

and obtain their own objectives for the control of their own lives, environment and development.

Socially, the book comes at a time when Indians are "in". This reason for the ready publication and circulation of his book may not appeal to Mr. Cardinal. However, it may advance the goal which Mr. Cardinal sets himself: that of informing Canadians about how Indian people feel and what they seek to do in the immediate future. Mr. Cardinal hopes that an informed Canadian public will not permit the injustices and oppression to continue.

In general, Cardinal's criticism and points are well made and substantiated. There is a danger, however, that the whining tone which emerges from time to time, and the complete lack of humor, will undermine his objectives and lose him the concern of his readers. The publishers might also have indulged us with a better quality of printing and binding. The binding is so poor that the book barely survives one reader. On the whole, the book is easily read and comprehended and has a powerful and discomfiting impact. It is not a sociological treatise and provides a welcome relief from the usual exposition of "the Indian problem." Cardinal makes his people and their concerns very much alive and he conveys the anguish of the frustrated person who finds himself without alternatives, without power, and without much hope of amassing the needed finances and support to achieve desired ends. It is a book which should give every Canadian reader pause.

University of Calgary

JOAN RYAN

Portraits of the Premiers, by Sydney W. Jackman. Sidney: Gray's Publishing, 1969. 272 pp. \$7.50.

"You must never," my old Granny used to say, "judge a book by its cover." And I have tried earnestly to live up to this rule, however difficult it has been to do so. In the present case, the difficulty is enormous. For one thing the cover of Professor Jackman's book is padded and pretentious — the title is embossed in gold and includes the provincial coat of arms. For another it arrived semi-clad in a topless dust jacket that offers a statement of warm praise by Willard Ireland, and a ludicrous photo of Professor Jackman, standing by his bicycle at the foot of the Legislative Building steps — though judging from the accoutrements it

could be Brighton or Bournemouth. Inside the cover one learns that the manuscript was completed on "The Feast of St. Ambrose, 1969." (I confess I had a vision of the good professor scribbling off the last few sentences at the end of a long table, littered with the remains of an enormous banquet.) Not an auspicious beginning this.

The book is subtitled "An Informal History of British Columbia." Informal it most certainly is. A history of British Columbia it manifestly is not. It is rather a collection of short undocumented biographical essays on each of the province's 25 premiers, beginning with McCreight and ending with Bennett. Most are between seven to ten pages in length and all are straightforward, factual and generous. As one reads the book one is led to wonder at the good fortune of British Columbia in finding so many splendid men to steer the provincial ship of state. Of James Dunsmuir Professor Jackman remarks, "He was absolutely honest and reliable, trustworthy in business and thoroughly capable in the administration of his economic empire." Aspects of his character the miners clearly had overlooked. But then earlier in this particular essay Professor Jackman comments that Robert Dunsmuir was frugal and did not "indulge in extravagance" although it is later stated that he built his son James "a handsome costly house" at Departure Bay.

I suspect, however, that such criticism is niggling. The book is informal, cover notwithstanding. And it does offer a useful introduction to the political life of the province and we must be grateful for that. As to its reliability, in the absence of footnotes or other documentation, we can count on Professor Jackman's reputation as an historian. His touch is gentle, his judgements more soft than harsh, and his interests clearly more in the area of manners and 'society' than in the hard vigour of politics.

It is vexing, nevertheless, that the grime, the bitterness, and the raw edges of power so seldom emerge in studies of the history of this province. The gentility which infuses these biographical sketches is wholly out of place in B.C. history because it is unreal. There has been too much of Victoria in provincial historiography and far too little Nanaimo, or Vancouver for that matter. Padded covers are easier to hold but they hide too much of the truth.