

organizations in their countries which specialize in labour history and provide a summary bibliography of relevant written material.

The *Archivum* editors realized from the outset that they were not in a position to compile a truly exhaustive survey of world wide activity in this important field. However, they are clearly disappointed, as we must be, with the paucity of response to their efforts to assemble what could have served as a valuable, even if cursory, international overview of labour and trade union archives. Only about one fifth of the correspondents who were approached actually arranged for reports from their nation or region, namely, Australia, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, the German Democratic Republic, Ireland, Israel, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Yugoslavia, the Caribbean Area, and Southeast Asia. Furthermore, these trilingual reports (12 English, 6 French, and 3 German) vary widely in terms of their comprehensiveness. The contribution from Finland, for instance, is longer than that from the USSR.

However, even with such obvious limitations, this issue of *Archivum* remains a useful addition to any archival library. Not surprisingly, its chief value derives from the international perspective which it partly affords. Contrasting Canada's unenviable record in the field with that of other, largely industrial, nations offers little in the way of solace. If anything, it further underscores our regrettable and somewhat anomalous neglect of social history. This is particularly true when you consider that we were spared many of the deleterious effects of two world wars that our European counterparts experienced. Even though, as Nancy Stunden the Canadian specialist, observes, the situation in this country has rapidly improved during the past decade to the point where current activity in the field is at a much more respectable level, there is still considerable room for improvement. This issue of *Archivum* provides us with a glimpse of a number of successful international models which, while they are not entirely relevant to our situation, certainly are worth investigating as the increasing number of labour archivists throughout Canada look at ways to collectively increase their effectiveness.

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Canadian Airmen and the First World War, The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Vol. 1. S.F. WISE. Toronto : University of Toronto Press in cooperation with the Department of National Defence, 1980. xx, 771, illus., maps, ISBN 0 8020 2379 7 \$35.00.

The appearance of this book, the first official history to emerge from the Directorate of History of the Department of National Defence since C.P. Stacey's *Arms, Men and Government* in 1970 has been awaited with eagerness and a certain degree of skepticism. There is an inevitable feeling that the published result of such a long gestation period, regardless of its quality, will appear inadequate when the immense labour involved in its preparation is taken into account. This initial doubt was reinforced when it was known that this, the first of a projected four volume history of the Royal Canadian Air Force was to deal with Canadian airmen in World War I. The popular capsule view of the subject which, for once, was reasonably accurate was that Canada never succeeded in that period in establishing an air policy, or more than an embryo air service, but did become involved in air training and its young men, both military and civilian, furnished such a happy hunting ground for recruiters of the British flying services that Canadians did play an inordinately prominent part in the air war. Great stuff for 'war stories' but not a

promising theme for a coherent official history. S.F. Wise and the staff of the Directorate of History have succeeded, beyond the most sanguine expectations, in producing one.

The body of the book is divided into four parts of roughly equal size covering Canadian training and air policy, naval air activities, the development of strategic air power both defensive and offensive, and air power as part of the land battle. The latter three sections are primarily studies of British progress and activities in these areas with the participation of Canadians superimposed on or integrated into the narrative. This last is accomplished in a masterly manner with no trace of the unevenness which might reasonably be expected to result from such an arbitrary marriage. The use of Canadian exploits and activities to describe or highlight the larger events becomes an essential part of the narrative and adds to its historical value rather than forming a parochial irritant.

The blurb on the jacket flap refers to *Canadian Airmen* as "a revisionist account of the war in the air." It certainly is not blatantly revisionist and indeed, when it is considered that the only works with which it can be legitimately compared, the British and Australian official histories, were published nearly fifty years ago and that the progress of events and the availability of additional sources and research provide a new perspective on air activities of the period it is hardly surprising that Wise does not slavishly follow these predecessors. Indeed, one of the most valuable "fringe benefits" this book provides is that regardless of its Canadian orientation, or whether it is "revisionist" or not, it represents the only comprehensive account currently in print of the development and employment of British air power 1914-1918. This account and the book's primary theme of recounting Canadian involvement in this environment are obviously the products of competent research through a wide range of secondary sources and a volume and variety of primary sources that is little short of astounding. The amount of effort involved in identifying, and then tracing, the activities of over 20,000 Canadians serving in hundreds of units in three services is staggering to contemplate. The book is written in clear and concise English. Archivists may notice the faint difference in style and 'texture' between chapters such as 'Hughes and Canadian Air Policy, 1914-16' based almost entirely on primary sources, principally correspondence, and those in later sections with a larger secondary source content. This cannot be avoided and is not a detraction. The main text concludes with the aftermath of the war and the initial moves towards the formation of a Canadian air force. Well brought out in the earlier text, however, is the way in which their wartime experience was to affect the men who were to pioneer peacetime military and civil flying in Canada.

