

The Canadian Pacific Railway and the Development of Western Canada 1896-1914, by John A. Eagle. Kingston, Montreal, and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989. Pp. xvi, 325; illus.; maps.

This is the third book devoted to the activities of the Canadian Pacific in western Canada to appear in recent years. First came *The CPR West*, edited by Hugh Dempsey, which printed most of the papers presented at a conference sponsored by the Glenbow Museum to celebrate the centenary of the arrival of steel at Calgary. This was followed by Robert Turner's *West of the Great Divide*, a detailed and lavishly illustrated history of the physical aspects of the railway in British Columbia. Now comes this third volume, a general history that complements the earlier studies, either by giving additional details or by dealing with matters that did not fall within their schemes of things.

Its most interesting contribution is its account of the circumstances and negotiations that resulted in the historic Crowsnest Pass agreement of 1897 and the twenty-year battle with James J. Hill and his Great Northern Railroad that followed. Other major themes are Canadian Pacific's policies regarding land sales and settlement, and the expansion of the rail system and its equipment with amenities to attract the tourist and traveller. All this took place during a long period of virtually unbroken prosperity in Canada, which happened to coincide in great part with Thomas Shaughnessy's years as president of Canadian Pacific (1899-1918).

As early as 1891, Sir William Van Horne, Shaughnessy's predecessor, had warned Sir John Macdonald that he could "hardly imagine anything more dangerous to the interests of the Dominion . . . than the granting of a charter through the Crow's Nest Pass to any company that may by any possibility come under American control." Two years previously Hill had formed the Great Northern Railroad and expressed his intention of building it to the west coast; by 1893 he had completed the line.

Van Horne was convinced that Hill intended to build branch lines northward into Canada, especially in the Kootenays, where mines were opening and traffic was offering. In so doing he enjoyed two considerable advantages: his main line was much nearer the Canadian mines and smelters than was that of the Canadian Pacific, and he could build his branches up valleys which in general ran north and south. By contrast, Canadian Pacific could not hope to counter this invasion effectively unless it built a difficult and expensive line westward from the Crowsnest across the mountain ranges that divided the valleys. The GN-CP battle for traffic lasted for the better part of twenty years, in the course of which the Great

Northern or its subsidiaries pushed across the Canadian border at no fewer than eleven points between Vancouver and the Alberta border. It began to cool down when the two companies co-operated in the completion of the Kettle Valley line in 1916, the year of Hill's death. It had been to a considerable measure a personal matter on Hill's part, and relations improved after his passing.

Eagle contends that the basic aim of Canadian Pacific's land policies was "to maximize profits," not to encourage settlement that would "generate more traffic for the railway." To this reviewer at least, the case is not proven. True, the company made every effort to secure revenue from its lands, but the profit motive alone cannot explain such things as the assistance given to promising settlers who for one reason or another were in danger of forfeiting their holdings. Capital payments were postponed; overdue interest was cancelled. An empty country would produce no traffic, and permanent settlement was what the company had in view. The history of the vast Bow River irrigation scheme is instructive in this respect. Eagle's narrative stops short at a time when profits seemed in prospect, but Canadian Pacific was to emerge from the project twenty years later a good many millions in the red. As Mitchner remarks in *The CPR West*, "The company lost financially, but it had bestowed a profound long-term benefit on the agricultural industry in Alberta."

Shaughnessy's first preoccupation was with the railway itself. During his presidency the system doubled its mileage in only fifteen years and made such major improvements as the construction of the Lethbridge viaduct, the Spiral Tunnels and the Connaught Tunnel. It faced competition not only from American lines to the south but also from the Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific from the north. Shaughnessy continued Van Horne's efforts to make travel attractive and therefore profitable: he added new first-class hotels and improved rolling stock. There were interesting differences in artistic taste between the two presidents. The chateau style that Van Horne had introduced in the Chateau Frontenac made its last appearance in the Empress Hotel in Victoria; it had no part in the design of the first rebuilding of Hotel Vancouver or the new first-class hotels built in Winnipeg and Calgary. Van Horne had taken a keen personal delight in the elaborate decorations that had become characteristic of Canadian Pacific's first-class sleeping cars; Shaughnessy found their "lack of taste and comfort . . . absolutely disgusting."

As the fifty pages of notes suggest, the narrative is carefully documented, but a bibliography would have been helpful. One must often hunt for details of references, especially to unpublished sources such as theses.

Eagle tells us that the book was originally conceived as a biography of Shaughnessy, a project that was abandoned because personal sources were found to be inadequate. This is a pity, as the glimpses of Shaughnessy one catches in this corporate narrative indicate that his was a complicated and fascinating personality.

Vancouver

W. KAYE LAMB

The Letters of Malcolm Lowry and Gerald Noxon, 1940-1952, edited by Paul Tiessen with Nancy Strobel. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988. Pp. 182; one illus. \$22.95.

The Letters of Malcolm Lowry and Gerald Noxon, 1940-1952 starts with a chronology that highlights the various stages of Lowry's and Noxon's lives, as well as their mutual interests. Paul Tiessen's ensuing introduction about the writers, text, and the sources provides a valuable key to the correspondence. The correspondence itself is divided into blocks arranged according to biographical periods. A short introductory paragraph, often quoting related material by Noxon, aids the reader in placing these blocks as well as the single letters. The letters are not, however, annotated, which at times makes it difficult to comprehend references to persons or works of art not generally known. A good index in some measure compensates for this shortcoming.

By far the largest of these blocks is the one covering the period from the summer of 1941 to May 1944. In these twenty-one letters criticism by the Lowrys and Noxon of each other's work is at the centre of interest. The letters on Noxon's poetry and on his novel *Teresina Maria* give testimony to Margerie and Malcolm Lowry's ability to issue creative and productive critiques of their friend's work. Margerie's novel *Horse in the Sky* is in its turn subject to Malcolm's and Noxon's criticism. Unfortunately, Lowry's work, especially *Under the Volcano*, which he rewrote in this period, is not discussed in the letters. There are, however, a few short passages in the correspondence which hint at Noxon's influence in reshaping it. These permit Tiessen to infer the existence of a "small writer's guild" (8) which, he suggests, was of much help to Lowry as he did his work. Indeed, writes Tiessen, "[Lowry's] correspondence with Noxon makes clear how incorrect it is to regard him as having burst in 1940-44 beyond the limited artistic range of the earlier (1936-40) drafts of the novel with the help only from Margerie. Gerald Noxon also was periodically on hand . . ." (3). In my