

Workshop of the British Empire seems to be a rather experimental examination of the past, and is not entirely successful from a number of points of view. Yet it suggests so many opportunities for further study and reveals so much value from collections being brought to some form of archival sanctuary that it stands as an important publication by the very nature of its conception. I wish it were written with a more vigorous style, that so many figures and firms mentioned in the text did not slip by without at least some attempt at characterization, that we were told more about the "careers" and properties of many of the Clyde Valley products, and that a more substantial context for the title of the volume were provided. All the same, it is a book of many virtues and leaves one with the hope that the authors will pursue this genre of publication, perhaps by taking some of the directions indicated in *Workshop* Michael Moss (Archivist of the University of Glasgow) and John Hume (Department of History, University of Glasgow) make a good team as this and other books which they have co-authored prove. May their next two books look at Scotsmen in the workplace and at home, and at Scotsmen as a pool of emigrants to the plantations, colonies and Dominions.

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Canada's Refugee Policy: Indifference or Opportunism? GERALD DIRKS. Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1978. xi, 316 p. ISBN 0 7735 0296 3 \$18.95.

White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy towards Orientals in British Columbia. W. PETER WARD. Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1978. xi, 204 p. ill. ISBN 0 7735 0318 8 bd \$15.00 ISBN 0 7735 0319 6 pa. \$6.50.

For the most part both these books make sad reading. Taken together they are very depressing indeed and they confirm in a very thorough way the fact that the tolerant, multicultural Canada, which we are proud of today, is an achievement of the last thirty years at most. Gerald Dirks, a political scientist from Brock University, has described and analyzed Canada's policies and attitudes towards refugees in this century—a tale, in the main, of indifference, procrastination and even hostility until the period after World War II. Peter Ward, an historian from the University of British Columbia has recorded the implacable opposition and antipathy of the citizens of British Columbia towards all Asian immigrants from the mid-nineteenth century until very recent times.

Both these works provide a mass of valuable and detailed information on their respective topics and are clearly the result of very thorough research. They illuminate important aspects of Canadian development since Confederation of which we should be fully aware. Both, however, share a common fault, namely a failure to put these events in their international and historical context in a sufficiently detailed way; and to provide enough background information about Canada itself at this period, so that we can understand more about the origin of these attitudes and fears. Indifference to the needs of refugees, as well as racial discrimination and ethnocentrism are international phenomena and no region of the world has been or is without them. The period about which both authors are writing has been notable for its racial hatreds, class and ethnic discrimination and strong national drives for homogeneity and exclusiveness. East and West have been equally involved. In the nineteenth and for a good part of the twentieth Century, Canada's behaviour towards non-white immigrants and later towards refugees has been sadly characteristic of the times.

Gerald Dirks begins his study with chapters on the refugee phenomenon itself and on Canada's earlier experience of refugee and quasi-refugee movements including the United Empire Loyalists; the refugee slaves from the United States; Jewish refugees escaping the pogroms of Czarist Russia and Eastern Europe before World War I; Mormons in small

numbers; Mennonites in two separate waves; Hutterites and Doukhobors. Needing people to work the land, develop her commerce, and push back her frontiers, Canada provided fairly easy entry and some generous concessions for these earlier movements. But this era ended in the twenties, if not before. World-wide depression and continuing unemployment had a profound influence on Canadian attitudes towards immigrants and refugees, intensifying existing prejudices, anti-semitism and a general suspicion of foreigners. By the late 1930s when the plight of German Jews was becoming desperate, Canadians were in no mood to respond. "The indifference of Canadians to the world beyond their borders", Dirks writes, "manifested itself in a wide variety of forms. Canadians proved to be uninterested in, if not antagonistic to, the plight of the refugee". From the wholly unsuccessful Evian conference on refugees in July 1938 onwards, he documents the caution, conservatism and lack of generosity of the MacKenzie King government towards Jewish and other refugees before and during the war, as well as their initial hesitation and delay in responding, with other countries, to the needs of the millions of displaced persons in Europe when war ended.

