Labour History, St. John's, Nfld., 1988.

The rich and powerful in this country and province have their biographers and hagiographers. The business pages of our newspapers and centre-pieces of our glossy magazines are replete with details of their deal-making,

their fortunes and chicanery, their marriages, divorces, and finally their deaths. The less rich and powerful are another matter. Political figures of the left — CCF/NDP, and even occasionally Communist Party — may attract some attention, along with key trade-union leaders like Jack Munro or Bob White. Once we move to the rank-and-file of the Canadian working class, the usual pattern is silence.

It therefore gives me real pleasure to review a book which in singular fashion breaks with this silence. Jack Scott, as some *BC Studies* readers may know, is a figure who has made his mark on the British Columbia left and in a variety of organizations and activities — the Canadian Communist Party, Progressive Worker, the Canada-China Friendship Association, Spartacus Books, the writing of labour history — and who has led a life as variegated in its way as that of any corporate prince or political courtier. *A Communist Life* is essentially Jack Scott's autobiography, as recorded, transcribed, and very ably edited by Bryan Palmer. The result is a fascinating yarn that keeps the attentive reader riveted from start to finish.

From Scott's early Irish days to his Depression experience in the Workers Unity League and Communist Party, from his war-time service in the Canadian Armed Forces to his trade-union activities in post-World War II B.C. and the Far North, from his move out of the CP to a position far more supportive of Maoist China, we have here the stuff of lived experience that those of a later generation will probably never know. Here is Scott on how an impromptu street meeting would be organized in the mid-1930s: "You know, you just got up there and yelled any goddamn thing you could think of. The idea was to get a crowd together." Of the attitude of the CP leadership towards the rank and file: "They were the ones that did the work, we were the guys who do the thinking." His own rebelliousness served him in good stead, first as a signaller overseas ("I did do a good job. One reason why I did was because I didn't follow the rules"), no less than as a foot-soldier in the larger working-class cause in this country. Not surprisingly, this led him into conflict with the party hierarchs and eventually to expulsion. Even in his pro-China days, when he visited that country at the height of the Cultural Revolution as an honoured guest of the Chinese Communist Party, he was able to retain a modestly critical attitude towards the Great Helmsman. "Some of the parts were good in the sense of youth that were prepared to rebel. On the other hand, what disturbed me more than anything else was the tremendous personal power that Mao appeared to have, the sway that he had over the multitudes. . . . That I did not associate with socialism."

The book is filled with personal recollections spanning fifty years. Never

one to pull his punches, Scott can be extremely tough on his opponents; e.g., the CPC-ML of Hardial Bains, and cutting in his personal comments on a host of people he has known. Yet the book gains from the zest and passion that he shows, and the editor was very wise not to anaesthetize his story. From figures in the Communist Party or trade-union movement of the 1930s and 1940s like Tim Buck, Harvey Murphy, David Archer, and Stanley Ryerson, to those on the Vancouver labour or left scene of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, to much larger events on the world scale (e.g., the China which Scott visited three times in 1967, 1976, and 1984), there is the stuff here of acute observation by a self-educated and self-confident member of the Canadian working class.

For B.C. readers, Scott's autobiography will have some additional attraction. Writing of Slim Evans, leader of the 1935 On-to-Ottawa Trek, Scott notes: "It wasn't strange that Evans, who came from British Columbia, should prove a thorn in the side of the Party leadership. BC was always criticized for being too leftist and too militant and not properly analyzing the situation." Of the frustrations of starting a would-be national organization like Progressive Workers on the west coast in the 1960s, "We grew a bit locally, not terribly. The main problem was we didn't get groups going in the rest of the country. It became a local BC group, which we never wanted to happen." On B.C. politics in the 1980s: "There was, in my view, real potential in Solidarity . . . for building an independent working-class political movement that could have brought in allies." On more recent developments: "I think it's downer than it's ever been down before right now. . . . It's an extremely reactionary period." On the B.C. NDP: "Good Christ, you've got to go almost to the right of Genghis Khan to get to the right of what the NDP has been in the last number of years."

