

knowledge, *The West Beyond the West* offers some disappointing inaccuracies. On the same subjects, Margaret Ormsby's *British Columbia* gets the facts right; and I suspect that of the two books it remains the more authoritative.

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Mutual Hostages: Canadians and Japanese during the Second World War, by Patricia Roy, J. L. Granatstein, Masako Iino, and Hiroko Takamura. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. xii, 281 pp. Illus. \$24.95 cloth.

This book is the undertaking of four historians, two in Canada, two in Japan, who embarked upon a comparative study of confinement practices of the Japanese and Canadian governments during World War II. Their stated objectives were to "set out what happened," without condoning or condemning, to question whether the two governments looked upon those under their control as "mutual hostages," to clarify differences in the two approaches, to determine what the two governments and peoples knew and believed about each other, and to understand the "divided loyalties," especially of Japanese Canadians.

As a comparative analysis the work meets limited success. The impressive number of archives consulted yielded much interesting material, but did not allow a comparison in the strict sense. The book ends up being almost entirely about the treatment of *Canadians* as hostages, including soldiers and civilians in Asia, but mainly Canadians of Japanese ancestry in Canada. Of the 218 pages of text, only 52 concern the Pacific War and/or the treatment of Canadian prisoners in Japanese hands. The balance of the book concerns almost entirely the treatment by the Canadian government of 21,000 Canadians of Japanese ancestry, and fewer than 5,000 civilian Japanese nationals who were living in Canada in 1941.¹

A short introductory chapter on Japanese immigration to Canada, written from a diplomatic point of view, provides an excellent background for understanding the precarious position of Canadians of Japanese ancestry beginning in the late nineteenth century. This chapter underscores the

¹ Reference is often made to 21,000 Japanese Canadians (*including* 5,000 Japanese Nationals) uprooted from coastal British Columbia during the early years of the war. That figure does not include 1,000 people already outside the "protected zone," also affected by the measures against Japanese Canadians although not uprooted, or those who were born while the conditions of the War Measures Act were in effect, from December 1941 to March 1949 (a net increase of 4,000). 26,000 were thus affected by the actions of the Canadian government.

point that one cannot understand the events of the 1940s without reference to events of the previous six decades, although it also emphasizes the fact that the book is more concerned with the treatment of Japanese Canadians than with military matters.

Chapter 2 begins with an overview of the approach of war in the Pacific, and focuses upon development of the Canadian government's policy towards Japanese Canadians between 1939 and the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, as well as the build-up of public "suspicions" of fifth-column activity on the part of Japanese Canadians sympathetic to Japan. Based on new evidence of discussions at official levels, a case is made that the Canadian government knew relatively little about Japanese Canadians and was rather ineffectual in finding out. There is, however, a twist, presented by the claim that

the fairest thing that can be said almost a half century after the fact is that the RCMP and military intelligence had uncovered little hard information about possible subversion within the Japanese-Canadian community, if indeed the potential for any existed, because they lacked the necessary resources and competence. (p. 51)

To make such a claim is, to this reviewer's mind, not only highly speculative but prejudicially so. Their claim for dispassionate historiography notwithstanding, the authors had a choice at this point, between presenting the lack of evidence of subversion as an indication that probably none existed, or dwelling upon the *possibility* that subversion might have existed. They chose the latter. As a result, the discussion sheds little light upon the topic and detracts from the careful scholarship upon which most of the book is based.

A third chapter stands on its own as a short but informative account of the treatment of Canadian POWs and civilians in Hong Kong and Japan. This story is expanded in Chapter 7, where a discussion of Japanese Canadians and Japanese nationals in Canadian camps is combined with an account of the outcomes for Canadian prisoners in Asia. There is some discontinuity in the separation of these two chapters in the attempt to maintain the mutual hostages theme, but there is no doubt of the basis here for expansion into a book-length treatment of the topic.

Chapters 4 through 6, which make up the core of the book, shift to the treatment of Canadians of Japanese ancestry, documenting the process by which they were uprooted, interned, and dispersed. (They were not, however, "evacuated"; that euphemism should have been put to rest here). This is the first major work on the topic since substantial national archives of the time were made available to researchers, and these official sources

and a variety of others have been well exploited. The difficult challenges, the momentous decisions, the contradictions and the ironies that characterized this period for everyone concerned are revealed in a skilful interweaving of material from official documents, newspapers, political speeches, and correspondence. In several instances the personal circumstances of Japanese Canadians are used to highlight the complexity of the issues and the difficult decisions faced by families for whom nothing would ever again be simple.

It is a shame, nonetheless, that the authors chose to undertake very limited interviews with survivors of the government's actions during the 1940s. There is a legitimate debate about whether living memory is more accurate than archival memory; both may be highly selective. But the book would have been enriched both by the rich ethnographic information that can be available only to modern historians and by an attempt to come to terms with the contradictions that would inevitably have emerged between the written and the verbal record. The "remarkable" school system in the interior camps, for example, claimed to be a result of the British Columbia Security Commission's recognition of its "educational duties" (p. 132), should more appropriately be credited to the efforts of the Japanese-Canadian teachers and a few Christian missionaries. As it is, the book will suffer the indignation of thousands of Japanese Canadians who will not find that this story matches their memories.

