Book Reviews

The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961, Walter D. Young. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1969. Pp. xi, 328. $8.50.

This book is thrice-blessed — a fact not without significance when one considers the strong evangelical fervour of the CCF — thrice-blessed because Professor Young can write lucidly; has a substantial contribution to make; and has had complete access to party files. And no one should labour under the illusion that the volume is simply a recitation of the electoral successes and failures of the national CCF party from 1932 to 1961. The author has, as his title suggests, probed deeply into the CCF and has produced an intelligent examination of its founding, policy development, public appeal, organization, and performance in parliament.

He has also made it abundantly clear that, despite the title, he feels the CCF was considerably more than a political party: it was, in addition, a movement or, perhaps because of the difficulty in separating the two words, it was a movement-party. The CCF was a party in the sense that it did seek political power; and it was a movement in the sense that it had a political philosophy and a platform (admittedly subject to a variety of interpretations), as well as a zealous membership that clung to it in the face of election disasters. The CCF had the followers that a secular religion would attract. For the most part, Professor Young's thesis about a movement-party bears close examination, although it does seem that there were sufficient compromises from the days of the Regina Manifesto through to the time of the disappearance of the CCF into the NDP to warrant a little more emphasis on the party side of the CCF.

This point is debatable, however, and it should not detract from the fact that the book represents a thorough, candid and competent piece of work. And for those outside this movement-party, it will even be comforting to realize that, despite the real and apparent democracy of the CCF, the party was run for much of its life by a Family Compact in which

David Lewis wielded a power unmatched by persons in comparable positions in either the Liberal or Conservative parties.

But the CCF was most certainly a movement; because, what other than a movement could fail to take account of original sin until the 1950's and could press on in the belief that man was perfectable? The CCF was a product of the Enlightenment and it held to the idea of progress long after pragmatic politicians had realized — along with that one-time visionary, H. G. Wells — that man was generally at the end of his tether.

Much of the strength of the movement side of the CCF came, not unexpectedly, from British Columbia where, it seems, there was a strong belief that the second coming could be achieved by man alone. Throughout the book the strident militancy of the B.C. left comes through. It was British Columbians who wanted more radical tones in the Regina Manifesto; it was British Columbians, following J. S. Woodsworth, who gave the party its pronounced pacifists; it was British Columbians who were critics of the Second World War and aspects of the Canadian war effort, long after the rest of the party had lapsed into silence in the face of the awesome conflict; and it was British Columbians who strongly opposed the first hints that the party was contemplating burying itself and rising again as the NDP.

The toughness of the British Columbia left raises a question that should possibly be asked in *BC Studies*: why was — and is, for that matter — the hard left so strong in this province? Its strength provided internal troubles for the national party and bedevilled the activities of the provincial party. Using Professor Young's movement-party thesis, it seems fair to suggest that the movement side of the CCF remained stronger in British Columbia than elsewhere in the country. Here there was more fundamentalism in socialism and less accidentalism in party membership. These aspects of the CCF produced reactions to the party in B.C. which had results that cannot be found elsewhere in Canada. For example, these aspects helped in the formation of a coalition of the Liberal and Conservative provincial parties in order to deny the CCF access to office; they assisted in the creation of the NPA in Vancouver politics for the same purpose; and they lay back of the preferential ballot of the 1952 provincial election which gave W. A. C. Bennett his first years as premier of the province.

Within the British Columbia party, this strident socialism was regarded by some as a reason for electoral losses; and such thinking surely lay back of the recent NDP decision to ease out Robert Strachan and elevate Tom Berger to the leadership. Some in the party thus hoped to present the

image of scrubbed-down, safe socialism. But such an image was distorted at the start of last year's provincial election when the question of public ownership of B.C. Telephone was raised by Tom Berger; this certainly looked like a reversion to the old hard line, a sign that the movement was alive and well and living in B.C. It provided Premier Bennett with the club for which he had been looking — free enterprise against runaway socialism — and he proceeded to beat the NDP unmercifully with the weapon shaped by a party leader who could not escape the movement side of his party's history. Here again was that old evangelical fervour for socialism troubling the party; here again was oblique reference to the belief that man could be perfected.