One is by no means obliged to share all of Scott's judgements. Nor is he all that sensitive to new themes and movements that have arisen — e.g., environmentalism or native issues. But his is not only an extremely interesting life, but also one which in the very different conditions of late twentieth-century Canada and B.C., with the resource and manufacturing sectors in decline, the trade-union movement on the defensive, the communist movement internationally in disarray, could simply not be lived in the same way again. Far more than memorabilia or nostalgia for proletarian causes of the past, what comes through loud and clear in Scott's memoirs is his fighting spirit. Something of that spirit is Jack Scott's true legacy to his readers and to the Canadian and B.C. left.

The Chinese in Canada, by Peter S. Li. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988. Pp. xi, 164. \$10.95.

Peter Li's book is the work of a well-known analyst of Chinese-Canadian society and race relations. It has several merits: it is short and easy to read, and it presents a clearly stated theoretical position as its theme. It is more readable than *From China to Canada*, more comprehensive than *Gold Mountain*, and more integrated in its analysis than David Lai's recent *Chinatowns*. Essentially, it is a short history of the Chinese in Canada organized around the theme of institutional racism. Both brevity and theme should make it a usable book for relevant courses in sociology and history. Two particularly well-done passages in the book present life histories (there are all too few of these in the literature so far) and an analysis (on pp. 69-70) of the costs of labour reproduction.

Merits, however, are balanced — and perhaps even overbalanced — by shortcomings, mostly associated with the basic theory and its application. By "institutional racism" Li means racism not confined to social encounters but racism systematically made a part of law and policy. The origin of institutional racism, he believes, lies not in the cultural or economic reactions of private individuals; that kind of racism would be unimportant if it were not for its use in institutionalized form. The real origin of racism lies in the needs of capitalism for an assured supply of cheap labour at the lowest possible reproductive cost. Thus, the needs of capitalism result in a set of laws, policies, and practices that ensure the subordinate status of "minorities" like the Chinese in Canada, justified by magnifying otherwise superficial differences of appearance and culture. Thus, "race" and assumptions about it are inventions that justify the creation and maintenance of a split labour market. Li rejects what he sees as the opposing argument, one that stresses culture. That argument, he believes, is one that blames the victim: it says minorities are discriminated against because they deserve it; they should abandon "old ways" and become like the majority.

From my perspective, there are several limitations to the use of this interpretation as the explanation of the history of the Chinese in B.C. and Canada, or, indeed, in analyzing "race relations" anywhere. There is no doubt of the institutional discrimination applied to Canada's Chinese, especially prior to the 1950s. It is a reasonable argument that capitalist labour need was behind much of that institutionalized racism. Li is not the first to suggest this; he is, however, the first to make this idea applicable to all of Chinese-Canadian history and, presumably, to all forms of economic life. Li sees certain kinds of employment as economic core occupa-

tions (e.g., resource industry labour in B.C.) and others (petty self-employment) as marginal and “ethnic.” Chinese, he seems to say, were pushed out of “core” occupations into marginal ones. But the place of the latter occupations in the economy is not discussed; nor is the well-known preference (relevant here) of migrating Chinese for being one’s own boss.

The greatest problems, in my view, lie in the post-1940s era. Canada’s changing policies towards the Chinese had nothing to do, Li believes, with changes in attitudes. They were a recognition that labour markets had changed and in the post-industrial world of the 1960s and after a different kind of immigrant was needed. Yet this argument does not quite fit. One could argue that by the late 1960s policy-makers recognized that the new, skilled immigrants now sought could only be attracted if allowed to bring their families, even though that greatly increased the labour reproduction costs that had been so slight before. But how does one account for the policy changes of the 1940s and 1950s that allowed for the reunification of the families of the earlier, unskilled immigrants, with all the attendant reproduction costs? In short, I would be willing to accept an argument that stresses capitalist labour need if not made the only argument and if not applied to all historical periods and all parts of the Canadian economy.