Given the care that is given to archival detail, the lack of sensitivity to language is all the more curious. A few examples: frequent and jarring reference to Japanese Canadians as "Japanese"; reference to Canadian-born citizens sent to Japan as "repatriates"; reference to actions taken against Japanese Canadians as an "evacuation." This was the sort of terminology used by the government of the time, of course, but in failing to acknowledge the ideological effect of such language, the authors have sacrificed critical interpretation and, deliberately or not, re-inscribed the patterns of prejudice. At the same time, the authors take pains to point out that only a few Japanese Canadians were, strictly speaking, "interned." I doubt that those who spent months in horse stalls at Hastings Park would find much meaning in this fine semantic distinction.

The first sentence of Chapter 4 illustrates one of dozens of instances where an insensitive, even provocative use of language conveys a misconception: "The Canadians in Hong Kong were the victims of military atrocities; the Japanese in Canada were the victims of civilian paranoia." The surface "truth" of the statement is not at issue. What offends is that in using this rhetorical device to revive the book's flagging theme of "mutual

hostages," the message reinforces the notion dominant prior to World War II that Canadians of Japanese ancestry were not *real* Canadians. It is precisely because many "other" Canadians at the time failed to distinguish "Japanese" from "Canadians of Japanese ancestry" and because they attributed a separate and subordinate place to Japanese Canadians (witness the cartoon reproduced on page 100 proclaiming "a Jap is a Jap") that the authors should have been more careful with and critical of their own representations, so as not to perpetuate prejudiced notions. Furthermore, while the authors go into the fine details of what the Canadian government did because they assumed Japanese Canadians were not *real* Canadians, they fail to address the belief itself.

There is, of course, a much more fundamental question of historiography here. This book takes the line that historians are dispassionate, objective, and value neutral, that they do not "condemn or condone" (p. xi) the events of the past. This reviewer simply disagrees. The facts do not "speak for themselves," they are constructed. They are chosen, judged, sorted, emphasized, or consigned to oblivion. Historians *do* make value judgements and to deny doing so is uncritical and can be dangerous. In this book the judgements are sometimes blatant, sometimes inserted between the lines, in innuendo and in what is *not* said. They come out nonetheless, and the book would have been the better for their acknowledgement.

In the final chapter, the theme of mutual hostages is again revived, as the various forms of confinement, as well as the various fears and prejudices that prompted the actions of both governments, are played off against each other in a final rounding out of the issues. They conclude that Canadians were far more obsessed with the dangers posed by Japan than were the Japanese with what might be going on in Canada, and they explain the Canadian government's actions towards its own nationals by pointing out that conditions of war stimulated pre-existing fears, prejudices and racial hatred to allow "precious few distinctions between Canadian citizens of Japanese origin and Japanese nationals" (p. 218). In the end, war itself is the decisive factor.

This work provides important information about circumstances in Canadian history that have as yet received too little scholarly attention. As an historical account it is uneven, with carefully researched sections interspersed with others that are highly speculative. Its analytical theme of "mutual hostages" is fundamentally flawed. Its failure to come to terms with issues of human rights in a book that is about the violation of human rights is disappointing. Its interpretation of the "facts," for Japanese Canadians, is bound to be controversial; but it is to be hoped that debate over

the facts will lead to better understanding not only of what happened, but of how it happened and of the difficulties and responsibilities involved in interpreting events of the past. This book shows, in myriad ways, that history is more than riffling through old papers.

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North to Alaska! Fifty Years on the World's Most Remarkable Highway, by Ken Coates. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991. 304 pp. Illus., maps. \$34.95 cloth.

On 20 November 1942, a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony took place at Soldier's Summit above Kluane Lake, Yukon Territory. The thermometer showed -30° F when, under a thin winter sun, Alaska's acting governor, E. L. "Bob" Bartlett, representing the United States, and Ian Mackenzie, representing Canada, each held one blade of a pair of gold scissors and cut the red, white, and blue silk ribbon which officially opened the Alcan Highway (Alaska-Canada Military Highway) to military traffic. Shortly thereafter, the first truck convoy, dubbed the "Fairbanks Freight," rolled north to that city.

This was the culmination of a hectic construction season which began when President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved a recommendation by his Secretaries of the Army and Navy and the Department of the Interior to build a highway linking already established military airfields along the route. It also would provide an alternative supply route to Alaska supplementing sea and air transportation.

Work started on a pioneer road from Dawson Creek, B.C. to Big Delta, Alaska. The U.S. Army Engineers were in charge of building the pioneer road, while the Public Roads Administration (PRA) simultaneously constructed a permanent finished highway. An intergovernmental agreement determined the general location of the highway which would connect American railroads in the Chicago area to the Canadian highway and railroad systems. These, in turn, would reach the southern end of the Alcan Highway.

Seven engineering regiments, aided by forty-seven contractors employed by the PRA, worked toward each other from various points along the route. They laboured under often harsh weather conditions and over extremely difficult terrain, yet finished the pioneer road nine months and six days after the start of construction.

The initial agreement between the U.S. Army Engineers and the PRA in April 1942 had called for a two-lane highway equalling standards for