

## Book Reviews

*Strangers Entertained: A History of the Ethnic Groups of British Columbia*, by John Norris. Vancouver, British Columbia: Evergreen Press Limited, 1971. 254 pp., \$6.95.

The interest in history engendered by centennial celebrations is giving Canadians an opportunity to repair their neglect of the history of ethnic groups. *Strangers Entertained*, published by the British Columbia Centennial '71 Committee, is a pioneer study of forty-six ethnic groups that have been and are taking part in the building of British Columbian society. It is based on accounts prepared by members of the ethnic groups, supplemented by reports by two graduate students at the University of British Columbia. Historian John Norris rewrote these materials and furnished a substantial integrative introduction and a brief conclusion.

Norris's preoccupation is with integration-assimilation and ethnic preservation. In view of the title of his book, it is tempting to summarize his position by saying that he is on the side of the angels. In the past, he holds, groups have integrated without assimilating; now the second generation assimilates willy-nilly; yet ethnic diversity is good and even necessary as a counteragent to influences from the United States, and should be maintained through continued immigration and policies favouring diversity. Every one of these propositions is debatable, but Norris makes his case well, and with disarming flexibility.

His introduction is built around various factors that affect integration-assimilation and ethnic preservation. It is systematic and thoughtful, and in parts fresh and innovative, as, for example, in his relating of pre-migration social background to preservation of ethnicity, integration, and cultural impact, with due regard for different periods of immigration. His discussion of the important topic of language and education is marred, however, by a misreading of the *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, the less excusable for occurring in the same paragraph as an almost word-for-word borrowing of several lines from the report.

Norris begins by stating that all who live in British Columbia are immigrants or descendants of immigrants, and his catalogue of ethnic groups is exceptionally complete. Curiously, however, he omits the group that by his own assessment has "made the largest contribution of any group to the development of British Columbia," English-speaking Canadians of British or other European background. His ground for doing so is that their roots are in Canada, and yet he includes the Native Indians, who "met the boat," and the French Canadians, whose Canadian roots are longer than those of the English Canadians.

The French Canadians and the French are given separate treatment, and are listed separately in an appendix giving "numbers in ethnic groups in British Columbia (according to the Census of 1961)." The numbers appear to be for ethnic origin. It is a pity that Norris does not divulge how those of French origin were sorted into two categories: the origin question in the census does not seem to permit this.

The chapters on the various groups are informative and well written. That many seem too short is in part a tribute to their quality. In most there is an excellent balance between general analysis and piquant detail. A certain blandness and complacency is probably inevitable, in view of the fact that Norris was to a considerable extent dependent upon what representatives of various groups wrote about their ethnic fellows, and that a centennial celebration is an occasion for congratulation, including self-congratulation, rather than the exhibition of sores. Norris's rewriting gives a unity of treatment and style unusual in a work to which several dozen people have made contributions.

The organization of the book, with separate discussions of the various groups, brings home the diversity of British Columbia's population. However, the effort to include all groups restricts the space available for treating some of the larger, more complex or more significant ones. It also prevents adequate attention to ethnic phenomena that transcend particular groups (such as social stratification and power relations) and to the relations between groups, and limits comparison between groups.

The book is unnecessarily impoverished by its resolute focusing on British Columbia to the neglect of the Canadian context. Greater attention to relations between members of particular groups in British Columbia and in other parts of the country, and between British Columbian policies and those of other provinces and the federal government, would have given greater depth to the work. More pages would not have been required, but simply a broader perspective.

The value of the book is also diminished by failure to indicate sources

and to include a bibliography. The author may have felt that documentation would alienate some readers. A reasonable number of footnotes and a bibliography would, however, have enabled general readers to find out more about some of the events and peoples tantalizingly sketched in the book, and saved scholars intense frustration. Careful editing, incidentally, would have removed a considerable number of vagaries of punctuation, a mild frustration for the pettish.

*Strangers Entertained* is readable and instructive. Its author terms it a preliminary report; the measure of its success will be the number and quality of the works that it inspires. It is to be hoped that by this measure it will succeed brilliantly.

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JEAN BURNET

*The Canadian Indian: a History Since 1500*, by E. Palmer Patterson II.  
Don Mills, Collier-Macmillan Canada, Ltd., 1972. Pp. 210, illus.,  
maps. \$3.00.

In contrast to other former British settlement colonies the study of relations between European settlers and the indigenous people has not been an important aspect of Canadian historical writing. It is an area in which much of the basic research has yet to be done. It is therefore surprising, even given the Canadian penchant for survey history, that we are now confronted with a general history of the Canadian Indian. An attempt to deal with the history of the Canadian Indian since 1500 in less than 180 pages of text at this stage in the development of the field could be called courageous; or, perhaps, presumptuous.

