

By custom, button blankets are the product of joint male and female work. As with the earlier Chilkat blanket form, traditionally the men created the design, which the women then reproduced in cloth. Both designers and fabricators offer their statements, emphasizing the collaborative nature of this form of art. As this book shows, there has been a recent blurring of these lines as some women have taken to designing their own blankets. The book also gives evidence of a mixture of races and cultures, including several blankets sewn by white women in partnership with native male artists.

The only criticism which can be levelled against the volume is relatively minor. Despite the fact that the authors refer to extensive research with scholars and museum collections, little of this has made its way into the final product. There is still a need for a thorough report on this kind of documentary and historical research. Ron Hamilton's essay, though brief, offers a persuasive model for future work. "Button Blankets on the West Coast?" is one of the best contributions, combining oral history, archaeology, photography, texts, and museum collections.

*Robes of Power* is an especially important book. It is the first word on the subject, not the last. Aware of this, the authors ask one final question: "who will take over where *Robes of Power* leaves off?"

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*West of the Great Divide: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Pacific Railway in British Columbia 1880-1986*, by Robert D. Turner. Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1987. Pp. xii, 336. \$34.95.

At first glance this handsome volume appears to be of interest mainly to railway buffs. With the aid of more than 400 illustrations, maps, timetables, and reproductions, it provides a vivid account of the history of CPR rail operations in British Columbia from 1880 to the present. However, the general reader will find the text of this book well worth reading since it provides much valuable information on the railway which had such a profound impact on the history of British Columbia.

The author devotes his attention to the CPR's rail operations in B.C., for he has previously published illustrated histories of the company's maritime operations in the province.

Chapter 1 deals with the construction of the main line and the improvements and extensions to it in the 1890s. Turner emphasizes the importance

of the construction of the line from Port Moody to Vancouver by describing the 1887 arrival ceremony for the first train in Vancouver in which the city's mayor lauded the CPR and predicted a bright future for his city, while the CPR general superintendent responded that the company and the city would prosper together. The CPR did indeed play *the* major role in establishing the city and fostering its growth into the province's metropolis by 1901, as Robert McDonald and Norbert MacDonald have demonstrated. Contemporary photographs furnish a graphic picture of the difficulties of keeping the main line open in the winter because of heavy snowfalls in the Selkirks. The building of snowsheds to counter these problems is well known, but the development of rotary snow ploughs by the Leslie brothers in Ontario is not often mentioned. First introduced in the winter of 1888-89, they were so successful in clearing the line that they were used extensively thereafter, thus making "a significant contribution to keeping the CPR open on a reliable all year basis." (p. 39)

Chapter 2 deals with a number of developments in the 1900 to 1914 period. In this period, the CPR acquired the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway and extended it north along the east coast of Vancouver Island. It also greatly improved operating efficiency on the main line by reducing the steep grades at Field Hill, through construction of the Spiral Tunnels, and at Rogers Pass, by building the five-mile-long Connaught Tunnel. Facilities in Vancouver were much improved by the building of a new CPR station and new major freight yards (located just east of the city at Coquitlam).

Chapter 3 has a good account of the bitter rivalry between the CPR and J. J. Hill's Great Northern for control of the traffic of southern B.C. in the period 1898 to 1916. Photographs and several fine maps augment an excellent discussion of the building of the Kettle Valley Railway from Midway to Hope. Turner's conclusion that by 1916 "the CPR had won *de facto* control of the Coast to Kootenay rail traffic" (p. 147) is open to debate. Sanford's study of the Kettle Valley Railway shows that from 1915 on the Great Northern still competed with the CPR for this traffic.

Chapter 4 provides a thorough discussion of the modern steam era from 1920 to 1950. In 1931 the Crowsnest line was finally completed with the construction of trackage over the thirty-four mile section from Kootenay Landing to Procter, a segment which the CPR had judged too expensive to build in 1898. In the late 1940s the Esquimalt and Nanaimo was the first division of the CPR to be dieselized; it served as a testing area for the new generation of diesel locomotives.

The last chapter deals with the dieselization of the CPR, which trans-

formed the B.C. section into one of "the most modern railroad systems in North America." (p. 252) For example, the introduction of the more powerful diesel locomotives on the Calgary to Revelstoke section of the main line enabled the CPR to eliminate the frequent and expensive helper operations.

History deals with the ideas and actions of people. For a historian it is disconcerting to read an "illustrated history" which has few pictures of the people who built and ran the CPR in B.C. There is a photograph of Andrew Onderdonk, but why are there no pictures of equally important figures such as Henry Abbott and Andrew McCulloch?

One hopes that Turner will produce another volume on the history of Canadian National Railways, the British Columbia Railway and their predecessors in the province.

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*The Asian Dream: The Pacific Rim and Canada's National Railway*, by Donald MacKay. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986. Pp. 223; illus.

On first glance this volume seems to have been designed to serve as a gift for Canadian National Railway agents to present to prospective customers in order to demonstrate the company's long-standing interest in Asian trade. It has generous margins, a handsome assortment of photographs, illustrations, and useful maps, and even a separate ISBN for a presentation edition. Yet the book is much more than a coffee table adornment. The footnotes indicate that Donald MacKay, who is best known to British Columbia readers as the author of *Empire of Wood*, the Macmillan Bloedel story, has done considerable research in contemporary newspapers and books, in prime ministerial and departmental records in the Public Archives of Canada and, especially, in the Canadian National Railways Archives themselves. His select bibliography indicates he has perused most of the obvious secondary sources.

In a broad chronological framework MacKay tells "the story of Canadian National Railways, heir to two pioneer railways that pushed their way through northwestern Canada to the Pacific . . . [and] of the people whose vision enabled the lines to span the continent and of those who later extended the resulting commerce to the Asian Pacific." (p. 7) Despite flashbacks to the travels of Marco Polo and the voyages of Jacques Cartier and James Cook, MacKay really starts his tale with the completion of