

institutional histories, the study is also very much an insider publication. Readers unfamiliar with the geography of the Okanagan Valley or the mechanics of fruit production and marketing may find aspects of the book that are confusing.

All criticisms aside, *A Fruitful Century* represents a useful addition to the historical literature on the province's agrarian past. It should appeal to the general reader and academics alike, and the authors are to be commended for their efforts and the BCFGA for their sponsorship. While deserving of praise on its own merits, *A Fruitful Century* is far from a comprehensive history of fruit growing in the Okanagan Valley, let alone in British Columbia. Commercial fruit production on the Coast is barely touched upon, despite Dendy's claim that the book "is also a history of fruit growing and marketing in British Columbia" and the history of farm labour, women, culture, and society are virtually ignored. So too are developments outside the Okanagan which had an impact on markets, transportation and consumer demand. These topics and many more have to be addressed for both the tree fruit industry and the farm sector as a whole before we can begin to assess and appreciate agriculture's historical role in British Columbia.

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*Guest of Hirohito*, by Kenneth Cambon. Vancouver: P. W. Press, 1990.  
184 pp. \$10.00 paper.

Prisoners of war who tried, in the aftermath, to describe their appalling experiences and mistreatment during their incarceration often experienced singular obstacles. Their urgent and laudable desire was to depict the horror of the "other planet" from which they had returned, to pay tribute to those who had perished, and to try and find some explanation for all their sufferings. But how were they to break through the barriers of incredulity, scepticism and indifference at home which they often faced? Especially in the case of Canadian troops captured by the Japanese in the early days of the Pacific War, how to indict their own government for crass inefficiency and stupidity in sending these virtually unarmed soldiers to become so easily taken prisoner without any real chance of resistance?

Many of these survivors, as was only to be expected, not only had strong feelings of resentment, which added fuel to their determination to achieve recompense, and to prevent any cover-up of political folly. But at a deeper level, there was also a need to record, in "factually insistent" narratives,

every detail of their traumatic experiences, lest it be thought that such unimaginable horrors had only been invented later on to evoke sympathy with their plight, or to enhance their chances of reparation. But all too often, their emotional turmoil and bitterness gave their accounts a highly subjective tone which rendered more difficult identification with their sufferings.

At the same time, few of these writers were conscious of the limitations of language. Even if the brutal and dehumanizing conditions of the prison camps were unprecedented, the available language and figures to describe these were not. How to find the forms of language appropriate to the terror of these events, when the reality outstripped language's capacity to represent them? Furthermore, the very act of selecting and writing down their experiences gave a symmetry and coherence to events which contradicted the paralyzing violence and sense of discontinuity they have lived through.

No less complex was the difficulty of finding a sense of moral balance. If the Japanese mistreatment of prisoners was as inhuman and destructive as some accounts maintain, its victims must have been psychologically maimed and brutalized. On the other hand, if prisoners were as noble and stalwart as depicted by some survivors, could the system really have been all that oppressive?

The longer the interval between the events described and the time of writing about them, the more likely will the lapses of memory or the effects of time creep in. Inevitably, too, such memoirs bear the mark of trying to show how successfully or otherwise the survivors have dealt with their experiences, the kinds of interpretation they have adopted, or the ways they now understand the world in the light of their past sufferings.

Ken Cambon's account of his imprisonment, written nearly fifty years later, steers successfully through these perilous thickets. Enlisting under age, he was one of the first group of Canadians to be captured in Hong Kong in December 1941, and subsequently was sent to a revolting hard-labour camp in Japan. Of course he shares the widespread indignation at the Canadian government's blunders, but is generous in his depiction of his fellow sufferers. He was very young, and the process of maturing in such dreadful conditions left its scars, which became all the more notable when he returned to Canada and found his family and contemporaries unable or unwilling to recognize what his trials had done to him. Yet his courageous determination to copy the example of those who had saved his life during the disease-ridden years of captivity, and to devote himself to a medical career, makes clear that he had the capacity of turning his sufferings into a positive channel. His account of his Japanese captors, too, is

remarkably restrained, and points to an eirenic spirit of compassion. The candour and consciousness of his story carries conviction, and is strengthened by his readiness to forgive, if not forget. And the inclusion of an epilogue describing a return journey to Japan in 1985 is heartfelt testimony to the fact that, for at least one Canadian prisoner, the memories of the past, and the accompanying fears and doubts, could be turned to an experience of renewed hope for the future.

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*Grassroots Politicians: Party Activists in British Columbia*, by Donald E. Blake, R. K. Carty, and Lynda Erickson. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991. x, 168 pp. \$19.95 paper; \$39.95 cloth.

Admitting at the outset that little is known about "the men and women who make up the parties in the provinces and who keep these political organizations functioning at the grassroots" (p. 13), the authors of this important new book have contributed a significant first to the growing literature on Canada's provincial party systems. To explain the pattern of party polarization in British Columbia and its impact on those "who drive the system," Professors Blake, Carty, and Erickson have examined systematically the "values and beliefs of those who constitute the party cores" (p. 13). They conducted a demographic and attitudinal survey of the delegates in attendance at three provincial leadership conventions held over a fourteen-month interval in 1986-87. This book is the product of that research.

In keeping with the parties themselves, the conventions were a study in contrasts. The governing Social Credit party replaced one William with another (Bennett, the party modernizer, with Vander Zalm, the populist) in what remains to this day, with its twelve leadership candidates, the most contested convention in Canada's history. The New Democrats, the only other party with a legislative presence at the time, "quietly agreed" (p. 19) on the ex-mayor of Vancouver, Mike Harcourt, in an uncontested convention. And the Liberals, long accustomed to having no MLAs and to winning only a fraction of the province-wide popular vote, chose an obscure college instructor, Gordon Wilson, by acclamation.

By first establishing that the rhetoric "and sometimes the substance" (p. 85) of British Columbia's electoral politics is indeed as polarized as it has been typically described, the authors demonstrate how that feature of B.C. politics has manifested itself at the grassroots level. As in the description of the Anglican church being Britain's Tory party at prayer, British