

dollar bill. Now the price is at least thirty-five dollars and it's going up. . . . A lay is still a lay, isn't it? It can't be *that* much better now than it was in my day" (pp. 39-40). A logger depicts Vancouver winters as "the beer parlour, or a wild woman once in a while" (p. 114). To a teenager of the 1960s escaping a fundamentalist childhood in the Fraser Valley, the Downtown Eastside represented buying and later dealing heroin, the opportunity to "turn a lot of gay tricks" and interacting with "a lot of working women, a *lot* of women" (pp. 152-58). The realization that human beings are susceptible but at the same time resilient underlies several of these accounts, as with the latter individual, who is now a social worker "with kids on the street."

The stories in *Hastings and Main* reveal the world of little people, so to speak, from the inside out. The importance of maintaining dignity and pride under difficult conditions is emphasized time and again. The recollections demonstrate in graphic form the interplay which exists in all of our lives between what we hope to accomplish and larger forces, such as depression and war, which may in the final analysis be dominant. We are reminded of the limited control individuals may in fact possess, what a victim of the depression terms "the denial of the right of young people to the development of their lives" (p. 71). As another has summed up, "the peculiar thing about poor people is they live helplessly" (p. 102).

*Hastings and Main* has justifiably become a popular best seller, as well as being shortlisted by the BC Book Prizes. It should also be mandatory reading for all British Columbia scholars and academics who pretend to understand the province in which they live and work.

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JEAN BARMAN

*Never Say Die! The Life and Times of A Pioneer Labour Lawyer*, by John Stanton. Ottawa: Steel Rail Publishing, 1987.

This book is based on the author's experiences as a labour lawyer in British Columbia from the late 1930s to the early 1970s. During his career John Stanton represented miners, longshoremen, fishermen and forestry-workers, acting on their behalf in a number of key legal disputes. As he argues in the Introduction, the province's system of industrial relations changed profoundly in the years he was active as a lawyer. Few people are better placed to provide an insider's account of that transformation and its impact on organized labour.

Despite the book's title, Stanton does not give a full account of his "Life and Times." In fact, the book is not intended to be an autobiography but to serve an educational purpose, "to inspire the defenders and builders of unions today" (p. x). To accomplish this task Stanton provides his readers with a series of case studies drawn from his experience as a labour lawyer. Without exception, the cases that he describes are important ones and the fact that the author was himself a participant enhances the text. For this reason alone, *Never Say Die!* is an important contribution to the province's labour history.

Stanton was not an impartial observer during the often turbulent times which he describes, nor is he one today. Such neutrality would have been difficult to maintain, given some of the events described in the book: provincial police beating strikers while the latter were in custody (Blubber Bay, 1938); the eviction of strikers from their homes in the middle of a cold northern winter (Bridge River Valley, 1940); the compensation board that repeatedly and wilfully ignored independent medical evidence, thereby denying pensions to widows when they so obviously were entitled to them (Vancouver, 1955-62). These and other incidents suggest an inherent bias in the province's legal system. But one may still wish that Stanton had gone to greater lengths to explain the system and provided more detail of its operations, rather than simply to hold it up for disapproval.

The author is not an uncritical supporter of unions. For example, he is an unequivocal opponent of American unions in Canada. He also rejects the usefulness of unions engaging in partisan political activity, and makes scathing references to "power-hungry Eastern union politicians. . . . Ardent followers of the CCF, all these men viewed unions as a reliable source of 'bodies' who would provide funds and canvassers in elections . . ." (pp. 198-99). On the other hand, the Canadian Confederation of Unions, a group outside the Canadian Labour Congress, is described in approving terms, and Stanton acknowledges its help in the preparation of the book.

The book's episodic structure, essentially a collection of case studies, makes it easy to pick up and read short sections of the volume but also contributes to an overall sense of disjointedness. This is increased by the book's division into three sections, on union recognition, state intervention and "Lessons from within the House of Labour." The reasons for this subdivision are unclear, and the last of the three sections follows neither chronologically nor thematically from the previous ones.

While the book has its weaknesses, it was not written for the benefit of pedants or historians. Nonetheless, its success in its avowed purpose —

providing today's unionists with inspiration — is uncertain. In the opinion of this reviewer, White's *A Hard Man to Beat* (Vancouver, 1983) remains a much more compelling account of the same era. Despite their considerable stylistic differences, both books cover much the same territory, providing partisan accounts of labour's battles during the years around the Second World War. In addition, both authors share a similar analysis; Stanton's experiences with the province's judicial system, for example, corroborate Bill White's frank assessment that "the courts have been one of the establishment's most effective tools in fighting unionism." Stanton's memoirs, like White's, shed much light on a crucial period in B.C.'s history, and those people who wish to understand the sources and genesis of this province's polarized climate should read his book with care.

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JEREMY MOUAT

*The Life of Emily Carr*, by Paula Blanchard. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987. Pp. vi, 331.

Emily Carr is well known to most westerners as an artist with a powerful vision of the B.C. forests and as a writer of the award-winning *Klee Wyck*, her memoir of experiences among the coastal Indians. Born in 1871, she grew up in Victoria, and after studying art in San Francisco and later in England and Paris, returned to her native city to teach, paint, raise dogs, run a boarding house, and lead for her times the unconventional life of a single woman whose passion was art.

Last fall an Emily Carr painting sold at auction in Toronto for the unexpectedly high price of \$290,000. This is a barometer of the growing interest in and reputation of this artist, who is at last being recognized as one of Canada's best painters. Feminists have also discovered her, and found in Carr's eccentricities and creative struggles material for plays, television documentaries, and academic theses.

It is a pity that Paula Blanchard chose to cast her study of Carr in the form of biography, for she adds no new material to the detailed and penetrating study by Maria Tippett which first appeared in 1979. Blanchard is a good writer, a specialist in English and American literature who has previously written a biography of the American transcendentalist Margaret Fuller. Her avowed interest in Carr was to investigate the "inner conflicts of a woman painter." She notes that in Emily Carr "we see a clear example of anger contributing substantially to a creative career." This perspective,