

Book Reviews

The Men at Cary Castle, by S. W. Jackman. Victoria: Morriss Printing, 1972. 207 pp., illus. \$6.50.

S. W. Jackman has now published a second volume in the field of British Columbia political history. *The Men at Cary Castle*, a volume of biographical sketches of the Lieutenant-Governors of the province, is obviously a companion piece for his earlier work, *Portraits of the Premiers*. The subject matter has changed but the format remains the same, even to the precise wording of the first few lines of the "Acknowledgements."

Technically, *The Men at Cary Castle* is an improvement over the previous book. While not so lavishly bound as its predecessor, it is attractively illustrated by a series of fine pencil drawings by Gustav Rueter, a pleasant variation on the use of too well-known official photographs. As importantly, the text is free of the vexatious typographical errors which marred the *Portraits of the Premiers*.

The style, as one expects from Dr. Jackman, is that of an accomplished, if somewhat pedantic, raconteur. Fact and anecdote are deftly interspersed in a smooth narrative well capable of capturing the interest of the lay reader. If a certain tedium overcomes the reader in the later chapters, it may fairly be attributed to the lack of interesting subject matter rather than a flaw in the author's literary ability.

Such errors as do occur can be considered to be "slips of the tongue," a perpetual hazard of story tellers. The most obvious is in a comparison drawn between the political careers of Amor De Cosmos and Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinere. Dr. Jackman writes that "De Cosmos too acted in a similar fashion, deciding to stay in Victoria." The reference is clearly an accident, since earlier in the book, Dr. Jackman correctly notes that, with the passage of the Dual Representation Bill in 1874, unlike de Lotbinere, Amor De Cosmos resigned his post as Premier of British Columbia to retain his seat in the House of Commons.

In the "Acknowledgements," the author states the limitations of his book.

This volume does not pretend to be a definite [definitive?] collection. . . . It is not a formal historical study—the obvious trappings of scholarship such as footnotes and bibliography are deliberately omitted. This book is an informal consideration of the Lieutenant-Governors.

While respecting an author's right to delimit his own works, this reviewer cannot accept such a limitation in his consideration of the volume. The book is not merely literary entertainment but avowedly historical. It was supported, in some part, by the University of Victoria. Most importantly, it is written in a field inadequately served by scholarly works. Because of the lack of alternative secondary sources, this volume will, whatever the intention of the author, become a reference for students of all levels. Thus some criticism of its academic merit must be made.

As a minor point, this reviewer objects to the omission of footnotes and bibliography. These are not just "the obvious trappings of scholarship" but an integral part of any historical study. They indicate the care with which the subject has been researched and provide an indispensable guide for those who wish to enlarge their knowledge. Placed discreetly at the back of the book, they would be no distraction to the casual reader while greatly enhancing the worth of the publication.

A major criticism of the work is the disparity between the information given on the social and family background of the Lieutenant-Governors and the summary accounts of their business and political careers. Most of the men sketched in this book were prominent businessmen in British Columbia and it may be presumed this prominence was one reason for their appointment to office. Yet Dr. Jackson skims lightly over the details of their business interests, an omission particularly notable in the cases of H. Nelson, J. Dunsmuir, F. S. Bernard and E. G. Prior. While it is useful to know the familial connections and ethnic origins of all of these men, it would seem logical to devote as much care to outlining each one's career and reason for provincial eminence. In the case of W. C. Woodward, an account of his short and very independent political career might enliven the chapter.

From the contents of this book, one would assume that virtually the sole activity of the Lieutenant-Governor is to entertain Victorians and distinguished visitors. Apparently, after 1900, no Lieutenant-Governor played any role in provincial politics with the exception of Clarence Wallace in 1952. Yet there is some question about the part de Lotbinière played in Richard McBride's decision to introduce party politics into British Columbia in 1903. Moreover, J. W. F. Johnson intervened directly in 1933, threatening to dissolve the Legislative Assembly, to force

the reluctant S. F. Tolmie to set a date for a general election. Perhaps these political interventions were exceptional. Only a careful scrutiny of various premier's papers can demonstrate their uniqueness. There is no sign in this book that this scrutiny took place.

Dr. Jackman also evades the central question of the whole book. Why were these particular men chosen for this particular office? It may be impossible to answer this question with any accuracy. Yet the Provincial Archives does contain some material from the papers of Wilfred Laurier and R. L. Borden. In these collections, information relevant to certain appointments may be found. Since the book contains no bibliography, one can not know whether these sources were consulted and to what extent the generalizations stated by the author are valid.

The preceding criticisms lead inexorably to a final question. Why was this book on this topic written and published? The obvious answer has already been given. It is a logical companion piece to the *Portraits of the Premiers*. It is also meant to entertain and instruct the lay reader. Yet, for all his literary skill, Dr. Jackman has been unable to surmount the handicaps of his reliance on secondary sources and the innate lack of importance of his subject. One can only wonder why, when writing in a field so lacking in scholarly works of insight and original perspective, an author would waste time and effort on such a routine approach to a barren topic.

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Queen Charlotte Islands, a Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in the North Pacific, by Francis Poole. Reprinted with an introduction by Susan Davidson. Vancouver: J. J. Douglas Ltd., 1972. 347 pp. \$8.95.

In 1862 Francis Poole, a mining engineer, went to the Queen Charlotte Islands to prospect for copper on behalf of the Queen Charlotte Mining Company. He was accompanied by eight miners whom he had employed to provide the necessary labour, and he stayed there for almost two years, inevitably in almost daily contact with the Haida Indians. He claims at one point in his *Queen Charlotte Islands* (now reprinted after more than a century as No. 2 in the Northwest Library) to have been "the first white man who had dared to go and live amongst the hostile Indians of Queen Charlotte Islands . . ." Here, of course, Poole is indulging in the bragging that forms a tediously persistent element in his