

welfare, we will be little more than bystanders in a significant and developing area of reform. (p. 268)

Is this an "either-or" situation? Is it not equally logical, glancing sideways at some examples from more centrally planned societies, e.g., China or Cuba, to express admiration for some of their accomplishments? Will our obsession in the west with social and political pluralism leave us forever mired in a morass of incremental social change? In the last analysis I would have to agree with Buchbinder ("Just Society Movement" — chapter 5) that we cannot bring about much strengthening of social provisions and/or improvement in our problem-solving capacities without "revising perceptions and assumptions about basic givens in our society."

In his last chapter, Wharf raises some of these fundamental questions. For these alone I would recommend this book to local and not so local historians, if they can avoid the "trees" of the technical questions around community work and look for the "forest" of philosophical, social and political questions that lie hidden there.

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*Vancouver Island: Land of Contrasts*, edited by Charles N. Forward. Western Geographical Series Vol. 17, 1979. Victoria: Dept. of Geography, University of Victoria. Pp. 349.

The preceding volumes of the Western Geographical Series have been excellent sources of information and viewpoints concerning various geographical aspects and topics in British Columbia and western Canada. This volume on Vancouver Island is the first regional geography example in the series. It was prepared to be distributed to members who attended the meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers in Victoria in June 1979, but the volume will be useful to educators throughout the province and across Canada. The authors of each chapter are faculty members of the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria, and the editor was Chairman at that time.

The organization of the chapters follows a time-honoured format for regional geographies. Some geographers may have wished for some "innovative" or "new" approach to such a regional study, while others may agree that this standard format has the advantages of familiarity and logic. As is often the case in regional geography, the two introductory

chapters deal with the people on Vancouver Island — mainly their history of settlement and ethnic groups — and the next chapters discuss the physical environment into which these people came and to which they have adjusted. Part two, the physical environment, has brief chapters on natural hazards, climate and vegetation. One of the themes is areal contrasts in these physical phenomena.

Section three, with four chapters on the primary resource industries, maintains the customary geographical logic of discussing these industries through their functional connections with the natural environment from which they are derived. Thus, the forestry chapter builds on the preceding chapter on vegetation; the mining chapter stresses the influence of geology on mineral distributions; the agriculture chapter brings out the areal relationships with soils and climate. In addition to the excellent use of the well-known theme of natural resource/natural environment linkages, these chapters do not omit people; the purpose of the chapters is to show how Vancouver Island people *use* their natural environment to maintain important primary industries.

Part four, on water, energy and transportation, could have been a continuation of part three on the primary use of the environment, except that the water and energy chapters have a different viewpoint, mainly that of management problems. These chapters illustrate the concern of some geographers with natural resource management issues. The chapter on transportation describes the evolution of land transport routes on the Island and seems somewhat out of place in this section.

Many regional geographies often conclude with a section on cities and tertiary activities, but section five of this book seems to be more a collection of essays using the talents and topical interests of certain faculty members. There is little interconnection in the four chapters on manufacturing, recreation, tourism and urban social geography. Some readers may wish to have had a fuller section on the urban geography of Vancouver Island, since most of the people there are urban residents. Information and viewpoints about Victoria are dispersed through several chapters, however, and one should recall that Vol. 12 in the Western Geographical Series dealt specifically with aspects of Victoria's geography.

The book has been well produced and well edited. It is illustrated by an abundance of excellent tables and maps both on the regional scale for the Island and for certain small areas in most chapters. There are sixty-one maps, forty-six tables and forty-two pictures — thus a most useful average of eight to ten illustrations per chapter. Inside the back cover has been folded a most interesting photo-map taken from outer space; the

green areas indicate forest cover and the white areas show agriculture and cut-over forests. The landform characteristics of Vancouver Island are quite obvious from this satellite photomap.

The faculty of the Geography Department of the University of Victoria can be quite proud of this regional geography and proud of the internal co-operation and effort that went into its planning, preparation and production. Geographers and geography departments across Canada should try to duplicate this fine book and produce more such regional studies. Educators and parents could not complain about the lack of material for Canadian Studies if we had more studies similar to this one.

J. LEWIS ROBINSON

*Ocean of Destiny: A Concise History of the North Pacific, 1500-1978*, by J. Arthur Lower. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978. Pp. 256, *illus.*, maps, \$16.50.

British Columbia is a Pacific place. This fact about its history, that was so apparent in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has, with the establishment of continental ties, been largely ignored in the twentieth. Turning our faces to the sea of mountains, we have turned our backs on the great ocean that connects us with Asia. For their part, central Canadians have, quite rightly no doubt, been more concerned with trans-Atlantic relations than with developing contacts across the Pacific. In his book, *Ocean of Destiny*, J. Arthur Lower reasserts the importance of our aspect to the Pacific. He seeks to place Canadian, and therefore British Columbian, history in a Pacific context.

In the course of 200 pages, Lower provides a concise account of the history of the north Pacific from 1500 to the present day. There is a Canadian, rather than a Pacific, emphasis on the recent past. The first 250 years (1500 to 1750) are dealt with in twenty pages, whereas the last sixty years take up more than eighty pages. The geographic scope is as vast as the temporal. The Pacific Ocean covers one-third of the earth's surface and the north Pacific region includes the four largest nations in the world, the state with the largest population, and three countries that are among the world's leading traders. There can be no doubt about the importance of the topic or about the magnitude of the task undertaken by the author.