In a more general way, I see severe limitations to this theory as the sole explanation of any ethnic community’s history. There is no doubt that institutional racism played a major role in the experience of Chinese-Canadians. But must this interpretation be applied in such a severe and exclusive way; and must it be necessarily associated with capitalism? The necessary association of racism with capitalism here implies that non-capitalist societies do not institutionalize racism and that its occurrence in them is therefore a trivial matter. Black African students in socialist China might not agree. It also ignores the non-economic purposes for which a would-be-dominant group uses definitions to control who gets society’s rewards and opportunities. Recent work on Vancouver’s Chinatown by Kay Anderson is relevant here. Are recent cries by some Vancouverites that wealthy Asian immigrants are about to “take over,” the expressions of capitalist dupes, or the anxieties of today’s rule-making group that sees its power in jeopardy?

Second, Li’s approach rules out culture as a factor. His discussions of Chinese-Canadian institutions are superficial and often based on pre-1970 sources. His interests lie elsewhere. If culture is irrelevant — if the story is not one of the interaction of discrimination and culture — then all comparative work about what Chinese migrants do elsewhere can be ignored,

including Yuen Fong Woon's piece in *Pacific Affairs*, which specifically compares Chinese migrants in North America with those elsewhere.

Finally, this approach, which rightly avoids blaming the victim, puts not only the blame but all of the initiative in the hands of his oppressor. The victim is nothing but a victim; he has no other role in history and no initiative. Some of us who write ethnic history try to bring out the historical creativity of those who are the subjects of the policies of the powerful. But it sometimes seems that some members of the current generation of Chinese-Canadian scholars are willing to honour their ancestral generations for their sufferings even as they rob them of any role in creating their history. Surely that history does not belong exclusively to the current generation.

Li's book is provocative and thereby useful. Our next step is not, however, to engage in further revisionist assertions, but to see how we can incorporate several analyses into a more sophisticated understanding than we now have of Chinese-Canadian history.

University of British Columbia

EDGAR WICKBERG

Fishing With John, by Edith Iglauer. Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1988. Pp. 306.

About fifty pages into this book, I flipped to the back to see if it had an index. It does not, and probably it should have. A reader is likely to want to return to specific sections of the book: on how to select and prepare a dead second-growth cedar for a mast, on the delicate engine manoeuvres required to catch spring salmon hiding among the rocks, on the recipe for bread made from flaxseed, rolled rye, and a can of Pacific Milk. *Fishing With John* is filled with such information — details of working techniques, nautical suspicions, folk culture, and local lore.

Edith Iglauer has written something approaching a handbook to salmon trolling on the West Coast. She lets out several possible narrative lines — the education of Edith, the biography of John, the love story of Edith and John, the romantic life cycle of the salmon, or the seasonal cycle of the fishing life — but none catches on and holds. She baits her opening with some intriguing metaphors — the boat as a bird, John as a fish — but they get snagged and disappear. She places an odd premium on objectivity: we read how the salmon tasted to John, but not to the author. Iglauer sketches her main character tentatively: a potentially revealing detail, such

as John's pouring a *smaller* Scotch for Edith, or abruptly tossing her artichokes overboard, is austerely not commented on.

Fishing With John, given these absences, seems like a fascinating reference work, although it's not alphabetized. One promising explanation for this effect does seem to originate in John's personality: the white walls of "the pilothouse were covered with words printed in bold black letters about an inch or so high: . . . Were the walls talking? WATCH FOR A GIGANTIC HOAX, I read by the pilothouse door; then, LAWYERS SPEND THEIR PROFESSIONAL CAREERS SHOVELLING SMOKE. O. W. HOLMES" (12-13). For me, John's wall-writing provides the book's most interesting motif — *Fishing With John* as the *Famous Last Words* of the commercial salmon fishing culture:

On the inside of the door were the words CLOUD WATERS — SKEENA. "What does that mean?" I asked.