Although Canada did not delay very long and eventually admitted large numbers of displaced persons, embarking also on a vigorous immigration program (still of a "White Canada" kind) announced by MacKenzie King in 1947, Dirks shows how cautious we were in relation to the creation of permanent international institutions to care for refugees and migrants. Canada did in fact help to create these institutions (U.N.H.C.R. and I.C.E.M.)* but remained suspicious for a long time lest they exceeded their authority. As one example of our very guarded approach, it was seventeen years before we and the United States acceded to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees.

Canada responded very warmly, however, to the plight of Hungarian refugees in 1956, admitting some 38,000. She collaborated fully in World Refugee Year in 1960 and from then on Dirks has a more encouraging tale to tell, describing the individual movements to Canada of American War Resisters from 1965 onwards, Czech refugees in 1968, Tibetans in 1970-71, Uganda Asians in 1972 and the Chileans from 1974 onwards. The book ends with the Chilean refugee movement, the tabling of the Green Paper on Immigration Policy in February 1975 and the appointment of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Immigration Policy which reported to Parliament in the fall of that year. But that is only half-way through a decade of impressive Canadian effort for refugees which also included the Haitians, refugees from Lebanon, Cyprus and Angola and later from Indo-China. No evaluation of Canadian refugee policy can be complete either without some discussion of our new Immigration Act of 1977 which makes some significant improvements in refugee policy, and includes among its ten objectives, a commitment on Canada's part to honour its international obligations in relation to refugees—the first time that such a commitment has been included in immigration law. The terms "indifference or opportunism" in the title of this study are not really appropriate to describe Canada's refugee policy in recent years.

White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Towards Orientals in British Columbia is described by the author, Peter Ward, as "a study of anti-Orientalism in Canada—especially in British Columbia from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century." It concentrates on popular attitudes much more than on public policy since the author believes that the ultimate origins of west coast racism are to be found, not in the economic tensions created by the availability of cheap Asian labour in a developing industrial economy, but in the psychological tensions of racial difference and confrontation and in the whole social psychology of race relations. His primary task, therefore, has been "to understand the popular mind and its response to Asian immigrants". In his

* The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Inter-Governmental Committee for European Migration.

preface, he points out that Canadians have been slow to acknowledge their nativist past, clinging tenaciously "to the myth of the ethnic mosaic: the belief that the nation has evolved more or less harmoniously as a multicultural society". The history of west coast race relations, however, suggests that "Canadian commitment to multiculturalism has been tenuous at best". From the beginning in British Columbia, there was no doubt where the powerful majority stood. They wanted a racially and culturally homogeneous society—a white, Anglo-Canadian province—from which all visible minorities would be excluded.

This interesting study examines the experience of the three major Asian minorities in B.C., the Chinese, the East Indians and the Japanese and the whole-hearted, unequivocal hostility and dislike which they encountered in their endeavour to earn a livelihood in a new land. Not quite whole-hearted, since employers often seem to be very good workers who would work hard for very low pay, and a very few liberally-minded Canadians occasionally spoke up for them. The churches, according to this study, only rarely offered a helping hand and were mainly noted for their silence on the subject.

In a short final chapter entitled "The Drive for a White B.C." Ward summarizes the reasons for this widespread hostility to Asian immigrants and the motivation behind it. The chapter opens with the following statement:

From the late 1850's to the early 1940's anti-Orientalism was endemic in British Columbia. White society feared and disliked the Asian minority in the community and made its feelings abundantly clear in thought, word and deed. While prejudice was by no means universal within the province, the racist consensus was nevertheless extremely broad. For the most part those who dissented from it kept their council to themselves. Once ingrained in the white mind, racist assumptions remained fixed there for a century.

Although racial animosity appears to have been most intense in the heavily settled areas on the province where Asian immigrants had congregated, it cropped up everywhere at one time or another and all sections of the community were involved in it. Why? Ward discounts the possible influence of nineteenth Century post-Darwinian racial theory. Nativist leadership had only a marginal impact—"There were no nativists of truly demagogic proportions". The press was significant because it helped to circulate anti-Oriental opinion, but was really only a secondary agent. "Western images of Asia, continued migration from the Orient, recurrent economic rivalry, and intermittent conflicts of custom and of value" were certainly important. But the one central factor which was more important than all the rest was that "British Columbians yearned for a racially homogeneous society". They were afraid that a multiracial society "would destroy their capacity to perpetuate their values and traditions, their laws and institutions—indeed all those elements of their culture embraced by the White Canada symbol".

