Book Reviews

The Writing on the Wall, by Hilda Glynn-Ward [Hilda Howard] with an introduction by Patricia E. Roy. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974. $4.95 paper. (Social History of Canada series, number 20.)

The writing on the wall bore a stark and simple message: the yellow peril threatened British Columbia. This, at least, was the conviction of Hilda Howard, the British born Vancouverite whose alarm prompted this curious novel, published first in 1921. It is a tale of the Oriental penetration of British Columbia. The cunning "Chink" and the wily "Jap" are the villains of the piece; slyly they insinuate themselves into the province, hoping, in time, to make it theirs. Gordon Morley, the unscrupulous politician, sells them his honour and his province in return for wealth and power. But Lizzie McRobbie, clear-sighted and incorruptible, understands the real menace of the Asian. She knows Columbia's destiny must be both British and white. Her husband Carter, a wealthy cannery owner and Lieutenant-Governor of the province, is uncertain at first. Basically, yet blinded by self-interest, he employs Oriental labour and does not see the error of his ways. But in the end, confronted with the Legislature's Oriental franchise bill, he sees the truth with horror. Branding the measure the thin edge of the wedge, he refuses his assent and calls for a white British Columbia. The moral of the parable could scarcely be more obvious.

The Writing on the Wall was no literary masterpiece. In fact, it was nothing more than a crude anti-Oriental tract. Prejudice against Asians, that hardy perennial, had taken root in British Columbia half a century before the novel was published. Mrs. Howard's work was one expression of the province's recurrent nativism. This new edition includes a lengthy

introduction by Professor Patricia Roy, one which unfortunately contains a number of minor inaccuracies. The Chinese were disfranchised in 1872, not during the 1880's (p. vii). Chinese labourers were not imported by the CPR during the early 1880's (p. vii) but by Andrew Onderdonk, the American railway engineer who held construction contracts from the Canadian government. American agitators did not organize the Vancouver Asiatic Exclusion League in 1907 (p. xxix, n. 7); it grew out of the activities of the local Trades and Labour Council. Nor did the League incite the mob to violence before the riot of September 7, 1907 (p. viii). Its organizers intended only a peaceful protest.

The introduction's major weakness, however, is its failure to do what any introduction should: assess the significance of the work it introduces. Indeed Professor Roy has inflated the novel's real importance. She suggests that it was a propaganda piece, intended to arouse British Columbians and educate eastern Canadians. But Mrs. Howard seems a most unlikely propagandist. Before the book first appeared she had no formal links with organized anti-Oriental protest. Nor did she play any role in later campaigns. After publishing the novel she did little more than write occasional letters to editors, in which she inveighed against the Oriental immigrant. Professor Roy also skirts the task of assessing the novel's impact. In truth, the book was largely ignored. It did not capture the attention of many British Columbians, even those prominent in anti-Oriental circles. As for "educating the east," it failed utterly. (One notable Ontarian, however, did make room for the novel in his library — William Lyon Mackenzie King.) One can only conclude that the social impact of Mrs. Howard and her work was slight.

What little importance the novel had lies elsewhere. It was Mrs. Howard's peculiar gift to tap that great reservoir of hostile Oriental stereotypes stored away by generations of British Columbian xenophobes. Her work is a compendium of popular negative images. She flashes before her readers' eyes a seemingly endless series of pictures illustrating Chinese and Japanese depravity. These were the stock in trade of all who called for a white British Columbia. Today this remains the only interesting feature of the novel. It is neither a memorable work of literature nor a significant historical document. In short, there seems no justification for its second printing.

University of British Columbia W. Peter Ward

Watch-fires on the Mountains: The Life and Writings of Ethel Johns, by Margaret M. Street. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973. 336 pp. $12.50.

There is a sophistication about present-day nurses and nursing that could scarcely have been dreamed possible by Ethel Johns when she began her professional career at the Winnipeg General Hospital in 1899. Much of this difference can be related to the fact that this home-educated woman, who lacked any certification that a high school graduate would have, recognized the weaknesses in the hit or miss instruction program and decided very early in her professional life to find some solutions. That she was ultimately successful in this quest was verified in 1923 when the very first university department of nursing education in the British Empire presented three graduates for the degree of Bachelor of Applied Science (Nursing). That department was in the Science Faculty of The University of British Columbia. Ethel Johns was its director.

