

Back the Attack! is a pioneering study and it brings together a splendid anthology of memories on a surprisingly neglected subject. Its faults are those of an originator. There is so much excellent source material in both text and photographs that its presentation and layout has become rather fragmentary with many differing sizes of photographs and document excerpts running throughout the book with little linking text. In particular, the bold black headings given to the extracts tend to overwhelm the tonality of the black and white photographs. In addition, the amount of material included means the historical overview can point to, but cannot analyze at length, the fascinating implications of the sum of its parts. For a non-Canadian reader especially, it would have been useful to have had an introduction outlining the roles and expectations of women in Canada in the thirties and a conclusion which, as well as recording the immediate post-war acceptance of the "return to normal" (i.e. the roles of wife, mother, and voluntary worker), looked forward to the influence those mothers of the late forties had on the generation growing up in the fifties and sixties. Did their memories of opportunity and independence influence their daughters? It seems unlikely that they did not.

Another aspect which deserves mention is how unique Canada's contribution, and by implication, the contribution of its women was to the war effort. Canada supported Britain unstintingly and when Britain ran out of reserves of Canadian dollars, extended unique credit arrangements to prevent bankruptcy and allow continuation of Canada's contribution. Britain produced 69.5 per cent of its munitions throughout the war but Canada's munitions industry consistently outstripped all the other countries of the Empire in its production, averaging 7.9 per cent throughout in comparison with 1.6 per cent for the rest of the Empire put together. The remaining 21 per cent was bought or obtained through lend-lease arrangements with the United States. The scale of Canadian women's involvement was therefore more wide-ranging than the rest of the Empire put together. Geography meant that her service women were more likely to be involved in the European theatre of operations and the financial links meant that Canadian women were more likely to be directly involved in war production. Although the Empire is not currently fashionable, it was and remains a remarkable example of international goodwill. Despite these criticisms, Jean Bruce has written a book which, like a good dictionary of quotations, is hard to put down as one vignette of wartime life leads to another and the succession of photographs reveals its idiosyncracies of dress and lifestyle. *Back the Attack!* provides invaluable reference and entertainment for anyone interested in the history of women and the history of a nation.

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The Alaska Highway: Papers of the 40th Anniversary Symposium. KENNETH COATES, ed. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985. 208 p. illus. ISBN 0-7748-0229-4 \$22.95.

For those readers who know little if anything about the Alaska Highway and want to correct this deficiency, the collected papers of the 40th Anniversary Symposium on the Alaska Highway should provide the perfect remedy. Within the covers of this slim volume, fifteen articles provide a wealth of information about the rationale for the highway's construction, the international and federal-provincial negotiations that preceded

the first bulldozers, the massive logistical and technical problems associated with construction on a northern frontier, and the effects that the highway and forty thousand military and civilian construction crew-members had on this previously remote and sparsely populated territory. The challenge of building a 2333-kilometre road through rugged terrain is daunting enough, but the fact that it was opened within eight months stands as an astounding achievement. We are told of the 133 bridges, the dozens of staging camps, and the 928-kilometre oil pipeline included among the other ancillary construction projects. They make the enormity of this undertaking even more remarkable.

These articles do not simply dwell on the physical dimensions of the task, nor do they fall prey to the trap of only describing the herculean effort of the engineers and contractors. Insights are offered into such critical issues as the construction of Alcan and the political ramifications of the injection of thousands of Americans into that quintessential symbol of our national identity — the Canadian North. Throughout the book there are interesting portraits of the individuals who conceived the plan and those who saw it through the various stages of construction. The contradictions of construction and its impact are frequently brought home. The sense of awe inspired by the speed and relentlessness of construction is tempered by revelations of the incredible waste recorded by the United States Army along with the American and Canadian contractors under the Public Roads Administration. The long sought transportation link with the south opened untapped resources to exploitation while allowing entry of diseases which decimated the native population. The traditional themes within northern history find original expression in these works as well. Native society, the ecology, along with the political and economic structure of the territories are examined in relation to the Alaska Highway.

