

pression that these wars had something to do with the fur trade. What is not explored is whether such a conflict could have had prehistoric roots similar to Chipewyan-Inuit animosities or many of the early antagonisms in eastern Canada. There are a number of minor points, none of which seriously detract from the book.

The graphs and tables are all clear and to the point, but what the book needs is more maps. Changing locations of native groups are not well illustrated even though Yerbury has done some of the better work on the Chipewyan. The precontact distributions (Figures 1 and 15) changed greatly over time and are eminently mappable. In fact the entire subject of the book is an eminently geographical one, yet the geography of the fur trade is left too much to the imagination of the reader. Since Ray's *Indians in the Fur Trade* served in part as a model for this work, the omission of so much that is geographical is surprising.

The Subarctic Indians is a substantial contribution to the fur trade history of Canada. As the first detailed treatment of all the Subarctic Athapaskan groups it will provide a basis for further treatment of particular themes and native histories.

York University

C. E. HEIDENREICH

Canada's Colonies: A History of the Yukon and Northwest Territories,
by Kenneth Coates. Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1985. Pp.
251, paper.

Professor Coates has undertaken an ambitious task in covering a truly vast subject — the history of the northern territories from aboriginal time to the 1980s — in a brief 230-page, 60,000-word span. The treatment, accordingly, is selective, the subjects and examples cited reflecting the author's own interests and areas of research, and also the availability of published secondary materials. The focus is on the Yukon Territory, which received half or more of the space, including not only the obligatory review of the Klondike gold rush (the subject of his chapter 3) but also most of chapters 4 on the interwar period ("The Doldrums in the Middle North") and 6 on the Second World War ("The Army's North"). Furthermore, the treatment readily slips into Yukon aspects and illustrations in the remaining historical chapters, "The Early Fur Trade," "Boom and Bust in the Arctic," and "The Bureaucrats' North." For example, the emphasis in the Arctic chapter is on "West Side"

Herschel Island-based whaling rather than on the far larger, longer lived and more significant "East Side" whaling operations in Davis Strait and the waters beyond. The work also tends to slight topics that have not previously been exposed in the scholarly literature. The large, important theme of northern transportation and communications, for instance, is almost completely neglected, apart from a quite full account of the building and postwar management of the Alaska Highway, which was the subject of a scholarly conference held in Fort St. John, the proceedings of which Professor Coates edited. In general the book does not seem to give the District of Mackenzie or the Arctic regions their fair share of the limited space available. Still, all in all the author must be commended for a largely successful effort in covering so much of the territories' history in his short, readable book.

As the title indicates, the author stresses the "colonialist" nature of the territories' economic and political evolution. Though his understanding of northern economic realities prevents him from espousing the doctrine of regional under-development so dear to the theoreticians, in his concluding chapter "Whither the North" he adopts their favourite prescription of more government spending on the region. Not that he has been blind to previous shortcomings; numerous instances are cited in the later chapters. The federal government is portrayed as contributing to the unstable boom-and-bust character of economic activity by encouraging development in propitious times, then turning tail and abandoning its programmes whenever "regional resources declined in value or when southern promoters lost interest." Instead, he feels, the north does need "the assistance, perhaps even protection, of a more benevolent federal state, one that would represent the interests of the region rather than looking at its resources as a "quick fix" for the [national] economy." Such involvement would be larger scale and more consistently applied than in the past, would incorporate local participation in decision-making, and would be in tune with the possibilities and needs by "applying the north's resources to sustain a moderately-sized population and bring some semblance of stability to a very unstable region."

On the political side the author criticizes distant and remote control by past and present administrations, and decisions based on considerations external to the region. Instead he calls for greater local autonomy to give northerners a larger voice in decisions that concern them, as well as a means for protecting their distinct identity and interests. His solution seems modest, not requiring legislation but a will to introduce changes, as by appointing northerners to boards and committees and involving them in

all negotiations concerning northern interests. Though he is careful not to rule out eventual provincial status, the author points out that present divisions among residents make it inopportune, and besides, "it is not at all clear that provincial status is in the north's best interest."

Canada's Colonies sets out to give the native peoples a more prominent place and more sympathetic treatment than earlier studies have done. The book mainly concentrates, however, on the activities of the non-native sojourners — explorers, traders, missionaries, policemen, road-builders, miners, oil seekers, and the rest — while depicting the natives in the largely passive role of reacting to those activities. Natives' actions or conduct are not criticized, but the federal government is made into a whipping-boy. The pre-1940 policy of exercising limited control over Inuit, he charges, was impelled not by "humanitarian impulse" but simply as "a cost-effective means of administering Inuit affairs." On the other hand, its massive post-1945 involvement reflected "national priorities rather than a specific response to northern problems," was aimed at promoting "assimilationist values," and was applied in ways that irrevocably damaged the native's socio-cultural *persona*. Aid programmes such as housing and education were designed on inappropriate southern models, were inadequate to the need ("overcrowding was endemic"), while the handouts "undermined native self-esteem." In sum, they were "paternalistic and disruptive" and fashioned an environment in which white sojourners "shouldered the natives aside." He saw signs of hope, however, in the spreading co-operative movement and the formation of native rights groups, as well as in the emergence in southern Canada of church-promoted native support groups and scholarly northern environmental organizations.

In such a short work, brevity gives rise to occasional slips (for example, lumping musk-ox hides, polar bear pelts, and white fox furs as "exotic" furs). The book also is marred by typographical and spelling errors, no doubt originating in the publishing process: *Erbus*, Odgen, Tyrell, Turgetil, Netsikik, Artic, "I. O." (O. S.) Finnie, Malcolm Macdonald; feasibility, ot, philisophical, infuence, etc. But, to repeat, this slender volume is a valiant, largely successful effort that will reward the general reader or student desirous of learning more about Canada's northern territories in brief, readable form.

London, Ontario

MORRIS ZASLOW