When Margaret Street, a professor in the present day School of Nursing at the University of British Columbia, undertook the somewhat formidable task of writing this biography she was well aware of the hurdles she would meet. Though there had been numerous Canadian nurse leaders, few of them had had as diverse careers, professionally, as Ethel Johns. Few had shown more courage in confronting the opposition of hospital boards, the medical profession, even the fear of hospitals among the general public. None had so many opportunities to reach the members of her profession for Miss Johns was a prolific writer. First, as editor of the Winnipeg General Hospital Alumnae *Journal*, later as contributor to, then editor of the national nursing publication, *The Canadian Nurse*, her reach steadily widened. Miss Street's access to material included these sources, countless interviews and, perhaps most important, the unfinished autobiography of Ethel herself. The result is an interesting, authentic document that can be read with interest and value by nurses, doctors and the public at large. It is truly a history of nursing in Canada.

It is written of Ethel Johns that ". . . once she set her sights on a goal, however lofty, it was not in her nature to turn back. Her British pluck and determination, coupled with strong family tradition, would have scorned such withdrawal as inexcusable weakness." This determination she demonstrated physically in 1909 when, though quite inexperienced in either distance hiking or mountain climbing, she earned membership

in the Alpine Club of Canada by scaling an eleven thousand foot mountain in the Rockies.

Numerous other "heights" faced Ethel Johns through the years. She was appalled at the lack of interest displayed by so many nurses in the eight-year struggle to secure passage of an act by the Manitoba Legislature that would permit the numerous alumnae associations to unite to form a provincial nurses' association. Under the egis of such a body the right to register the membership and provide the proud title of "Registered Nurse" would guarantee greater protection to patients whenever illness struck. Manitoba has the proud reputation of being the second province in Canada, after Nova Scotia, to win such a right.

The problem that aroused Miss Johns most emphatically, however, was the pattern of education provided by the hospitals where nurses worked. She was aware that there was a general feeling in many communities that student nurses were just one step above maid service — overworked, poorly housed and fed. From her own experience she knew how often lectures were given to tired, sleepy students by untrained instructors. The key to more adequate instruction, in her estimation, lay in securing qualified teachers. But where to get them?

Miss Johns took a year off to study the problems of education for student nurses by qualified nursing instructors. Teachers College, Columbia University gave her the clues. She became convinced that hospital-university affiliation was part of the answer. She strongly advocated a standard curriculum that would fill the balance of the need and improve the teaching of student nurses.

How to achieve these goals was the next problem. After a number of years in hospital activity, Canadian universities were approached. Dr. W. W. Wesbrook, president of U.B.C. at that time, showed the greatest interest since he had been associated with the course established at the University of Minnesota. Ethel Johns secured appointment as Director of Nursing at Vancouver General Hospital in 1919. Soon the organizational wheels began to turn. She resigned from the hospital to devote her full time to the university program. Five years later, with the "university degree course" enrolment growing, Miss Johns resigned. She had taught many nurses how to teach but, unhappily, more years passed before the Canadian Nurses' Association approved a standard curriculum for schools of nursing.

The success of the U.B.C. program was directly responsible for Miss Johns' next assignment. Through the Rockefeller Foundation, she carried out various studies in United States and in Europe. A year later she

returned to the United States to assist with the New York Hospital-Cornell Project. In 1933 she became the first fulltime editor and business manager of *The Canadian Nurse*, the official journal of the Canadian Nurses' Association. She retired from this active life in 1944.

Ethel Johns was a capable and very intelligent woman, outspoken and firm. An excellent teacher, she was precise, clear and compelling in her classes. She was intensely proud of her profession and spared neither herself nor those working with her to achieve the goals she envisaged.

Quest for a Profession: The History of the Vancouver General Hospital School of Nursing, by Nora Kelly. Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1973. 174 pp.