The book is divided into five sections with each stressing a particular theme: planning, building, Canadian sovereignty, and the Alaska Highway, the postwar Highway, and the impact of the Highway. The papers presented at this interdisciplinary symposium were of uneven quality, depth of analysis, and breadth of research. These weaknesses can be excused, and in fact are offset by the strengths of the overall product. Each of the published papers adds to the mosaic pattern of the work by illuminating some unique element. The range of sources consulted by the authors collectively is impressive. These include archival material from Canadian, American, and British repositories, a broad survey of the existing literature, several unpublished theses, along with accounts of events as seen through the popular press. The judicious selection of maps and, in particular, of photographs also provides the reader with excellent visual representation of the topics addressed in the text.

Several works merit particular attention. Robin Fisher offers insights into the dream of British Columbia Premier Duff Pattullo who lobbied Ottawa for an all-Canadian road to the Yukon. His first expressions of that dream came in the form of letters written to an Ontario newspaper in 1897. Pattullo's lobbying was stymied for years by the federal government. Fisher chronicles a classic example of the strategic procrastination employed by then Prime Minister Mackenzie King to stave off a decision on the project. Pattullo pressured King to establish a commission to investigate the feasibility of building a highway. In 1938 King agreed but held off naming a commissioner for as long as possible. Eventually he appointed Charles Stewart who was seriously ill at the time. Stewart required six months to recover, the inquiry lasted a full year, and in the end the decision brought down did not vary greatly from the existing federal position. As Curtis Nordman points out in his paper "The Army of Occupation: Malcolm MacDonald and U.S. Military Involvement in the Canadian Northwest," the King government ended up main-

taining Canadian sovereignty in the North by paying 88.8 million dollars to the United States in 1944 and 1946 for its permanent installations along the highway. Richard Diubaldo describes the costly lesson caused to a large degree by Canada's neglect of the North during the years prior to 1939. Two other papers present an equally interesting, though conflicting, interpretation of the effects of the Alaska Highway on the Yukon Indians. Julie Cruikshank, an anthropologist, argues that the Highway has irreparably changed the native population. The relationship between the Indians and their land, and the relationship between Indians themselves through their traditional social organizations, have been damaged by the Highway. This change has led directly to the marginal position they occupy in the present Yukon economy and society. Kenneth Coates, an historian, argues that the Highway was merely one of many factors which have been responsible for the changes experienced by Yukon natives. He depicts the Indians as traditionally occupying a marginal role in the territorial economic and social order. The Highway, in his view, should not be blamed for the ills of the Yukon Indians and the argument that future construction projects should be modified or abandoned to protect the native society is based upon a misinterpretation of historical fact.

This book has interest for such a broad readership that it should be a success. Moreover, the range of topics and the variety of approaches taken make for an interesting study in itself. Finally, the collection offers insight into an undernourished area of Canadian studies — the North. As the editor notes in his preface, the volume is an introduction to the subject rather than the final word. His hope is that it will spawn further work on these and other related issues.

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The Polar Shelf: The Saga of Canada's Arctic Scientists. MICHAEL FOSTER and CAROL MARINO. Toronto: N C Press Limited, 1986. 128 p. ISBN 0-920053-63-7 \$24.95.

This book revives an age-old tradition in Canadian writing, the chronicle of Arctic adventure. In this particular instance, however, the story is not about the fabled explorers of the past, the intrepid Mounties of the Eastern Arctic Patrol, or the hardy traders of the Hudson's Bay Company. Rather, *The Polar Shelf* honours the contributions of Canada's Arctic scientists. The book is deceptive in terms of its format, giving the appearance of yet another in the long series of ubiquitous "coffee-table" books packed with numerous photographs of frozen landscapes, muskox, and caribou, accompanied by an uninspiring text. Such is not the case. *The Polar Shelf* is cleverly designed to provide the reader with an enjoyable blend of history, science, and personal anecdotes supplied by present and former members of the Polar Continental Shelf Project (PCSP). The photographs of polar bears and muskox are but an added bonus for the reader.

For those readers unfamiliar with the organization and its aims — lamentably this is the case for most Canadians with respect to the world class achievements of our scientific community — the Polar Continental Shelf Project came into being in April 1958. The Technical Sub-Committee of the Advisory Committee on Northern Development had recommended that a scientific research programme, "aim at hydrographic, oceanographic, geophysical and biological studies of the entire Canadian Polar Continental