

looks at the major players and metes out both praise and criticism, decrying government's paternalistic intervention into the lives of native people as well as its confusing policies regarding the region's natural resources. He praises the same government system for its stabilizing effect on development, allowing orderly penetration of the frontier. In the final analysis, Zaslow provides a realistic view of the problems with which the North has wrestled in the past and which it continues to face. Many of these are termed insoluble, but he also recognizes that great achievements have been made and Canadians are now determined to develop their northern frontier in a manner that deals more justly with the people and land of the North.

Doug Whyte
Yukon Archives

Northern Voices: Inuit Writing in English. PENNY PETRONE, ed. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1988. xv, 314 p. ISBN 0-8020-5772-1 \$27.50.

Two of the Inuit writings gathered here by Penny Petrone share a common theme — the “snow goose” and the “mosquito.” Southern readers may be displeased to find this allegory explained: the graceful and substantial snow goose stands for the Inuit people of the North, while the buzzing and annoying mosquito represents the white southerner. The imagery is appropriately political, for this is a political book. Petrone seems convinced that northern voices are both essential and sufficient for explaining the complex situation of northern peoples today. In defence of this conviction, her book assembles in rough chronological order several dozen texts in English, all attributed to Inuit speakers or writers of various times and regions.

Petrone, a professor of education at Lakehead University, already has to her credit a collection of Indian speeches and writings published in 1983 under the title *First People, First Voices*. Material for this Inuit volume proved harder to find: Inuit have never been as numerous as Indians, and their thoughts, speeches, and stories were almost never written down until well into the nineteenth century.

An eccentric editorial choice governs the makeup of this collection. All the material printed in *Northern Voices* is found in quotation marks or in some other fashion directly attributed to an Eskimo. Not until page 202 does the book present material that was literally written in English by Inuit. Worse, when Inuit wrote or spoke in English in the nineteenth century the effect cannot be what Petrone intended; the struggle with an unfamiliar tongue and conscious mimicry of Victorian piety or propriety will grate on most readers. The authenticity of some transcriptions is dubious too; consider Chimoackjo's report of the theft of some baleen (77): “Me bone gone Bone Capt Spicer bone... Other white men took a large quantity without permission.” The broken quality of one sentence and pomposity of the other cast doubt on the source and the method. Most of the texts were originally spoken in Inuktitut and have passed through German, Danish, French, and even Italian on their way to an English version. The reader cannot know how faithfully any of the early texts reproduces what the Inuit actually said or meant.

The proofreading of the English text is imperfect, and a few more specialist advisors should have been called in to save the author some embarrassing lapses and to help

her provide a fuller context. The Innu are not Labrador Inuit as is twice asserted (48, 288); this is what the Naskapi Indians call themselves. If “fulmar” was an Inuktitut word, as the glossary says (287), it would be the only word in the language beginning with the letter “f”; in fact this is the old Norse (and English) name for the bird the Inuit call “qaqulluk.” Some of the broad-brush interpretations also invite challenge, especially the suggestion (57) that Inuit were “dependent” on “the amazing wonders the Europeans brought with them” even before regular contact was established.

The editor’s decision to keep comment to the minimum also leaves some subjects crying out for amplification. Uvavnuq (21) “suddenly one night became a powerful shaman” at Igloodik. Igjuqarjuk of the Caribou Inuit (115-18) underwent a prolonged and painful apprenticeship to become a shaman, and Aua of Iglulik was marked for special powers from before his birth but had to respect extraordinarily strict taboos before getting access to his spiritual powers (120-23). Further west, Susie Tiktalik reportedly said (255) that “they had to kill a person and take his liver out to make him become a shaman.” One shaman offers the opinion that his counterparts in other regions are probably imposters. Nowhere does Petrone help the reader evaluate the possible reasons (including poor translations or unreliable informants) which might account for such diversity. Similarly, Petrone gives a splendid account (141-47) of Attagutalik’s rescue after she had eaten her first husband and children. (“What a horrid sight! She was like a bird in its egg.”) There is even a fine photograph of her in later life; but nothing is said to identify her as the wife and stepmother of two important men mentioned on page twelve or to discuss her own remarkable later life.