From earliest history, caring for the sick and injured has been considered essentially work for women even though their capabilities and intelligence usually were judged to be limited. Florence Nightingale, after her experiences in the Crimean war, used the gifts of money she received from a grateful country to organize a program for the education of nurses. Her experience of military life shone through the program. Nurses must be strictly obedient to every order they were given, do every kind of work assigned to them and take any form of punishment for transgression of these laws.

Many years before the Vancouver General Hospital was developed, hospitals in eastern Canada had adopted the Nightingale pattern for their "training" schools. It was reasonable, therefore, for the same kind of educational program to be organized at the newly built City Hospital in Vancouver. The author has provided an excellent description of the problems met by eastern graduates who ventured out west and staffed the developing hospital. Working a twelve-hour day, with poor living accommodation and small pay, resulted in requent resignations. The medical men and council agreed that the best answer to these complaints was to train their own nurses. Thus, in 1899, the first class of eight young women began a three-year course of training with one instructor-supervisor and one resident doctor to instruct them. Length of time in the school under these conditions was the criterion for graduating rather than examinations. School teaching and nursing were the two professions into which young women could enter and achieve some prestige in the community. There was no problem in securing large classes of students in either field. Nor did World War I diminish the supply, since nurses

were needed overseas as well as at home. The 1918 influenza epidemic created still greater demands.

In 1919, when Miss Ethel Johns became Director of Nursing, she introduced a new concept to the school of nursing — affiliation with the University of British Columbia. Though there was little interest among the student nurses of the Vancouver General Hospital to enter the program in the new school under Miss Johns' direction, three "combined course" nurses received their degrees in 1923. Patterns of instruction in the university course have altered over the years but the program progressed satisfactorily.

Each of the last four directors of nursing had a great, though different, impact on development in the school. Of these, only Grace M. Fairley has passed away. Thus, hundreds of the more than 6,000 nurses who have graduated from Vancouver General Hospital will feel very much at home as they read this interesting history.

One regret of this reviewer was that the author, who undertook extensive research, decided "to keep footnotes within reasonable bounds." Many of the 105 numbered footnotes do not prove very enlightening to an interested reader. Who has the time or opportunity to look up annual reports, minutes and so forth? A very brief sentence or two immediately below the references would have been more useful.

Vancouver MARGARET E. KERR

The Social Economy of the Tlingit Indians, by Kalervo Oberg. Vancouver: J. J. Douglas, 1973. $9.50.

Oberg's study of the dynamics of Tlingit economy is one of those Rip van Winkles that repose unnoticed for decades and then are awakened in print to engage the next generation of scholars. Forty years intervened between the filing of this University of Chicago dissertation and its "rediscovery" and publication. During that period numerous other contributions to Tlingit ethnography have appeared (notably those of de Laguna, Drucker, Garfield, McClellan and Gunther's translation of Krause), all of which understandably overlooked this entry buried away in the bibliographic bone-fields. It has finally been unearthed and I commend it to both scholars and laymen as a significant ethnographic statement.

Kalervo Oberg, originally a student of economics, was chosen by anthropologist Edward Sapir to gather data concerning economic behaviour in primitive societies — data which might be used in clarifying

the differences in a long-standing feud between F. H. Knight and Sapir as to the basis for exchange values in economies without markets or money. Sent forth into the ethnographic wilderness of the Alaskan panhandle, Oberg arrived in Tlingit country in June 1931, and undertook a year of fieldwork, primarily among the relatively conservative and uninfluenced Klukwan. A preface describes this period in the field and explains that the published text represents his dissertation based on this research "except for a few minor corrections."

The book presents a thoroughly satisfying analysis of the interplay of social and economic forces within aboriginal Tlingit culture as it was observed, recalled and reconstructed by Oberg and his informants. It is readable although somewhat technically phrased with surprisingly little of the biceps-flexing jargon common to dissertations in the social sciences. The work proceeds as follows: (Chapters) I, general cultural overview of Tlingit; II, social organization; III, property and ownership, the concept of wealth; IV, annual production cycle; V, division of labour; VI, distribution of wealth, the potlatch; VII, trade; VIII, utilization of goods, the potlatch revisited, concluding remarks. A few charts and appendices provide data on economic patterns and resources and an inventory of Tlingit clans.

