

Book Reviews

Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819, by Warren L. Cook. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973. 620 pp., 62 illus. \$17.50.

It has taken a long time since the work of Henry R. Wagner, William R. Manning, and Judge Frederick W. Howay, for a truly significant volume to appear on the early history of the northwest coast. That it took such an interval for an historian to sift through published materials and the rich archival resources in the Americas and Europe is remarkable although the labour itself might have deterred the more faint-hearted. Professor Cook is the first to attempt an evaluation of the nearly three centuries of Spain's interest in the Pacific Northwest. Not only has he scoured the archives for new material, but he demonstrates an enthusiasm for his subject which is transmitted to his readers. Very often his descriptions of places and events reach near poetic beauty. The book is necessarily a large one and its fresh interpretations will have a considerable impact upon historians of British Columbia.

During the breathless thrust of expansion in the sixteenth century, Spaniards seemed unwilling to let any corner of the New World avoid their glance if not their touch. The search for precious metals, new Indian civilizations, or other resources, led explorers north from Acapulco almost to modern Oregon before the climate and exhaustion halted further reconnaissance. Spain closed the book on expansion to the north of California, concealing existing information to prevent possible foreign competition. By the eighteenth century even the Spanish government had forgotten about knowledge which lay buried in dusty archives. Occasional visits of the Manilla galleons which crossed the Pacific annually between Acapulco and the Philippines to northern waters left little mark. As the history of the wrecked Nehalem Beeswax vessel near the mouth of the Columbia River points out, survivors did not live to inform anyone of their discoveries. Throughout the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth

centuries, the world was content to trust apocryphal accounts of exploration and to leave the entire coast to the theoretical Spanish claim.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, it was not a renewal of curiosity that impelled Spain to substantiate long neglected claims over the northwest coast. Rather it was a reaction to the intrusions and competition from Russia, Britain, and the United States which rekindled Spanish efforts and resulted in a dangerous confrontation between Spain and Britain at Nootka Sound.

It is the period 1769 to 1795 that forms the major substance of the book. Professor Cook examines the expeditions of Juan Pérez, Juan Francisco Bodega y Quadra, Esteban José Martínez, and others, pointing out that one of the great errors of the Spanish imperial government was to keep these expeditions and their discoveries shrouded in near total secrecy. Not only was this detrimental to the case for sovereignty over unsettled territories, but the remarkable endeavours of Spanish explorers were lost to the world. When Captain James Cook visited Nootka Sound in 1778, he found little evidence of previous Spanish visits. With the publication of Cook's journals and information that the northwest coast possessed a marketable resource in sea otter pelts which could be sold at great profit in Canton, the race was on. By 1786, there were at least six vessels on the coast of present British Columbia from England, India, and China.

Not only were Spanish claims being lost by default, but during the 1780's the coastal Indian societies received their first major contacts with Europeans. As Professor Cook points out, these Indians were soon dependant upon metal utensils, firearms, and other trade goods. The price they would have to pay was a high one for European diseases and greed accompanied the traders. Because these individuals did not have to return annually to the same territory, the maritime fur trade could be exceptionally brutal. For their own part, many of the coastal tribes were exceptionally warlike and jealous of their sovereign rights. Incidents were common and the atrocities perpetrated by one group of fur traders brought the revenge of the Indians against the unsuspecting occupants of the next expedition. Fortunately, not all Europeans present on the coast abused the Indians in pursuit of sea otter pelts. The intellectual curiosity and scientific spirit of the Enlightenment were also present. Since the Spaniards did not develop major commercial interests, they presented less immediate danger to the Indian societies.

The confrontation which developed between Spain and Britain at Nootka Sound in 1789 could scarcely have ended with an amicable

agreement. As it was, the rival commanders Esteban José Martínez and James Colnett were not men cut out for complex diplomatic negotiations. In his treatment of the incidents, Professor Cook has drawn upon a vast array of documentation to see what factors motivated the various parties. The behaviour of Martínez in arresting Colnett and other British citizens, so long portrayed by historians as an act of drunken irrationality, becomes a necessary step for the protection of Spanish sovereignty. Not only did Martínez take his responsibilities seriously, but he understood that without dramatic action to stop Colnett, there would be a strong British base established somewhere on the coast.