"The Skeena is one of our tiptop salmon-spawning rivers, in northern B.C.," John said. "Skeena is the Indian word for 'cloud waters.' The Skeena is misty, with huge dripping trees along its shoreline. I think it's a very beautiful name for a beautiful river and I wanted it here." (13)

The Akriggs (*British Columbia Place Names*, 1986) explain Skeena as coming "from two Tsimshian . . . words meaning 'water out of the clouds.'" That Iglauer records a more resonant translation, rooted in emotive personal description, and evoking obliquely Hubert Evans (whose presence is recognized in the Acknowledgements) and his antecedent salmon-novel *Mist on the River*, is reason enough to wish for an index.

Fishing With John takes its form from the notebook, or more particularly from the troller's logbook (John's is quoted at some length towards the end of the book). In her logbook, Iglauer records her learning to read new graffiti, the mysterious writing on the wall which signals the language of a culture far removed from her home in the New York literary world. The process involves interpreting the personality, and politics, implied in John's wall of quotations; still more literally, she must learn to read the map. Grief Bay, Yankee Spot, Goose Island and the Goslings, John's translation of Namu — these and several others are localisms not included in the Akriggs' dictionary. John also coins his own place names: Victoria is "Crumpet Town"; the Lower Mainland becomes "Lower Funland." Edith is also learning the register peculiar to a particular industry — the derivation of "Scotchmen," the folk etymology of "Hoochy," the Norwegian pronunciation of coho, and the names for the salmon: humpies, bluebacks, smilies.

Fishing With John frustrates the reader interested in biography or love story. But read as a logbook of language-learning, it claims a nice appro-

priateness. The radio telephone, Iglaer discovers, is essential to the West Coast fishermen, but the key to using it is to talk in private code, both about personal affairs and about fishing. Those who use the "Mickey Mouse radio" must learn to be reserved, taciturn, in order not to give away the location of the fish or details of their private lives to people listening in from Vancouver to Alaska. To reflect the patterns of this culture, a business-like logbook provides a good model, mirroring the man whose motto is "The spirit of liberty is the spirit of he who is not too sure that he is right" (13).

The dust jacket anticipates the logbook. It reproduces of a nautical chart framing a small black-and-white snapshot of a ghostly, nearly invisible troller. Map and frame overwhelm boat and subject. What makes the jacket especially fitting is that the chart is pencilled over, in various colours, with John Daly's own notations. The map of the place is personalized by these signs of its being used. So with *Fishing With John* — the book finds its personality in its usefulness.

University of British Columbia

LAURIE RICOU

The Accidental Airline: Spilsbury's QCA, by Howard White and Jim Spilsbury. Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1988.

The history of commercial aviation in post-Second World War British Columbia has only recently begun to be written. Vancouver-based Pacific Western Airlines (formed in 1945 as Central B.C. Airways) and Queen Charlotte Airlines (formed in 1946) were largely responsible for the retreat or demise of the old coastal shipping companies in the ten years following the war. Jim Spilsbury's *The Accidental Airline* joins John Condit's history of Pacific Western Airlines¹ as part of a popular literature that complements the earlier shipping histories by Robert Turner, W. Kaye Lamb, Norman Hacking, and Gerald Rushton. The book will also be of interest for the light it throws on the wartime economy of British Columbia and on the "solid interlocking of interests" within the province's corporate, legal, and political fraternities in the decade after the Second World War.

Born in 1905, Spilsbury was brought up on Savary Island, where he established a radio business when he was twenty-one years old. Between the wars he toured "Spilsbury's Coast," repairing and supplying radios to

¹ John Condit, *Wings Over The West: Russ Baker and the Rise of Pacific Western Airlines* (Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1984).

settlers, canneries, and logging and mining camps.² In 1941 he formed the Vancouver-based company Spilsbury and Hepburn specifically to manufacture radio equipment for the West Coast war effort.

This book begins in 1943, when Spilsbury and Hepburn bought their first airplane to service their customers. "They wanted our radios," Spilsbury recalls, "but when they saw the plane we brought the radios in, they wanted the plane even more." For a few years Spilsbury ran an airline disguised as a radio business, but in 1946 he formed QCA, which in 1955 was taken over by PWA after a bitter power struggle. At the limit of its expansion QCA was Canada's third-largest airline, providing air service to the west coast of the mainland and Vancouver Island.