The heart of Oberg's discussion, and necessarily of any insightful treatment of the economic structure of the upper Northwest Coast, is an analysis of the practice and implications of the potlatch. Admitting tribal differences, we have been told in the past that the potlatch was essentially a number of different things, among them: a means of distributing wealth (Boas and others), a validation of rank (Sapir and others), a distributing of people in terms of wealth (John Adams), and a lot of ostentatious, heathenish nonsense resulting from divine misplacement of plentitude (six generations of missionaries, officials and casual observers). Oberg treats the potlatch as the central socio-economic issue, indeed, the keystone of culture holding the system together and keeping the constituent members separate. A translation of human effort into human satisfaction, the potlatch is

> the important enterprise of Tlingit life. Through it a man becomes famous; through it he smashes his rivals; through it he makes his best friends and worst enemies. Through the potlach a man consolidates his clan or helps break it down. And all this is done with wealth. Therefore, how can one speak of wealth as serving purely economic ends? Among the Tlingit wealth is a means used in attaining all the conflicting ends set up by their society. (pp. 132-3)

According to the author, the Tlingits distinguish two types of potlatch: those connected with the important events of life *(xu'ix)*, and those purely for the display of wealth and enhancement of prestige *(tutuxu'ix)*. Oberg penetratingly and convincingly describes these in terms of their motives, formalities and results.

A somewhat disquieting matter is Oberg's treatment of Tlingit art, a subject of considerable economic consequence. Such statements as "the art of the Tlingit is exemplified by all the material objects of his culture" (p. 13), suggest that the author has not distinguished art from craft; however, he is in company with many museologists and art historians who confuse art with artifacts. Such a confusion has obscured Oberg's picture of the role of the artist and the evaluation of workmanship in Tlingit society. The use of a number of other terms proves disturbing, as well. For instance, we are told that Tlingit "warfare" consisted only of clan feuds, while later (p. 108) we discover that the Tlingits made constant slave-raids, possibly as far south as Puget Sound. Apparently slave-raiding (*modus operandi*: enslave females and young of both sexes, kill the rest) was not warfare.

Sapir's influence is noted in such notions as, "Linguistically, the Tlingit are closely related to the Haida, both, in turn, being members of the great Athabaskan language family" (p. 12). In fact, Tlingit is, with Eyak, now placed with the Athabaskan languages in the Na-Dene phylum, but no systematic correspondences showing relatedness to Haida have yet been presented.

If a general criticism can be leveled against Oberg's presentation, it is that it draws us into the ethnographic quest so that we crave additional facts and details which simply are not provided. Indeed, the remarkably observant geographer, Aurel Krause, provided much more detail on such pertinent socio-economic matters as Tlingit material culture, hunting and fishing techniques, ceremony and individual life cycle. The reader may find that he finishes *Social Economy* with the appetite whetted for more and as many questions as answers. Possibly that is the reason that one of the prepublication changes Oberg made in the manuscript was to expand the bibliography of further readings on the Tlingit. *Social Economy* was Oberg's *Jugendwerk* and suffers from some of the stylistic problems inherent in dissertation writing, but it neither clouds his insights nor the picture of Tlingit life he provides.

Oberg's contribution is carefully and enjoyably introduced by Wilson Duff, who remarks Oberg's "deep peneration into Tlingit thought." Professor Duff toasts the volume as a fitting marker to the end of the period

of university-initiated anthropological field research on the Northwest Coast and the beginning of an era of re-evaluation of previous descriptive ethnography by Indians themselves. Indeed, each passing year leaves fewer and fewer Indians who recall the ethnographic period or speak Indian languages, and it seems logical that the future will increasingly find researchers concentrating on the rich collections of Northwest Coast lore reposing in museums and archives. For many bands it is already too late to find Indian consultants who can provide ethnographic material. As a case in point, almost 20 years ago, Ram Singh prepared a study of aboriginal economic systems of the Olympic Peninsula similar to Oberg's work on the Tlingit, and found that much of the detail was already eroded from memory. Despite this attrition of Indian informants, more anthropologists than ever seem to be engaged in fieldwork and I see no impending change in the pattern (although there is evidence of a wholesome trend toward programs in which bands retain anthropologists and linguists to prepare culture programs). Neither do I see a movement toward consistent re-evaluation of previous work by Indians themselves, as desirable as this would be. Isolated examples of such critiques can be cited — Professor Duff notes an instance involving a review of Oberg's work by an informed Tlingit elder. Hopefully, such new departures as the University of Victoria's program to train Indian teachers certified to prepare and conduct culture classes will promote a trend toward reviewing the ethnographic literature on the part of Indians.

