

surveys these developments with ease and in brief compass. By concluding with 1790 he does not give us an appreciation of Vancouver's exploratory expedition, Bodega y Quadra's diplomacy, and Anglo-Spanish relations at Nootka and in London. The ending seems regrettably anticlimactic, but a sequel is promised. To his credit Pethick has included a chronology, bibliography, index, twenty-one photographs and one map — ample illustrative and documentary data for a book of this kind.

If this book is intended for the popular market, this reviewer quarrels with the dustjacket's claim that this is a pioneering effort. *First Approaches* is indeed a new look at old evidence, but Pethick is not the first writer to show how contact developed between the Northwest Coast and the wider world. This book is, in fact, a worthy successor to the historical tradition established so many years ago by Bancroft and Begg. Pethick seldom goes to hitherto unused manuscript sources except where otherwise printed. A major weakness is that in the rush to get into print the author has left an overabundance of indigestible block quotes that often carry the narrative rather than providing useful and illustrative detail (see in particular pages 80-95). He does not describe the ill-fated *Gorgon-Discovery* expedition planned by the British before the Nootka crisis. The interests of Canadian and American colonials in the future of the Northwest Coast are not considered. The obstacles of environment and distance receive scant attention. On the other hand, the detail Pethick provides appears unflinching accurate and can be relied on. For this reason his book is important in bringing to the reading public details of the early history of British Columbia. But if this book is intended as a popular work for the public, its numerous and extended footnotes only drive up the costs to consumer and tend to defeat the intended purpose of this kind of work.

Nanoose Bay

BARRY GOUGH

Packhorses to the Pacific, by Cliff Kopas. Sidney, Gray's Publishing, 1976.

Pp. 132, *illus.*, \$5.95.

Spatsizi, by T. A. (Tommy) Walker. Nunaga, 1976. Pp. 272, *illus.*,

\$11.95.

There is now, in British Columbia, a fairly substantial body of what might be called "wilderness-adventure literature" going back all the way to the work of the transcontinental tourists, Milton and Cheadle. How-

ever, it is also true that these authors are not native-born British Columbians. For example, Eric Collier (*Three Against the Wilderness*), Norman Lee (*Klondike Cattle Drive*), R. M. Patterson (*Dangerous River, Finlay's River*) and Martin Allerdale Grainger (*Woodsmen of the West*) were all born in England, while Theodora Stanwell-Fletcher (*Driftwood Valley*) was an American. Considering British Columbia's history of immigration, it is not surprising that some of our wilderness-adventure books are written by immigrants, but it is curious that I cannot, offhand, think of any book-length work of this type by a native-born British Columbian other than Dr. Pat McGeer's *Politics in Paradise*.

This point was brought home to me by the recent appearance of two new additions to British Columbia wilderness-adventure literature, Cliff Kopas' *Packhorses to the Pacific* and T. A. Walker's *Spatsizi*. While both authors are long-time residents of British Columbia, both were born elsewhere — Kopas in Alberta and Walker in England.

Packhorses to the Pacific tells the story of a journey undertaken by Kopas and his new wife in 1933. They travelled in four months from Calgary to Bella Coola following the old trails of explorers and fur traders. *Packhorses to the Pacific* is Kopas' second book and follows his earlier study of the history of the Bella Coola Valley. The volume is very attractive and well-designed, typical of the fine work of Morriss Printers. There are eight pages of very good maps, something I am always pleased to see in a volume of history. In addition to telling the story of the Kopas' journey, the book is also an historical odyssey. Throughout the narrative, the author compares their experiences to those of the earlier travellers such as Father de Smet, Sir George Simpson, David Thompson and Alexander Mackenzie, with an emphasis on the dramatic elements of these stories. While most of the historical anecdotes in this book are worthwhile and interesting, there are some that are simply uninteresting rehashes of old chestnuts such as the stories of Cariboo Cameron and the Overlanders of 1862.

Walker's *Spatsizi* begins in the same Bella Coola Valley where the Kopases ended their journey. The book is in three parts. First comes the fascinating story of the Walkers' 1948 northward migration from Bella Coola to the Spatsizi Plateau, which is more than 150 miles north of Hazelton. The account of the journey is a very realistic rendering of the joys and tribulations of outdoor life, packing and camping. Second, Walker tells of their experiences settling into the new territory and establishing a thriving big game guiding operation. The third part of the book describes the Walkers' attempts to preserve the wilderness character of

the Spatsizi area. Walker gives a sensitive, if slightly paternalistic, description of the dreadful plight of the northern Indians with whom he had extensive contact. There are also some nice details about an important generation of British Columbia land surveyors such as Frank Swannell and G. S. Andrews.

In describing his attempts to save Spatsizi as a wilderness area, Walker is speaking as one of the recent pioneers of the wilderness-preservation movement. Because of this, the book is important for those interested in history of conservation/preservation in this province. As Walker notes, when he began trying to save Spatsizi, nearly 30 years ago, "ecology" was a word to be looked up in a dictionary.

Walker's occupation as a big-game guide brought him into contact with many wealthy clients, and some of these, notably H. R. MacMillan and Phillip Connors, tried unsuccessfully to aid Walker in his attempts to save Spatsizi. The irony of having the assistance of growth-oriented, expansionist capitalists is apparently completely lost on Walker, but the reader is left wondering just how many Spatsizis were destroyed in order that these people could be in an economic position to take advantage of Walker's exclusive trophy-hunting service.

Both volumes suffer because of the weakness of their editing. This is all the more regrettable since many of the mistakes could have so easily been corrected. In *Packhorses to the Pacific*, for example, the paragraphing is extremely erratic. Numerous descriptive paragraphs of five words or less litter the narrative, distracting the reader. In some cases, there are consecutive paragraphs of eight words or less. There also lurks the overused exclamation point, as in these two back-to-back paragraphs:

"It must be the Dean!

The dubious, dangerous, deadly Dean!" (p. 117)

The reader, who is just as pleased as the author to encounter the river, scarcely needs two exclamation marks to emphasize the point.

The editorial problems of *Spatsizi* are more profound. As a story of Walker's life (particularly during the years 1948 to 1968), the book should maintain a clear and straightforward narrative line. This narration, however, is continually muddled by the inclusion of many non-essential names of both people and places. New characters — major, minor, historic and modern — are introduced at the rate of about one per page. A quick check of the index reveals about 185 names and I noticed that even this lengthy list is not all-inclusive. In the matter of names, the book reads like a Russian novel. And why, in a book about the search for a British

Columbia wilderness, an editor would allow us to suffer Walker's gratuitous sniping at British socialism (p. 20) escapes me.

I don't wish to leave a negative impression. Despite these reservations, both *Spatsizi* and *Packhorses to the Pacific* are interesting and worthwhile books — even if they are not likely to depose the classics of the wilderness-adventure genre such as *Three Against the Wilderness*. Their appearance, both backed by British Columbia publishers, suggests that local and popular yet commercial and non-professional history in the province is in a relatively healthy state.

Victoria

DEREK REIMER