

BOOKS *in* CANADA

a national review of books

VOLUME 4, No. 3

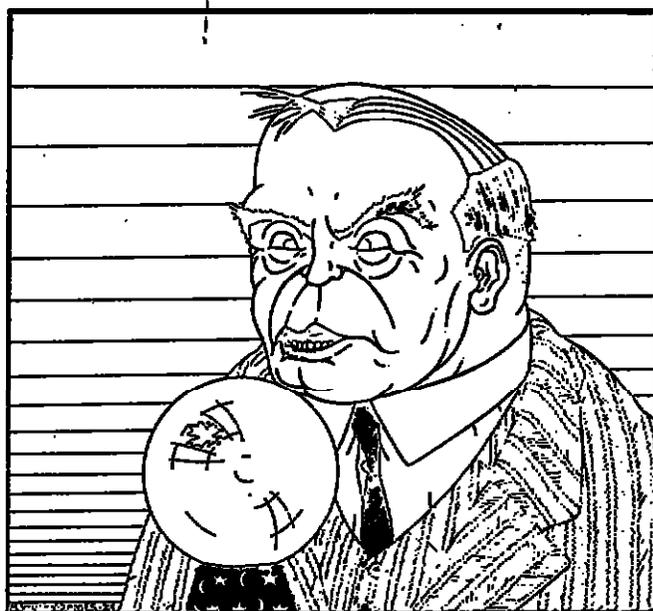
MARCH, 1975

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asks whether
JUAN BUTLER
deserves all the prizes

DAVID LEWIS
examines Alberta's
SOCIAE CREDIT
dynasty

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- Edgar Z. Friedenberg
on loss of liberty
- Robert Stamp
on class wars



C.P. STACEY

sums up
William Lyon
Mackenzie King

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BOOKS in CANADA

Vol. 4 No. 3

MARCH, 1975

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NOTES & COMMENTS

A GATHERING OF THE clans is how one was described the publishing seminar held recently at Trent university and, in many ways it was an apt remark. The booksellers, the authors, both varieties of publisher — Canadian and branch plant — and the magazine editors had all come together at the invitation of the academics and in the presence of the librarians, to display their strengths and disguise their weaknesses for the edification of the Secretary of State. They had come to his home riding of Peterborough, Ont., to sit at his feet and to hear him proclaim the government's publishing policy. Many of them went away disappointed, discouraged, and angry.

To be sure, the event had been eclipsed by Hugh Faulkner's promise, delivered in the House of Commons the previous day, that he would introduce legislation (to be effective Jan. 1, 1976) removing the special tax privileges enjoyed by *Time* (Canada) and *Reader's Digest*. While the proposal is certainly welcome, a lot can happen between now and January, 1976, and we still don't have a precise definition of what constitutes a Canadian magazine.

What the minister announced at Trent was a fulfilment of promises made on the eve of the last federal election. It seemed to us that the statement would have carried more weight if it had been made in the House of Commons and, barring that, at a joint meeting of French- and English-speaking publishers. We saw no Quebec publishers in attendance.

The Canada Council's current assistance to publishers of some \$4 million is to be increased annually by \$1.5 million, earmarked for the promotion and distribution of Canadian books and periodicals. This new program, designed to make Canadian publications more accessible and desirable to the public, includes such proposals as potting books and magazines on sale in federal buildings, financing a joint distribution and sales operation for mass-market publishers, distributing book reviews and promotional information about Canadian publications, and extending the Foreign Investment Review Act.

Mr. Faulkner declined to discuss library purchases, Canadian representation in retail outlets, or educational publishing, claiming these were provincial and municipal areas of responsibility. Come on, Mr. Faulkner. Texts developed in Ontario have been used in every province of the country. Doesn't the production of materials transcend provincial boundaries?

The most significant development to come from the minister's speech was the formation of the Book and Periodical Development Council. Joining together the Writers* Union, the Canadian Library Association, the Canadian Booksellers Association, the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association, and the Independent Publishers Association (a seat has been reserved for the Canadian Book Publishers Council, which numbers among its members both foreign and Canadian-owned firms), the new body marks the first step towards unity in an industry fraught with suspicion, petty feuds and major problems. The council's first act was to denounce Faulkner's statement.

But the members must solve some of their own internal squabbles before effecting any great changes in the industry. The booksellers want the publishers to provide better service and the librarians to buy directly from them; the librarians want to sell books in remote branches and to buy from the cheapest source; the writers want better royalties from the publishers, better displays from the booksellers and librarians, and royalties from the taxpayers for borrowing their books from the libraries; and the publishers want to make more money. The council is a strange amalgam of private, public, and corporate concerns, and one that is prepared to bite the hand that feeds it — the federal government.

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THE CURRENT FUSS over the report of the Canadian Materials Committee of the Toronto Public Library Board strikes us as alarmist and misdirected. The committee recommended that Canadian books be given a "central place" in the system's branches and that this could be achieved through a six-point plan involving, among other things, spending 20% of the library's budget for books and materials on Canadian titles. This point caused a dreadful hue and cry among many librarians, patrons, and concerned citizens who feared that a quota system would deny freedom to read, brainwash our children, and prevent young people from reading the best of the world's books while forcing them to consume the inferior home-grown product. Surely if Canadians are ever to become aware of their own culture, books and materials must be available in the public library — an institution that, after all, is supported by Canadian taxpayers. And, is this need not doubly felt in the absence of comprehensive and mandatory courses in Canadian Studies in the schools?

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SOME TIME AGO, *Books in Canada* determined to devote this issue of the magazine to education. We started with a basic question: What is the percentage of Canadian content in the textbooks used in school curricula? Faced by a monumental research problem and a pressing deadline, we looked around for help, The Independent Publishers Association agreed it was a worthwhile project — one in fact the IPA planned to tackle when it had more time, money, and staff. The Canada Studies Foundation, which for the past five years has sponsored teacher-based projects in social studies, only now is preparing itself for an evaluation of the experiments. We decided to pursue a more specific topic. Namely, how has high school students' awareness of Canada changed since the watershed year of 1967? Our contacts bounced us from one academic to another until we had come, fruitlessly; full circle. We uncovered opinions in full measure, but facts were in short supply. And we're still wondering. Can anyone out there help us?

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QUALITY OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: A grade-eight student of our acquaintance is "doing" Africa in Social Studies. One of her assignments was to memorize the names of all the countries in Africa and their capital-cities. Which was fine. Except that, as her parents pointed out to her, the atlas her class is using, *The Canadian Oxford School Atlas*, was published in 1963, and the names of at least 10 African countries (and capitals) have changed in the years since then. When the girl asked her geography teacher about the atlas, it turned out he didn't know it was out-of-date.

MUST OUR KIDS REMEMBER THE ALIMO?

By MORRIS WOLFE

THE TWO REVIEW articles that follow, by Edgar z. Friedenberg and Robert Stamp deal with the problems of quality, and equality in Canadian education. But them's another question that has to be raised in any discussion of schooling in this country — that of the *Canadian education* of our children. Here things remain grim, and the situation in our elementary schools is, I believe, particularly so. Our public schools, at least in my experience, seem almost totally unconcerned with presenting, as Sonja Sinclair put it in the *Background Papers to the Royal Commission on Book Publishing*, "a point of view ... unadulterated by the nationalism of others." To an even greater extent than our high schools and universities, our elementary schools appear to be little more than branch plants of the American school system.

"I'm going to leave/Ol' Texas now/They've got no use/For the lonehorn cow./ . . . Say adios/To the Alimo [sic]/And turn my head/Toward Mexico." So reads a neatly copied entry in the handwriting exercise notebook of one of my daughters. The American-produced math text used by another daughter consists of questions such as: "If one car leaves Philadelphia travelling at 75 m.p.h. and another leaves Pittsburgh travelling at 60 m.p.h. . . ." The library at a school the children attended last year contained work by only two Canadian writers — L. M. Montgomery and Farley Mowat. Other school libraries I've seen aren't that much better. A poll of 80 Edmonton school children revealed their favourite Canadian writers to be Ernest Hemingway and Robert Frost. (Why shouldn't they believe that; given the readers they use?) The social studies section of the Ontario government's Curriculum Guidelines for grades one to six ends with a bibliography of professional books — except that only five of the 17 books listed are Canadian, and included in the five is A. B. Hodgett's *What Culture? What Heritage?*

The list of examples could go on, but the point, I suspect, is clear, and readers will be able to provide examples of their own. While there's little doubt that the nationalist movement of the past several years has had some effect on university curricula, and to a lesser extent on the course content of the secondary schools, it has had no discernible effect, at least so far as this observer can tell, where it's needed most—in our elementary schools. Young children move from their largely American-dominated television screens to their largely American-influenced classrooms without really knowing that they're Canadian.

It should be possible to walk into a classroom and know (without peeking at the Rag in the front hall) what country the classroom is in. Based on the books my elementary school kids use and their course content, one couldn't be certain much of the time whether they were attending Canadian or American schools.

The token Canadian content that they do get, mostly in social studies, is still taught in the same dull mte fashion that I experienced 25 years or so ago. It's as if nothing has changed. It's as if the schools were — and are — deliberately setting out to deliberate us of any real sense of our past. A recent M&S book on the Canadian educational system asked us in its title, *Must Schools Foil?*, implying that they do. But the fact is, schools don't fail; mass educa-

tion succeeds remarkably well at doing what the industrial revolution created it for — producing people who are semi-literate, uncritical, without a sense of history, and most of all, conformist.

Why else can branch-plant publishers such as Collier-Macmillan get away with oeddline such inane trine as its Canadian History Program, a series of pamphlets on aspects of our history designed for use in senior elementary and junior high schools? The pamphlets consist of photographs and snippets of prose from the period under discussion, followed by questions about them. In the pamphlet titled *New France* for example, there's a photograph of a statue of Governor Frontenac. The caption under the photograph reads: "This statue of Governor Frontenac can still be seen in the town square of Quebec City today. Note that Frontenac is pointing to the mouth of a cannon; Why?" There's a moving passage from an unidentified play in the pamphlet titled *The Great Depression*. A woman cries out to her husband: "... your boss is making suckers out of all the

Young children move from their largely American-dominated television screens to their largely American-influenced classrooms without really knowing that they're Canadian.

wives and the poor innocent kids who'll grow up with crooked spines and sick bones. Sure, I see it in the papers, how good orange juice is for the kids. But our kids get colds one on top of the other. They look like little gliosts. Betty never saw a grapefruit. I took her to the store last week and she pointed to a stack of grapefruits. what's that? she said. My God, Joe—the world is supposed to be for all of us." The passage ends with two questions for discussion. "1. What should you eat in order to keep well? 2. Was Betty well fed, do you suppose?" If a steady diet of stuff like that won't make our kids stupid, I don't know what will.

My 13-year-old daughter complained bitterly last year about how boring the Canadian history was that they were doing in social studies. She hated it, she said. Her grade seven class was "studying" the founding of New France. What that meant was having to "learn by heart" notes their teacher dictated to them, and then having to regurgitate that material on weekly quizzes. ("Learning by heart" must once have meant committing to memory something of special personal significance. That hasn't been the case for a



From *The Great Depression*, by Barnett Singer (Collier-Macmillan Canadian History Program, \$1.95 paper).

long time now — at least not in schools. “Learning by heart” has come to mean **committing** to memory something an authority figure wants memorized for reasons that are **usually unclear.**) At the same time that my daughter was complaining about history at school, she **was** carefully organizing her time at home to be free to watch her favourite television programs — Pierre Berton’s stories about Canada

on *My Country*, Patrick Watson’s simulated interviews with historic figures on *Witness to Yesterday*, and for eight weeks Pierre Berton’s *The National Dream*.

Our schools, I’m afraid — particularly our elementary schools — continue to be pan of the problem rather than part of the solution. Those of us who are nationalists are losing the most important battle of all. □

SCHOOLS AND THE LOSS OF LIBERTY

In their attitude toward education Canadians may be engaged in a conspiracy against their own civil rights

The Learning Machine: A Hard Look at Toronto Schools, by Loren Jay Lind, The House of Anansi, 228 pages, \$8.50 cloth and \$4.75 paper.

By EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG

THIS IS ONE of the best books about schools I have read in some years. as Lind was one of the sharpest and most perspicacious education reporters to work regularly for a metropolitan daily. The articles he wrote for the Toronto Globe and Mail (he now covers City Hall) would put Fred Hechinger to shame, if that were possible, though the New York Times is not generally more bland and less critical than the Globe and Mail. Lind’s work demonstrates clearly, that in-depth investigative reporting need be no more limited by its attention to concrete cases than formal research in the social sciences is. While no general theoretical statement emerges as a summary of Lind’s findings, he gives such a complete, accurate, and historically rooted account of the way the Toronto system operates that the principles involved are easily made explicit and applicable as general statements, just as most of the classical physics could be understood from a really clear and conscientious account of the way an automobile operates. From the schools, however, one learns principally sociology and politics. They do not teach us much about physics, aside from the principles of inertia. They also constitute a form of entropy, increasing their drain upon available energy as the world grows more chaotic.

All but the last of the 11 essays that constitute Lind’s book deal with specific events, procedures, programs, or organizational aspects of the Toronto system; while the last is an eloquent and disarming plea for a much greater measure of local control of community schools, which Lind sees as the only practicable way of making them more responsive to the needs of the working-class majority that constitutes their clientele.

Lind begins with a comparison, based on personal observation, of two elementary schools: Dundas Street, on the edge of the inner city, and John Ross Robertson in an upper-middle- to upper-class district of North Toronto. The schools are not as different as one might expect. As Lind observes:

Inside their doors, the sharp differences melted into subtleties. At Dundas and at John Ross Robertson, education comes in what appears to be much the same package. I found bath places wrapped snugly in the middle-class etiquette of schooling. But at each school the wrapping had a different effect, depending on the interplay of school and community.