While the author's interpretation of the Nootka incidents appears quite logical, many historians like contemporary eighteenth-century observers have been influenced by the colourful fantasies and propaganda generated by John Meares. Injured financially by the seizure of the British ships and by the advent of Spanish power at Nootka Sound, Meares twisted the events to strengthen the British case for possession. In the process, he painted the Spaniards and particularly Martínez as barbarians capable of the worst cruelties. Despite the fact that Professor Cook identifies Meares for what he was, a most intelligent and witty liar, his loaded arguments and ability to dramatize make it very difficult for any historian to avoid some of his myths.

Although they were well aware of the potential of the fur trade, Spaniards lacked the flexibility and initiative to make profits. Their attempts to utilize established markets in the Philippines failed since neither Mexican nor Philippine merchants were willing to take up the challenge of the fur trade. The Spanish occupation of the coast was to maintain sovereignty and to investigate the possibility of a passage through the North American continent to the Atlantic.

The driving force at Nootka came from a number of strongly motivated and highly intelligent individuals who were not restricted by purely economic factors. Captain Pedro Alberni, commander of the Catalonian volunteers who garrisoned Friendly Cove, became more famous as the first successful gardener on the coast. Juan Francisco Bodega y Quadra during his governorship at Nootka, developed a most successful relationship with Chief Ma-Kwee-na; his realistic Indian policy drew widespread acclaim from all of the nationalities visiting the port. Even if Bodega's policies were based upon the need to strengthen the Spanish claim to the coast, the result permitted some penetrating scientific observations of Indian society. The accounts compiled by Alejandro Malaspina, José Moziño, Dionisio Acalá Galiano, Cayetano Valdés, and others, provide

raw material for excellent insights into aspects of Indian culture and the results of European contact which otherwise would have been lost. Some of this material has been available for many years in published form, but Professor Cook adds a new depth resulting from his extensive archival investigations.

On the thorny question of whether the coastal Indians practised cannibalism, the author tends to oppose the generally held opinion today that it did not exist. Certainly there is no lack of source material which purports to explain in lurid detail how Ma-Kwee-na butchered youthful victims for his cannibal feasts. John Meares published full accounts of these ceremonies from evidence he claimed to have collected from Indian chiefs other than Ma-Kwee-na. Since Meares's account influenced other observers including the Spaniards, many of their descriptions repeated his information. Although Professor Cook catalogues numerous sources which referred to cannibalism, there is no hard evidence and even the existing circumstantial reports might be discounted. Francisco Eliza, for example, learned about Indian cannibalism from the English prisoners of the *Argonaut* (page 296). As Chief Ma-Kwee-na explained in rebuttal to the charge, rivalries within Indian society made it good politics for others to condemn him for a crime which sparked great abhorrence from all Europeans.

When Malaspina visited Nootka, he set out to study the Indians in order to solve some of the great discrepancies in European accounts about the coastal societies. He found that almost all sources from Captain Cook to John Meares reported the existence of cannibalism and that the members of the Spanish garrison accepted the belief. After questioning witnesses and visiting the Indian villages on numerous occasions the only confirmation of cannibalism came from an eight- or nine-year-old boy who had been sold to the Spaniards. Quite possibly he reflected the opinion of the friars who were certain that they had saved him from a horrible death. When one relative of Ma-Kwee-na answered in the affirmative when asked about cannibalism and then realized what the question had been, he retracted his answer demonstrating great repugnance and horror at the whole idea.¹

Malaspina concluded that the charges of cannibalism and particularly those of Meares were false. Severed hands and other human remains possessed by the Indians and used by Europeans to suggest cannibal

¹ Pedro Novo y Colson, ed. *La Vuelta al Mundo por las corbetas Descubierta y Atrevido al mando del Capitán de Navío Don Alejandro Malaspina desde 1789-1794* (Madrid, 1885), 355-356.

