

government tried to do, and how and why it often failed, still needs to be told. Mann's essay is a good beginning in one area.

David Jones has reworked his study of agricultural education in the 1920s in the light of prevailing optimism behind land settlement schemes. He recognizes that a full understanding of why British Columbia embarked on an elaborate program of agricultural education requires a closer examination of patterns of land settlement, boosterism and change in agriculture itself, but not having that knowledge, he falls to musing about the point when a myth "assumes the form of a *Zeitgeist*." As Doug Owram's book, *Promise of Eden*, demonstrates, the ideas and enthusiasms spawned by visions of the bountiful west provided fertile ground for myth-making. Jones is onto something that ought to be carried further for British Columbia, but the present article adds little to his earlier one in *BC Studies* (Fall 1978).

Gillian Weiss' account of the long struggle to institute public school kindergarten also leaves larger questions open. No doubt British Columbia governments were backward in supporting kindergarten as compared to other governments in North America, but, as Weiss' evidence of the flowering of private arrangements for pre-schoolers demonstrates, the push for publicly-supported kindergarten was part of a larger pressure for child-care facilities that had relatively little to do with pedagogical presumptions about kindergarten being "an essential year for the child." The volume is rounded off with a useful select bibliography from Frances Woodward.

The editors have performed a service in making these readable, well-researched articles more available through publication in book form. The articles expand the conventional subject matter of educational history, and together provide a useful contribution to the study of ideas that motivated several educational movements in twentieth century British Columbia history.

Provincial Archives of British Columbia

TERRY EASTWOOD

Songs of the Pacific Northwest, by Philip J. Thomas. Saanichton, B.C.: Hancock House, 1979. Pp. 176; \$19.95.

The scope of *Songs of the Pacific Northwest* is set out by Thomas in the first paragraph:

This book of songs attempts to bring to life something of the story of British Columbia and its people. In the Pacific Northwest setting from the

days of the early fur trader to the present, people have used their own songs to express and share their reactions to events. That the story told through them is so full and varied indicates a rich heritage in a land not generally recognized as having an English language song tradition. (p. 6)

Thomas presents forty-nine songs, some from archival sources and others he collected himself. Arranged chronologically, the songs fall into two basic divisions, pre- and post-Confederation. The first of these includes songs about White-Native contact, colonial Victoria, the Fraser and Cariboo gold rushes, and the move toward Confederation. The second deals with settlement, transportation, and various primary industries: logging and saw-milling, mining, fishing and ranching. This is a book intended for use as well as study for in addition to the words and music, chords for guitar accompaniment are provided. Each song is followed by a detailed discussion of its subject matter and historical context. Where necessary there are explanatory notes which give more information on particular topics. The text is illustrated with photographs, maps and drawings. An appendix provides further particulars about the lyrics and tunes, and a bibliography of the sources used for Thomas' research completes the book.

There are several things to be said in praise of this book. It fills a definite gap: publications on Canadian folksongs are all too rare, and those on B.C. even more so. The text is attractively laid out and nicely complemented by the various illustrations and photos. It is possible that the book will be referred to as much for its visual material on B.C. as for the songs. The discussions are detailed, and often amazingly so. The description of hard rock mining, for instance, is reminiscent of the encyclopaedic treatment of whales and whaling in *Moby Dick*, and one cannot imagine the layman requiring any further information for an adequate introduction to that industry. Finally, the songs are clearly presented, with obscure or foreign words explained where necessary, and with simple chords and progressions that even a novice musician can use.

Thomas deserves considerable credit for being one of the first in this field, and for the amount of work he has done. He has spent a great many hours and covered many miles collecting songs sung in British Columbia. He has ensured their preservation by depositing tapes of 400 of them in the Sound and Moving Image Division of the Provincial Archives, and he has assisted in their popularization through his own teaching and performances. He has been instrumental in saving an evanescent part of the province's heritage. Further, in gathering such

primary sources he has provided a valuable model for other students of B.C.'s social history to follow.

