

is admittedly incomplete, Webb could have easily strengthened her work by taking advantage of what has been done and by examining more documentary and secondary sources on the Canadian side of the border.

Melody Webb's *The Last Frontier* must, even with its weaknesses, be loudly applauded. Like the Yukon River pioneers she so clearly admires, Webb has ventured where few have dared to tread. In doing so, she has illustrated the need to look more closely at the Yukon River valley as a geographic and historic unit. This book should awaken other historians to the need for more comparative work on the Yukon Territory and Alaska.

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More Deadly than War: Pacific Coast Logging, 1827-1981, by Andrew Mason Prouty. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985. Pp. xxvii, 252; illus. \$30.00.

The history of western North America's timber industry is a story of work-related injuries and deaths. Typical of the "carnage" are three turn-of-the-century fatalities in Washington state: James Burns, a timber faller, killed instantly when crushed by a falling tree limb; Hjalmar Anderson, a 15-year-old boy, "horribly mangled" by sawmill machinery; and G. W. Davidson, a hooktender, crushed to death between two logs. Like thousands of other men who held the region's most dangerous occupations, they were the "human victims" of an industry "more deadly than war."

In exploring this theme of physical injuries to woodsmen in California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia, Andrew Mason Prouty adds an important new perspective to Pacific coast forest history. His case rests on evidence drawn from timber journals and the abundant, but mostly untouched, Workmen's Compensation records, as well as government reports, personal reminiscences and novels. After providing a highly evocative description of life in isolated, all-male logging camps into the 1920s, Prouty details logging technology as it evolved through the hand, bull and highlead logging eras. This descriptive background serves as a foundation for the book's core, a chapter documenting the potential hazards at each stage in the timber production cycle from the initial falling of trees in isolated forests to the manufacture of lumber and shingles in mills. A concluding chapter summarizes Workmen's Compen-

sation data on timber industry deaths and injuries, indicating that 3,390 loggers and 860 mill hands lost their lives in British Columbia between 1917 and 1980.

Three influences shaped Andrew Prouty's perspective on forest history. First, he was born in Vancouver, B.C., graduated from high school and college in Seattle, and worked for two years at a logging camp near Campbell River, Vancouver Island, in 1936-37 before returning to Washington state. Thus he brings a practical realization of the trans-border character of west coast industrial history. In addition, his maternal grandfather, John O'Brien, had been a boss logger in Minnesota, while an uncle and great-uncle had toiled as forest workers. Finally, after being ordained a Catholic priest in 1946, Prouty lived for eleven years in the logging town of Morton, Washington. He later entered the University of Washington's graduate program in history and in 1982 completed a doctoral dissertation, of which *More Deadly Than War* is a slightly edited version. This family background and personal experience helps explain the book's insightful portrayal of the loggers' work environment. It also accounts for the volume's overriding tone of moral outrage. In Prouty's view, the "disgraceful recklessness and disregard for human life so characteristic of the timber business" throughout history shame forest companies and unions alike; historians also stand accused of ignoring the subject.

Unfortunately, judgemental language and emotional fervour are no substitute for careful analysis. Prouty seems uncomfortable with broader generalizations or theoretical perspectives and never gets beyond supporting his main point, often with graphic detail, that forest work has been bloody and dangerous. For example, he offers tantalizing suggestions about why workers and unions focused mainly on living conditions and wages while ignoring safety, but does not explore the question systematically. And he explicitly refuses to compare accident rates across the international border between B.C. and the three American states. Prouty is uncertain whether he is studying only loggers (suggested by the title and chapter 3) or both loggers and millworkers (p. xvii and chapter 4). In addition, his description of the relationship between technology and safety concentrates on the period from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, though the book's statistics extend to 1981. We learn little of logging society or technology in the era of trucks, chain saws and wheeled skidders.

Prouty's discussion of British Columbia's forest safety record is also disappointing. Focusing on Washington state, he treats the Canadian

industry as ancillary to the American. Limiting his British Columbia research mainly to the *Pacific Coast Lumberman*, Workmen's Compensation statistics and a couple of novels, he leaves unexplored other potential sources such as B.C. government reports and Department of Labour records, industry and union manuscript collections, and oral histories. He ignores entirely the development of forestry in B.C. from the mid-1930s to the early 1970s, thus overlooking the implications for workers' safety of profound technological changes in, and decentralization away from the coast of, logging and milling after the Second World War. Prouty states that much is known about labour turmoil, the struggle for unionism, and conservation in Pacific Coast forest history (p. xvii); in fact, we know very little about these subjects for B.C. Statements that British Columbia had a better accident prevention rate in the woods after 1916 than did its American counterparts, and that available literature suggests greater emphasis on safety and accident prevention in B.C. (p. 161), are also unsubstantiated.

While ultimately unsatisfactory as a work of historical interpretation, *More Deadly Than War* draws attention to a significant but overlooked part of our industrial past. It leaves a profound impression of the risks that timber industry workers have endured for more than a century. In so doing it charts a course for future research in the field of forest history.

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This Is My Own: Letters to Wes & Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-1948, by Muriel Kitagawa, edited by Roy Miki. Vancouver, B.C.: Talonbooks, 1985. Pp. viii, 302.

This collection of writings on Japanese Canadians is really three books in one: an extended essay by Roy Miki, the editor, on the life and times of Muriel Kitagawa; the real meat of the book, her letters to her brother Wes, a University of Toronto medical student, between 12 December 1941 and 29 May 1942; and a selection of her published and unpublished writings from December 1941 to 1948. Kitagawa was a gifted writer. Although she wrote quickly and without much opportunity for revision, she is always clear, frequently forceful and sometimes poetic. Historians will appreciate the perceptive contemporary and retrospective reflections of a well-informed and articulate Nisei and vivid descriptions of the daily worries of a young mother in the uncertain months after