Patterson's book is divided into two sections. In the first he advances some theoretical proposals and the second is a narrative of the history of the Indian in Canada. In part one it is argued that comparative study of the Canadian Indian and other races in colonial situations would produce useful results. Some of the problems of comparative history are also inadvertently revealed. If valid conclusions are to be reached a reasonable knowledge of both sides of a comparison is required, and in this regard Patterson's description of Harold Miller (whom he misquotes in the New Zealand context) as an "authority" does little to inspire confidence. The examples that are used from other colonies tend to be rather eclectic. There is clearly a difference between the nature of culture contact in

settlement colonies and in colonies of exploitation, and this distinction would have added coherence to the first section, particularly as Canada fitted both categories at different times in her history. It is also curious that the idea of colonial parallels which is advanced so earnestly in the first section is largely ignored in the second. The author concludes the first section by delineating four phases through which the Indians of Canada have passed since 1500, and this framework forms the basis of his account in the second section.

In spite of the constantly reiterated rhetoric about "putting the Indian at the centre of his own history" Patterson's second section is essentially an account of Indian-European relations. This approach is possibly the most valid for the historian since he relies largely on written, and therefore European, sources. But the danger of the approach is that it results in history in which Indians do not act, they only react. That is, Indian motivation is constantly seen in terms of what the European is doing to him, and not in terms of the impulses and priorities of Indian society. It is this more subtle form of ethnocentrism, not simply the elimination of negative and derogatory terms which Patterson emphasizes (on page 182), that needs to be overcome by historians of acculturation. I am not convinced that in this book the author has achieved such detachment from European norms. Although he deplors the tendency of Canadian historians to see the Indians only as adjuncts to European activities, his own book remains essentially an account of Indian responses to the European stimulus.

British Columbia is dealt with largely in the final chapter, but it contains little that will be new to anyone familiar with the Indian history of the province. The author places considerable emphasis on the development of Indian protest, a subject that he is well qualified to discuss by virtue of his Ph.D. thesis at the University of Washington on Andrew Paull. However, the heavy reliance on secondary sources in other parts of the chapter means that some old errors are repeated, such as the assertion (after H. G. Barnett) that the Coast Salish were little touched by European contact until the middle of the nineteenth century. Some new mistakes are also made, for example the claim that the Nootka were the first group of Indians that Juan Perez made contact with in 1774. Faults such as these tend to reinforce the view that adequate general histories in the field will have to wait until more detailed monographs have been produced.

The overall impression conveyed by the book is that it was written and published in a great hurry. The first two chapters seem to exist in isola-

tion from the rest of the book. I suspect that the first at least was a paper that was originally written in a different context and thrown into the book for good measure; the suspicion is strengthened by the fact that on page 10 it is described as "this paper." The numerous lengthy quotations from secondary sources inevitably leave the impression that the author has not completely digested his material. The technical craftsmanship is rather rough. For instance on pages 120 to 121 there are four reasonably long quotations from a report by the Aborigines Protection Society on the Indians of Upper Canada published in 1839. None of the extracts is free of mistakes of transcription, the work is cited differently in the footnote than in the bibliography, and neither of the citations is correct. Nor is this an atypical example. Of the quotations checked by the reviewer an alarming percentage contained more errors than can be excused on the grounds of faulty proof reading. The ideas do not follow one another very coherently, and the book is in places badly written. The publisher even manages to disprove the maxim that you cannot judge a book by its cover.

This book is to be welcomed if it indicates that the Indians of Canada are to receive more attention from historians. Although much of the material here can easily be found in more accurate original versions, the author does provide a service by collecting a considerable amount of information on the Canadian Indian in one place. But surely we are entitled to ask more than this from an historian.

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*Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Volume X, 1871-1880, edited by Marc La Terreur. University of Toronto Press, 1972. P. xxix, 823. \$20.00.

The most recently published volume of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* will do nothing to marr the reputation won for the dictionary by the two earlier volumes, for it displays the same meticulous research and literary excellence that have already established this enterprise as a tribute to Canadian scholarship and publishing. It is also a memorial to the imagination and public spirit of James Nicholson, the Toronto manufacturer of bird seed who, at his death in 1952, left the bulk of his substantial estate to the University of Toronto for the founding of a diction-

ary which would provide a record of the lives of representative Canadians of the past from all walks of life. A student of British literature and history, the English-born Nicholson wanted Canada to have a reference work equal to the *Dictionary of National Biography*. His hopes are being fulfilled in a series of volumes which will be the indispensable tools of successive generations of researchers and a source of information and enjoyment for general readers as well. Since the project is the work of scholars in both French and English Canada, and there is also a French edition published by the Laval University Press, the dictionary may contribute something to that elusive objective — national unity.