Neither school dealt honestly with either its pupils or their society. “What’s often strived for,” Lind notes, “is a hyped euphoria, an artificial ecstasy, that offers learning at the expense of nine-tenths of what the children know.” But the dishonesty affects children of different social classes very differently. Higher-status children learn it as proper PR; the tone of the school is like that of a TV commercial, though clumsier, and it cues them in to expect success in the kind of life they suppose they are destined to lead. The school is the first public arena in which they develop and display their skills at games people play. Working-class youngsters are more likely to find the school merely bewildering, as it reconciles itself and them to their place in the vocational stream of life — cooling out, usually, any great expectations:

The feeling was that the poor had to be brought up to middle-class standards before “excellence” was even in question. If some went so far as to succeed, that only showed that they could do it if they really tried. These forces coloured the atmosphere of schooling; you picked it up in the tiny nuances as well as the gross statistics. A facile conclusion would be that the system worked at John Ross Robertson, while at Dundas Street it failed. Quite otherwise: it worked at both schools.

Amen.

Lucid and fundamental as it is, Lind’s essay “Two Schools” is among the least novel in *The Learning Machine*. Peter Schrag did much this kind of thing very well with reference to American schools’ of the 1960s in *Voices in the Classroom* and with specific reference to the Boston school system in *Village School Downtown — a book, now neglected*. that was wholly prophetic of Boston schools in 1975. Even earlier, in his book *The Schools, the*

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journalist Martin Mayer approached American schools similarly, though without Loren Lind’s gritty grounding in either their history or their politics. But the remaining chapters of the book are unique. They are of Canada all compact, and in the case of the 10th chapter, “The Davis Imperative,” the Family Compact as well. This is the place to learn not only

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Here are the stories behind the **two top cycle jumpers in the world**: Evel Knievel, undisputed king of the sport, and **15-year-old Gary Wells**, the plucky kid who **challenges the king** for his crown. Exciting black and white photos. *Reading level: grades 6 to 8* **80¢**

WHO WANTS TO BE ALONE? by John Craig

Original title: **Zach**. When **Zach leaves the reservation** to search for his lost ancestors, his wanderings **bring him into contact with the nomads of the med**. John Craig, one of Canada's leading juvenile authors, has created a story that authentically depicts the atmosphere and lifestyle of today's young people on the move. *Reading level: grades 9 to 12* **\$1.30**

THE CALL OF THE WILD by Jack London

This fast-moving adventure novel about a dog's transformation from **loyal house pet to savage leader of a wolf pack** brought its author International fame when it was first published in 1903. *Reading level: grades 5 to 8* **80¢**

CURIOS GEORGE GOES TO THE HOSPITAL

by Margret and H. A. Rey

When Curious George, the curious monkey, **thought a piece of jigsaw puzzle was a piece of candy**, he ate it. Then he felt **very sick** and he **had to go to the hospital**. But **George is too mischievous to stay out of trouble**, and it isn't long before he's turning **everything upside down**. *Reading level: grade 2* **\$1.00**

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THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

by Florence Party Heide and Sylvia Worth Van Clief

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of Premier Davis but also of Bishop Strachan, and of other dignitaries of pedagogic history strung out between them along what now can be seen as Desolation Row.

Lind gives equally cogent attention to contemporary problems of the Toronto school system. His discussion of the plight of immigrant parents attempting to preserve their culture by having courses in their native languages offered in the schools, against the resistance of the Director of Education and often of their own children — who see English clearly as the language relevant to their economic future — is a moving account of the costs of New Canadianism. His chapter "On Having to Read" fully documents the statements of the late Paul Goodman concerning the overemphasis schools place on teaching people reading -instead of letting them learn it-and the frustration and stultification thii often causes. There is a hopeful chapter on sex education, which seems to have been approached in Toronto with special candour and intelligence; Lind would like to believe that this might serve as an opening for a more concrete humaneness in other areas as well, but finds little evidence that this is happening. His chapter on the fiscal complexities of the school system is, of necessity, extremely complex; but it is clear and provides information absolutely essential to anyone who wishes to appraise the schools so as to fix their place in the system of social priorities in a time of economic crisis. And his chapter on "The Coming of SBF" is the best and most original in the book: "The acronym stands for Studies in Educational Facilities. It was, in fact, a \$40 million crash course in technical innovation, bringing to fulfilment the then Education Minister William Davis' intention 'to plan the shape of future schools to avoid obsolescence, and to control costs'." The SEF schools, designed by a Ford Foundation subsidiary with a maximum of technology and a minimum of community consultation — ordinarily, none — promised flexibility, but turned out to be ugly and uniform, and generally more expensive par square foot than those put up by independent contractors during the same period, often incorporating unique, locally inspired features of design.

IN HIS LAST chapter Lind abandons his descriptive-analytical approach to argue for a more rational and humane procedure in planning for the use of increasingly limited resources. His basic recommendation, as I have indicated, is for much greater local participation in planning and governance of schools. On this point he is at one with George Martell -one of the essays in Lind's book, the one dealing with the question of native-language instruction, appears in somewhat abridged form in Martell's recent collection, *The Politics of the Canadian Public School*. Lind is eloquent and, I should think, to a Canadian reader, convincing. To an American reader — at any rate, to this American reader — he is less so. Canadians have accustomed themselves through the years to a government so much more centralized and overtly elitist than Americans that they are inclined, I believe, to underestimate the mess quite ordinary people are capable of making of things when they get the chance. William Davis and I would not, I fear, take kindly to one another, but he is to Louise Day Hicks as Hyperion to a satyr, though the metaphor cannot, of course, be applied closely in this case. In any event, Lind himself states the problem baldly enough in observing that "the schools in Canada are part of the larger logic of a political economy that sanctions the conditioning of students to its uses, however harmful that process is to them." I see little evidence that any group objects strongly to this; objection is directed

rather, at the fact that the school leaves the children of the poor, of native peoples and other discriminated groups, insufficiently useful to other people to guarantee them a secure place. It isn't being used destructively that they mind (that, after ail, is what happens to many of the privileged) but being neglected destructively, and deprived of their potential — not for self-development but for lucrative and secure placement. Few Canadian parents, of any social class, cherish the development of the young for their own sake. Lind is aware of this, when he quotes Clive Beck's *Moral Education in the Schools*:

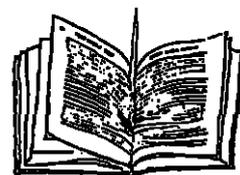
"I do not think we are aware of the tremendous backlog of authoritarianism toward younger people ... that exists in our society," he wrote. "It pervades our school systems, our family arrangements, our laws, our whole society. The inferior status of women in our society, barbaric though it is, is easily outweighed by the disrespect and subservience to which we commit our children" (ellipsis Lind's).

Of course, the problem is circular, as serious social problems always are. The schools inculcate the deference on which elites depend for social stability; but they delight parents, and most of the local community, by doing just

Canadians have accustomed themselves ... to a government so much more centralized and overtly elitist than Americans that they are inclined ... to underestimate the mesa quite ordinary people are inclined to make of things when they get a chance.

that. Lind is explicitly aware of this difficulty, too: "The socialist critique offers a fair assessment of social reality, a good basis for outward political struggle. But it too often neglects the psycho-social underpinnings of oppression. The struggle is deeply personal as well as boldly political. Unless we somehow contend with what Wilhelm Reich described as 'the emotional plague' we will hardly be able to rearrange society to liberate ourselves."

Except when they can blame their lack of freedom on the United States (as, of course, they often may justly do) Anglophone Canadians do not appear to place a high priority on liberating themselves -not nearly so high, I fear, as they place on restoring capital punishment. They appear more often to be engaged in a great conspiracy against their own civil rights in the name of respect for authority. The schools deserve that end very well; and it may be no ultimate loss for liberty if rising costs make the Canadian people unable to afford as much as they want of the kind of schooling they prefer for their children. The difficulty is that, as societies approach economic crisis, it is often their mom genial functions that are sacrificed first while measures intended as social controls are maintained or intensified. *The Learning Machine* is not a muck-raking book, or an alarmist one. It is merely honest, perceptive, and fully informed. Thii, of itself, will make it enough to spoil many a reader's deep dream of peace. □



THE LAST CLASS WAR

Educational Opportunity: The Pursuit of Equality; by W.G. Fleming, Prentice-Hall of Canada, 133 pages, \$5.95 cloth and \$3.75 paper.

By ROBERT STAMP

CAN A SERIES of educational texts appeal both to student teachers and the general public? If this volume is indicative of other offerings in Prentice-Hall's "Critical Issues in Canadian Education" series, the answer is a resounding "No." Series editor Alan King is naive when he proclaims that "anyone concerned with serious inquiry into the educational process in Canada should find each volume a stimulating learning experience." These books are likely to be read only by captive audiences - those teachers-in-training forced to endure yet another required education course.

There's a glimmer of hope in the opening chapter of *Educational Opportunity*, but it quickly fades away. Fleming admits that the concept of educational equality "refers to an unattainable ideal — both because education leads to a great variety of outcomes and because there are ineradicable differences in the capacity of individuals to utilize educational opportunities." But instead of pursuing the question of class and cultural barriers to equality, the author chooses to concentrate on the "stages of progress" toward the realization of the dream.

The result is an ever-onward, ever-upward success story, with the public school cast in the role of hero; each year we come closer and closer to realizing that impossible dream. We are treated to lengthy accounts of "progress" made in the various provinces and local school systems towards providing equality of access (more programs available to more children), equality of facilities (bringing all schools up to certain acceptable standards), equality of programs (diversified curricula with something for everyone), and equality of outcomes (more and more high-school graduates and post-secondary students).⁷

Unfortunately Fleming passes much too quickly over the conflicts. Yesterday's barriers to educational equality — inter-provincial and urban-rural differences — are being overcome, and perhaps deserve only a brief mention. But

The coming battles will be initiated by angry groups of parents who have first-hand knowledge of what schools do to their children.

with each passing decade society discovers new obstacles to equality. The major barrier of the 1970s - the middle-class WASP school versus the lower-class child — is dismissed all too easily.

Perhaps it's the author's own middle-class perspective that makes it difficult for him to comprehend the angry cries of working-class parents. He does admit that "the school remains a bastion of support for traditional patterns of conduct." But then he reveals himself: "The very existence of the civilizations of the Western world depends on the acceptance of certain values and the rejection of others." It's up to the lower-class child to adapt to the behaviour

patterns and norms of the middle-class school. Adaptation for Fleming is not a two-way street.

This point of view leads to some curious omissions. We hear nothing from the parents at Toronto's Park School nor from the parents in Montreal's Pointe St. Charles region, who have been fighting for decent inner-city schools since the beginning of the decade. Nor do we learn about the efforts of rural parents in Ninette, Man., or Vineland, Ont., to keep their small schools open in the face of effortstoward bureaucratic centralization. These parents are fighting for educational equality, even though their desired goal may be somewhat different from that of the school administrators.

The shock troops of the "equal opportunity" struggle in, Canada today tend more and more to be "disadvantaged" parents rather than educational managers. The bureaucracy may have gone as far as it can in providing equality; the coming battles will be initiated by angry groups of parents who have first-hand knowledge of what schools do to their children.

"Bureaucracy" and "community" are emerging as the two opposing forces that promise to dominate the politics of Canadian education during the latter half of the 1970s. The individual's response will be conditioned by his own personal view of the future of civilization. If that view is one of institutional advance, supported by the bureaucratic and technocratic imperative, then he or she will applaud the march of progress documented by Fleming. But if he sees community initiative as a means of redressing the wrongs of our schools, he will be disappointed in *Educational Opportunity: The Pursuit of Equality*. □

CLASS IN EVOLUTION

*We sit in a circle of chairs
books open on our laps. we are
doing Darwin this week, tracing his innocent
maps of order all the way
to the cloudless solution.*

*watching what had waited transparent
all those fumbling years
fall open like a garden flower,
step by step confusion
closed by theory.*

*And no clause left for accident.
Beneath his patterned stars
it is a rotter of destiny
with doomed orders huddled together
as the earth's edge. their time done.*

*Now we ore sent, the appointed ones,
bookeating swallowing species
hungering circular monster
lunching on reasons
for being here.*

(From *intersect*, by Carol Shields, Borealis Press, paper, unpriced).

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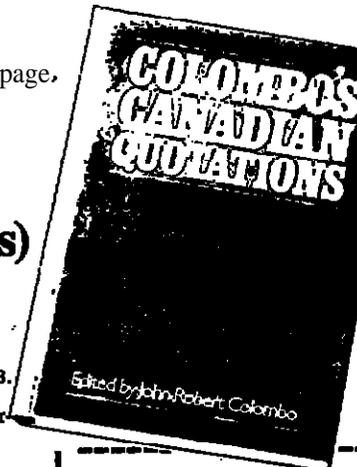
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WAS SPIRO AGNEW RIGHT?

Here's a man who knows what's wrong with Canadian writers; they are an elitist pack of effete snobs

By JIM CHRISTY

HOLD ON. SOMETHING strange is going down in Canadian literature on the *literary scene*, if you please, and I think I know what it is: animbroglío of sorts, at least from my perspective. It's a question of priorities. Everywhere I look there's a writer complaining and most of the complaints are ridiculous. I'm thinking about all these people who take themselves so seriously unmindful of the fact that it could be much worse, they could be *working*. As if they shouldn't thank their lucky stars that they can make money from their *writing especially* in a country of 22 million people, very few of whom are *affected* in any way by the *material* they are writing. All these people are upper-middle-class, sophisticated, university-educated types writing about upper-middle-class, sophisticated, university-educated types and this son of *thing*, I submit, *does not interest* the potential reading public in this country because they do not come *from that* class; in fact, I *submit further* that most people in that class are even bored by the *writing* because it is so damn vapid and square, about as exciting as a six-year-old, six-cylinder, four-door sedan inching along at 50.

