

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.

The idea behind the book is laudable, but its execution leaves much to be desired. If the bibliography is indicative of the extent of the research (and it is not described as a "select bibliography") then there are some alarming gaps. The author apparently has not read anything by Glyndwr Williams, James R. Gibson, Terence Armstrong, or O. H. K. Spate. On Spanish explorers on the northwest coast, Warren L. Cook (who could at least have helped with the spelling of Spanish names) and Christon I. Archer are both ignored. Lower has read Alistair McLean, but not J. C. Beaglehole, on James Cook. His comments on the treatment of orientals in British Columbia are not informed by the scholarship of either Patricia E. Roy or W. Peter Ward. Not a single article from *Pacific Affairs* is cited. No attention is paid to recent work on the Pacific out of the School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University. Admittedly, Lower's focus is on the north Pacific, but outdated generalizations about the south, like the one on "blackbirding" (page 107), could have been modified in the light of work by Peter Corris and others. While the list of neglected authors reads like a who's who of recent scholarship on the Pacific, even works cited are not necessarily taken into account. Keith Ralston's article on "Patterns of Trade and Investment on the Pacific Coast, 1867-1892" that appeared in the first issue of *BC Studies* is listed in the bibliography, and yet the author still asserts, without batting an eye, that "San Francisco controlled the economic life of the Pacific coast in the mid-nineteenth century" (page 180).

Built on a rather shaky foundation, this book leaves the impression of being old-fashioned and text-bookish. Like the books I was given at school, it is episodic and fragmentary. The chapter divisions are chronological and each chapter is subdivided into sections dealing either with a particular nation or with a specific subject. The author does not have the space to deal with anything in great detail, but neither does he develop consistent themes to tie the information together. There is no overview or synthesis to give coherence to the detail.

The author is necessarily selective about the information he presents, and his selections are revealing. *Ocean of Destiny* is rather more a history of the lands that surround the north Pacific than a history of the ocean itself. The sea brings imperial tides and currents, but we are shown their impact on the shore. There is little here about ships and sailors, and Lower has not drawn any concepts from the ocean and island-centred history that is currently being written on the south Pacific. To a considerable extent, his point of reference is the metropolis. Even British Columbians may be a little disconcerted by the central Canadian focus and the

suggestion in the first sentence that the Pacific west was settled from the east. It is almost as if the author has not entirely overcome the bias that he is reacting against. Indeed, the need to reassert the importance of the Pacific, my first paragraph notwithstanding, may be more central Canadian than British Columbian.

There are also some more minor problems. Errors of fact have crept into the book, as is bound to happen in a work of this scope. The normally high editorial standards of the University of British Columbia Press have slipped a little, allowing the appearance of James Webber (page 32) and Mark Train (page 109). The publisher has, however, relented a bit on the price of this volume.

The publication of *Ocean of Destiny* will serve the useful purpose of reminding British Columbians that their province is an integral part of the Pacific. The book also brings a certain amount of information on the north Pacific region together in one place. It does not, however, make any new contribution to knowledge, and neither does it offer any clear interpretation of the history of the region.

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