Anti-Orientalism in British Columbia from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century is seen, therefore, as a wholly native growth. But similar feelings were widespread during that period. It was the time when empires flourished and white dominion over other races was regarded by majority opinion as wholly legitimate. After World War I, it was the period when fascism and its accompanying racial hatreds were rampant, not only in Europe. And it was the heyday of white-only immigration policies in the United States and Australia, as well as in Canada. Nor should we forget other national drives for homogeneity. When, in recent times, were the Japanese ever friendly and welcoming to foreigners who wished to settle permanently in their country in any numbers?

It is both salutary and informative to read these two studies which add a great deal to our knowledge of this period in Canadian history and politics. If both would have benefited by a more comparative approach, they still serve to remind us that racist

feelings, discrimination against minorities and indifference to the plight of refugees in faraway continents are part of Canada's very recent past.

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'Give Us Good Measure': An Economic analysis of relations between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company before 1763. ARTHUR J. RAY and DONALD B. FREEMAN. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, © 1978. xvi, 298 p. ill. maps. ISBN 0 8020 5418 8 bd. \$17.50; ISBN 0 8020 6334 9 pa. \$4.95.

In *'Give Us Good Measure'* Ray and Freeman have presented the Indians of the fur trade as "economic man". To do so they have written a study in four parts complete with twenty-nine tables, fifty-four figures, and eleven illustrations. The authors' major contribution to the history of the fur trade is their detailed examination of the Hudson's Bay Company's account books.

After a brief discussion of the historiography of the fur trade in part one, the authors go on in part two to detail the spatial and institutional structure of the fur trade. The key figures which bridged the gap between European and Native cultures were the Hudson's Bay Company factor and Indian trading captain. The interaction between these diverse cultures was not always smooth because neither side had much understanding of the others' basic values. Unfortunately, we are not given an analysis of how the trading ceremony developed over time. Instead, it is presented as a fixed and unchanging form with the exception of the increasing importance of alcohol.

Part three entitled "The Economic Structure of the Fur Trade System: A Quantitative Analysis" presents a detailed examination of the effectiveness of the Hudson's Bay Company factors in maintaining an "overplus". The "overplus" was the difference between the official standard of trade and the higher actual rate of exchange. Raw data for this analysis was extracted from the Hudson's Bay Company account books where the medium of exchange is Made Beaver. The authors demonstrate that the factors were able to consistently show an "overplus" and to maintain it at levels as high as fifty percent above the official standard for long periods. However, this was the maximum sustained rate because the Indian's transportation technology (the birch bark canoe) could only carry a certain amount of furs, and hence the Indians' purchasing power was equally constrained. This limited carrying capacity had profound implications for the types of goods the Indians demanded in exchange for their furs. Because strictly limited quantities of bulky durables, such as guns and blankets, could be transported, high fur prices left the Native consumer with a greater purchasing power than his actual needs required. The gap between this increased purchasing power and the Indians' need for durables was filled with alcohol. Brandy was consumed as part of the trading ritual and thus did not have to be transported long distances. This convenient answer to the disposal of the Indians' comparative wealth had, as Ray and Freeman point out, an added advantage for the Hudson's Bay Company factor. Brandy was always traded at a high rate of "overplus" and liberal watering greatly increased that rate. The increased trading in alcohol during periods of greater competition for furs allowed the Hudson's Bay Company to absorb lower rates of "overplus" in more durable trade goods. For these reasons, brandy became a very highly valued commodity for both merchant and consumer alike.

Ray and Freeman do not examine the tragic irony of the Indians' increased economic power. A greater purchasing power only led to a greater use of alcohol. Thus, an improved economic position became a detriment for Native society and not a benefit as traditional economic theory would have us believe. In part four the authors are more concerned with