This theory of mine, which others seem to sham and which seems country simple, has not been mentioned in any of the cry-baby articles I've read of late about the *sorry* plight of *Canadian* writers. *What* is mentioned is the nasty publishers, the lack of a *reading* public; I *read* about some brave author wanting to smash a copy machine as a protest against something, I *read* about a magazine being boycotted, I *read* about royalties from *libraries*, perhaps the *most* ridiculous suggestion of all is the Writers' Union's *expressed* goal of a closed shop, which means that it could tell

Let's take literature out of the hands of all those borers who live their lives in pinch-penny installments, so smug and content as if their family-sedan prose was holy.

publishers they could *publish* only union writers. Well, I've been a member of the IWW, The National Maritime Union, and the Teamsters but *that* is enough to make me a *proud* scab. Such petty grievances and myopic solutions! Will somebody please tell me it's all a joke? But, alas, everyone's serious, dead serious. It *seems* that if you want to become an insider you have to leave your laugh at the door.

The real reason the industry is in trouble — and it's so damn obvious — is that practically no one is writing anything that anyone else wants to read. It's an elitist act and it's high time the curtain came down.

In every other country of the world 'with a vital *literature* the industry is *supported* by its popular writers. It is these people who are responsible for the publication of the elitist writers, the avant-garde, the poets. *Here*, with the exception

of *Hugh Garner*, who is not taken seriously — is called the best bad *writer* in the country — there is no popular *writer*. The *result* is a body of jejune and bloodless prose supported by the government and high-school required-reading lists. Mention "the people" and watch a Canadian writer *smirk*. They can't handle *Gerard de Nerval's* statement that poetry is in the skeet because, you see, it is these same people who am in the *street* and they're *dumb*. I doubt, however, that either *truck* drivers or *entrepreneurs* want to read about some *professor* going out into the woods and feeling victimized when he *realizes that* it's all because of *American* domination of his country's economy. *Later*, for that. *I mea*", it may *interest some* people but. . . . Look, I go into a bar and meet an Estonian who served *five* years on the *Russian front*, *works a lathe*, *cross-breeds rare flowers*, speaks *10* languages and reads a book a day (none of them Canadian); there are *Hungarian freedom* fighters, *waitresses* born in *Russian concentration camps*, *Indian* pool hustlers, *Negm* pimps, *prostitutes*, *inventors*, *trappers*, *deserters* from the *Turkish airforce*, *millionaire art restorers* All these *people* read books. I haven't made *them* up, I know each one of them and practically no one is writing about them or for them. In fact, the only *people doing anything* are *women* and they're not doing much. But, *better* them than the ball-less and bloodless work of the smug *avant-garde* and the *writers-in-residence*.

There is this whole *other* experience that enriches Canadian life and people who come out of that experience, should they happen to write, are met with incredulity; and lo and behold, if they get a book published it invariably will be botched. I'm thinking of *Marcel Home's Annals of the Firebreather*, a book that should have been a best *seller* but the publisher decided to stick a price tag on it that restricted it to the *heretofore-mentioned* public, that *frankly* wasn't *interested* in the confessions of a real *ma*". *one* who has lived.

The best thing I've made in more *than a year* is a *manuscript* by a guy named *Barry Dickey*, a narrative about his *experiences* driving a cab in *Toronto*. I mentioned this *recently* to a publisher who thought I was putting him on: "Who in the world would be interested in something like that?"

A publisher's reader, a month or so ago, praised a book of mine glowingly in *terms of style, structure, and language* but admitted "there is a *house* prejudice against this sort of *thing*." He *meant* the life style of the people in the book, in other words, *me* and the people I came in contact with since it was autobiographical. He said it has all been *clichéd*, as if I *were* a sociologist or an interloper. Would a book about *suburbia* or the university life be rejected on the same grounds?

Those in the know just don't understand and it's *discouraging* but then I take a job every once and awhile. *Dennis Duffy*, in a recent *Globe and Mail* review of the *anthology Outlaws* had the audacity to *criticize* the contributors — *Erling Friis-Baastad*, *Pat Lane*, *Charlie Leeds*, *Marcel Home*, and myself — not in *terms of our* writing, but for assuming the position of *fellaheens*. He claimed that

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SILENT WITNESSES

Heather Fairlie Wood and John Swettenham

published November 1974

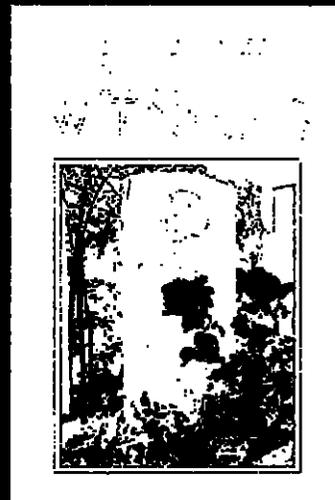
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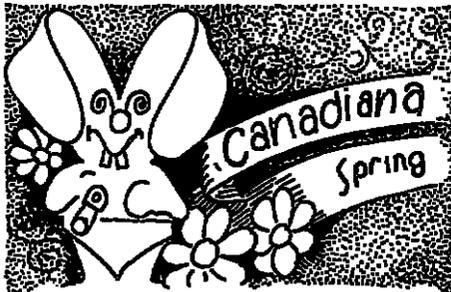
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we were messing with a "vein that has been thoroughly worked" and should be "pushing out further to where the real outlaws live." An example of a real outlaw, he says, is **Mordecai Richler's** **Joey Hersh**. Well, excuse me professor, I don't want to take anything away from that particular novel but we're playing for real here. We're **not** making up **anything**. The point is that the designation "outlaw" or "outsider" connotes more than someone's criminal **record**; it represents the alienation and estrangement that make up the **secret dominant experience of our society**. The vein we're working is our own experience.

The nitty gritty is that people would read Canadian literature if it had **anything** to do with their **lives**, if it **explored** that **gallimaufry** existence just beyond the blinders of elitist eyes. Let's take **literature** out of the hands of all those **bores** who live their lives in pinch-penny **instalments**, so smug and content as if their **family-sedan prose** was holy. Let's heat from somebody who has lived. Let's see someone take a risk or **two**. Give **us** a feeling, richness, **excitement, adventure, something that makes life easier** to bear or **at least** explains a **tiny bit** of it. **Yes**, that's **precisely** what I want. some **LIFE**. Here, here! □

Life on the unfunny pharm

Blackout, by Hubert **Aquin**, translated by Alan Brown, **The House of Anansi**, 168 pages, \$8.50 cloth and \$3.50 paper.

By **BRIAN VINTCENT**

READING AN Aquin novel is like standing too long under the etchings of **Goya's maimed** monsters and wretched **lunatics** howling down the cavernous halls of the Prado in Madrid. The **experience** in **both** cases is harrowing, to say the least.

Aquin's world is a pitiless, glacial nightmare peopled by paranoids, murderers, and rapists who **take** enormous doses of drugs like sodium **amytal** to forget or remember **or just** to help them cope **with their** spiritual bankruptcies. When they have taken enough to make them dazzlingly euphoric **or** hopelessly despairing, they write about themselves in confessional tones.

Blackout is the third of **his** novels describing this unpretty world that has

appeared in **English**. Like **The Antiphonary** and **Prochain Episode**, this is an **eccentric** mystery story that is allowed to unfold as it will and does so with staggering complexities and **serpentine** twists and turns.

Little is certain. A **Québécois pharmacist**, who is a revolutionary and unquestionably deranged, **murders** his English Canadian **mistress** and pursues her memory throughout the book. (It is not difficult **to read** this as political allegory, or more precisely separatist **wish-fulfilment**.) A second plot **involving** the dead girl's sister and a black pharmacist from **Nigeria** runs parallel to the **first**. **Criminal** fantasies and insanity cripple character after character. Even the book's **editor**, whose old-womanish fussing with the text results in a glut of prim footnotes, finds himself **teetering** on the brink as he **struggles** for control of the story with a character of **protean** powers known as RR. Mystery compounds mystery and the reader is **left** to make what he can out of **all** this muddle.

Blackout appeared originally in French as **Trou de mémoire** in 1968. Most of **its** present interest lies in the fact that it is dearly a **rehearsal** for **L'antiphonaire**, which was published the following year. It sketches **out** a good **many** of **The Antiphonary's** themes and Aquin's much **discussed**, though puzzling, fascination with esoteric **16th-century-science** makes its first clumsy appearance here. In **The Antiphonary**, this erudition loses its show-off quality and becomes an integral part of the novel.

Part of the problem **with Blackout** lies in the novel's style. Early on in the book, **the** author of these confessions **writes**: "There is only one possible law of style; write to the maximum of intensity and incantation." Which is just what Aquin does. The result is long paragraphs (one section consists of more than eight pages virgin of paragraphs, a phenomenon I **had** not expected to find outside of Proust) full of passionate polemic -political, sexual and intellectual.

This is **interesting** enough for the light it sheds on a character searching, like his country of French Canada, for an identity; but Aquin has almost forgotten to include a narrative in his **enthusiasm**. **Happily**, the balance is restored in the book's latter and **best parts** when **the author takes** the black **pharmacist** and his nymphomaniac girlfriend on a journey of mental and physical collapse from Lagos through **Lausanne** and Paris back to **Montreal**

and the novel's dramatic though **puzzling** climax.

Once again, as in *The Antiphony*, which won him the Canada Council's first award for excellence in literary translation, Nan Brown has **produced a flawless** English text that preserves the density and intricate hysterical tone of the original.

So far, **Aquin's work** has been a continuum of ever-increasing quality. Each of his new books has been better than **his** last. This augurs well for his latest novel, *Neige noire*, which has recently appeared in Quebec book shops. □

Bright kids, moronic adults'

Waken, Lords and Ladies **Gay: Selected Stories of Desmond Pacey**, edited and with an introduction by Frank M. Tiemey, Borealis Press, 118 pages, \$4.95 paper.

The Story So Far 3, edited by David Young, Coach House Press, 174 pages, \$4.95 paper.

By MICHAEL SMITH

DESMOND PACEY WROTE and published 31 short stories between 1937 and 1972, which means he was probably busy at other things. After all, Pacey is a critic, and a substantial children's poet. but not exactly the sort of writer you expect to **see** grouped with Raymond Knister and E. W. Thomson in the new Canadian Short Story Library series from Borealis Press.

One reason he may well have been selected is that **Pacey's** stories seem so typical of what threatens to become the prototype of all Canadian short fiction. Like many others, they're planted in **rural** settings (or settings so simple they may as well be **rural**); they **often** concern the adult observations of children, and several have to do with death. None seems particularly **memorable**; and yet most provide a good comfortable **read**.

A **lot are** reminiscent of stories by Sinclair Ross — an acknowledged influence on Pacey — as **for** instance. in "The Test," a struggling farm **couple** stands to **lose** its livelihood when its dairy herd gets tuberculosis. Similarly, "That Day in the Bush" echoes some of **Knister's** work as Pacey builds — though far **more** simply — the momentous atmosphere that precedes a **farm** youth's tragic fate.

Pacey often draws the tension between childhood and the **flawed** adult world that fictional Canadian tads seem uniquely and **so** **prodigiously** able to perceive. In the title story he describes **the** reactions of a couple of English boys to **their rural** teachers, and the wily **carnal** cheek displayed by one advanced 10-year-old. In "Aunt **Polly**" a child discovers his elders' greed after a family death.

Somehow it seems significant that Pacey, who has all the outward qualifications **of** the obfuscating academic, writes such Simple, mostly innocent stories about Canadian and English **people** while so many new young writers seem almost **driven** to spew **up** muddled, awful stuff.

At the risk of appearing a **literary** fanatic, I can't imagine why anybody would want to **read The Story So Far 3**. Almost all these stories — **most are** no better than short vignettes — **are** "experimental," which you **are free** to interpret as **meaning** riddled with gimmickry. A **handful** (by Matt Cohen, George **Bowering**, David McFadden and others) **are good**, I guess, but anything worth reading **either** has been published elsewhere (I'd seen Cohen's story before) or will be. There's not much sense **trying to read** them here because of all the junk between them.

If I were browsing through a **bookstore**, just a glance at a couple of the introductions ("When asked about biography. he said, 'I write in the dark' and 'I squat to crap' ") would be enough to make me pot this silly book down. **The** text and accompanying **photos** (A **A Bronson** posed nude on a bed) **are** the kind of moronic vomit that would have been embarrassing in a high-school yearbook.

Somebody at the Canada Council sees fit to give money to Coach House Press, and with some of it this overpriced nonsense was produced. All you **are** given for your money is a collection of in-jokes from a **bunch of** aging freaks who seem to lack even **the** talent to be **funny** about it. I like it better my way: "I squat in the dark" and "I **crap** to write." □



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The garbageman stayeth

Canadian Healing Oil, by Juan
Butler, Peter Martin Associates, 153
pages, \$8.95 cloth.

By JIM CHRISTY

JUAN BUTLER IS UNIQUE in the narrow world of Canadian fiction. He is exploring, adrift may be more accurate, in a terrain few others can visit, if they even know it exists. He is an egregious writer capable of startling feats of language, of sculpting vignettes with a sudden power, as he says, "like a nail being driven through your ear." It is because of this special talent and his own awareness of it that Butler feels comfortable hinting in print — hell, proclaiming — his own greatness and claim to Governor General's Awards and Nobel Prizes of the future. Arm-gance, supported by special gifts, can be an appealing thing. Had *Canadian Healing Oil* been Butler's second novel instead of his third, such would be the case. But, as it is, the whole act falls flat.