The book also has its shortcomings. Some are of lesser importance, perhaps, and are mainly the responsibility of the publisher. The sans-serif type face, although clean in appearance, is difficult to read. The letters and words do not flow into each other, with the result that the ideas seem correspondingly choppy and require more concentration than usual. The cover, with its sturdy, washable binding that looks very much like a school textbook, is misleading about the book's contents. The page design results in haphazard pagination. There are two to three consecutive pages with no numbers, a drawback in a book where people will make use of the page numbers more frequently than usual to look up specific songs. A format should have been chosen such that the illustrations and pagination did not interfere with each other.

The editing is sloppy. Because the index gives two entries for page 129, every entry following is out by two pages, especially unfortunate in a song book as the index will probably get a good deal of use. The table of contents is correct, but people are just as likely to look up songs by their first lines as their titles. The explanatory notes are difficult to read because of their small print and length. Moreover, they tend to ramble. One begins on page 142, continues on page 144, and ends on page 147. I never did find the rest of the one that begins on page 94. Similarly, there is some discussion of a *Seattle Illahie* #2, but that song never appears. If it was deliberately omitted, mention of it should also have been deleted. A more frustrating omission is that not all the photos and illustrations are identified and dated. In these cases the reader is told the owner of the photo, but not what it is of, and is left to guess its date and relevance. The photos are especially interesting, and so this oversight is the more noticeable.

A more serious failing and one as much the responsibility of the author as the publisher is the absence of footnotes. Thomas must have done a great deal of research for the discussions of the songs but, without documentation, there is no way of knowing the sources he has used, where he has used them, and which are his own ideas and attitudes. As Thomas writes with much feeling and verve it is all the more important that we be able to separate the author from his material. As it stands now, we cannot assess the sources for ourselves, and Thomas cannot get credit for his particular insights and analyses. The whole can only be taken as opinion, and Thomas' research is for naught.

The book is uneven in its execution, with the result that one gets a selective rather than a representative view of B.C.'s history. Not all the people of B.C. are dealt with. With the exception perhaps of *Chief Douglas' Daughter* there are no songs that portray the experience of women. Perhaps Thomas is only interested in men's songs. Possibly only men's songs have survived; or perhaps there were no songs about women. If so, it is both an interesting and a significant fact, and Thomas should discuss and explain it.

And even though the songs here deal with men, they are further restricted in that they represent the experience mainly of one group of men, those in the primary industries. There is nothing about those who live in cities, about the service industries, for example, or manufacturing or the professions. Again, were there no songs about such people, or none surviving? And again, if so, Thomas should discuss and clarify this situation.

The discussions accompanying the songs display a certain imbalance. First, they do not all give the same sort of information: not all of them deal with the origin, background, and context of the songs. This certainly provides variety, but frustrates as well. On some topics, Thomas seems to trail off: the discussion of *Sunset*, for instance, is little more than a reiteration of the ideas in the song. On others, he goes into great detail, as with the discussion of mining technology. On yet others he waxes eloquent and editorial. His treatment of labour matters, for example, reveals him as unswervingly pro-worker and pro-union. This is not bad in itself; indeed, it is refreshing to get other than the standard version of history. It is unfortunate, however, that his perspective is just as slanted as the one he attacks.

The effect of such selectivity is that what emerges is a picture not of British Columbia but of the author and of his particular interests, attitudes and opinions. Perhaps he should have taken more time at the outset to discuss and explain the book's parameters and its limitations, and thus justify injecting so much of himself into it.

The appendix reveals that the music for at least seven of the songs was chosen and even written by Thomas himself. He has changed the words of some of them to fit the tune he chose or to suit the singer. Thomas does not hide these facts: indeed, one learns of them through his notes. The discovery is puzzling for the impression given in the introduction is that these songs are the "real thing," that these were the songs as they once were sung, and Thomas' involvement was only to unearth them and present them to us. Moreover, it seemed from the five endorsements on

the back cover, written by school and university educators and choir leaders, that others had interpreted the book in the same way.

