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archaeologists economically dependent on excavating the Native American patrimony. Hence, the Native American patrimony ceased to be merely of scholarly interest to them, and became a vital interest. But the CRM laws were poorly drafted in regard to meaningful scholarly criteria. And with less and less reporting of the archaeological work accomplished, professional archaeologists, Native Americans, and the national public at large became less conversant with the real nature of that patrimony, and Indian activists made more and more demands for its control, further hampering knowledge of the content of the patrimony. The problem, then, is a social structural one, made manifest by laws that breed conflict. Are the laws simply poorly written, or are they themselves a manifestation of a strategy of "divide and conquer"?

Melburn D. Thurman

The First Nations of British Columbia. By Robert J. Muckle. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998. 128 pages. \$19.95 paper.

Robert J. Muckle had a daunting task: write a book about the original inhabitants of British Columbia, addressing all the issues of arrival, survival, social structure, linguistic diversity, history, technology, mythology, art, European contact, changes as a result of European contact, and current sociopolitical conditions. He accomplished all this in 128 pages, with illustrations, six appendices, a glossary, and a selected bibliography included.

Aside from the brevity of treatment, the book does contain some very interesting information. Though the style of writing is rather informational in tone, the passive voice construction, which dominates every page of the text, makes the reading less exciting than the subjects deserve. One more notable issue concerns the complete lack of citation until the last chapter which seems rather odd in light of the anthropological bent the author hails as the key to understanding all cultures.

In the first chapter Muckle addresses an important issue, one that concerns the title of the book. He explains the history behind the current term Canadians employ to label their original inhabitants, *First Nations*. It is quite a feat to acknowledge the history of identification problems as a result of the ambiguous all-inclusive term *Indian*. It is also noteworthy that there is tremendous global reluctance to any term other than *Indian*. Though Canada is quite progressive in sociological matters, the issue here, what to call these peoples, is not one very open for compromise or counsel, but rather follows the typical pattern that the government decides on a term it applies to particular people under their reign. Thus, the current government-approved label calls the former Natives (and former Indians) First Nations. The label seemingly recognizes preeminence of habitation of the people that wandered over the polar ice caps in their journey to the new lands some ten to twenty thousand years ago.

In the second chapter, the issues of history come into play as the label functions to cover all the peoples from Bonavista to Vancouver Island, though

the focus is now British Columbia. Muckle notes that there were numerous First Nations accounts of arrival to British Columbia in an attempt to acknowledge oral tradition but then he immediately dismisses all the accounts as folk theories in order to reify the anthropological and archeological explanation as indisputable. Having dealt with the issue of labels and arrival, Muckle focuses on the social and settlement patterns of the once-nomadic sojourners. Having done that, the book is now half finished.

Muckle tackles ethnology in British Columbia in the book's next section, exploring anthropology and oral tradition, traditional culture areas of British Columbia, linguistic diversity, population settlement patterns, diet, technology, social organization, mythology, shamanism, health and healing, art, the potlatch and other important ceremonies, trade, slavery, and warfare. Perhaps the most interesting of these concerns what he writes about population. He notes the general conclusions concerning assumed population prior to escalating contact and then the percentage of decline due to warfare and disease. The rest of the subjects receive typical treatment—nothing unexpected, nothing new.

In the final and the most interesting portion of the book Muckle covers culture change and modernization, population loss, the impact of the fur trade, the effects of the gold rushes, the impact of non-Native settlement, missionaries, and residential schools, government relations with First Nations, assertions of aboriginal rights, negotiations in the 1990s, and economic and cultural initiatives. There are many issues that Muckle addresses in an appropriate manner, though too briefly. The first of these is population loss, more than 90 percent of which resulted from diseases that continued to affect First Nations until the late 1920s. After this time, the numbers finally start to increase again. The last five issues provide the most engaging text, accompanied by actual citations. Of these five, the government relations with First Nations is the most revealing because Muckle discloses the history of reluctance, deception, and dishonesty in dealing with individual nations as well as the whole First Nations population. The other issues he discusses do not reveal anything surprising.

Finally, the appendices actually contain some interesting information. The first appendix compiles a short description of all the First Nations of British Columbia. The third appendix provides excerpts from the Royal Proclamation of 1763, which stresses issues and rights of the First Nations in light of westward expansion. The fifth appendix includes excerpts from the Nisga'a Agreement-in-Principle and the sixth appendix contains a list of First Nations involved in treaty negotiations at the time of the book's publication.

The book is very sparse in its information, treating each issue only at surface-level. As an introduction, it leaves some very distasteful impressions. Though it is favorable to the First Nations in their current situations, the author's anthropological bent suggests that as First Nations become trained as archeologists and anthropologists, their contributions will have greater impact. In other words, when First Nations say about themselves what anthropology and archeology teach them, then what the First Nations say will be of value.

Frederick White

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