Butler's first book, *Cabbagetown Diary*, was a raw look at a particularly bad city experience, awkward in sections but vital and honest. It was followed a couple years later by *The Garbageman*, which contained some of the most powerful scenes in Canadian literature. It was a startling novel featuring a chaotic landscape of violence where the borders of dream and waking blurred, the story existing in a state of hypnagogic terror. The only weakness was again some clumsiness of style that particularly marred the ending.

The Garbageman drew praise from the phenomenal English writer Colin Wilson, who commented, "It is a kind of extreme, a boundary. . . . The question is whether you now have the qualities to go beyond it." Butler probably does have the qualities and is quoted on the jacket of the current novel as saying his intention is to spend the rest of his life, "going beyond it." But he didn't do it in *Canadian Healing Oil* because he bent over backwards to surrealism.

There is none of the awkwardness of the other books but neither is there the violence that seemed to be his forte. His device to mirror the soul, to go "beyond." The book is a melange of dream, "reality," history, politics, inner dialogue, travel notes; and

esoteria. Rather than being an effective display of versatility and sustained multi-level writing, it descends to crafty dilettantism. The book was probably written very quickly. It just reads too easily, not with white-heat passion either, but a methodical, paragraph by paragraph climbing and descending of the levels. Here a little Bousongo mythology, a dash of perversion, some sectarian political parody, a jigger of fear. Had he taken longer, Butler could have buttressed the construction. He wouldn't have based the most potentially important section of the book, a parable about rage and terror, on misinformation about the inherent qualities of two snakes that he compares, a rattler and a tree viper.

Surrealism has been useful to Butler in his first two books as a means, as counterpoint to his realistic power. In this book he's abandoned the real and,



Juan Butler

thus, simply lost his edge. He's sacrificed a lot of passion for a little hit of polish. It seemed to me that in his third novel Butler employed every technique, looked everywhere possible, to avoid, purposely, the intimations of *The Garbageman*. Perhaps he turned away from something he didn't want to see-destiny, the beyond, call it what you will. Near the end of *Canadian Healing Oil*, the author's persona is about to drink of the "dark, tar-like liquid" but a woman stops him. "Not now, monsieur," she says. "It is solely for the moment when you come face to face with your destiny."

To go beyond, Juan Butler has to pick up something he lost along the way. If he does, he'll deserve all the prizes. □

Pine-needle paths of glory

Great Stories of Canada, **six** reissues, **Macmillan**, each \$4.95 cloth and \$2.95 paper:

-**Captain of the Discovery**, by **Roderick Haig-Brown**, illustrated by **Gordon MacLean**, 174 pages.

-**Arctic Assignment**, by **F.S. Farrar**, edited by **Barret Bonnezen**, illustrated by **Merle Smith**, 154 pages.

-**Scarlet Force**, by **T. Morris Longstreth**, illustrated by **Alan Daniel**, 154 pages.

-**The Golden Trail**, by **Pierre Berton**, illustrated by **Alan Daniel**, 110 pages.

-**The Nor'Westers**, by **Marjorie Wilkins Campbell**, illustrated by **Gordon MacLean**, 128 pages.

-**Man from St. Malo**, by **Robert D. Ferguson**, illustrated by **Merle Smith**, 122 pages.

By **SUSAN LESLIE**

MACMILLAN IS TO be commended for the new, revised editions of its Great Stories of Canada series. **Originally** commissioned some 20 years ago, the series was intended to bring **some of the more** exciting aspects of our history to young **Canadian** readers. This year, six have been **reissued**, and **they** truly are **great** stories. The voyages of **Cartier**, the tight of the **Nor'Westers** to control the fur **trade**, the discoveries of **Vancouver**, the **Klondike** gold **rush** — these are adventures that put G.A. Henty to shame.

While the telling is not always as **great** as **the stories** themselves, the six appearing this **year** are certainly readable. **Pierre Berton's** *The Golden Trail* relates the hardships and madness of the thousands who struggled to the **Klondike** gold rush. The plain facts — the thousands of miles **they came**, the starvation, the pianos they carried across the **Chilkoot** Pass — **are** so startling; **one** wonders what ever **happened** to Canadians that we are **so** unhealthy and Phlegmatic now. *The Nor' Westers*, **Marjorie Wilkins Campbell's** book about the fur **trade**, documents **the** same kind of courage, endurance and greed. Peter Pond. David Thompson, **Alexander Mackenzie** and Simon **McTavish** at **least** received some wealth and fame for **their** struggles along the long mute

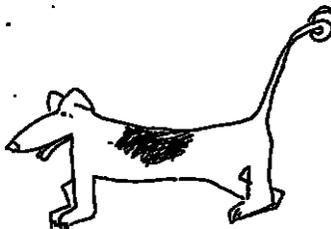
to the trapping grounds. But the anonymous **voyageurs** — **portrayed, unfortunately**, in this book as **musical** beasts of burden-paddled thousands of miles **every** year for cornmeal, lard, tobacco and a few dollars. Most of them were dead by 40. Campbell gives a few pages to **the** Indian and **Métis** women who made **the voyageurs'** lives bearable. She also mentions Charlotte Thompson, the **Métis** woman who **married** David Thompson when she was 14. She followed him on his voyage of **exploration** through **the** Rockies, with a baby and a **small** child. She **sounds** formidable, and would be fine material for a **future** Great Story of Canada.

Man from St. Malo, a **biography** of **Cartier** by Robert **Ferguson**, presents a grim vision of early exploration in **Canada**: starvation, scurvy, **frostbite**, hostile Indians. **Cartier's** voyage up **the** **Saint Lawrence** seems more perilous and awesome than space **flight**.

Some 250 years later, **Vancouver** travelled along the **rough rocky Pacific** coast. He and his crew suffered too: storms, hunger; **attack**, disease **made** their voyage as diit as **Cartier's**. *Captain of the Discovery*, by **Roderick Haig-Brown**, makes good use of Vancouver's log to document the **arduous** voyage of the Discovery up the West Coast **from** California to Alaska.

Morris Longstreth's book about the Mounted Police, *Scarlet Force*, covers another great story in Canadian history. Somehow our modern RCMP **es** not **have** the **dignity** of its predecessor. *Arctic Assignment* describes **the** journey of the **St. Roch**, the last **great** voyage of Canadian discovery. It was written by **F. S. Farrar**, who was a member of the **St. Roch's** crew.

It is hard to believe that people, suffered and **struggled** so much for beaver **pelts** or gold **dust** or map-making. The **series** provides a salutary look at the determination and **hardiness** that created a country out of this "land that God gave Cain." **The Great Stories of Canada** are not the sort of books that **one** reads **breathlessly**. (Will David Thompson make **it** through the icefloes?) But they **are, nonetheless**, fine adventures, and I think most children who read easily will be engrossed in them. □



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Bible Bill and the apostles

The Dynasty: The **Rise and Fall of Social Credit in Alberta**, by **John J. Barr, McClelland & Stewart**, 248 pages, \$12.50 **cloth**.

By **DAVID LEWIS**

THIS IS A RACY and **hero-worshipping** apologia for Social Credit in Alberta, but it is not a work of historical analysis. The author has a journalist's eye for facts and personalities and the advantage of **having** been on the inside as one of **an** intimate group of advisers to the government and the party during the last **few** years of Social **Credit** reign. The reader, therefore, gets a fair picture of the towering **figure** of William **Aberhart** and of the lesser but **impressive figure** of Ernest Manning. He learns about some of the internal rivalries and about the work of the **government** and **legislature**. The book conveys accurately the fervent commitment of Aberhart's followers in the early years and the sated complacency which oil money produced in **the** Manning era. All these events **are** described in some detail but they are not connected into a rounded picture of a phenomenon that is as **bewildering** as it is interesting.

The successful emergence of Social **Credit** in Alberta is described, but not explained, in **terms** of the obvious: the **Depression**; the farmer's **bitterness** against the banks and mortgage companies; and the **mesmerizing** conversion of **Aberhart** himself and the impact of **his** Prophetic Bible Institute. These indicate the presence of widespread **discontent** and a readiness to **listen**, but the author does not provide the social, economic and cultural background that would illuminate Aberhart's success in not only winning **the** people of **the** province in a short couple of years, but also in evoking from them a religious fanaticism for **a** **cause** they did not understand. This has always intrigued me. In the late **1930s** or early **1940s** I was on a **CCF** speaking tour in Alberta in the company of **William Irvine**. At one of the early meetings I dared criticize Aberhart and the Social Credit government. **This** proved to be **sacrilegious**, for the small **audience** rose **angrily** and **walked out on me**, leaving

me with mouth open, but **not** in oratorical **flight**.

That Aberhart did not fathom the intricacies of Social Credit as **propounded** by Major **C.H. Douglas** **there** is no doubt. And who **can** blame him? Indeed, the author of **this** book **suggests** that his hero was bored by Douglas and **his** pontificating details. What, in my view, **remains** a mystery is how **far** Aberhart really believed in Social Credit and to what extent he merely responded to the **fact** that it singled out **the** moneylenders for condemnation without threatening the fundamentalist framework of his thinking.

This book makes clear again that, once in power, Aberhart did nothing about Social Credit in the **first** 18 months despite his solemn **promise** to act within that period. Astonishingly, he appointed one **Robert J. Magor**, a wealthy and traditional **financier**, as his main adviser, he consistently **rejected** the advice of Douglas and **quarrelled** with **him**; **when some** Social Credit legislation was finally **introduced** under pressure from a growing **group** of dissidents **inside and outside the Legislature**, Aberhart had so little faith in it that he and **his** government disclaimed responsibility for it, **presenting** it as **the** conception and child of the Social Credit **Board**. **These** and other facts prompt one **to wonder** just how deep were Aberhart's convictions about the **Social** Credit panaceas.

When Manning took over in 1943, the **paradox** **became** even **more striking**. He **hardly** talked about Social Credit except in perfunctory **genuflexion** before the **shrine**. **His** central target was socialism and the **CCF-NDP**, even though they were certainly not a threat to him. He knelt **more devoutly** before the altar of **free enterprise** than before the **shrine** of Social **Credit**. After he left the premiership, **he** **quickly** **joined** the financial establishment at its apex. Today Manning, besides **being** a Senator, is **president of one fairly large corporation and director of 10 others**. Among **them, mirabile dictu, are** the Canadian Imperial Bank of **Commerce, Manufacturers' Life Insurance, CP Air, McIntyre Porcupine Mines, and Steel Company of Canada**. **How** is that for a sworn opponent of Big finance and the Eastern Moguls?

There is little doubt that Aberhart was saved by the war and Manning by the gosh of oil at **Leduc**. **The oil money** enabled what had become a **traditional conservative government to remove the provincial sales tax and to**

achieve **impressive improvements in education, roads, and social services**. But when **Harry** Strom, the third and last Social Credit premier, proved incapable of **modernizing the** party and **making an** impact on the electorate, the official conservatives **under** Peter **Lougheed** took over.

Barr details **many** of the important **events** and describes **interestingly** the careers of the leaders. But the reader will not find in his book any thoughtful explanation of **the Social** Credit phenomenon **in** Alberta or any profound analysis of the **causes** of its rise and fall. For these insights he will have to look elsewhere. □

Telling sad stories of the war and King

Canada's War: The Politics of the Mackenzie King Government, 1939-45, by **J.L. Granatstein**, Oxford University Press, **illustrated**, 436 pages, \$18.95 **cloth**.

By **C. P. STACEY**

THE SUBTITLE OF Professor **Granatstein's** book describes it more accurately **than** the main title. It is an excellent and sometimes fascinating political **history of Canada during the Second World War, centring on Mackenzie King**. A **history of Canada's War** it is not—unless you subscribe to the view that the fighting did take **place in** Ottawa. The mud and the blood are not here, but there is a fair amount of dirty **work**.

Pmf. **Granatstein demonstrates** once more his **well-known** genius for hacking historical documents to their lairs. His basic source is the Mackenzie **King papers, including** the famous **diary**; but he has also used documents left by a myriad of other actors **in** the drama, great and small, and the records of government **departments** in Ottawa, **Londop** and (to some extent) **Washington**. With enormous industry, **energy**, and **skill** he tans to **use** the **great mass** of new and **important** material lately opened to historians of the war.

Canada's War is not **concerned entirely with** politics in the narrow sense, and indeed it **does not tell us** as much that is new in this area as in others. **The**

field of conscription, necessarily a **major** interest of the book, had been pretty industriously ploughed already, not least by Gmnatstein himself; **but his** chapters on **war** finance and social policy **break more** new ground. One department is weak: the **chapter** called "A Nation on the World Stage." contains good stuff, but it is **so** incomplete that it might have been better to leave it **out** altogether. One can only look with surprise at an account of Canada's **relations** with the international **war-making** machinery that does not even mention the Combined Chiefs of Staff (the Anglo-American committee that mu the Western Allies' war) and which entirely omits the First Quebec Conference, including Churchill's proposal that Canada should be allowed at least a limited share in the discussions, a truly horrible **suggestion** which was instantly vetoed by Roosevelt.