The first two volumes deal with figures of the French regime who died before 1740. Originally it was intended to continue with publication of succeeding volumes in chronological order, but when the Centennial Commission of the federal government gave the DCB a grant for biographical research in the years 1850-1900 it was decided that the next volume to be published would cover the decade of the 1870's, a period which would reveal much of the personalities and issues associated with Confederation. Thanks to this decision, persons connected with British Columbia are appearing in the pages of the dictionary sooner than they would otherwise have done.

The grouping of figures according to date of death creates a few problems, since some men and women live long past the years of their public importance. Thus many readers of this volume will be surprised to come upon Louis Joseph Papineau, who died in 1871 at the age of 84. Generally, however, the result of the adoption of this principle of organization is that the biographies in a given volume provide an excellent picture of a period. Although this is notably true of the first two volumes, since they deal with only one society, it is also true to a rewarding degree of Volume X, despite the fact that it covers distinctive communities scattered across a continent.

Written by a number of contributors, including such well established students of the history of British Columbia as Dorothy Blakey Smith, W. Kaye Lamb, Margaret Ormsby, and Madge Wolfenden, the biographies of British Columbia figures, read together, take one some distance toward understanding the social, economic, and political foundations of British colonial society on the west coast and of the province in its first decade. Foremost among the founding fathers is, of course, Sir James Douglas, who is the subject of an excellent extended biography by Dr. Ormsby. That Douglas is accorded as much space (10,000 words) as Joseph Howe, George Brown, or Sir George Etienne Cartier, all of whom appear

in this volume, indicates a full appreciation of his place in Canadian history on the part of the editors, and that should be gratifying to British Columbians who have often felt that the father of their province has not had the press he deserves in some versions of our history.

The accounts of Douglas and some of his contemporaries portray a society passing from the dominance of the fur trade, through the growth of an increasingly sophisticated crown colony, to the beginnings of the economy and the political system we know today. In the activities of James Cooper, who is described by Dr. Ormsby as the "first political agitator" in British Columbia, notably in his organization of a settlers' protest against Douglas' appointment of his brother-in-law, David Cameron, as first chief justice of Vancouver Island, may be traced the origins of the movement for responsible government in the colony. In the careers of men like Edward Graham Alston, Arthur Thomas Bushby, Robert Ker, and George Cox, all of whom held numerous offices under the Crown, one can see the growth of the colonial civil service and the early provincial administration.

The transition from the fur trade to a more diversified economy is well illustrated in the career of James Murray Yale, who spent more than thirty years in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Langley. Witnessing the decline of the fur trade, Yale turned to other resources and became a pioneer in the packing of salt fish on the Fraser and the developer of the largest farms on the mainland. Another early entrepreneur who merits a biography is John Sullivan Deas, the mulatto from South Carolina, who for a brief period in the seventies was the largest canner on the Fraser. Other pioneers whose achievements are recounted in this volume include Sewell P. Moody, founder of the first large lumber export business from the British Columbia mainland, Jerome Harper, cattle rancher and miller, famous for his champagne lunches at Clinton, and Edward Stamp, whose success in several fields, especially shipping and lumbering, leads his biographer, Dr. Lamb, to describe him as British Columbia's first industrialist. It was to quench the thirst of sailors and the workers in Stamp's sawmill on Burrard Inlet that John Deighton ("Gassy Jack") opened the Globe Saloon, and his contribution to the social life of Granville is also recorded here.

Life was not all getting and spending, as readers are reminded by the lives of Modeste Demers, first Roman Catholic bishop of Vancouver Island, and Edward White, one of the early Methodist missionaries whose skill with an axe made him in a double sense the builder at New Westminster of the first Methodist church west of the Great Lakes. Robert

Christopher Lundin Brown, the pioneer Anglican missionary in the Lillooet area, was a bachelor whose publications encouraged immigration to British Columbia and resulted in the sending of bride ships to Victoria from England in 1862-63. He remained a bachelor. "Captain" John Evans, a Welsh miner, never quite made good in mining but as a well-known figure in the Cariboo and a member of the Legislature he left the stamp of his Congregationalist conscience on the province.

A most valuable feature of the dictionary is the inclusion of comprehensive bibliographies after each biography, giving manuscript and published sources related to that entry. There is also a lengthy general bibliography of both primary and secondary sources for the period covered by the volume. Finally, there is an index of all persons mentioned in the volume, so that information can be found on some 5,000 persons in addition to the 547 who are the main subjects. With such wealth to come, may further volumes follow soon.