proclivities were probably nothing more than war trophies. An experience of Captain George Vancouver illustrates the attitude of at least some Indians. Invited on board Vancouver's vessel to dine, the Indians ate everything provided except venison. Understanding the possible meaning, the officers attempted to clarify the origins of the meat by pointing to the fur garments of the guests. This seemed to confirm their suspicions since they felt the finger pointed to them rather than their furs; they rejected the meat until the seamen produced the remainder of the haunch.² If indeed cannibalism or even occasional ceremonial cannibalism existed, the Indians soon accepted admonitions against it. Since the power of any Europeans to influence Indian customs was not strong at this point, it seems more likely that Malaspina's conclusions were correct.

Professor Cook presents a masterful treatment of the competition for the coast and the dangerous international repercussions of the Nootka Sound Controversy. For Spain, the ramifications of a diplomatic defeat in which her claim to sovereignty over unsettled territories was lost, marked the beginning in a long series of disasters. While the major preoccupation of the Spaniards at Nootka was to negotiate an acceptable settlement with the British commissioner, Captain George Vancouver, the implementation of the Nootka Conventions was not an easy matter. When it became obvious that much of the British case rested upon the total mistruths provided by John Meares, Vancouver's position was not strong. The Spaniards, although they had expanded the post at Nootka by 1792 into a fairly permanent fortified base, desired to establish the line of demarcation at the Strait of Juan de Fuca where they had a small garrison at Puerto Nuñez Gaona (Neah Bay). The plan was to make Vancouver commit his nation to a relatively modest section of the coast and thereby to remove British claims to all territory north of San Francisco. The result was a diplomatic standoff in which Spain sought to reduce the damages done through earlier European negotiations. Finally, impelled by the need for alliance in Europe and with the knowledge that there was no north-west passage, the Third Nootka Convention of 1795 resulted in a mutual abandonment of the northern port with free access to the coast guaranteed to both parties.

In the latter section of the book, Professor Cook breaks new ground to show how Spain retained an interest in the Pacific Northwest after the evacuation of Nootka. Efforts were made from the province of New Mexico to close off the land approaches to the west. While the expeditions

² George Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World*, I (London, 1798), 270.

dispatched to intercept Lewis and Clark illustrate a continuation of Spanish concern with the northwest, such acts were little more than muscle spasms soon to be followed by rigormortus. Any real policy to maintain a presence in the Pacific Northwest would have demanded the reoccupation of Nootka Sound or some other port. The author's argument that part of Spain's weakness resulted from the placement of California, the Columbia basin, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca under the control of the Captain General of the Interior Provinces at Chihuahua isolated from the northwest coast is certainly correct. If, however, there had been a genuine policy to re-establish territorial claims, distance and administrative errors could have been overcome quickly. Even before the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1807 and the outbreak of the first Mexican Revolution in 1810, the idea of restoring Spanish control over the distant northwest coast had ceased to influence all but a few.

Perhaps the author's description of Spain's activities on the northwest coast as "the apex of her colonial expansion" is just a little misleading. From the beginning, most authorities in Madrid and Mexico City considered the region to be little more than an expensive and bothersome annoyance. There was little of the missionary zeal and effort to utilize available resources which characterized the Spanish empire in an earlier age. The flood tide of empire was carried forward by its own inertia beyond the point it should have ebbed. Despite the play on metaphors, Professor Cook has written an admirable book which will become the standard history of Spain's role on the early northwest coast. The only error of note is on page 107 where mercury is described as being in demand in New Spain for refining gold ore, which should read silver ore. Other errors (pp. 134, 185, 195, 394, 481, 530, and 549) are either small typographical mistakes or incorrect dates.

University of Calgary

CHRISTON ARCHER

British Columbia: One Hundred Years of Geographical Change, by J. Lewis Robinson and Walter G. Hardwick. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1973. 63 pp.