There are only three appendices — astonishingly few. They are two brief accounts of Canadian airmen in Russia 1918-20 and in subsidiary theatres of the war and a most interesting statistical analysis of Canadians in the British flying services. This computer analysis takes a bit of digesting but is worth the effort. It is a new feature of an official history and a commendable one. Presumably such "popular" subjects for appendices such as fighter pilots' victory claims and lists of honours and awards were rejected as being beneath the dignity of such a publication. This seems rather a pity — they would not have detracted from the book's stature and might have added a little. The index is adequate though not exceptional. However, the notes at the end of the book are superb both in content and presentation and should serve as a model for similar publications. A bibliography of printed sources, while perhaps not a necessity, would have been a convenient and useful addition.

Cartographically, the volume is a delight. In addition to a fine selection of well-drawn black and white maps, there are six beautiful fold-out maps in colour, plus coloured maps as end-papers. One might be tempted to ask if the purpose of the maps could not have been achieved with a less lavish and expensive production but the recipient of a review copy can just sit back and revel in them. Photographically, the book fares less

well. While the selection of the more than 200 photographs cannot be faulted, the decision to print the photographic pages on the same paper stock as the rest of the book, particularly in light of the expensive map production, is a particularly puzzling bit of false economy. The layout is characterized by vast white spaces for no apparent reason, esthetic or practical, while such errors as captions under the wrong photographs and the printing of the incorrect half of a cropped photograph indicate a slovenliness in editing at the production level that is unacceptable in a book of this stature. Such elementary clangers in aircraft recognition as calling a DH4 a DH9 or calling a Martinsyde and SE5A Bristol Fighters does little to generate respect for the compilers.

Wise, in paying tribute to the members of the Directorate of History past and present who worked on the book describes them as too numerous to list. It is indeed a pity that the effort was not made as he and they have produced a book which is a solid foundation for future historical work, official and unofficial, on the hitherto largely untouched topic of Canadian military aviation history.

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The Magnificent Distances: Early Aviation in British Columbia 1910-1940. Interviews and initial research by PAUL STODDART. Commentary by DAVID PARKER. Compiled and edited by DENNIS DUFFY and CAROL CRANE. Victoria: Queen's Printer for British Columbia, 1980. ii, 78 p. illus. \$3.00 pa.

It is commonplace to remark upon the great developments in aviation within the lifetime of individuals who are still living. However, many of these people are aging and dying, often without telling their stories. The initiative represented by the Public Archives of British Columbia's publication *The Magnificent Distances* is therefore commendable.

A part of that institution's Sound Heritage Series, the book consists of excerpts from interviews with twelve of the province's aviation pioneers, men and women ranging in age from 64 to 87. They represent a wealth of experience in military, commercial and private aviation: Gordon Ballentine, Joe Bertalino, Cyril Charters, Ted Cressy, Harold Davenport, Earl Gerow, Walter Gilbert, Maurice McGregor, Donald McLaren, Earl MacLeod, Margaret Fane Rutledge and Hal Wilson. Editors Dennis Duffy and Carol Crane have arranged selections from Paul Stoddart's interviews in chapters entitled " 'Through Space Suspended' ", " 'Flying on the Coast' ", " 'The First Airfields' ", " 'A Dollar Here and a Dollar There' ", " 'Into the Bush' " and " 'A Definite Change in the Times' ". Informative without becoming obtrusive, David Parker's commentary supplies essential context as well as illumination of such specialized terms as "the Gosport system" mentioned in the interviews.

Students of aviation history will recognize the themes which emerge from the interviews; however, the stories lose none of their fascination because of their predictable nature. Ted Cressy's description of Victoria's first airfield evokes the primitive conditions: "You could always take off from the north end of the (Landsdowne) field more or less, and you'd be just about in the air when you passed (Bowker) creek. But if you had a strong wind coming in, you had to come down very close to the creek and just skip over it and then make your landing". Hal Wilson recalls the Eve brothers in a way that shows how an interviewee who does not mince words can go right to the heart of a subject: "They did stupid things like carrying people loaded to the gunwales in an airplane that was never designed for it, and flying 50 feet off the water with a pair of