University of British Columbia J. V. POWELL

Fire In The Raven's Nest, the Haida of British Columbia, by Norman Newton. Toronto: New Press, 1973. 173 pp., illus., $9.50.

In his Preface, Newton begs the reader's pardon for the generality and

> . . . necessary superficiality of this brief book, which makes no pretense either to deep sociological analysis (Indians have had enough of that, Heaven knows) or to a profound exploration of the Haida soul. (p.1)

After a prolonged struggle to finish reading *Fire In the Raven's Nest*, one is inclined to agree with the author that the book is, indeed, superficial, sociologically irrelevant, and lacking insight into any aspect of Haida soul or culture.

Newton claims that the book is basically a documentary

... organized on a clear intellectual curve, but the surface is broken up prismatically, the parts being connected by transformation and juxtaposition. (p. 1)

Whatever else is meant by this astonishing bit of prose, it is clearly an apology for the book's lack of internal coherence and for the way in which odds and ends of miscellaneous information, taped and otherwise collected by Newton, have been stuck together in order to produce something resembling a manuscript.

The book rambles through a series of Newton's interviews with non-Haida met in bars, or buses, and in passing, and with Haida people, including artists, the band manager of one reserve, and others willing to talk with him. The interviews are coupled with Newton's own pessimistic impressions and observations of the people interviewed, the Queen Charlotte Islands, and fragments of Haida culture, past and present. The author alternates between a condescending liberalism that attempts to excuse what clearly shocks him about the lifestyle of the aboriginal Haida and a pitying disapproval for modern Haida ways. Thus, he states on the one hand that

... [although] Haida civilization ... was, at its worst, grim, narrow, crude in its material satisfactions and deadeningly conformist.... (p. 101)

it was no worse, in its ritual aspects, than Freemansonry!

On the other hand, he bemoans the general moral decline of contemporary Haida society. He refers to

... the gauche and countrified girls of the reserve whose future ... [holds] at best, an early and insecure marriage ... at worst ... [prostitution] (p. 13)

and to adolescent white girls walking the streets of Masset

... with a complacent and relaxed sensuality ... Had their skin been dark, such a walk would have been considered an invitation. (p. 21)

An invitation to whom, one wonders.

Inserted among interviews and impressions is Newton's description of the history of Haida contact with Europeans and his attempt to fathom the origins and symbolic structure of Haida myth. The historical account provides a relatively balanced readable treatment of the major outlines of European-Haida interaction, but Newton's conclusion that Haida social order has crumbled and broken down before the onslaught of the European cultural invasion, so that only a few meaningless rituals performed for tourists remain (pp. 47, 94), is evidence of the superficiality of scholarship to which he admits. That Haida culture has changed is

undeniable; yet Newton, so critical of sociological analysis, fails to penetrate beyond his own preconceptions of "the poor Indian" to see the tremendous vitality and strength that has enabled Haida culture to survive, to endure, to persist. Changes in social order do not necessarily reflect social disintegration and decline but may, on the contrary, indicate the incredible adaptability and flexibility of human culture, enabling it to survive in the face of devastating and oppressive conditions imposed by other cultures.

Where Newton does attempt "analysis," in his discussion of Haida myth, he entangles himself and the reader in a confusing and muddled interpretation that can hardly be called enlightening. If *Fire In the Raven's Nest* is meant for the lay reader, Newton is unfair in expecting that reader to sort out Tsimshian and Athapaskan themes from Haida ones, and to comprehend the presumed relationships of complex Haida mythological elements to both the geography of the Queen Charlottes and the "movement of stars and planets" without at least a chart of the heavens and some explanatory diagrams. Newton states that "since this book is not a technical study I have not outlined my method nor its detailed results." (p. 4) One doubts that there was either method or result in such a subjective "study."