The **central figure** appears to advantage. **There** have been a good many King-haters, in hi time and since. Prof. Gmnatstein, it seems fait to say, is **by** contrast almost a **King-lover**. He &es not conceal the Prime Minister's unpleasant **characteristics**, but he views **them** with an indulgent eye. He comes close to taking King at his own **valuation**, which was high. He says that King's "greatest achievement" was his **social program** - notably, in this period, family **allowances** — and he accepts the great man's identification of it with **Industry and Humanity**, the **almost** unreadable book that King published in 1918. The general idea underlying family allowances -but hardly the thing itself — can be found in this book. **Twenty-six** years later, **under the** **impulsion** of political and economic expediency and needling **from the Left**, King made family allowances the law of the land. Gnnatstein clearly feels that this performance rates three cheers. Others may fed that one mild cheer would be ample.

One thing you will not find **in** this book, **and** that is the **extraordinary** idiosyncrasies that have received so much attention fmm the media since the later King diaries were opened recently. Joan **Patteson**, King's closest friend and confidant for the last 30 years of bis life, appears on page one and is never seen again. The author is **hardly** to blame for this. King was **very** successful in maintaining the separateness of his two worlds — the world of public affairs, and the **private world** of the women and the spirits — and when he was in office the latter was definitely secondary. Nevertheless it sometimes

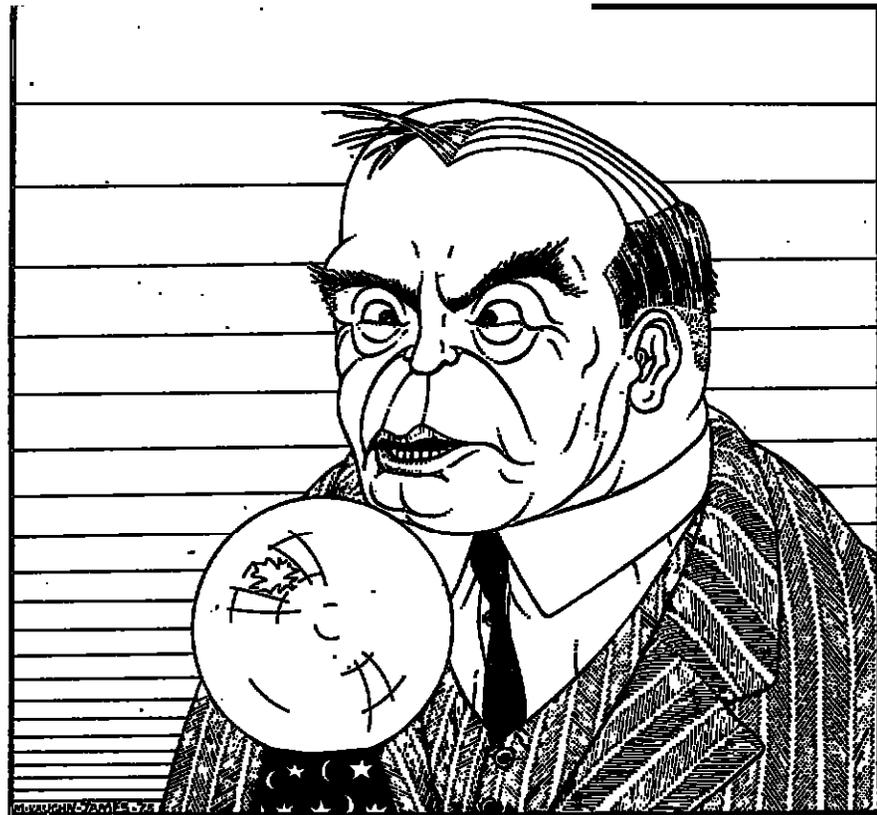
impinged on the public **world**, and I myself believe that this happened at the time of King's dismissal of Colonel J.L. Ralston from the Cabinet in **the** conscription crisis of 1944. I **interpret** King's **diary as meaning** that on Oct. 30 a telegram fimm George **Fulford**, a Lib-

Under the **imp&on of political and economic expediency . . .** **King mode family allowances the law of the land. Gmnatstein clearly feels that this performance rates three. cheers. Others may feel that one mild cheer would be ample.**

eral MP who **favoured** conscription, triggered in King's mind the idea that them was a conspiracy against him in **his** Cabinet. The spirits were not involved, but King's reaction was purely irrational **and** intuitive. Them was no conspiracy; but King made his belief that **there** was one **the** basis of a great act of policy. My **interpretation** is that King **resolved from** that moment to dismiss Ralston, striking the conspirators **before** they **could** strike him. Next day, he obtained General **McNaughton's** assurance **that** he was ready to take Ralston's place. He made his preparations **in** complete secrecy;

then, at the Cabinet meeting on Nov. 1, he spring his mine and dismissed Ralston — and because everyone was **utterly** taken by surprise, Ralston's **conscriptionist** friends did not leave with him. Gmnatstein is unwilling to accept **this** version. He admits at the end of the book that both the conspiracy and the "generals **revolt**" of which so 'much **has** been heard **were** "probably" fantasies of King's mind; but he seems to ask us **to** believe that the **decision to fire** Ralston was taken on the spur of the moment actually **during** the meeting on Nov. 1. It is true that **King** never **actually** says that he took the decision on Oct. 30 or 31. In my opinion he did not dare commit **this deadly** secret to **the** secretary to whom he dictated the diary.

At the last the author **can spare** only six pages to interpret his whole story. He makes **large** statements **without** developing them. Canada, he **surprisingly** says, in 1939 had "much the same status as in 1914." Thus he demolishes at one **stroke** Sir Robert Borden, the vast consequences of the First World War, the Statute of Westminster, and about 20 years' hard **labour** by Mackenzie **King**. **What** he seems fo be saying is that these things **were** bogus because in spite of them Canada in 1939 **still** went **to** war (in **Granatstein's** book) **entirely** because of the British **connection**. (He clearly doesn't like the British connection; but let that pass.) Only as a



result of the Second World War, he says, did we achieve "genuine nationhood." He finds the evidence for this **achievement** in a new national "confidence." and attributes this in great part to family allowances (no fooling) and the other social-welfare measures associated with King. I only hope **Granatstein** doesn't live to see the outbreak of the **Third World War**, which alone will **test the** soundness of his ideas. It will not be our British connection that will get us into that, if it happens; our **American** connection will drag us **into** it, and the **British** along with us. At that point we shall **find out** how much the "confidence" the baby bonus gave us is really worth. □

The national monument that birdseed built

Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume III, 1741-1770, Frances G. Halpenny, general editor, U of T Press, 782 pages, \$20 cloth.

By ROGER HALL

SINCE CONFEDERATION it **has** been the chief concern of **all** Canadians — editors, politicians, scholars, and just plain people — to examine, **explain**, justify, or expose exactly what we are. More often than **not** the answers defiantly have pronounced what we are not, and left it at that. As successive volumes of the **Dictionary of Canadian Biography** appear it becomes evident that Canada's **national pastime** is **being threatened**. With **four** volumes now complete, and a **recent** massive transfusion of federal money to assure eight

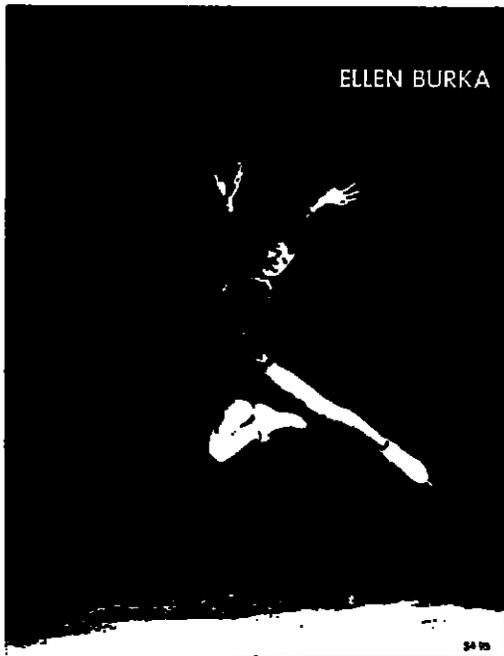
mom within the **decade** (carrying the story up to **1900**), an answer to our perennial identity crisis must be at hand. **Even if we don't discover the true** alias of Johnny **Canuck**, the **DCB** does provide a scholarly national **monument**, suitably dressed **up** in both official **languages**, and it **serves** a lot of **other purposes** as well.

Canadian scholars had almost **for-saken** the idea of an authoritative source for Canadian **biographical** information when, in the early 1950s, financial inspiration **appeared** in the form of a bequest from **James Nicholson**, a **Toronto entrepreneur who** had made his **fortune** in, of **all** things, the **birdseed** business. Nicholson had **long** delighted in reading the **collective** wisdom in Britain's imposing **Dictionary of National Biography**. **In his will** he left the University of Toronto a **generous** sum for founding a Canadian equivalent, wisely leaving the production details to the university authorities. He did specify that the **work should** be original and based on primary sources and "supply **full, accurate** and concise biographies of **all** noteworthy inhabitants of the Dominion of Canada (exclusive of living persons), from the earliest

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The difficulty [with the DCB] is that while the characters involved may all have died within the same general span, they didn't necessarily flourish during a similar period.

historical period to the time of publication." By 1959, the dictionary, by then linked with the University of Toronto Press, was underway. Two years later Laval University assumed responsibility for the publication of a French edition and a fruitful collaboration resulted.

The first volume appeared in 1966, and with a few-inevitable exceptions, the biographies set a high standard. Unlike the *DNB* or the prestigious *Dictionary of American Biography*, the *DCB* does not maintain a strict alphabetical order throughout the series. Rather each volume is arranged chronologically according to the death dates of the individuals involved; within the volume a conventional alphabetical arrangement prevails. This works out well enough for Volume I, in which 600-odd articles cover the years from 1000 to 1700. Volume II (issued in 1969), however, covered a much shorter time period, from 1701-1740, and Volume X, the next to appear (in 1972) because of a special Centennial grant, focused on the single decade 1871-1880. The idea was that one could study a whole period in terms of one volume. The difficulty is that while characters involved may all have died within the same general span, they didn't necessarily flourish during a similar period. The scheme's utility is further drawn into question when one considers the vast numbers of indexes that will have to be published, to make the volumes easily accessible. Perhaps a useful solution would be for the indexes to serve also as epitome volumes and cover either the whole series or substantial portions of it. Epitomes or some sort of concise editions would be a boon as well in that the price of the new volumes (although no longer high in relative terms) is still \$20 each, which puts the series well beyond reach of most students and all but the most enthusiastic general readers.

Of course they are distinct advantages to the chronological sequence system too, perhaps the most obvious being the ease in marshalling scholarly resources for its manufacture, and also

that additional volumes covering new periods can be added as time goes on without disturbing the integrity of the whole design. The difficulty with the *DNB* and *DAB* in this regard was that both had to issue supplementary volumes immediately their alphabetical series were completed.

Volume III of the *DCB* has just been issued and records the lives of some 550 individuals who died between 1741 and 1770, a tumultuous time that was dominated by repeated warfare between French and English, reaching a climax in the conclusive Seven Years War. Following a successful pattern established in Volumes I and II (and unfortunately removed from Volume X), introductory essays by superior scholars discuss prime points of interest to the period. W. J. Eccles here assesses the French forces and C.P. Stacey measures English efforts. Their work is complemented and extended in their respective biographies of the two principals of the campaign, Montcalm, sketched in a satisfying; critical "warts and all" fashion by Eccles, and Wolfe, placed firmly in an unemotional perspective by Stacey. Incidentally, the bibliographies accompanying these sketches are fine and detailed and portray effectively incidents of historiographical debate. Volume III also reflects a sharper concern for the findings and interests of recent historical scholarship than was evident in Volumes I and II. A clearer portrait of the role of merchants in New France is seen and a closer understanding of the intricacies of the governmental administration of the colony demonstrated. A scholarly interest has also been maintained in terms of the inclusion of another glossary of Indian names and an increased sensitivity to the role of the natives both as pawns and partners in the French-English clash. Louis Chevrete's capable sketch, of Pontiac's resistance to European pressures is a particularly good account. Satisfactory attention is also paid to officials engaged in fur-trade rivalries and a sharper understanding of the exploration of the West is achieved through penetrating pictures of such men as the LaVérendryes.

A few (restrained) quibbles could be made. The *DCB* is still elitist history. For example, in Volume III why couldn't we have a portrait of the ordinary habitant's lifestyle, in the form of an introductory essay? This theme is touched upon in André Vachon's handsome sketch of administration in New France in Volume II but never given the

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-St. John's Evening Telegram

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attention social history requires (especially with the advantages provided by modern methodology). Translations from French to English appear uniformly good but complaints about the other direction are occasionally heard. Finally some of the smaller biographies appear not to have received the same rigorous professional review as the bigger ones. Donald Horton's medium-length sketch of Jean-Eustache Lanouiller de Boisclerc correctly and ably depicts his important contribution as *grand voyer* (chief roads commissioner). Yet Horton permits the fact that Lanouiller served 10 years in the important post of Controller of the Marine to go by without any development. Fortunately such inferior efforts are exceptions and, indeed, other biographies by Horton are of a superior caste.

The DCB is the most ambitious project ever undertaken by the historical profession in Canada. Its excellence shows the attainments of the discipline; at the same time it provides a useful platform for beginning and mature scholars alike to exhibit their abilities and achievements. In terms of the Canadian identity, may we never see the last word. □

For ever and ever? Ah, men

The Power and the Tories, by Jonathan Manthorpe, Macmillan, 305 pages, \$12.95 cloth.

By PETER REGENSTREIF

THE CONSERVATIVES have been in power in Ontario for almost 32 years; but as far as I know, this volume is the first attempt to analyze the why and the how. It's not too bad a try.

There is far too much emphasis on personalities for my taste and Manthorpe devotes about two thirds of the book to the tenure of William Davis, which covets only the last three or so years of the three decades of Tory dominance.