The book contains several themes of interest to students of British Columbia history. The first relates to the primacy of the resource industries to the coastal economy, the second to the revolution in modes of transportation on the coast between 1935 and 1955, and the third to the extraordinary power wielded at the time by a handful of institutions and individuals in British Columbia.

Spilsbury's customers were the people and companies engaged in what were known during the war as the "critical industries," namely logging, fishing, mining, and farming (38). Spilsbury understood the needs of this perennial quartet of resource industries, and after 1943 his airplanes supplied them with radio equipment, supplies, and passenger service. He was their lifeline, and they were his. Profits earned from providing air service to the Alcan (1949-1955) and DEW line (1955) megaprojects were considerable, but QCA's prime revenues remained those derived from the logging and fishing industries. "We were there when they were all booming," Spilsbury says of logging camps in the late 1940s, "and we couldn't help but to boom along with them." Spilsbury's airline did not — like a modern airline — unite major urban populations; like the steamship companies, it linked Vancouver with work camps and company towns to the north of it.

Spilsbury was acutely sensitive to the revolution in transportation wrought by air travel. No longer were packtrains and overland expeditions necessary to visit remote timber and mineral prospects: air travel brought capital and resources into closer contact. Seaplanes, for example, could land men and equipment at distant lakes and inlets. Writing of one of his first airborne radio repair trips in 1944, he remarks: "To visit all these places normally took at least a month out of my life. Placing them suddenly

² Howard White and Jim Spilsbury, *Spilsbury's Coast: Pioneer Years in the Wet West* (Madeira Park, B.C.: Harbour Publishing, 1987).

minutes apart was like travelling in time. It was uncanny.” By the early 1950s QCA “had darn near put the old Union Steamship Company on the rocks, destroying the coast’s old lifeline. I felt burdened with a deep responsibility over this, deeper than maybe anybody else would have, because I was the guy who knew how essential those steamships had been for coast settlers like my parents.”

The book is one of heroes and villains. QCA’s early demise, as Spilsbury sees it, was caused by the founder of PWA, Russ Baker, “a rough upstart . . . an impostor, a bullshitting bush flier.” Baker’s Central BC Airways was prohibited by the federal Air Transport Board from flying on the coast, but after 1949 Baker “poached” and “pirated” his way into Spilsbury’s territory, drawing away so much business that Spilsbury was forced to sell out to Baker in 1955.

Baker’s strength stemmed from what Spilsbury calls his “extremely powerful friends.” The villains, specifically, were Baker’s principal backer, the Ontario mining magnate Karl “Daddy” Springer; his hunting friend, the logging magnate H. R. MacMillan; federal Minister of Trade and Commerce C. D. Howe; federal Solicitor-General and Vancouver MP Ralph Campney; the Bank of Montreal; Alcan; and Alcan’s American contractors. “They were such a small group in this country then,” Spilsbury reflects, “if you got on the wrong side of them, they could cut you off at the bank, they could tie you up with red tape, they could get you coming and going.”

For example, in 1953, when Baker applied to the Air Transport Board to extend his routes into QCA territory, he was supported by H. R. MacMillan — a director and shareholder in the ailing Union Steamship Company — who wanted Baker’s, not Spilsbury’s, airline to inherit Union Steamship’s coastal routes and federal mail subsidies. Solicitor-General Campney (whose Vancouver law firm represented Baker, Alcan, and Union Steamships) also supported Baker’s successful ATB application. “Being small and independent,” Spilsbury realized at the time, “we are defenceless against political and financial groups.” A friend in Ottawa at the time suggested to Spilsbury that he construct a family tree of the directors of the Bank of Montreal “and figure out who we should get next to.” Stories such as these are, alas, credible, and Spilsbury supports his allegations against Baker and Co. with reference to Condit’s remarkably candid history of PWA.

Pushed further into debt by Baker’s airline and backroom tactics, Spilsbury sold QCA to him, but only after C. D. Howe persuaded the Bank of Montreal to call its loan to QCA of \$400,000 on twenty-four hours’ notice.