Perhaps the impression displays more the reader's ignorance of folk music than error on the author's part. Perhaps folk songs are always altered as the singer sees fit. Perhaps with the older songs this is all that Thomas could do, for although the worst may have been written down the tunes are less likely to have been. Yet if Thomas' behaviour can indeed be thus vindicated, criticism is still valid in that he should have anticipated such misunderstandings from those less knowledgeable about folk music and explained his procedure to them.

Those songs which have been collected by Thomas himself also create some confusion. For one thing, they are of relatively recent composition. Are they then folk songs? Thomas mentions these in his introduction and justifies their inclusion by saying that a folk song may be either traditional or "newer and authored of the same general type if the writer's primary intent is social and communicative rather than commercial" (p. 6.) One wonders about this definition, for it is likely that many composers of songs on the Top 40 or even advertising jingles may see themselves as having social perceptions to express and communicate.

But more to the point, Thomas has defined a folk song only in terms of its actors, and surely, and especially so in a creative field, the audience is just as important as the composer. The missing part of his definition is the acceptance of a song by the "folk," the proof of that being its diffusion, both in its own time and over time. The trouble with presenting a recent song as a folk song is that one can only assess it in terms of the first of these criteria; whether it lasts through time cannot be determined until some time has in fact passed.

For these more recent songs there is little evidence that they have reached much of an audience even in their own time. Ironically, many of the songs in this book, if not true folk songs now, have a chance of becoming so by virtue of their inclusion in this collection. They will now reach a wider audience and enjoy a greater chance of being learned and performed. Also, their enduring over time at least is ensured with their being published. But are they representative of the experience in B.C.? They seem to be the product of a particular generation of writers. Why did Thomas choose these and not, or also, songs about the province written by younger composers such as Bob Bossin, Rick Scott and Joe Mock, who have also written out of their own experience and who have already shown their appeal to audiences through their success in concerts and recordings? Again, the problem here may stem from Thomas' not

being more clear about the scope and limitations of a book such as this, but in the absence of such a discussion the reader is left to conclude that Thomas' choices represent only his particular and very personal tastes.

In summary, *Songs of the Pacific Northwest* is many things, and it is not many others. It is interesting, it is complex, it is provocative, and it is confusing. Above all, it is idiosyncratic. It is an admirable first contribution to the field of B.C.'s folk songs. One hopes, however, that a second volume, which Thomas mentions in his introduction, will take note and avoid some of the shortcomings of the first. One especially hopes that Thomas will take the time to discuss what a folk song is, what folk music is, what one can — and cannot — learn of folk music of the past, and what one can gather today. A future volume might then avoid some of the comments that the present one prompts. And the reader would derive much more from Thomas' obvious knowledge and experience of the field.

B.C. Provincial Museum

VIRGINIA CARELESS

The End of Russian America: Captain P. N. Golovin's Last Report, 1862, translated with introduction and notes by Basil Dmytryshyn and E. A. P. Crownhart-Vaughan. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1979. Pp. xxii, 249. Illustrations, maps, appendices, glossaries, bibliography, and index. \$21.95 U.S. in hardcover.

This title is the fourth volume in the Oregon Historical Society's series of English translations of rare and obscure sources on the North Pacific and its borderlands in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is a laudable choice, being the result of an official fact-finding mission to Russian America at a critical juncture in its history by the Naval Ministry's Captain-Lieutenant Paul Golovin, a career officer and petty nobleman who was sent with State Councillor Serge Kostlivtsov of the Finance Ministry to inspect the territory of the Russian-American Company, a joint-stock concern that monopolized the economy of Russia's only overseas colony. The two men spent nearly six months of 1860-1861 interviewing residents, inspecting establishments and examining records at the colonial capital of New Archangel (Sitka) and vicinity on Baranof Island, St. Paul's Harbour and vicinity on Kodiak Island, St. Nicholas Redoubt and Coal Cove on the Kenai Peninsula, and St. Constantine Redoubt on Nuchek (Hinchinbrook) Island in Prince William Sound.