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MARGARET PRANG

*The Wonderful World of W. A. C. Bennett*, by Ronald B. Worley.  
Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1972, pp. 290. \$10.00.

Canadian history has been well served by the art of biography. It is impossible to study this country's past without reading Creighton's Macdonald, Careless's Brown, McNaught's Woodsworth, Graham's Meighen and so on. Provincial political leaders have been less well served, although the libraries of many universities carry the earnest efforts of many an M.A. or Ph.D. student in the form of studies of one provincial politician or another. It is perhaps the measure of our federal consciousness that we have left the lives of our provincial politicians to graduate students.

Yet who can deny the signal influence of such provincial worthies as Oliver Mowat, Ernest Manning, T. C. Douglas, Joseph Smallwood, Maurice Duplessis and W. A. C. Bennett. Admittedly, several of these have been described by journalists — Pierre Laporte's *The True Face of Duplessis*, and Robert Tyre's phillipic *Douglas of Saskatchewan*, are two examples. Nevertheless, the serious, scholarly work has tended to be confined to national politicians, to men who shape the destiny of a nation rather than to those who shape the policies of a region. Some of the provincial political leaders deserve better treatment, if only because they did



manage to cling to office longer than any federal politician — with the exception, of course, of Mackenzie King.

It may be, however, that provincial leaders don't deserve any more than this. After all, what matters of great moment can we attribute to the likes of Sir Richard McBride, Dufferin Patullo, John Hart or Byron Johnson? For the most part, narrow, noisy men with little vision, whose view of politics was that of the business man. What is there to say about them save that they got into power, they bent their efforts toward staying there and that they did all they could for their friends and associates. But then, even that might be worth knowing about, if presented by a conscientious biographer with a passion for objectivity and accuracy.

W. A. C. Bennett is a provincial politician who has had two biographies written — one by Paddy Sherman based largely on Mr. Sherman's columns while he was legislative reporter — and the other, the book under review, by Ronald Worley, sometime executive assistant to the premier, flack, and ardent Bennett worshipper, and that rules out both objectivity and accuracy.

It may be incorrect to describe *The Wonderful World of W. A. C. Bennett* as a biography, for it is a good deal about Ronald Worley's life with W. A. C. Bennett and, moreover, some parts of it lead one to feel it would be better categorized as hagiography. Mr. Bennett emerges as a man of inordinate wisdom — however homely — and Mr. Worley as one of the Premier's few intimates (although it is clear that W. A. C. Bennett is never really intimate with any one, indeed it is difficult to see how anyone could be intimate with a man whose speech, according to Worley, sounds like a politician's handbook).

The book begins with a brief description of Mr. Bennett's early life, but then moves quickly into the B.C. political scene: the decline and fall of Duff Patullo, Bennett's departure, with Tilly Rolston, from the Conservative party after his rather chequered career as candidate for the provincial leadership of the party and his abortive attempt to enter federal politics; and then the departure of Ronald B. Worley from the Liberal party to stand by Bennett's side. The burden of the narrative concerns the twenty years of Social Credit in power in B.C.

To be fair to Mr. Worley, once the reader has managed to overcome the cloying sycophancy of the book and the author's penchant for inventing conversations (although this is a failing of many popular biographers) the book does offer both an interesting record of events during the Bennett era and an intriguing picture of the Social Credit leader. How accurate the record is and how reliable the picture can only be deter-

mined when some painstaking scholar provides a documented study. It does seem likely, however, that Mr. Worley's imagination knows some limit and that at least some of what he says has a factual basis.

The picture of the premier that emerges is of a man with an enormous ego, a staggering conviction of his own rectitude and great faith in his own destiny. He appears to be one seldom assailed by doubt, the living embodiment of all the virtues Dale Carnegie and Norman Vincent Peale ever expounded. Chief amongst these is loyalty for once a man was inducted into the leader's retinue, he was never cast aside, electoral mishaps notwithstanding — the career of Einar Gunderson is a good example, that of Ronald Worley another. Indeed, if one can believe Mr. Worley, few provincial premiers can have picked their colleagues with less thought yet clung to them with more tenacity than W. A. C. Bennet.

It may be that at some point in the future, someone will sit down to the documents and attempt a serious biography of W. A. C. Bennett. They will need to read Mr. Worley's hymn of praise and self-advertisement because it will offer an object lesson in bad biography and because there may be something in it that, when checked, will offer an insight into the life of the first and probably the last Social Credit premier of British Columbia.

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