It is interesting to note that — after the election was safely over — Premier Bennett announced he was plugged into God; this connection undoubtedly confirmed for the premier the validity of the doctrine of original sin and the election results would seem to bear out his conviction. The premier knew that he was working with an electorate that was considerably lower than the angels; the NDP, still showing signs of being a child of the Enlightenment, could not believe this and paid for its disbelief.

University of British Columbia CHARLES HUMPHRIES

Vancouver's Svenskar: A History of the Swedish Community in Vancouver, by Irene Howard. Vancouver, Vancouver Historical Society, 1970. 127 pp. $6.50.

The Vancouver Historical Society deserves warm congratulations on the publication of its first Occasional Paper which is, in fact, not a paper but a book and a very handsomely produced one at that. The subject matter of this first "Paper" is an excellent choice. With the exception of the Japanese and Doukhobors, no immigrant group in British Columbia has been the subject of a full scale book. Mrs. Howard's study of the Swedish community is thus a particularly welcome contribution to the historiography of British Columbia.

Mrs. Howard did not set out to write an academic treatise. The absence of footnotes (there is, however, a good bibliography) is the most conspicuous indication of this. More significantly, the book has not been conceived within any theoretical framework and has no thesis except to

show that there is still a "Swedish fact" in Vancouver. The author's aim has been simply to tell the story of the Swedes in British Columbia — the subtitle is misleading — and that she has done well.

Generally, Mrs. Howard has avoided the common weakness of many ethnic histories. Rather than giving tedious lists of members of the ethnic group who have "made good" in politics, the arts and letters and business, she has skillfully woven many names into a smooth flowing narrative. This system, however, does break down. For example, she quite properly devotes a chapter to E. A. Alm, a prosperous real estate man and philanthropist who underwrote the costs of publication. But then, as a separate "chapter," she prints the correspondence concerning his donation of a Canadian collection to the library of the Swedish city of Österlund.

The separate chapter on Alm and one on Paul Boving, a professor of agriculture at the University of British Columbia who actively disseminated a knowledge of Scandinavian culture to the community at large, are exceptions. Mrs. Howard's main interest is the ordinary Swede in British Columbia, and particularly, the "underdog" in the Labour movement. On several occasions she remarks on the importance of Scandinavians, especially Swedes, in unionizing the loggers.

Her explanation for the predominance of the Swedes in union activities does not satisfy the reader. Her only explanation is a brief quote from *Svenska Pressen*, a weekly Vancouver newspaper, suggesting that in Sweden working conditions were better. This may be the sole explanation but as it stands, it only tantalizes the reader. It would be helpful to know, for example, if many of the Swedes who were early members of the militant Lumber Workers' Industrial Union had had union experience in their motherland. Because of the relationship of the L.W.I.U. with the Workers' Unity League [p. 79], the participation of several Swedish loggers in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion and the publication of Marxist literature in *Frihet*, the journal of the Scandinavian Workers' and Farmers' League, it would be interesting to learn if these Communist sympathies were acquired in North America or brought from Sweden. In short, did the Swedes have something unique in their background which catapulted them into a prominent place in left wing labour movements or were they merely one of many immigrant groups working in primary industries who were acutely affected by the Depression?

In other aspects of her study, however, Mrs. Howard provides some answers for questions which she had not consciously asked. The student who is seeking evidence for an examination of such concepts as metropolitanism and the cultural mosaic of Canada will find some useful

examples. The fact that the subtitle is misleading is indicative not of an error in the author's logic but rather of the fact that Vancouver was the metropolis for loggers in upcoast and Vancouver Island camps. Vancouver was the city in which they were hired, to which they escaped in time of unemployment or for holidays and from which their unions were organized. Vancouver was also a metropolis for coastal miners but these workers are represented in this volume merely by a melancholy poem from one of the local Swedish newspapers.