Newton's temerity in claiming that his analysis is based, in part, upon Levi Strauss' *Mythologiques* does not make this dull and over-priced little book any more comprehensible.

University of Victoria MARJORIE MITCHELL

Pillars of Profit: The Company Province 1934-1972, by Martin Robin. Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1973. 351 pages, illus., $12.95.

One of the peculiar attributes of the scholar is his ability to find joy and delight and beauty in the most prosaic of subjects, lifting the ordinary and commonplace to the highest levels of abstruse appreciation. What, then, might we expect as the product of an academic and the most delightful parade of political characters and events ever to grace or disgrace the political stage of this or any other country: a feast of fascinations, surely? Alas, no, *Pillars of Profit* demonstrates that other ability of the academic, that of being able to reduce even the Venus de Milo to a commonplace assortment of numerical dimensions and other dusty attributes.

Pillars of Profit is the second half of Professor Martin Robin's political history of British Columbia. It opens with the excitement of Duff Pattullo's "Work and Wages" victory in 1934, groans its way through the two coalition governments, gives grudging admiration to the pyrotechnics of the Bennett decades, and winds up with the excitement of the Barrett N.D.P. victory in 1972. In response to critics of his first volume, the author gave us to understand that his purpose was not to meet the needs of the academic profession and that the ordinary canons of scholarship were not all that relevant to his work. Critical and popular history seemed to be the standard suggested.

Nobody will ever fault the author for not taking a stand. On every page he makes it clear that, rather like plagues of spruce budworm, the rapacious capitalists have had their evil way with the province's natural riches and working people. Few if any politicians of the right or centre of this picture ever bothered to notice enough even to disapprove, let alone change the situation. Session by session these politicians had the legislature enact bills and approve development programs, the details of which we are given in case after case. To Liberals, Conservatives, and Social Creditors these programs represented progress in economic development: tidal waves of foreign money poured in to open up the hinterlands of the Cariboo, the Trench, the Island, and the Kootenays, all of it providing jobs and prosperity for British Columbians. For the men of the left, however, the money wave represented exploitation, economic colonialism, immoral profit-taking, and rapine on an imperial scale.

The major difficulty with his critique is that Professor Robin seems to lack a comprehensive vision of the world. He is puzzled by the "company province" and by its people: they simply do not make much sense to him and he is somewhat at a loss to explain why it is. He appears happiest, in a way, with Pattullo reign. At its beginning, the voters were tired of the Tories and the Depression, not yet ready for the socialists, and the reformist Liberal looked just about right for a time. Pattullo survived so long as he confined his quasi-socialism to the distributive side of politics and did not try to interfere on the regulatory side too much. When he did, he got into trouble, began looking old and tired, and was deposed.

The author does rather a better job than most have done in detailing the differences between the Liberals and Conservatives of the Coalition period. It is probably the most satisfying part of the book, and a fair bit of it is attributable to his able characterization of the state of the C.C.F. throughout this period. Robin understands and depicts well the faults

and problems of the left in the way that only a supporter can do. For this we are in his debt. Unfortunately, the closer we come to the present, the less penetrating and satisfying is his analysis of the socialist party, a development which may be associated with his personal involvement in it.

Better than previous authors too is his account and explication of the remarkable peregrinations which led to the selection of a maverick Kelowna Tory to be the first Social Credit premier for B.C. While it might not satisfy fully the professional psychologists, the author's analysis of the 1952 multi-system election returns seems carefully and persuasively done. The great organizational activity of the Socred missionaries from the Alberta government has long been known but here Professor Robin contributes a wealth of corroborating detail that should be useful (if only to scholars). If he is to get to the real kernels of this material, however, the academic reader must steel himself to deal with much chaff, some of purely fictional origin, that marks the writer's disdain for the bible-thumpers, and especially those from Alberta. Referring to the time of W. A. C. Bennett's capture of the Socreds, for example, Robin writes that:

> to the chattering, gnome-like minister of the Church of the Nazarene, who packed his bags the day before and left for his Alberta home, the meeting presaged the beginning of the capture of a people's movement by a dangerous opportunist. Reverend Ernest George Hansell, the father-advisor of the vibrant Socred brat, sulked and brooded all the way to distant Vulcan where, replenished by a snatch of prayer and swill of seltzer water, he soon busied himself with other pressing matters.

