

cent of the skeletons showed pathological disorders (including evidence of anaemia and rickets) apart from the generally common signs of arthritis.

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*B.C. Rail Guides* by Pacific Coast Branch, Canadian Railroad Historical Association. Vancouver, Canadian Railroad Historical Association (P.O. Box 1006, Station "A") 1973. 7 numbers. \$0.50 each.

Railways — and the promise of them — are an integral part of British Columbia's history. It is no wonder then that the Pacific Coast branch of the Canadian Railroad Association is thriving although it was only formed in 1970. The enthusiasm of its members has led to the publication of seven B.C. Rail Guides.

Some of these booklets are designed specifically for the railway "buff" and will be of interest primarily to such individuals. The best example is Ron H. Meyer's list of preserved locomotives and rolling stock in British Columbia and the Yukon. A companion piece is David L. Davies' collection of very brief histories of the major railways in British Columbia with emphasis on their dates of completion. This compendium makes no pretence of being comprehensive but there is at least one misleading omission. Mr. Davies implies that the third street railway in the province was that of Nelson which began service in 1899. This is not so; New Westminster had an electric street railway in 1891. Although the third pamphlet, the report of a field trip to the Mission-Abbotsford area, is a souvenir of that journey, its mixing of historical data and observations in June 1973 will be of interest to students of the historical geography of the Fraser Valley.

Members of the Association are aware of the tendency of much of their work to be of an antiquarian nature. To extend "the *dimensions* of the subject," W. Jordan has prepared a limited collection of statistics for the railway historian. The list shows the numerical correlation between railway developments in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada. However, the introductory apology for its many inadequacies is fair warning. When the list is expanded and revised — as inevitably it must be — it would be helpful if the compiler also indicated the specific sources for each table rather than relying on a general bibliography.

In describing the controversies among the advocates of competing rail routes in the Peace River, the only purely historical booklet, Andrew J.

Rimmington's "Peace River Railway Surveys of the 1920's" reveals something of the importance of the promise of railways to British Columbia history. Mr. Rimmington correctly suggests that for governments in the 1920's "a lively interest" in Peace River railways "was politically necessary; [but] to actually proceed with any of the plans would have been politically disastrous." (p. 3) The discussion, however, is confined to the federal government. The thesis is at least as true for the government of British Columbia. Premier John Oliver sponsored some surveys of the Peace River district and repeatedly referred to the need of linking the Pacific Great Eastern with the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia. Oliver's support of this idea was particularly evident when he was fighting a provincial election campaign or when he was under pressure from Vancouver businessmen who wanted to lure the trade of the Peace River away from Edmonton. His successors, Dr. J. D. MacLean and Dr. S. F. Tolmie also gave lip service to the idea of extending the P.G.E. into the Peace although their talk was often inspired by attempts to dispose of the P.G.E. Incidentally, if this booklet is revised, Mr. Rimmington should note that Canada did not have any embassies in Europe — or anywhere else for that matter — before the Second World War. That, however, is a pedantic point which does not detract from the general usefulness of the work.

For the general student of British Columbia history, the most welcome of the rail guides are Ron H. Meyer's selected bibliographies of British Columbia railways. How Mr. Meyer defines "selected" is not clear; his bibliographies are quite comprehensive. Not only do they include standard books and articles in both popular and scholarly journals but their coverage extends to government reports, theses and pamphlets. As well as the major lines in British Columbia, entries refer to projected railways, logging roads and the White Pass and Yukon. Chronologically, they range from H. Y. Hind's 1862 *Sketch of an Overland Route to British Columbia* to a forthcoming volume, *Van Horne's Road* by O. Lavallee. By implication, Mr. Meyer's guide to what has been done in British Columbia railway history demonstrates the many gaps in our knowledge. One hopes that the enthusiasm of the members of the Pacific Coast branch of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association will continue and that others will also be inspired to delve into the fascinating field of railway history.

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