This comprehensive historical geography of British Columbia by two University of British Columbia professors of Geography is a pioneer work in its field. It is concise yet packs in a surprisingly large amount of information on and interpretation of its subject. Some might consider it regret-

tably short, whetting the appetite of the reader for more elaboration, illustration and explanation of the multi-faceted and changing land of British Columbia. It is written in an interesting and fast-moving style that exhibits a satisfying uniformity throughout, although readers who are familiar with the authors' other writings will recognize their respective contributions.

A major theme in the book is the progression from the marked isolation in the early settlement period toward greater integration during a century of growth and change. A fourfold concentric zonation of British Columbia focused on the southwestern urban nucleus is defined, in which the "intensity and complexity of economic activity, and the density of population, decrease outward." This sets the stage for a discussion of the early settlement nuclei of Victoria and New Westminster and the penetration of the interior during the search for gold. The rapid rise of Vancouver which quickly overwhelmed its Vancouver Island rival in commercial and industrial importance is treated at length, including some consideration of its functional areas.

The approach is chronological within several broad periods, the first two being 1843-1886 and 1886-1918. The natural resource base and developments within major regions are traced up to the end of World War I. The rapid expansion of the economy, both on the coast and in the interior, during the period 1919-1946 is the main theme of the next section, followed by a more detailed outline of the ensuing industrial growth and functional integration after 1946. This latter section is organized under resource use headings, including forestry, fisheries and electric power. The last part of the book is focused on the hierarchy of urban places and their functional characteristics. An unfortunate mainland bias creeps in at this juncture where the authors devote nearly five pages to a detailed consideration of metropolitan Vancouver under the section heading, "Georgia Strait Region," but dispatch Victoria in a mere twelve lines. Not only out of respect to her aged dignity, but also on the basis of a metropolitan population nearly one-fifth of Vancouver's, surely Victoria warrants the better part of a page? A much better job is done on the roles of the sub-regional capitals in the interior, particularly Prince George.

The lack of references or a bibliography may please the general reader, but will disappoint the more academically inclined who might wish to consult this pioneer work as a starting point for further study. In one instance where some indication of source is offered the reader is frustrated: four maps of early Victoria are attributed to P. D. Floyd, two of

which even give page numbers, but nowhere is there a reference to what Floyd wrote or where it can be found. The inclusion of more maps to illustrate such changes as occurred in the fish canning industry would be desirable and a little more statistical information would be useful. Of course, documentation such as this might clutter the book unnecessarily for general readers, and no book can be all things to all people.

The book design is based on an $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ format with two columns arranged across the long dimension. A spacious and dramatic layout of the text is achieved by starting each heading half way down the page in the next column after the column in which the last section of text terminates. This is carried to extremes by treating even sub-headings in this fashion and might be more effective if only major headings were so treated. Also, strict application of the technique results in several unfortunate instances where one to four lines hang in open space on pages 30, 42, 54 and 60. Perhaps the text could have been backed up slightly by minor variations in starting points at the beginnings of sections in order to avoid this result.

The book is good reading and offers an excellent interpretation of the evolution of British Columbia in a nutshell, despite the minor flaws mentioned. It takes a broad view, identifying the major elements of the changing geographies of British Columbia. It is to be hoped that it will generate greater interest in the historical geography of the province and will inspire other books on the subject.

University of Victoria

C. N. FORWARD

Residential and Neighbourhood Studies in Victoria. Edited by Charles Forward. Victoria, B.C.: Department of Geography, University of Victoria; Western Geographical Series No. 5, 1973. xv + 230 pp., index, maps, diagrams; \$4.00.

A perennial and truthful response by teachers of urban geography when challenged by their students with the old battlesong to up the Canadian content has been to point to the paucity of humanistic empirical research (as opposed to conceptual and impressionistic studies) on the Canadian city. A few years ago William Bunge urged geographers to once again become explorers and chart the unknown islands of the human condition. For Bunge the dark continent was literally on his own doorstep, and throughout the late 1960's his Detroit Geographical Expedition

collected folk geographies while acting in an advocacy role in Detroit's inner city.

