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**Micmacs and Colonists: Indian-White Relations in the Maritimes, 1713-1867.** By L.F.S. Upton. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979. 243 pp. \$22.00.

Historians of the Canadian colonial experience have, until very recently, paid but scant attention to the role of aboriginal peoples. While this tendency to ignore Amerindians in historical terms can hardly be called unique, in the case of Canada it is ironic in view of the overriding importance of its fur trade during the colonial period. As anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with Canadian history is aware, the fur trade called for at least some cooperation with Amerindians; for two and a half centuries after first settlement by the French, this trade dominated the Canadian economic scene. Apart from some outstanding exceptions, the typical figure of the Canadian frontier remained the trader, whether Amerindian or European, rather than the armed settler, soldier or warrior. This is an experience unique in the colonial Americas, stamping Canada's early history with its individuality.

Well-known as this might have been for some time, it is only recently that Canadian colonial historians have begun to focus on the role of Amerindians in any meaningful sense. The way was indicated by an anthropologist, Alfred G. Bailey, with his seminal *The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504-1700*, first published in 1937. A hiatus followed as Bailey's work went out of print; then, in the late 1960s, historians began to rise to the challenge. Among these was the late Professor Leslie Upton, already established for his work on the refugees from the U.S. War of Independence who settled in Canada. *Micmacs and Colonists* was his last book.

The Micmac may or may not have been the first Amerindians to come into regular contact with Europeans in North America, despite Upton's acceptance of the frequent assertion that they were. What is certain is that they played a significant, if not always important, role in colonial politics for longer than any other native peoples in Canada. In tracing out and filling in something of this little-known aspect of early Canadian history, Upton tries to be thorough and is always readable. However, despite his good intentions to give the Micmac their historic due, he has difficulty in displaying more than sympathy. Successful as he is in assembling new information from colonial archives, he is not able to provide his Amerindian pro-

tagonists with anything more than a shadowy presence.

Micmac contact with Europeans began in the usual way for the north: with trade. But Amerindian custom dictated that trade could not be carried on without alliances which were all-embracing, including war. Along the Atlantic seaboard, developing colonial rivalries soon ensured that the military aspect of these alliances overtook the commercial, and the Micmac along with some other peoples became in effect the guerrilla arm of the French in their wars with the British. For the Micmac, this meant that they were able to maintain their traditional way of life in their own lands long after the fur trade had lost its importance in the maritime regions.

If the French used their warrior allies to keep the British colonies off balance, the Micmac were not slow in realizing the potential of their position to maintain a measure of control over their dealings with the French. Thus, they were far from being the pawns of the French as they have been so often represented. In fact, when it came to self-interest, the Micmac were as motivated as the Europeans, and soon revealed themselves as skillful manipulators of colonial rivalries for their own advantage. Their goal was not extravagant: it was simply their survival as a people in an increasingly hostile environment. France's final defeat in North America deprived the Micmac of their bargaining position; a century and a half after the French had first settled in their lands, they became irrelevant to colonial politics.

This is a tale that has been told elsewhere, and Upton does not change existing interpretations. However, by extending this approach into the British period, and to the present day, he considerably adds to the story. It is intriguing to learn, for instance, that Washington wrote to the eastern Amerindians urging them to remain peaceful, but offering help against the British if necessary. We do not know what effect this had, although the Micmac did remain neutral. However, a few took part in the American attack on Fort Cumberland in 1776, jolting the neglectful British into once more distributing supplies and presents and even into signing a new treaty with Micmac and Malecite at Fort Howe. But apart from Upton's assurance that they then regarded the English as "all one brother," we learn nothing about the Amerindian view of this episode. This is unfortunately typical.

*Micmacs and Colonists* may not be definitive, but it is at least a step in the right direction.

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**Dene Nation: The Colony Within.** Edited by Mel Watkins. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978. 189 pp. pap. \$4.95.

*Dene Nation* is a frustrating anthology of essays. It should have, and easily could have, been a much more significant book. Certainly the issues which it addresses, pertaining to the economic, political, ethical, and historical rights of indigenous peoples to the territories they have used and lived on "from time immemorial," are cogent and compelling. Undeniably, editor Mel Watkins has assembled an interesting and diverse collection of contributors. Clearly the inherent conflict between the interests of big business and those of tribal people is central here, and as such this book should occupy a key place in a worldwide comparative investigation of this issue.

Why, then, is it so unsatisfying? One answer must lie in the book's curious organization. Most of the articles are culled from oral or written testimony presented to the Berger Commission, a Canadian government-appointed body sent to the western Sub-Arctic to ascertain local opinion on a proposed gas pipeline easement through their territory. As in the closely paralleled Alaska situation in the early 1970s, this oil-inspired construction quickly became inextricably tied to a realization and formalization of the nature and extent of aboriginal claims to the land, with Natives arguing, quite astutely, that title must precede any outside development.

Watkins limits his selections to those which vigorously advance this position. Most of his contributors perceive an historically and contemporaneously antagonistic relationship between southern, mostly non-Native Canadians, and the Native Dene who live in the Northwest Territories. They assert that dire consequences would follow the construction of any pipeline in territory *not* controlled by Native people, and advance the principle that the Dene constitute a "nation"