

too far, rejecting historical analysis and arguing that we must return to the original documents to get a true sense of the personalities and events of this very traumatic time. *Warriors of the North Pacific* provides both an interesting example of the strength and importance of these often inaccessible missionary memoirs and an indication of the weakness inherent in allowing such documents to stand alone. Charles Lillard asks the right questions, and the missionary accounts republished here hold great potential for those in search of the answers, but his decision to forgo his own analysis, coupled with an as yet unsubstantiated rejection of existing historical scholarship, leaves a rather unsatisfying book.

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*The War Against the Seals: A History of the North American Seal Fishery*, by Briton Cooper Busch. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985.

This book has a curious title. It is meant to convey the sense that man prepared himself to engage in the seal fishery with almost the same, often ritual, preparation that he reserved for war. What this book does — and it does it extremely well — is to document the history of the activity of seal hunting. Many readers will find this sufficient reason to read and enjoy this book.

As an analytic history of seal hunting in North American waters this book is unfortunately a failure. First, *The War Against the Seals* suffers from the fact that the Atlantic and Pacific seal fisheries are almost entirely unrelated, and the book's fragmentary nature is not helped by a separate section on hunting out of Boston. Both the Gulf of St. Lawrence harp seal fishery and the North Pacific fur seal hunt are covered from the first major exploitations to the present. The whole is an uneasy combination. Second, and most important, the author misses, or fails to develop, the major themes which make the history of the seal hunts of such contemporary interest: the complicated interrelatedness between the biology, the business and economics of sealing, and the broad politico-legal (and moral) issues raised.

Although the bibliography and preface contain reference to the biology of the seals, no use is made of this scientific evidence — notwithstanding the misleading claim on the dust jacket, itself wholly unworthy of a

university press. This points to several major problems. First, the life cycles of the various Atlantic and Pacific seals, their breeding habits and migrations are inadequately explained or ignored, leaving a misleading impression about what might be regarded as a reasonable level of predation when man insists on regarding seals as economic resources. Modern evidence also tells us that it is critical to consider at what stage of the life cycle harvesting takes place and that this is species-specific. Busch also repeats as fact what is often no more than nineteenth-century opinion about the biological effects of the seal hunts such as the assignment of responsibility for the rapid decline of the North Pacific fur seal herd to the Canadian pelagic sealers. The vast scientific output of Canada's Department of Fisheries — much of which is available in a highly readable form — is nowhere tapped, and, for instance, little appreciation is given of the inter-species biology (and economics) of the fish and seal populations of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, evidence I would have thought essential to understanding the politics and passions behind recent controversies.

The level of seal hunting might, of course, be expected to vary with price behaviour. Entry into and exit from the seal fishery by hunters was (and is) fairly swift; this means that biological re-adjustment may start almost immediately, providing that extinction levels have not been reached. The author fails to capture any historical or contemporary sense of why seal skins commanded a price and why that price varied, with the subsequent effect on the animal populations. One is left with the impression that any seal hunting imperils the seal populations, and that is most assuredly not true (except from certain moral positions — but they are not discussed either)!

It is a major disappointment that this book contains no reference to "property rights." The use of natural resources raises bio-economic issues about the appropriate level of exploitation, given certain goals of maintaining the resource stock at some predetermined level. Furthermore, if one harvester acts in a conserving manner he must be able to appreciate the rewards of his responsible management — and irresponsibility suitably punished — and that this will only prevail if there is less than open access to the fishery. Not only is this the stuff of most jurisdictional disputes about who gets to fish and who not, but in the case of the seal fishery it gave rise to major territorial controversies, as in the case of the Bering Sea dispute between Canada and the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The diplomacy of the resolution of this conflict

is as much a part of the seal fishery as the sharpening of the harpoons. In most fisheries the new law-of-the-sea conventions allow for extended economic zones; this is a notion which first appears in the nineteenth-century seal fishery but regrettably does not appear in this book.

The author warns us in the introduction that he "is on the side of the seals." Unfortunately the book never quite loses this Greenpeace myopia, and a balanced historical perspective is never gained. The book is a severe disappointment although, as I have indicated above, it can be read with pleasure at the level of a simple narrative.

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*Tales from the Canadian Rockies*, edited by Brian Patton. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers, 1984. Pp. xvi, 303.

Brian Patton has edited an extremely frustrating book. The almost eighty documents, both fictional and historical, which he has reproduced in whole or in part cover a wide range of experiences in the Canadian Rockies, from early Indian mythology to life in twentieth-century national parks. Most of these documents have been published previously, but often in sources not likely to be encountered by the general public, the target market of this book. Even for historians of the region there are bound to be items never before seen. Ranging in length from less than a page to about ten pages, the documents compiled here are often fascinating and informative first-hand accounts of life and travel in the Rockies. Each reader will undoubtedly find his own favourites, whether for the information contained or the beauty of the description. The moving fictional prose of Howard O'Hagan's *Tay John*, the clash of cultures and personalities described by Robert Campbell in "Edward Whymper" and David Thompson's account of his 1800 ascent of a mountain peak at the headwaters of the Bow River were personal highlights.

Unfortunately, the presentation detracts greatly from an appreciation of the material reproduced. The awkward format, the absence of an introduction to the volume and the omission of certain key documents prevent this chronologically arranged anthology from being "something of a documentary history of the Rockies," as the editor claims it to be. The acknowledgements providing the sources of the documents and the brief biographical sketches of the authors are at opposite ends of the book,