

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

Canada's first railway, the Champlain and Saint Lawrence in 1836, and then presents a very traditional account of the problems of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, the success of the Canadian Pacific Railway in completing the first transcontinental line and developing trans-Pacific shipping services, and the decision of the Laurier government to assist the Grand Trunk in building Canada's second transcontinental railway.

MacKay is ostensibly writing about both major predecessors of the Canadian National Railways, but he gives short shrift to Mackenzie and Mann and their Canadian Northern enterprises. Although the Canadian Northern's great strength was, as MacKay properly notes, its prairie branch lines, Mackenzie and Mann wanted to have their own ships on the Pacific. MacKay, however, focuses on the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific line to Prince Rupert. His account is somewhat wanting. He fails to appreciate fully the irony of British Columbians' desire for Asian trade and their antipathy to Asian immigrants, and he ignores the Grand Trunk Pacific's employment practices which made it difficult to secure or retain white labour. He does mention the grandiose plans Francis Rattenbury prepared for a terminal and hotel complex in Prince Rupert but curiously does not provide an illustration of this most vivid example of the Grand Trunk's dreams of a prosperous Asian trade.

While the first half of the book merely reworks well-known material, the third quarter draws heavily on the archives of the Canadian National Railways and the recollections of its employees to document more obscure subjects such as the rise and demise of the Canadian Merchant Marine, the opening of Canadian National offices in Shanghai, Singapore and Yokohama in the 1920s, Canadian National's efforts to compete in the silk trade, the wartime experiences of its agents in Asia, and the difficulties of re-establishing Asian trade in the immediate postwar years. The last quarter deals with the expansion of trans-Pacific trade since the 1960s which, in a sense, has seen the fulfilment of the Grand Trunk Pacific's dreams of trans-Pacific trade and the development of the port of Prince Rupert. Nevertheless, MacKay realistically concludes that "the dream of Far East trade has waxed and waned like Prince Rupert's rainbows." (p. 197) In sum, this book offers a refreshing approach by stressing that Vancouver is not the only provincial port and undoubtedly pleased the Canadian National Railways, which commissioned the work, by demonstrating that, contrary to conventional wisdom, the Canadian Pacific Railway never had a monopoly on Canadian interest in Asian trade.