Ultimately, however, the collection earns the reader’s admiration. Many of the texts themselves are impressive: the extract from Lydia Campbell’s autobiography, written in the Newfoundland English of a Labrador Inuk of the 1890s, is brief but moving; it also reminds us, with its talk of trees and turnips, of the wide diversity of Inuit experience and adaptation. Phrases leap off the page, like Abe Okpik’s remark, “It is up to the Eskimos of today to use their Eskimo strength of word and thought.... It is something very special and wonderful to be an Eskimo” (141). Or the Rev. Armand Tagoona’s thoughts on the instability of imported fads: “I’m not criticizing young people.... Sometimes they are not even the way they want to be themselves. Something unseen makes them do things they don’t want to do” (213). There is a great deal of cynicism, rooted in experience, towards the white man: “Our precious land,” wrote Alootook Ipellie in a piece of short, allegorical fiction, “is the last match in their box and they are attempting to ignite it as quickly as they can.” (251)

Not all is hostility to the whites: readers who are immersed in the sophisticated stereotypes of academic learning may occasionally be jolted by Inuit perceptions of the past, and particularly of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Peter Pitseolak, in an excerpt from the well-known autobiography he prepared with Dorothy Eber, refers to the HBC supply ship as “Our big helper.... that ship helped the Eskimo people” (167). Martha Flaherty, though bitter about her treatment as a young TB patient, reports that “For as long as I can remember, Inuit believed that the white people were very helpful” (274). Minnie Aodla Freeman observes (240) that “one of the reasons why Inuit welcomed the Hudson’s Bay Company was the fact that the Company never tried to change Inuit ways of behaving or thinking.” The observation is a fascinating echo of what one still hears today from old HBC traders, explaining

the benign nature of their own contact with the Inuit compared with the changes wrought by the missionaries and government agents.

This book has both the pleasant surprises and unfortunate gaps of an eclectic manuscript collection: detail is abundant and sometimes exciting, but context is hard to find, and not all texts ring quite true. More important, the wide range of sources Petrone has mined for this material make two significant points about the availability of material — printed or archival — on the Inuit. Much that is valuable and authentic can still be found, and perhaps only be found, in the papers of southerners who lived or sojourned among the Inuit and were fascinated enough to preserve what they learned about them and learned from them. The later parts of the book, however, make it clear that modern Inuit are creating records of their distinct experience which tell — without intermediaries — of their concerns. Any archives that has a mandate to document Canada's northern heritage should already be attempting to do with unpublished records what Petrone has accomplished in print.

Philip Goldring
Canadian Parks Service

Seafaring Labour: The Merchant Marine of Atlantic Canada, 1840-1914.
ERIC W. SAGER. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989. xviii, 321 p. ISBN 0-7735-0670-5.

Entre 1979 et 1982, les membres du Atlantic Canada Shipping Project recueillirent une impressionnante banque de données reliée aux navires et aux matelots ayant navigué à partir des ports de l'Atlantique durant les 19^e et 20^e siècles. Grâce à ce travail, les Gerald Panting, David Alexander et Keith Matthews furent en mesure d'offrir des études préliminaires sur ceux qui montaient les navires de haute mer.

Selon Sager, l'ouvrage était nécessaire parce que les historiens et les sociologues nous avaient abondamment renseigné sur les travailleurs des navires de pêche mais très peu sur les matelots de haute mer. La majorité des publications portant sur ce sujet proviennent d'historiens amateurs et de journalistes, qui s'intéressent davantage aux aspects techniques de la navigation qu'aux matelots eux-mêmes. Quoi qu'il en soit, le succès qu'ils remportent auprès des chercheurs avides d'histoire de la navigation illustre bien l'intérêt qui existe pour l'histoire maritime au Canada.

Ce volume se divise en neuf chapitres qui reflètent l'évolution historique de la situation du matelot dans son milieu de travail. Du contexte pré-industriel prévalant sur les petits vaisseaux, Sager explore ensuite la transition vers les navires de haute mer en étudiant le processus de recrutement, la lutte pour la protection des matelots contre les abus d'autorité des capitaines et maîtres de bord. Avant de terminer par un survol du « nouveau » milieu de travail maintenant « industrialisé » des matelots, l'auteur décrit la vision qu'entretenaient ces derniers de leur lieu de travail qu'ils considéraient souvent comme leur foyer. Tout ce processus fut témoin de la transition vers le capitalisme industriel. En résumé, le livre traite de la survivance et ultérieurement de l'extinction du travail artisanal durant l'ère industrielle.