Now the results of humanistic exploration of the Canadian city are beginning to appear in print. Charles Forward's expeditionary force consists of four faculty members and two former graduate students of the Geography Department at the University of Victoria. Together they have produced an extremely well-balanced collection of six vignettes covering a range of neighbourhoods in Greater Victoria. Technically, the volume maintains the excellent standard of this occasional series; seventy-five illustrations, including maps and photographs, provide a copious and compelling sense of place.

The collection opens with Forward's account of the evolution of the Uplands, Victoria's most fashionable residential neighbourhood. Forward's more general point concerns forces which have favoured the longevity (more optimistically, he prefers immortality) of the Uplands over a sixty-year period. But mortality is a more common visitor to the urban scene, and R. W. Robertson presents an evaluation of the death and rebirth of the Rose-Blanshard district. He offers a useful review of the legislative basis to Canadian urban renewal, and continues with a detailed discussion of the human problems of relocation, with its disruption of established patterns of spatial behaviour. His data is derived from a well-designed questionnaire survey.

Themes of malaise are implicit, but never explicit, in the next two papers, C. Y. Lai's discussion of Victoria's Chinatown and a profile of a delinquent juvenile group by Douglas Porteous. Lai's is a detailed longitudinal study of a fading urban village, whose population has dwindled from several thousand early this century to fewer than 200 in 1972. Vacant properties and an aging population just outside the urban core are an invitation to the bulldozer and the wrecker's ball, but Chinatown's demise is a timely one in the present mood of historic preservation, and Lai has mild optimism for rehabilitation of the district. Porteous' study is an original attempt to introduce some of the American gang literature to the Canadian city. Although he does not totally convince the reader that he is indeed encountering the "Burnside gang," the description of the spatial range of the youth, and their chosen locations for delinquent acts, are illustrative of Bunge's call for subjective geographies, for entry to the cultural world of lifestyle groups.

The two final papers discuss two facets of residential development in Greater Victoria. Peter Murphy's contribution on apartment location returns to an evolutionary perspective and a descriptive interpretation of

the emerging spatial pattern. The market, access to downtown, view locations, and a rather mild zoning policy are identified as the critical variables in the present distribution of apartments. Ian Halkett's study of the rural-urban fringe in the Saanich Peninsula is an appropriate conclusion to the book. Here, on the urban frontier, Halkett indicates how the emerging residential morphology is determined by different zoning strategies in the three Saanich municipalities. Local councils and bylaws are asserting a philosophy of privatism as they extend discretionary powers over the municipal landscape.

The six case studies form a neat bundle. The papers show a consistent quality, and their strong empirical nature and excellent illustrations will make this inexpensive volume an asset to urban studies courses in junior colleges and universities throughout the province.

Undoubtedly the authors have attained their goals, but irreverently (and perhaps irrelevantly) one might ask whether the goals might not have been more ambitious. A recurrent methodology in several of the papers is a temporal one, to chart the sequential development of spatial patterns. The emphasis is then placed on describing the changing patterns, the morphology, with little attention to process. One result of this methodology is that comparative generalizations are limited. A discussion of the Uplands, for example, might have used as an organizing theme the transference of value systems from the Old World to the New, the role of metaphor and symbol upon the landscape in a city where a new high-rise can still be called *The Rudyard Kipling*.

One further point. To open with an allusion to William Bunge is certainly disarming and possibly inappropriate, but to be consistent in this review it does raise a further question. Bunge characterizes humanistic study of the city as one which implies a stance by the explorer which is not value-free. Although each of the papers carries planning implications, these implications are not expressed forcibly or in detail. Several of the papers allude to failures in Victoria's urban structure; a renewal scheme which left over half the relocated families with less residential space than before their displacement, zoning bylaws which might check land speculation but also act to block the in-migration of lower income families.

But perhaps in Victoria the art of nuance and innuendo is sufficient to make the point, and the club tie rather than the red flag will expedite a movement towards maximizing equity rather than efficiency in the urban system. Perhaps too these final remarks are somewhat errant and uncharitable. Certainly they should not obscure the very real achievements of this volume, sensitive, thorough, well-written, and drawing on data

more personable than the census. The Victoria contributors have established a strong precedent for other explorers of the Canadian city.