But it's entertaining stuff, nevertheless. There are broadly drawn depictions of the regimes of George Drew, Leslie Frost, and John Robarts. The personalities associated with the Davis administration are reasonably well-covered. There is an amusing — pmb-

ably unintentionally so — description of the press gallery at Queen's Park that is an amalgam of *The Front Page* and the peculiar biases of a *Toronto Globe and Mail* standard-bearer. And the events of the last few years — the Fidnam and Hydro affairs, the conflict-of-interest difficulties experienced by some Cabinet ministers, the separate-school issues, and the decision to halt construction of the Spadina Expressway — are given extensive attention.

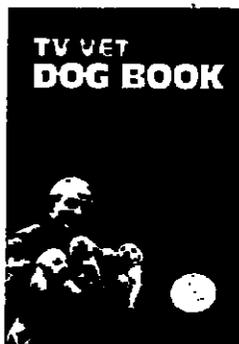
Interesting though all this is, there is a major shortcoming: while it is probably too much to ask that a book written for popular consumption have a thesis, this one hardly has any focus at all. It is more of a chronology with the author concentrating on some recent events that he has had some experience covering.

There are all sorts of allusions as to why the Conservatives got in and stayed there: the 30-odd rural and small town ridings in a band across the province from the Ottawa River to Lake Huron that are traditionally Tory; the party's strong organization, now nicknamed the "Big Blue Machine"; the effective use of polling, public relations and advertising. But only on oc-

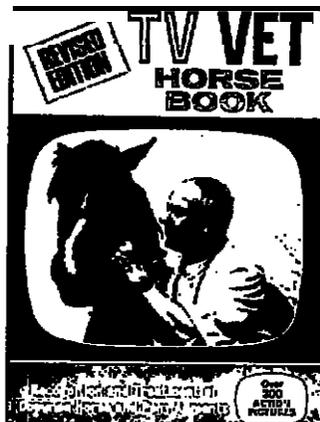
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casian does **Manthorpe** get down to the fundamentals; the Conservatives have held office because they alone among **the parties** have been able to satisfy the requirements. Their leader is always someone preferred by voters over any of his counterparts — and this is clearly, according to polling over the **last 15** years, the major factor in an election; they never have a **public** tight, so they appear united; and the **province** has undergone remarkable and uninterrupted **growth** during the entire period the Conservatives **have** been in.

These elements are interrelated, of course. **Manthorpe** makes one of his most telling points by correctly noting on several occasions that “any Liberal with ability and ambition naturally gravitates toward federal politics where the Liberal party has the corner on power.” In politics as in **war**, to understand an outcome one might better **examine** the weakness of the **defence** rather than the strength of the attack. After Mitchell Hepburn, Liberals in Ontario have scarcely **bothered** with provincial politics because they found Ottawa **far more** appealing. And with the CCF-NDP never **really** much more **than** a minority taste tier 1944, the Conservatives have had everything pretty much their own **way**.

Finally, economic good fortune means that underlying conditions of public dissatisfaction **are** absent. Once a party **gains office**, it naturally attracts business and professional elites who **can** only reinforce **its** success through the money nod skills these groups have to offer. In short, the recipe for the Conservatives in Ontario is pretty much like that for the Liberals in Ottawa — a **combination of good luck, some talent,** and money.

What would have made this a great book would have **been** a systematic dissection of the relationship between the Conservatives and the business and commercial groups that dominate the province. Instead, the reader is treated to some gossip and tales of conflict of interest and maybe even **minor** scandal. Any **knowledgeable political** observer could match **Manthorpe** dollar for **dollar** with similar goings-on in (say) Quebec, Manitoba, and British Columbia, to mention a selection of Canada's other **provinces**. We'll leave the United States out.

So despite having **produced** a piece of interesting diversion, it **seems** to me that **Manthorpe** has got it a bit backward. He claims early on that the scandals of the Davis administration **reflect** “a party rotten with elitism, crumbling

from within beneath the sheer weight of its preoccupation with maintaining power.”

Quite the **contrary**. If anything, under Davis, the Conservatives **demonstrate** a party **rank** with nepotism (elitism **after all** suggests competence) and apparently so unconcerned with staying in office that they steadfastly oppose the public will on such issues **as** the **Spadina Expressway** and fail to provide leadership in such vital **areas** as housing and managing the economy. Previous Tory administrations were not so **cavalier**.

There are the necessary, but not **sufficient**, conditions for a change in government. Whether the Davis administration is driven from office **depends** at least as much on the ability of **his opponents** to portray themselves as credible alternatives to the voters. The polls show the Liberals now in the lead in Ontario. But, there is still lots of time until an election must be held. □

Chicken Chow Mean

In the Sea of Sterile Mountains: The **Chinese** in British Columbia, by James Morton, J.J. Douglas, **280** pages, \$1250 cloth.

By DOUG BEARDSLEY

THE **EARLY** POLITICAL life of British Columbia revolved **around** two issues: the Chinese and the railway. James Morton's book **is** a chronological history, **from 1858** to the present, of the Chinese in B.C. The **first** half establishes the Chinese **settlement** in **Victoria** and the development **of** the railway and the vital **role** the Chinese **labourer** played in its successful **completion**. Then, after the **discovery** of gold on the mainland, the scene **shifts** to Vancouver-along with the prejudice and bigotry that followed these unfortunate. **people throughout** the province.

The title comes from Edward Blake's infamous remark, that British Columbia was “an inhospitable country, a sea of sterile mountains,” and few Chinese would disagree with the first part of that quotation. The **author** traces the early history of **British-Chinese** relations through the Opium Wars of 1839-1869, **thereby shedding** light on the initial reasons for the

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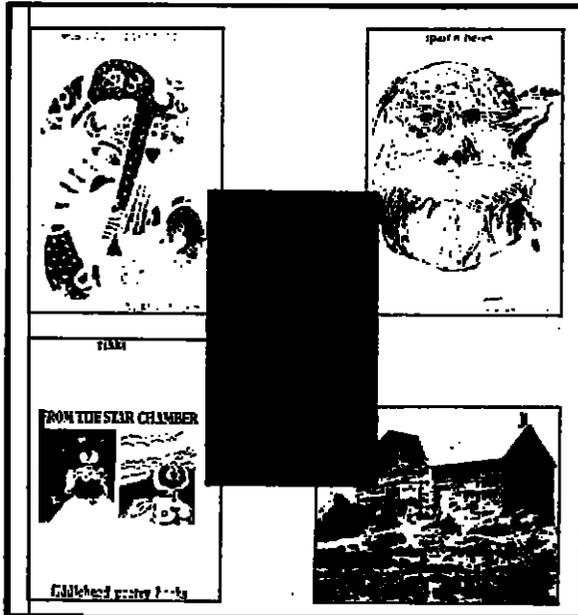
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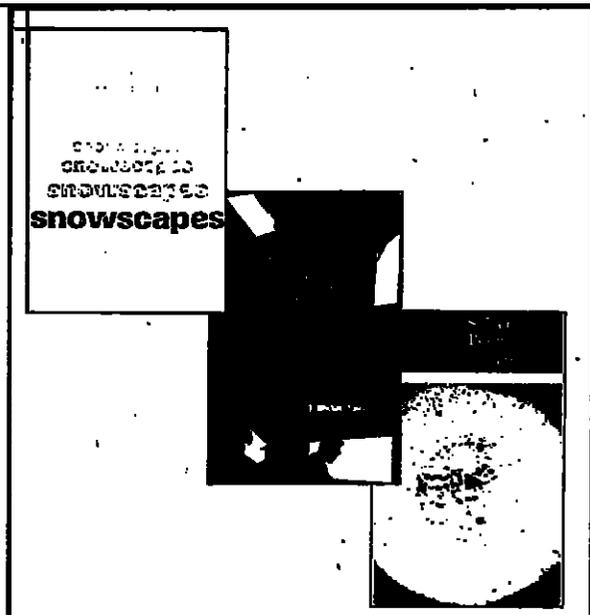
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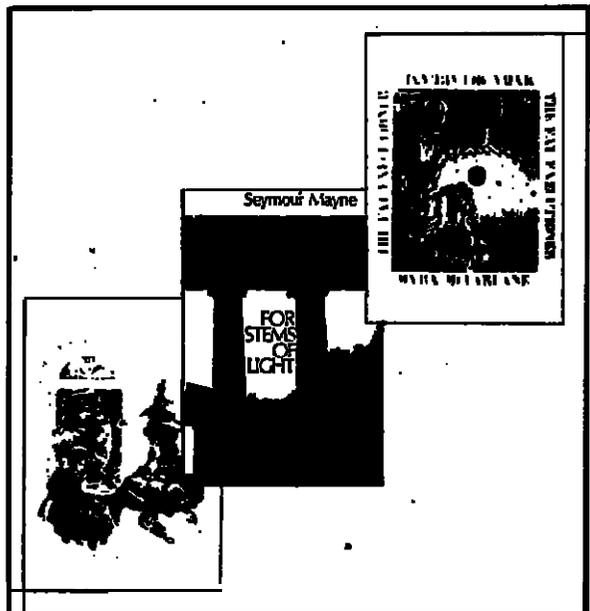
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and-Oriental feeling that greeted the Chinese when they landed on Vancouver Island. Also, he **skilfully documents** the reasons for the Chinese emigration, emphasizing the Californian **attitude**, (there were several major **riots** in America), which was reported in local papers in Victoria.

Still, there is little to account for the sick propaganda and vicious verbal **attacks** that were a weekly feature of the Victoria newspaper, *The Colonist*, and Morton is not afraid to pinpoint those **most** responsible for fanning the flames of **prejudice**. He also quite rightly attacks **Sir Wilfrid Laurier** (who considered **trade** more important than racial **bigotry**) for his **one-sided** policies in **favour** of the Japanese. It was **fortunate** for all that British tolerance prevailed on Vancouver Island, and the real possibilities of violence were never taken seriously. The same could **not** be said when, with the completion of **the** railway, the Chinese shifted their attention to the mainland.

All in all, this book charts the sorry, disgraceful record of the anti-Chinese Whites (it was not till 1967 that Chinese immigration was placed on an equal basis **with that** of other nationalities). Morton has documented it well by means of **the** newspapers of the time, but the companion volume remains **to be written**: the Chinese in the West have **yet** to tell their story.

This handsome book is beautifully produced, with a helpful chronology and index, **but** the 16 pages of black-and-white photographs **are** far too few in a book of this subject and size. □

Searching for reel values

Marshall Delaney at the Movies: The Contemporary World as seen on Film, **by Robert Fulford, Peter Martin Associates, in association with Take One** magazine, 244 pages, \$10 cloth.

By PETER HARCOURT

MOVIES. WHAT CAN we do with them? They are too **much** a part of our every-day existence to ignore them, **yet they** pass **through our** lives in too random a fashion **to be** discussed with the same thoroughness that we apply **to the** mom established **arts**. A little more demanding than baseball or hockey yet not so

serious as **poetry or music, movies exist** in an intellectual limbo: we tend simply to **comment** on **them**, as they come and go. That is to say, we review **them**; and if we are established **journalists with** some **kind** of following, we gather our reviews into a book, possibly with **revisions**. This is the **pattern** followed by Pauline **Kael**, Stanley Kauffman, John Simon, and now Robert **Fulford** — a collection of **reviews** culled from disparate efforts over the years.

It is **important** to notice the **occasional nature** of these collections, because they are always an uneven mixture of **autobiography**, social history, and film **criticism**. Like the great Robert **Warshaw**, Fulford is **particularly** adept at recreating the sense of occasion involved in going **to** a movie. By **discussing The Great Race** in terms of the **responses of** his children or *The Collector* in terms of his own adolescent fantasies of women, **Fulford is able** to create for us the **context from** which these films were seen. Similarly, pieces like "A Day at the Flicks," and "A **Night at the Drive-in**" convey as much a sense of **what it** is like to see films in **Toronto as** they do **of the actual** films that he happened to see.

This collection is in three **sections**: Canada, Hollywood, and **films from** abroad. It is within the Canadian **section** that **Fulford's role** as social **historian seems** most important, as he **documents** for us **the sense of** excitement or disappointment that each new Canadian film inspired. Yet what were the 'expectations **that** he brought to these films? What are the standards by which he judges them?

If we ask **this sort of** question, we **run up against the limitations of a collection** of this **kind**; for them is no evolving argument, no theoretical position, no critical consistency of any kind. How else can one explain **Fulford's** ability to describe the **mundane and reactionary Helicopter Canada** as "a triumph of **mature** documentary art" (which his son **loved, by** the way), to prefer **Kramer's Bless the Beasts and Children to Shebib's Rip-Of**, and yet **at the same** time to be sensitive to the cultural importance of a semi-porno film like *Valerie* and to see the potential importance for documentary of **Allan King's A Married Couple** (though he feels obliged to apologize for his enthusiasm now). What I am **suggesting** is that **Fulford's** critical evaluations are as random as the selection of movies that any professional reviewer gets to see. Urbane, courteous, and **generous** in tone, these reviews nevertheless end by



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endorsing the sort of right-wing **conformism** that is inevitable nowadays for anyone who puts his faith in the shifting **subjective** values of "common sense" and "good taste." Dealing with *The Great Race*, less in terms of the **film** on the **screen** than of the people watching it, **Fulford** concludes:

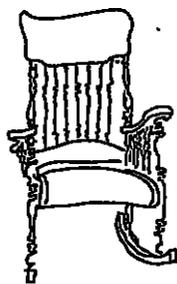
But as a parent, with a deliciously amused child on one side and a deliciously frightened child on the other, you can hardly remain cool to the central point: this is what movies are all about.