Most unsatisfactory is the treatment of the Bennett decades. Its deeds and misdeeds are fully chronicled, too fully in fact, for these pages read even more like a jammed digest of thousands of newspaper clippings than do comparable books by former newsmen. Here most of all do we lack a unifying theme, theoretical framework, or scheme of interpretation. True, the Coalition had been discredited, and throughout most of the period the C.C.F.-N.D.P., Liberals, and Conservatives posed greater threats to themselves than to the Socreds, but the secret of Bennett's electoral appeal continues to elude us. Despite some examination of the Bennett shift from "a little blacktop government" for the Interior into "a big dam government" for the tycoons (which others have pointed out before), Professor Robin really fails to advance us much beyond the simple-minded boom and fear of socialism explanations of the Vancouver business pages. Indignant this account is throughout, but that will hardly do as a radical

critique of the province's recent history. *Pillars of Profit* no more constitutes real left-wing stuff than does the N.D.P.

Just as the author fails to explain Bennett's success, so does he fail to explain adequately his downfall. The book was delayed and extended to cover the 1972 campaign but it might well have been stronger without it. While it is marginally useful to have a reasonably detailed account of the campaign, this former B.C. resident still feels unenlightened about the causes of the 1972 eruption of the socialist volcano which had been threatening and trembling continuously for almost forty years without previous effect.

The book represents well the dilemma facing a number of our able but would-be radical academics. A professing socialist and ideational enemy of private capital, Martin Robin is still a university professor beset by, and responding at least in part to, all the bourgeois conformist pressures that occupation involves. In his heart of hearts, Robin knows that ignorant or self-serving and misguided politicians like Pattullo, Hart, Anscomb, and Bennett have sold the people's heritage for bits of blacktop and symbols of power without the substance. He knows it and, like a decent scholar, he lists their sell-outs on page after page: Kitimat-Kemano, Rocky Mountain Trench, Britannia and Bridge River, Cominco- and Kaiser-land, the feudal empires of the integrated forest giants, the whole Columbia River project, and so on. Capitalists made a great deal of profit from all of this and the author knows thereby that it must be wrong. Unfortunately, such are the slippery standards of our society that the academic cannot demonstrate incontrovertibly that it was in fact robbery. This central thesis of *Pillars of Profit* forever escapes proof by the bourgeois (phoney objectivist?) standards of the university professions. "It's right there. Can't you see it?" he seems to plead. Fearful that we won't, he picks up his crossbow and unleashes another quiverfull of invectives.

At heaping scorn and nastiness, the author is much experienced. He likes phrases like "headless fascist monsters" (a Winch quotation), "conditions fattened the patronage barrels and sharpened the greed of junior and senior politicians," and "the papered peace people were treated to a raft of homilies and metro slurs." A number of them he works to death and the language quickly becomes tiresome and his message badly blunted. Perhaps, though, this vocabulary is his method of rendering the book "popular." If so, one wonders what kind of audience he has in mind for sentences like these:

Why not break (the Coalition) altogether and replace the restrictive duopoly with a happy monopoly? The Tories found the oligopolous arrangement iniquitous and to their perpetual disadvantage.

Professor Robin wishes not simply to document them in unmistakable fashion, but he wants dearly to proclaim the sins of the wicked rather widely on the winds of change. He wants the working man of B.C. both to be persuaded that he has indeed been robbed and worked up into a lasting fury over the injustice of it all. Achieving these twin objectives is a difficult task. It escaped even Marx, impressive scholar and theoretician that he was, who needed Engels, Lenin, and many others. Success in the technique escapes Professor Robin as well.

Despite an inherently fascinating subject, in too many places one's primary impression of *Pillars of Profit* is that of chewing doggedly through mounds of well-sorted news clippings held together by an oversalted paste of dubious quality. To say that too often the critical line of this work goes no more than invective-deep is bad enough, but, *scandale de scandales*, Martin Robin has even managed to make B.C. politics boring!

Queen's University EDWIN R. BLACK