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DAVID LEY

The Development of the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1885 to 1913, by David J. Reid. Vancouver, Economics and Sociology Unit, Northern Operations Branch, Fisheries and Marine Service, Pacific region, Department of the Environment, 1973. (NOB/ECON 4-73). vii, 87 pp., biblio.

One of the problems in studying British Columbia is the comparative paucity of reliable secondary works. The difficulties this can cause are neatly illustrated by the work under review. This study, which is basically an essay with extensive appendices, is a revision of a paper given at the 1973 Canadian Historical Association annual meeting.

Reid sets out to analyse mergers among firms engaged in salmon canning on the Fraser River in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His argument is based on two tables which he has compiled and which appear in an appendix — “Exit and Entry of Companies into the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1870-1909” and “Directory of Companies involved in the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1870-1909.” These tables are used to graph the incidence of mergers. From the results, Reid argues that the peaks of mergers on the Fraser River reflect the peaks in a general merger movement in the United Kingdom and the United States. He also contends that the mergers were motivated by a desire for “monopsony power” rather than for economies of scale, and that they resulted by 1902 in the industry passing out of local control.

Unfortunately for these elaborate compilations, there is no way that even moderately reliable lists of this type can be produced from secondary sources; the files of the British Columbia provincial registrar of companies and of contemporary newspapers are essential. Reid, however, seems to have depended on Cicely Lyons, *Salmon: our heritage*, Vancouver, British Columbia Packers Limited and Mitchell Press, 1969, which he calls “an excellent source of statistical material.” But Lyons, in spite of an over-generous review in *BC Studies*, no. 8, pp. 56-8, is a work of piety rather than scholarship, and its treatment of the early years of the Fraser River canning industry is riddled with factual errors. Consequently Reid’s “Directory” is wildly inaccurate before 1890 (not one of the first 25 items

is completely free from error and several pioneer operations are omitted) and is not to be trusted after that date. These inaccuracies probably don't in themselves vitiate his argument about mergers since the major mergers can be easily identified without use of his top-heavy apparatus; the biggest hazard is to the unwary user who expects a higher standard of reliability from a government department.

University of British Columbia

KEITH RALSTON

"Haida Burial Practices: Three Archaeological Examples; The Gust Island Burial Shelter; The Skungo Cave, North Island; Mass Burials from Tanu," by George F. MacDonald and "The Gust Island Burial Shelter: Physical Anthropology," by Jerome S. Cybulski. *Archaeological Survey of Canada Mercury Series*, Paper No. 9. Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1973. 113 pp. \$2.00.

As its name indicates, the National Museum's Mercury Series, of which these two contributions comprise Paper No. 9, is specially designed to provide prompt publication of the results of Museum-sponsored research. In the light of this object, MacDonald's report is understandably preliminary in scope and Cybulski's is surprisingly complete.

MacDonald provides a useful though very brief review of Haida mortuary practices as depicted in ethnographic and ethnohistoric sources. He then presents the results of investigations at three archaeological sites where the dead had been deposited in a rock shelter (Gust Island), a cave (Skungo Cave), and plank-covered pits (Tanu). Short descriptions and some illustrations of the burials, boxes, and such associated material as cedar-bark matting, labrets, and copper ornaments constitute the bulk of the report. MacDonald feels that the Gust Island rock shelter was in use at least during the eighteenth century and probably until about the middle of the nineteenth century. The burial cave, he reasons, was used between about 1765 and 1865, and the Tanu pit burials likely represent mass interments following one or more of the 1860-1880 epidemics.

Cybulski has provided us with a very workmanlike description of the Gust Island skeletal material. Considering that MacDonald's estimates place these remains in a period of marked decline in Haida population, Cybulski's observations on early mortality and skeletal pathology are particularly interesting. Over 80 per cent of those individuals whose age could be calculated died before their thirtieth year; and close to 30 per

cent of the skeletons showed pathological disorders (including evidence of anaemia and rickets) apart from the generally common signs of arthritis.