Spilsbury called up the local bank manager, but "it had all been done over his head, from back east." Simultaneously, Baker bribed officials in Ottawa to the tune of \$25,000 in unmarked bills. Financed by what Spilsbury calls his "big money boys," Baker bought QCA for \$1.4 million in July 1955, merging it with PWA. "This was not competitive victory," Spilsbury concludes, "it was outright purchase. You can purchase anything your heart desires if Daddy is rich enough."

Something of a professional Englishman, Spilsbury found all this utterly appalling. "I was brought up in the old English style which taught you that if you come from a good family and behaved like a gentleman, that was enough; you could count on the right sort of people to see it and you didn't have to sell yourself." The right sort of people may have helped Spilsbury get from Savary Island to Vancouver, but they could not help him on Parliament Hill. The moral of the story is that a boy from the West Coast can succeed in business as long as he restricts his operations to a modest scale and to his own turf, keeps out of the way of corrupt politicians and big money boys, and spends as little time as possible "on bended knee in that godforsaken outpost called Ottawa."

Altogether the book makes a revealing if an uncomfortable read. The joy and levity of *Spilsbury's Coast* is largely lacking and is replaced with serious political drama and more than a little justified bitterness towards Baker and his backers. The two-page index, however, is execrable; a glossary of aviation acronyms would have been handy; and new material is presented that belonged in the first volume, such as the year his father came to Canada (1889) and the date his family moved to Savary Island (1913).

The book deserves to be where it is, on the best-seller lists. Spilsbury has a raconteur's eye for an anecdote, a keen sense of history, an earthy sense of humour, and, like Captain Walbran, a genuine interest in the people who lived and worked on the coast.

University of British Columbia

RICHARD MACKIE

Stein: The Way of the River, by Michael M'Gonigle and Wendy Wickwire. Foreword by David Suzuki. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1988. Pp. 191.

In this book M'Gonigle and Wickwire relate the story of a wilderness conflict which epitomizes the debates over old-growth forest currently proliferating in British Columbia. At the same time, they provide scholarly

insights into topics ranging from the human ecology of an untrammelled watershed to the role of local self-determination in global sustainability. Above all, the consistency of traditional native ways with the integrity of wilderness is the pervasive message.

The book communicates at three levels. Striking photographs, mainly in colour, grace virtually every page, easily qualifying *Stein: The Way of the River* for “coffee table” status. A pictorial browse through the book, reading only captions, would give the reader a first pass at the contents. The sidebars, occupying almost as much space as the text, contain a wealth of information, usually in the form of excerpts from archival sources, both diagrammatic and textual. And the text itself, while occasionally emotive, expresses a detailed academic understanding of the Stein Valley’s history, culture, geography, and politics which is conveyed in language that the layperson can comprehend. The only element that may stymie the general reader is the unexplained use of special symbols in the spelling of native names. To enhance the value of the book as a reference source, it should also include a subject and name index and perhaps a bibliography or reading list.

In setting out to express their sense of the wholeness that characterizes the Stein Rivey Valley, the authors faced the organizational dilemma of having to divide into chapters a picture which is essentially indivisible. The solution was found in the structuring of the book’s contents around two intertwining themes: the fate of the community of Kumsheen at the junction of the Thompson and Fraser rivers, and the situation of the Stein wilderness itself.

The story of Kumsheen is bittersweet. For thousands of years before the arrival of white people, the Nlaka’pamux Indians lived in tune with nature through a five-season cycle. Their lives were comfortable, and they were entirely self-sufficient. Spirituality and subsistence intertwined in their almost year-round use of the Stein River watershed. The marks left by this use were superficial with regard to their ecological impact, but profound in their cultural significance. Rock paintings made by young people during their rites of puberty and by shamans are world-class in archaeological terms and still hold a powerful force in the view of the native people who maintain the related spiritual traditions. M’Gonigle and Wickwire interpret the anthropological history of the area with sensitivity, giving equal treatment to native myth and scientific record.

