

Book Reviews

Juan Pérez on the Northwest Coast: Six Documents of his Expedition in 1774, translated and edited by Herbert K. Beals. Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press. Pp. xxvii, 270; maps; bibliography; glossary. US\$24.95.

In 1985 the Oregon Historical Society published Beals's *For Honor and Country*, a translation of the 1775 journal of Bruno Hezeta. This has now been followed by *Juan Pérez*. Both are based on Spanish documents that have not previously been published in English, with annotations and explanatory matter by Beals.

In 1774, Pérez was ordered to explore the northwest coast as far as 60° north, and to land and take possession at places that might be suitable for settlement. He set out from San Blas, on the Pacific coast of Mexico early in the year, and after stopping for a month in San Diego and another month in Monterey, both recently established, he headed north. A month later he was in about latitude 52°. Here he decided to abandon the objective of 60° and stand in towards the coast, because of a shortage of water and his concern about possible adverse winds on the return journey. This is one of several puzzles concerning the voyage. He could have topped up his water supply in Monterey, and he had only encountered winds adverse for the return journey about 25 per cent of the time since leaving Monterey. He closed the land at the northern end of the present Queen Charlotte or Haida Islands, where the native people met Europeans for the first time. The meeting was friendly, and there was some trade of small ship-board items for artifacts (now in the Museo de América in Madrid) such as blankets, basketry, and carvings. The appearance and behaviour of the native people was described by Pérez; he also described the land, or what he could see of it.

He did not or could not anchor, and turned south. He later did anchor near the present Estevan Point on Vancouver Island where Indians came

off in canoes and again traded small items with the Spanish crew. Pérez then returned to San Blas, stopping at Monterey en route.

After a foreword by Donald Cutter, Beals opens his book with an introductory essay giving a brief history of earlier explorations of the coast by Drake, by the Russians, and by Spanish explorers of the California coast. The essay also gives an outline of what is known about Pérez himself. This is followed by Beals's translation of part of Pérez's journal, covering only the voyage from Monterey north and back to Monterey, plus two covering letters written by Pérez to the viceroy. The journal itself occupies only twenty-nine pages of the book. It is so short that the question arises as to why he did not translate the full journal of the voyage, of which there are two copies in Mexico, rather than adding so much supplementary and sometimes peripheral data in following sections and appendices.

Journals were also written by Esteban Martínez, the second-in-command, and by the two chaplains, Crespi and Peña. Beals might have made more use of these as cross-references, since they add to the story of the voyage. He may have refrained because the journals of the chaplains have already been published in English.

There were at the time conflicting opinions on how well Pérez performed his duties, and historians have since been divided on this subject. Beals quotes some of them, but on the whole he comes down in favour of the explorer, who died during another northern voyage in the next year. He was promoted to the grade of lieutenant before word of his death reached Madrid, so officialdom presumably agreed with Beals.

The book will be useful to scholars interested in history, native studies, or geography. It contains a reproduction of the map prepared after the voyage by Cañizaras, which was discovered recently in the National Archives of the United States, after having long been considered lost. The book has one fault, probably beyond the control of the author. The footnotes, some of which add greatly to an understanding of the book, are grouped at the end. This may be a defensible choice, but to make it work there should either be running heads in the text or running heads over the footnotes giving page references. Without them, it is hard to find a footnote, especially since there are eight series of notes, each beginning with the number 1. As to the translation, not having a copy of the manuscript original, this reviewer can only say that he believes Herbert Beals to be a competent translator.

There are other journals of Spanish explorers of the northwest coast which have not been published in English, and it is understood that the

Oregon Historical Society and Beals are continuing with their valuable work, hopefully in a format that is easier to follow.

Vancouver, B.C.

JOHN KENDRICK

White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914, by Patricia E. Roy. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989. Pp. xvii, 327. \$37.95.

As the subtitle suggests, this book pursues two themes: white attitudes towards Asians in early B.C. history and Asians as an issue in the provincial politics of that era. Given the nature of my skills, I will focus this review only on the first of these themes.

Basically, Professor Roy's argument is that until about 1900 white attitudes towards Asians in B.C. had mostly to do with labour-management relations. From about 1900, however, a change occurs: as the economy fluctuates, and as white immigration declines while Asian (especially Japanese) increases, anti-Asian sentiments are more broadly expressed in white society. The terms of expression often invoke the need to defend a "white man's province," but that expression is a broad cover for a variety of white anxieties.

I find this general argument an advance over the previous level of discussion of the subject. Instead of continuing a simple argument of either economic anxieties or racist reaction as the basis of white attitudes, Roy has combined them and dealt with the subject developmentally, showing how emphases and modes of expression changed with changing historical contexts. I particularly like her conclusion that "white man's province" is not an expression of simple racism. It seems to me that she has gone part of the way towards shifting the focus of explanation from where it has been to where it could more fruitfully lie. In what follows I will attempt to develop this point.

I think it can be usefully argued that the ultimate concerns of British settlers in B.C. — first and last — have clustered around questions of political and cultural dominance. On a multicultural frontier the founding of a colonial government and the justifications that accompany it are matters of critical importance to the subject we are discussing here. In such situations, a would-be dominant group must claim to rule all inhabitants of the territory, and thus it must include them within its legal jurisdiction. Thus, if the Asians in B.C. enjoyed some benefits of British justice it was less a