From the point of view of **consumption**, of course this is true; but could then not be a **more** critical point of view? What about the values of escapist optimism being drummed into **his children** by the miles of such movies that every child sees, values that in turn will help to form **their** own disguised **responses** of "common sense" and "good taste"?

At a time when newspaper reviewers are becoming increasingly complacent and **philistine**, it must seem ungenerous on my part to complain about the very values of urbanity and courtesy that make **Fulford's** writing such a pleasure to read. Yet if **one feels**, as I do, that films are **really** important-not just in

terms of the **pleasure** that they might give **our children** but also in terms of the hidden **value** systems that they so slyly perpetuate — then one wants a **more rigorous** examination of these matters than can be expected within the consumer-guide **format** of the film **review**. One wants books on the cinema that think **through** these problems, and not just a collection of **random** film reviews.

Characteristically, for someone of **Fulford's** literary, humanistic background, his reviews of **foreign films** allow him to utilize his analytical intelligence at full strength. **Foreign films**, we all know, are more like real art; and so we find **fine** discussions of **Truffaut** and **Godard**, for the screenings of which, of course, he left his children at home. □



Fluid gig for McNamara 's band

Diving for the Body, By **Eugene McNamara**, Borealis Press, 79 pages, \$3.25 paper.

And **the Dying Sky like Blood**, by **Peter Stevens**, Borealis Press, 112 pages, \$4.95 paper.

Milk Stone, by **Pat Lowther**, Borealis Press, 94 pages, \$3.95 paper.

The Earth-Book, by **Tom Marshall**, Oberon Press, unpaginated, \$5.95 cloth and \$2.95 paper.

By **LEN GASPARINI**

BEFORE PLUNGING into a critique of these recent collections of poetry, I would like to preface it by referring briefly to **Borealis Press**, a relatively new publishing outfit located in Ottawa. Along with **Oberon Press**, also in Ottawa, **Borealis** can already boast a

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Eugene **McNamara** has been contributing poems and stories regularly to all the "little mags" for the past decade. He is one of the original and most outspoken of the Windsor group of poets that appeared in the mid-1960s. Too often ignored, his work has progressed in various directions, and *Diving for the Body* marks his seventh volume of poems.

The title poem is an autobiographical journal of the psyche. It begins with a series of flashbacks depicting seemingly unrelated incidents; these incidents are later fused into the **all encompassing** imagery of water and other marine symbols. The poem is about decay and resurrection, and the sea becomes the very amniotic **fluid of life itself**: "... i will/rise in a tall shower of waking/water now surface **broken**..."

On the whole, this collection is not as **impressive** as **McNamara's** previous one. *Passages*. It is somewhat uneven and lacks the totality of strength that enforced visions upon the **reader** of his earlier work. Many of the poems are merely anecdotal and serve no purpose other than amusement. But **for all** that, **McNamara** can still evoke a poignant

nostalgia. His camp **humour** and almost **rhythmless** lines add a certain distinctness to the subjects he **writes** about. In "Last Seen" he gives us the sinister atmospheric effects **surrounding** a rape. "Neighbors" is a perfect piece of irony in mental suburbia, where a law-abiding citizen is suddenly reduced to a gadget and goes berserk. "Among the Missing" and "Imagine" are symptomatic of a social breakdown; the latter is **especially** effective.

McNamara's Diving for the Body is a worthwhile collection, even for its occasional brittleness.

Peter Stevens, a latecomer to the Windsor scene, describes his fifth book of poems, *And the Dying Sky like Blood*, as "a Bethune collage for several voices." The title itself is taken from a line in a poem by Mao Tse-tung. Aside from many **first-rate** poems, the book contains interesting factual material about Norman **Bethune's** life quoted from newspapers and social histories. **Bethune's** own writings on medical matters are also incorporated into the book, as well as the lines from numerous old American songs.

All of the poems are **interrelated**, producing a kind of improvisational effect that goes beyond **social criticism** to

an **ontological awareness**. The poems abound in propositions about questions that continue to concern our age: self-knowledge and self-definition, the power of ideology, the perplexity of spirit, and the obduracy of flesh. "The Unemployed **March**" begins with billboard emphasis, "JOBS NOT **BREADLINES**," and ends on a note of **anarchy**:

*slogans sprawl across the pavement
but the voices stick to his hands
become knives
to heal the city*

Other poems are equally compelling in describing the "slug trails" of **Spengler's prophesied** decadence of Western civilization and intellectual desiccation. Like Robert Bly, Stevens regards with acumen the poet's **role** among mankind whose "eyes trapped inside the locks/unable to avoid/the keys I turn in their sockets. ..."

This is undoubtedly Stevens' most powerful work to date and should be on assigned reading **courses**.

Milk Stone is Pat **Lowther's** poetic attempt to **come** to terms with the metaphysical **side** of her **nature**. I have always found her poetry steeped in mannered obscurity, scintillating with

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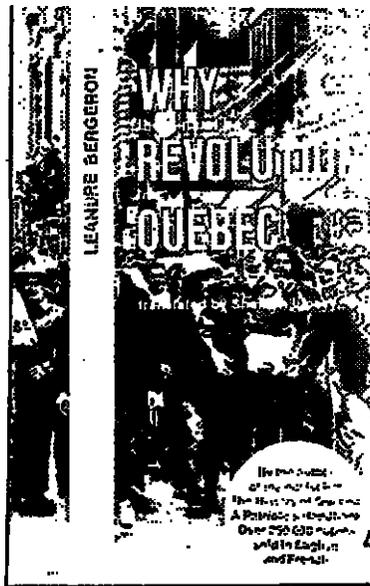


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artifice, swollen with symbolism, and equivocal to the point of **abstruseness**. In this way it is **like** a revolving prism that disperses vivid images and **reflects** lyrical brilliance. On the other hand, **her** poems are best **taken** individually than as a whole. The result of a **collection** such as this is too cloying to the **intellect**; however, there are some poems that almost **defy** any logical **interpretation** because of the **heavy** juxtaposition of metaphors. **Certain** poems — "Woman **On/Against** Snow," "Arctic Carving," "Woman," "For **Selected** Friends," and "Growing the Seasons" — are beautiful and **evocative** of subtle shifts in feeling. "Mr. **Happyman** is Coming" is one of **Lowther's** best poems. It's not by **chance** that she saved it for the end.

Tom Marshall's *The Earth-Book* is disappointingly inferior to his **previous** collections. **There** are moments of **real** poetry in "The Lamb," "Hygia," and "The Web Outside My Window," but the inclusion of "MK and the Implosion of the **FLQ**," a short, uninspired play for voices, **weakens** the book's **structure** considerably.

All in all, these four books **offer** an interesting cross section of poets who have **been** publishing **since** the **1960s**. With so many **new** poets sprouting like mushrooms, it's good to know what some of the older ones are doing. □

Opaque new world

The Exploration of North **America** 1630-1776, by W. P. **Cumming**, S. E. Hillier, D.B. Quinn, and **Glyndwr Williams**, McClelland & Stewart, 272 pages, \$30 cloth.

By **NEVILLE THOMPSON**

OF THE MAKING of coffee-table books **there** seems to be **no end**. The **principle** is certainly laudable: combining **pictures** from museums, private **collections** and **rare** books with selections from contemporary accounts and the commentary of experts in a **slippered** mood. At **their best**, such books are **useful** to the **specialist** and appealing to

the **general reader**. It is fashionable to **sneer** at **them** as symbols of good **taste** for the **affluent** who can pay the **price** without **appreciating** their value. But **much** the **same** motive produced the **great** collections of the **past**. In our **suburban** age, **everyone** can be his own Bernard **Berenson** or Catherine the **Gnat**. **All** but the most **austere** **defenders** of **intellectual** values must **see** in this an encouraging, if slight, **advance** on the **unrelenting** vistas of gold-weave sofas, sun-burst clocks and **brass-tipped**, slant-legged television sets.

The **most** common word to **describe** these books is "sumptuous." If the thing is **worth** doing, it must be done lavishly to the point of **excess**: **expensive** **paper**, good type and lots of large **colour** reproductions. Unfortunately *The Exploration of North America* fails on all but **one** count. The **paper** is good: so **thick** and **heavy**, **indeed**, that it is hard to **believe** that **there** are **fewer** than 300 pages in this **large** volume.

Such **colour** illustrations as **there** are are good. **There** are beautiful pictures of birds, and **flowers** that **convey** something of the exotic fascination the New World must **have held** for Europeans in the 17th and 18th **centuries**. But **they** are all too few. For the most part the pages of *this* book are cluttered with small black-and-white pictures that **weary** both the **eye** and the mind. The scale is often so small that a magnifying glass would be **needed** to **appreciate** **them** fully. This is particularly true of the maps. It is a good idea to **reproduce** a **great** number of them to show the **explorations**, **patterns** of **settlement** and the growth of knowledge about the emerging **interior** of the continent, but **their** value is much reduced when the print cannot be **read**. **Despite** its price, **the** book gives the impression of having **been** put together with too much of an **eye** to cost. No doubt this is always a consideration, but it should not be so obvious in a production that **makes** its chief appeal to **the senses**.

The prose, awkwardly **fitted** around the illustrations, is also unsatisfactory. **The** contemporary sources are **conventional** and the commentary, although written by noted **historians**, is a flat-footed, textbook summary. No one's **pulse** will be quickened by the drama and excitement of the **explorers'** ventures inland **from** the coasts in this account. Perhaps its chief value is as a **reference** work, pointing the **reader** to fuller and more **interesting** narratives. The **sources** of the material are **meticulously** noted and there is a full **bibliography**. □

IN BRIEF

A **SECOND** edition of Eric Arthur's fine architectural history, *Toronto No Mean Ciq* (U of T Press, \$25), is, of course, most **welcome**. It would be doubly so if the **text** as well as the captions had been updated. The book, **after** all, is more than a decade old and that decade has been marked by extensive **analyses** of the **city's** history and **architectural** development (much of it sparked by **Arthur himself**). Nevertheless, for those who **missed** it the first time round, this **re-issue** provides an **opportunity** to gain one of Canada's classics of urban history.

ROGER HALL

EXPERT BIOLOGISTS may find **anatomical** flaws in *The Mammals of Canada* by A.W.F. **Banfield** (U of T Press, \$19.95) and Darryl **Stewart's** *Canadian Endangered Species* (Gage, \$12.95). But for this urban layman, whose **contact** with wildlife is confined to cleaning up garbage **after** *Procyon lotor lotor* (Eastern Canadian raccoon) and **who** thought the main endangered **species** in this country was the honest politician, both books seem **to** be perfectly mounted and richly **illustrated** specimens **of their** genus. The **Banfield** volume, which has been in preparation by the National Museums of Canada since **the** 1920s, **presents** definitive descriptions of our 196 species of **native** mammals. Stewart explains how 14 of those mammals (along **with** dozens of other species) may shortly **exist** only in books.

DM

IN **1949**, **LOUIS Dudek** began to **correspond** with **Ezra Pound**, then confined to a hospital for the **insane** in Washington. The correspondence between the two poets continued until 1967. Both the content of the letters in *DK! Some Letters of Ezra Pound* (DC Books) and Louis **Dudek's** notes on them make for fascinating reading. Pound's **letters** are full of advice **about** things Dudek should do — people he should **meet** (**McLuhan**, for example) and books he should read (*Mein Kampf*). "Dudek," he writes **at** one point. "in any given year the mind is alive in certain ideas/anyone not fighting for the clear definition% those ideas IN **that** year . . . will be a bloody **bore/writers** job/to keep terminology CLEAR and definite/AND to spot WHICH ideas matter at a given DATE." A fine and moving book.

MW

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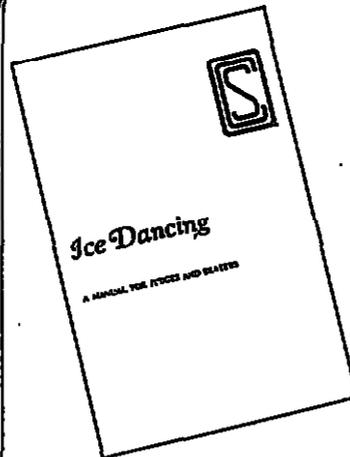
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WHEN THE **FIRST** edition of George F.G. Stanley's *Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People* (Macmillan, \$16) was published in 1954, it was the only one-volume account of Canada's military past; 20 years later, it is still alone in its field. **This** is a commentary of sorts on Stanley's apt choice of a subtitle, for Canadians clearly are an **unmilitary** people with **little** concern for their own stirring tales of derring do. **Unfortunately**, perhaps, there is little to stir the blood in this book. Stanley is more interested in organizational **changes** over the decades than he is in individual heroics. **But** his account does trace handily the **flow** of events, the influence of external forces on **Canada**

dins since the 17th century, and the way **our** people have had to react to them. There is **solid** scholarship here, but none of the **academic** paraphernalia that casual readers seem to dislike, and the overall result is satisfying and entertaining. This is also true of the last chapter, an account of the development of the **Canadian** forces since 1960. Here Stanley is a good **liberal**, approving of peace-keeping, **mildly** critical of the **United States** and its influence on **Canada**, and moderately in favour of the unification of the armed **forces**. **Liberal**, mild and moderate — those words could also be used to **characterize** Canadians in general, but the **virtue** of this book is that it reminds us **all** that even the mild and moderate **have** military traditions of duty and **valour**.