Vancouver's Svenskar provides answers but no simple solution to the question of whether or not the Swedish community reflected the "mosaic" or "melting pot." The early history of the Swedes in Vancouver suggests that despite their desire to be assimilated into the Canadian community, the concept of the "mosaic" is the more suitable description. They established their own Lutheran church, their own sick benefit society, lodges and press and frequently married within their own community. By the 1930's and 1940's, however, some assimilation into the "melting pot" had taken place. The church welcomed non-Swedish members and sermons were given in English; most of the surviving societies were using English rather than Swedish at their meetings and although *Svenska Pressen* advocated a policy of "Swedishness," most Vancouver Swedes were "more interested in the urgent task of physical survival than in culture." [p. 96] Nevertheless, in the post-war years, the Scandinavian Central Committee, which embraces Swedish groups representing a varied political spectrum, continued to sponsor midsummer and midwinter festivals "through which the existence of an ethnic community was regularly reaffirmed." [pp. 93-94] And, in 1964, a Swedish language school was established to teach Swedish to the children of the third generation. The first immigrants, anxious to be assimilated and fearful of embarrassment as a consequence of being unable to speak English, had not taught the mother tongue to their children, the second generation. That Mrs. Howard is herself a second generation Swede is not without significance. Once assimilated into the general community, the Swedes could afford to advertise their Swedishness as part of the Canadian "mosaic."

It is to be hoped that consciousness of the "mosaic" among other ethnic groups will encourage the publication of similar studies. The Vancouver Historical Society has made an excellent first step by sponsoring this volume which deserves a place on every shelf of British Columbiana.

University of Victoria PATRICIA E. ROY

Salmon: Our Heritage, by Cicely Lyons. Vancouver: British Columbia Packers Limited and Mitchell Press, 1969. 768 pp. $12.50.

Salmon: Our Heritage is the most recent evidence of a heightened interest by laymen and academics in the history of British Columbia's salmon industry. Acquisition of the early records of J. H. Todd and Sons and the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company, theses by Keith Ralston (The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen) and W. M. Ross (Salmon Cannery Distribution on the Nass and Skeena Rivers of British Columbia, 1877-1926), and Hugh McKervill's book, *The Salmon People*, all have contributed to this renewed interest. Ralston and Ross concern themselves with particular problems of the salmon canning industry on the Fraser and Nass and Skeena rivers. McKervill's book is a well-written, though controversial attempt to portray the type of people involved in the industry. Lyons' volume has a much broader purpose — she attempts to analyze the first one hundred years of the salmon industry in British Columbia. The author, an employee of British Columbia Packers Limited, was indeed fortunate that her position afforded consultation with many documents of that company hitherto unavailable to historians. On the basis of such information, as well as the valuable document collections in the Provincial Library at Victoria and the Special Collections Library at the University of British Columbia, together with the varied number of university theses and other published works, one could reasonably expect a definitive history of the industry.

Lyons documents the areal expansion of salmon canning along the British Columbia coast, the increase in the number of cases and species canned and the rise in the number of canneries that persisted into the 1920's. Case studies describe the history of early canneries and the pioneer efforts of entrepreneurs such as Alexander Ewen, Henry Bell-Irving and Henry Doyle who founded and developed the industry during its infancy. In these case studies the author focuses her attention on changes in ownership, production records and local management with particular reference to the canneries that were eventually incorporated into British Columbia Packers Limited. In the latter half of the book Lyons describes some of the technological advances in the salmon canning industry and the diversification of company production away from a total dependency on salmon together with the concomitant and progressive decline in the number of canneries and increasing concentration of canneries in the Vancouver and Prince Rupert areas. Included throughout the book is the fascinating history of British Columbia Packers and its gradual domination of the

salmon industry in the province; the introduction of untried products into markets in Eastern Canada, Europe and other areas of the world; and the problems of a declining industry in a province that is still largely dependent on the primary processing of raw materials.

The author makes some attempt to correlate development of the salmon industry with the economic, social and political life of the province. The close association between important men of the salmon industry such as R. P. Rithet, J. A. Laidlaw and J. H. Todd and the rise of Victoria as the centre of the province's economic and social life gave the salmon industry an aura of respectability and a degree of political influence. Later with the formation of limited companies, the emergence of Vancouver as centre for the industry and the rise of lumbering and mining industries, the dominant influence of the salmon industry on the life of the province began to diminish. Lyons fails to probe fully the nature of the early relationships or the implications of the later decline. Attempts to tie developments in the salmon industry to broader historical trends in British Columbia and Canada are largely unsuccessful as the author records events but provides little analytical discussion. References to the Atlantic Charter (p. 449), to the raid at Dieppe (p. 458) and to the entrance of Newfoundland into Confederation (p. 487) are largely irrelevant to an assessment of the importance of the first one hundred years of the salmon industry on life in British Columbia.