University of Victoria

DONALD H. MITCHELL

B.C. Rail Guides by Pacific Coast Branch, Canadian Railroad Historical Association. Vancouver, Canadian Railroad Historical Association (P.O. Box 1006, Station "A") 1973. 7 numbers. \$0.50 each.

Railways — and the promise of them — are an integral part of British Columbia's history. It is no wonder then that the Pacific Coast branch of the Canadian Railroad Association is thriving although it was only formed in 1970. The enthusiasm of its members has led to the publication of seven B.C. Rail Guides.

Some of these booklets are designed specifically for the railway "buff" and will be of interest primarily to such individuals. The best example is Ron H. Meyer's list of preserved locomotives and rolling stock in British Columbia and the Yukon. A companion piece is David L. Davies' collection of very brief histories of the major railways in British Columbia with emphasis on their dates of completion. This compendium makes no pretence of being comprehensive but there is at least one misleading omission. Mr. Davies implies that the third street railway in the province was that of Nelson which began service in 1899. This is not so; New Westminster had an electric street railway in 1891. Although the third pamphlet, the report of a field trip to the Mission-Abbotsford area, is a souvenir of that journey, its mixing of historical data and observations in June 1973 will be of interest to students of the historical geography of the Fraser Valley.

Members of the Association are aware of the tendency of much of their work to be of an antiquarian nature. To extend "the *dimensions* of the subject," W. Jordan has prepared a limited collection of statistics for the railway historian. The list shows the numerical correlation between railway developments in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada. However, the introductory apology for its many inadequacies is fair warning. When the list is expanded and revised — as inevitably it must be — it would be helpful if the compiler also indicated the specific sources for each table rather than relying on a general bibliography.

In describing the controversies among the advocates of competing rail routes in the Peace River, the only purely historical booklet, Andrew J.

Rimmington's "Peace River Railway Surveys of the 1920's" reveals something of the importance of the promise of railways to British Columbia history. Mr. Rimmington correctly suggests that for governments in the 1920's "a lively interest" in Peace River railways "was politically necessary; [but] to actually proceed with any of the plans would have been politically disastrous." (p. 3) The discussion, however, is confined to the federal government. The thesis is at least as true for the government of British Columbia. Premier John Oliver sponsored some surveys of the Peace River district and repeatedly referred to the need of linking the Pacific Great Eastern with the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia. Oliver's support of this idea was particularly evident when he was fighting a provincial election campaign or when he was under pressure from Vancouver businessmen who wanted to lure the trade of the Peace River away from Edmonton. His successors, Dr. J. D. MacLean and Dr. S. F. Tolmie also gave lip service to the idea of extending the P.G.E. into the Peace although their talk was often inspired by attempts to dispose of the P.G.E. Incidentally, if this booklet is revised, Mr. Rimmington should note that Canada did not have any embassies in Europe — or anywhere else for that matter — before the Second World War. That, however, is a pedantic point which does not detract from the general usefulness of the work.

For the general student of British Columbia history, the most welcome of the rail guides are Ron H. Meyer's selected bibliographies of British Columbia railways. How Mr. Meyer defines "selected" is not clear; his bibliographies are quite comprehensive. Not only do they include standard books and articles in both popular and scholarly journals but their coverage extends to government reports, theses and pamphlets. As well as the major lines in British Columbia, entries refer to projected railways, logging roads and the White Pass and Yukon. Chronologically, they range from H. Y. Hind's 1862 *Sketch of an Overland Route to British Columbia* to a forthcoming volume, *Van Horne's Road* by O. Lavallee. By implication, Mr. Meyer's guide to what has been done in British Columbia railway history demonstrates the many gaps in our knowledge. One hopes that the enthusiasm of the members of the Pacific Coast branch of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association will continue and that others will also be inspired to delve into the fascinating field of railway history.

PATRICIA E. ROY