J. L. GRANATSTEIN

THE NINTH VOLUME in a series of "pictorial records" from the apparently inexhaustible supply of Charles de Volpi is *Nova Scotia: A Pictorial Record* (Longmans, 160 plates, \$28.95). It covers the **province** of Nova Scotia from Champlain's plans for Port **Royal** (1605) to Yarmouth in 1878 engraved by Eugene **Haberer**. The format of the volume follows that of previous de Volpi "records": large **quarto-size** reproductions of prints and engravings in black and white, and only enough text to **identify** the scene being illustrated. **The** quality of the reproductions is, with few exceptions, poor, particularly for engravings with finely **wrought** detail and prints originally in delicate pastel shades of **colour**. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, how John Boydell's beautiful **18th-century** engravings could be **reproduced** so badly. As an historical record, and as a **source** for identifying Nova Scotia prints, this **book is valuable but the original** artists and engravers have been badly served by their modern publisher.

RICHARD LONDON

SOFT & RECYCLED

By PAUL STUEWE

THE **ADVENT** OF THE inexpensive paperback reprint was greeted **with all** the **hosannas** appropriate to a vehicle that promised to dispense **Kultur** to the masses. **Although** "The Paperback Revolution" has **proven** to be more of a merchandising phenomenon than a literary one, **wider** distribution through newsstands, drugstores and supermarkets has enabled many publishers to reach a wider audience.

General Publishing's **PaperJacks** series is the most active reprint **program** in **terms of both number of titles** (JO-75 this year) and aggressiveness in selling foreign rights. This is also a brightly packaged and competitively priced line, and the over-all quality of its **initial releases** is equally impressive.

The pick of the litter is **Mavis Gallant's My Heart is Broken** (\$1.76), a collection of eight **short** stories and a **short** novel. Two or **three** of the **short** stories, all of which were originally published in *The New Yorker*, **do fall** into the mode of scrupulously detailed, apparently casual but in fact highly **structured** studies of **genteely** aimless individuals that constitutes the staple diet of the magazine's fiction readers; **but** the **remainder open** out **into symbolically** charged dissections of some of the constants of social relativity.

Mavis Gallant is one of that **rare** breed of naturalistic **writers** capable of infusing both animate and inanimate objects with mystery **as well as character**, a talent brought to its fullest completion in "Its Image on the Mirror." This novella of sisterly rivalry **unravels** within a context of impacted familial and social relations in Quebec between 1920 and **1960**; and as Ms. Gallant's protagonists **undergo their** own "Quiet Revolutions" of sensibility **and awareness**, one comes to understand that she **is a creator of myth as well as a perceptive** social observer, an explorer of both national and individual character who should be considered a quintessentially **Canadian** titer.

John Mills' The Lund of Is and *The October Men* (both \$1.75) are **also** noteworthy, although Mills seems **rather unsure** of his attitude towards established fictional conventions. Much of *The Land of Is*, particularly,



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reads as if he had just **discovered Wittgenstein** and the modern novel of **epistemological** relativism. While he has no difficulty in concocting an exotic brew of **skewered** identities and crossed purposes. **this** sort of thing has been done so often that I found it more of a *Tour de France* than a tour *de force*.

But perhaps Mills just had to get this book **out** of his system, because *The October Men* is markedly superior. The writing is in the hard-boiled detective **fiction** vein, and particularly evokes Raymond Chandler in its wise-cracking economy of description: "... a tall landlady with hair curlers, thick lenses and yellow teeth, who dislikes cats and keeps a crippled husband in the basement." And: "He looked at me with admiration — since I had registered a definite emotion I was his hero." Mills' plotting still impresses as more frenetic than controlled, but *The October Men* certainly establishes him as a writer of solid accomplishment as well as of **great promise**.

Donald Jack is also represented by two titles in *PaperJacks*, *Three Cheers For Me* and *That's Me in the Middle* (both \$1.75), the first two volumes of "The Bandy Papers." Jack is an impishly humorous and extremely facile writer working in a **genre** — the humorous **treatment** of military life in wartime — with rich possibilities for satire, but I find his books disturbingly lightweight. Everything is played for laughs in "The Bandy Papers": death not only happens off-stage, it has no discernible effect upon Jack's protagonists, and the consequent air of general insensitivity results in a **set** of Colonel Blimps rather than Good Soldier Schweiks. The chuckles come fast and furiously, but the deeper **humour** of the human **condition** is barely skimmed.

Much the same can be said of two recent M & S paperbacks by Max Braithwaite, *Why Shoot the Teacher* and *The Night We Stole the Mountie's Car* (both \$2.95). Braithwaite is a good deal more sympathetic to his people than is Jack, and his reminiscences of surviving the 1930s in Saskatchewan occasionally permit **tight-lipped** farmers and dour school trustees moments of real **dignity**. But again, the decision to be relentlessly humorous about every experience, regardless of its tragic, melodramatic or simply banal elements, becomes tremendously wearying over time. Braithwaite's books thus seem like a rewriting of Sinclair Ross by Richard Needham, and while they are both well-written and diverting, a

conscious consideration of them leads to the conclusion that there is still a lot of opportunity for Canadian authors who can write humanely as well as humorously.

Several other titles deserve at least brief mention. In the Northern Affairs department, R.D. Symons' *North By West* (*PaperJacks*, 181 pages, \$1.75) is a vivid retelling of two Indian legends suitable for children as well as adults; and Ray Price's *Yellowknife* and *The Howling Arctic* (Peter Martin, both \$3.95) contain a good deal of useful historical information, although both take more of a "how the white man opened up the land" approach than one concerned with what the indigenous inhabitants thought of the whole business. Harry J. Boyle's *Memories of a Catholic Boyhood* (*PaperJacks*, \$1.50), is a gentle reminder of how amusing the good old days seem, now that we no longer have to live them. □

PERIODICALLY SPEAKING

BY MORRIS WOLFE

MONEY — mostly the lack of it has been a recurring theme in Canadian periodicals. **this** month, *Cinema Canada* has suspended publication for lack of funds. So has *The Atlantic Provinces Book Review* after just one issue. According to editor Jim Lotz, St. Mary's University has lost interest in the project. Out on the West Coast, because of rising costs the University of Victoria is considering the discontinuation of Robin Skelton's excellent international quarterly, *The Malahat Review*. Letters of support can be sent directly to Skelton or to the President c/o the University of Victoria. In an editorial in the current issue of *Malahat* (#33), Skelton comments on the effect the economic problems of book publishers have had on established titles. "... authors," he says, "who would normally, have their work produced by large firms in, let us say, Toronto, New York, and London, are now occupying more and more space in the small press catalogues . . . thus ousting the hopeful unknowns."

SPLITS ON THE LEFT in Ontario are frequent. **The Waffle**, which had been forced out of the Ontario NDP a couple of years ago, recently underwent a split of its own. With it came the death of its official publication, *North Country*.

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Now we have a new magazine, *Ontario Review*, whose production collective includes former *Waffle* leader James Laxer. An editorial in the first issue apologizes to readers who may be puzzled by what's going on: "... if we've caused you a little confusion because of our penchant for indulging in left splits, we're sorry."

DOROTHY LIVESAY will publish and edit a new poetry quarterly, *CVII* (Department of English, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg). The magazine, whose first issue will appear in April, will publish some poems but will concentrate on criticism. The original *CV* (Alan Crawley's *Contemporary Verse*) was begun when there were almost no outlets in Canada for the publication of poetry. Poets such as Louis Dudek, James Reaney, Jay Macpherson, Daryl Hine, P. K. Page, Anne Marriott and Miriam Waddington appeared in print for the first time in its pages. *CVII* arrives at a time when there have never been more outlets for poets. According to Livesay, "what is called for now is criticism: voices from one end of Canada to the other expressing their criteria for good poetry and reporting critically on what is happening regionally."

THE AMERICAN QUARTERLY *Modern Fiction Studies* (Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana) is soliciting articles 6,000 to 8,000 words in length for a special issue on modern Canadian fiction, which will appear in the fall of 1976. "Modern" is interpreted by *MFS* as being since 1945.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FLASHING THE WRONG ID

I was interested to read in the January issue of *Books in Canada* that I had made an "ad feminam attack" on Margaret Atwood in the *Canadian Forum*. This information was surprising, as I have never written anything about Margaret Atwood in the *Canadian Forum* or, indeed, anywhere else. In fact, it is a good many years since I wrote anything on any subject for the *Canadian Forum*. Perhaps, in future, you and your staff will take the trouble to check this kind of thing. What seems to have happened is this. An anti-Atwood editorial did appear in the *Forum*. It was signed with initials that the careless reader might have assumed were mine. No one troubled to ask me, or the *Forum*, who had actually written the piece in question. I assure you, Ms. Atwood, and anyone else who cares, that I do not resent her

fame." And I hope that you will find an appropriate means of correcting this silly mistake in an early issue of *Books in Canada*.

Ian M. Drummond
Toronto

Editor's note: We apologize most sincerely to Mr. Drummond for our carelessness. The correct ID, we learn belatedly, was Ioian Davey.

A BRIT TO THE EYEBALLS?

Sir: Much as I admired the caricature of Macdonald by Martin Vaughn-James (not Michael, as your contents page inadvertently lists him) on the cover of the February issue, I feel it incorporates an element of symbolism that is at odds with history.

Macdonald is shown with the new Canadian flag in his eyes, as if a totally independent Canada represented his visionary ideal. Yet this was the man who insisted: "A British subject I was born and a British subject I shall die."

I'm sure Macdonald's vision of Canada's future included a corner of a heraldic field that was forever England. The flag in his eyes should have been the old Canadian ensign now adopted by the Province of Ontario.

Patrick Oliver
Toronto

DAVEY SHORT-CHANGED

Sir: Although it's a pleasure to see a Martin Vaughn-James illustration in your February issue, the amount of space allotted to MW's review of *From There to Here* by Frank Davey is less commendable.

As an occasional reviewer for *Books in Canada* and other periodicals, I'm aware of the shortage of space for reviews. But surely Davey's work deserves as much attention as Atwood's new poetry collection — or any of the other new books "featured" in February? It may not achieve the sales of *Survival*, but Davey's book is at least as worthy of attention on any grounds of relevance or scope of CanLit discussed.

And, furthermore, it is unusual among recent Canadian literary criticism in attempting a primarily stylistic, or formal, approach. It seems to me that you owe both Frank Davey and your readership an apology for treating so curiously a book that could generate interest in many not-so-famous but important Canadian novelists and poets.

John Oughton
Toronto

CLARIFYING OBSCURANTISM

Sir: We make very poor use of *Books in Canada* for our book ordering.

Would it be possible in a future issue for you to list all the publishers and their addresses? Some of the publishers are rather obscure and our suppliers have difficulty locating them.

Peggy MacDonald
Calgary Public Library

Editor's note: We appreciate Ms. MacDonald's problem and in future will make it our policy to include the addresses of the more obscure presses — assuming we can trace them ourselves.

- A. Beverage that oils Newfies 105 118 100 4 147 208 48
- B. American civil war general (1808-1894) (Jacob) 33 190 20 61 132
- C. Novel by the Merlin of Massey College (2 words) 58 26 184 169 60 65 192 42 135 83
75 93 120
- D. Bottoms up (3 words) 9 92 47 172 99 138 37 213 119 185
124 201
- E. Eskimo 170 30 63 203 115
- F. Publisher of Calgary Eye-Opener 53 146 210 110 126 165 34
- G. Station where Hudson's Bay Company residents trade 152 49 188 23 141 127 162
- H. A deviant square 171 112 11 57 35 31
- I. "Rossum's Universal _____" (play by Capek) 36 173 24 45 19 129
- J. Richard Rohmer's latest 151 98 38 189 22 202 67 1 217 82
72 158
- K. "_____ of the Family" — social organization with headquarters in Ottawa (2 words) 54 7 215 136 117 40 216 62 14 161
84 59 25 3 144
- L. Toronto Maple Leafs' right wing 177 76 6 211 145
- M. Profit; gain advantage (3 words) 18 103 166 130 200 87 140 121 5 167
96 69 29 106

- N. Chattered; scolded 196 207 91 39 182 28
- O. "Right _____" — legal power that usually accrues to ownership (2 words) 183 174 139 36 134 31 209 43 111 149
68 8
- P. Poet awarded for Lies 46 128 135 27 52 78 88
- Q. "... dromedaries of Midian a n d - " (Isaiah 60:6) 108 70 186 17 123
- R. Right now (3 words) 12 95 212 176 21 191 131 64 101 198
137
- S. Decline; degenerate (4 words) 10 89 175 153 50 114 71 156 125 81
148
- T. What mom bakes (2 words) 197 73 142 181 41 90 77 157
- ii. Class of cold-blooded vertebrates including lizards, snakes, turtles 204 66 205 159 94 74 214 113
- v. Unlike 199 79 13 178 194 102 160 143 122 150
- W. Montreal publishing house (2 words) 97 133 44 195 104 168 80 2 109 107
15 164 86 35 179 206 187 154
- X. Volatile liquid hydrocarbon mixture 193 163 16 116 85 32 180

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	32	X	33	B	34	F		35	H	36	O		37	D	38	J	39	H	40	K	41	T	42	C	43	O	44	U	45	I	46	P				
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142	T	143	V	144	X	145	L		146	F	147	A	148	S	149	O	150	V	151	J		152	G	153	S	154	U		155	C	156	S	157	T		
158	J	159	U	160	V	161	X	162	G		163	X	164	W	165	F		166	H		167	H	168	U	169	C	170	E	171	H	172	D				
173	I	174	O		175	S	176	R	177	L		178	V	179	U	180	X	181	T	182	H		183	D	184	C		185	D	186	Q	187	W			
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204	U		205	U	206	H	207	R	208	A	209	O		210	F	211	L	212	R	213	D	214	U	215	K		216	K	217	J						

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