Throughout the book the reader is deluged with a mass of interesting statistical and factual data on the industry. In this sense Lyons work is a valuable handbook of material which previously had been unpublished, but it is by no means, as the Forward claims, "a history with a unique flavour and emphasis." The book lacks a major theme. It fails to weigh some inviting questions concerning the role of salmon canning in its first one hundred years. First, to what extent can the salmon industry be regarded as a foreign dominated industry? Second, to what degree has the industry contributed to the economic prosperity of the province? Third, how has the industry affected the political and social life of a province whose economic development is intimately linked to a natural resource base? Merely recording factual information in an encyclopedic manner does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the industry's development. Chapter Three, for example, discusses the initial development of salmon canning in British Columbia but provides little explanation of why canning developed when it did, the degree of dependency on San Francisco capital or the importance of salmon salting to the initial success of a canning enterprise. Moreover, the expansion upcoast to the Skeena River,

and later to Rivers Inlet and the Nass River, is not probed fully, especially with regard to the differences in capital financing between the Skeena and Fraser canneries. Later, in Chapter Eight, the author is concerned with the sale of many canneries that occurred in the late 1920's and the general decline in the number of operating plants. The year by year events of the industry are recorded for the period, but there is little analysis of the reasons for the great turnover in ownership and the effects of these ownership changes on the consolidation of operating canneries along the coast.

Cicely Lyons' concern for an interest in the salmon industry is attested to by the diligence with which she has pursued completion of this lengthy volume. We are indebted to her for assembling much interesting data and later historians will assuredly benefit from this work. Lyons' devotion to the salmon industry, and her concern for the species on which the industry is based, makes it all the harder to conclude that we still lack a systematic and rigorous, historical analysis of British Columbia's salmon industry.

University of Washington WILLIAM M. ROSS

Bella Coola by Cliff Kopas. Mitchell Press Ltd., Vancouver, 1970. 291 pp., illus., index.

Cliff Kopas, a journalist, makes no claim to be an historian. His aim is purely "to perpetuate the thrilling story of Bella Coola and its people," to communicate to his audience his obvious and understandable love of this small coastal village. The author's goals are limited but laudable, and this book will, no doubt, enjoy a measured success in the gift shops of Victoria, although a more varied and more imaginative selection of photographs might well have enhanced its souvenir value.

More a series of descriptive vignettes than a chronological accounting of Bella Coola's past, Kopas' volume ranges over the usual recitation of eighteenth and nineteenth century explorers, Indian life and customs and the entrance of fur trader and missionary. The work of B. F. Jacobsen and the establishment of the Norwegian colony at the turn of the century make the Bella Coola story unexpectedly unique. Kopas' anecdotal treatment only accentuates the lack of that real meat of historical writing — good localized histories of this and similar towns.

The climax of the work, both in terms of the author's enthusiasm and the book's conclusion is the communal effort of the 1950's to build a road link to the interior of the province. With all due public commendation of the role of P. A. Gagliardi, then minister of highways, the minutely detailed description of the construction of the Bella Coola road has all the atmosphere of bringing the good news from Ghent to Aix. Yet it is this episode, more than any other, which brings the reader close to the problems and preoccupations of small town British Columbia.

Kopas' *Bella Coola* is based on undisclosed sources, according to the author, a mélange of stories, reminiscences, diaries and letters from his personal collection. Yet one chapter on Indian war and politics is only a slightly dramatized version of the comparable chapter in T. F. McIlwraith's monumental work on the Bella Coola, and it is surprising that this particular debt was not acknowledged. Unfortunately, Kopas appears to have missed the Rev. R. C. Lundin Brown's accounts of the area in the 1860's, in particular the dramatic conversion of Klatsassan before his execution, material eminently suited to this "fusion of fact and fancy."

National Museum of Man, Ottawa JEAN USHER