The seventy years following white contact — a blink of the eye in the time frame of the Nlaka’pamux heritage — saw a radical transformation of both culture and environment. White trade in primary resources such

as fur and gold, following decimation of native communities by smallpox, left the Indians distanced from their traditions and dependent on an unfamiliar and remote economy. Staples and dependency theories are used to explain how, under the now dominant white economy, one cycle of boom and bust followed another until every riverbed and mountain valley in the Nlaka'pamux territory had been mined, trapped, roaded, and logged, except the Stein Valley. On the doorstep of this last wilderness, "neglected by the dominant society, the native community has remained, living where its forebears have always lived, still wedded to its place at Kumsheen" (123).

Part Two of the book, on the natural history and biophysical attributes of the watershed, is given a human perspective by means of a series of sidebars that contain Adam Klein's account of a trapping season in the Stein with Young Easter Hicks in 1925 and by the description of the Stein environment as it would be seen by a hiker travelling through the watershed. Indeed, while ecosystem integrity and diversity is the main theme of Part Two, the wilderness hiker's perspective is central. The recreational use of the watershed is seen as consistent with ecosystem values, while potential logging is described as a threat to both.

The case against logging is further developed in Part Three, which addresses the current Stein land-use controversy and associated planning processes. Throughout, arguments against forestry are solidly built, but attention to the views of the forestry-based community is noticeable by its absence. The pro-logging "Share the Stein" group is, to be sure, mentioned, but only in terms of its connection with the large companies which encourage it. The authors, long-time activists in the "save" movement, remain unapologetic in their emphasis on the wilderness cause.

Part Four, "The Journey Ahead," makes the book more than a lament for times past and a condemnation of unwise and exploitative decisions. In these last chapters the authors delineate a constructive alternative to logging in the Stein Valley with a sound economic, social, and ecological rationale. They call for a diversified and self-sufficient local economy based on tourism, intensive forestry in areas outside the Stein Valley, and value-added processing of wood. More efficient, less wasteful forestry in areas already developed, the authors maintain, would more than compensate the loss of timber values in the Stein. These are the kinds of alternatives that the forest industry likely will have to implement as it reaches the end of its old-growth supplies. M'Gonigle and Wickwire make the case for implementing them now, while there is still time to include places like the Stein in a wilderness mosaic, extending throughout B.C. and the world.

From an academic perspective, *Stein: The Way of the River* is perhaps not sufficiently objective — after all, the avowed purpose of the book is to present the case for saving the Stein. Yet the bias is neither simplistic nor predictable. The authors are not *for* native people and *against* whites; neither are they *for* wilderness and *against* development. Forestry proposals are condemned, in the final analysis, as much for their potential to put the community through yet another cycle of boom and bust as for their incompatibility with the spiritual, ecological, and wilderness values of the watershed. The peoples, processes, and relationships which are consistently supported by the authors are those which sustain the integrity of Kumsheen and the Stein Valley. And the conservation of the Stein is supported not only because of a concern to preserve the intangible qualities appreciated by the native people “from time immemorial” and by more recently enamoured recreationists. There is also a central interest in cultural, economic, and political benefits which, in the words of the authors, “we are only beginning to understand.” “A deeper level of knowledge,” they assert, “is essential for the survival of a world so out-of-balance with the life forces which sustain it” (180), and the source of this knowledge is in native wisdom and in the wilderness itself.

Stein: The Way of the River would have enduring relevance whether or not the valley is saved. Yet with spokespersons like M’Gonigle and Wickwire, the grassroots movement working for the protection of the Stein River Valley surely will not be stopped. Chief Ruby Dunstan of the Lytton and Mt. Currie Indian people, whose preface to the book supports the sustainable use of the valley as envisioned by the authors, has received the endorsement of her people through re-election. Corporate forestry interests must realize that they can get like support from the people of B.C. at large only if they too support the integrity of this inspirational watershed. Action by Fletcher Challenge to follow a one-year moratorium on the Stein Valley suggests that such a realization is at hand.

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