

A LAMENT FOR
VANCOUVER (p. 9) / CANADIAN
HUMOUR??? (p. 23) / THE CANLIT
ACROSTIC (p. 31) / U of T's C-in-C. (p. 13)

BOOKS in CANADA

a national review of books

VOLUME 4, NO. 1

JANUARY, 1975

AS WE WERE SAYING...

Colombo's Canadian Quotations,
edited by John Robert Colombo,
Hurtig, 735 pages, \$15 cloth.

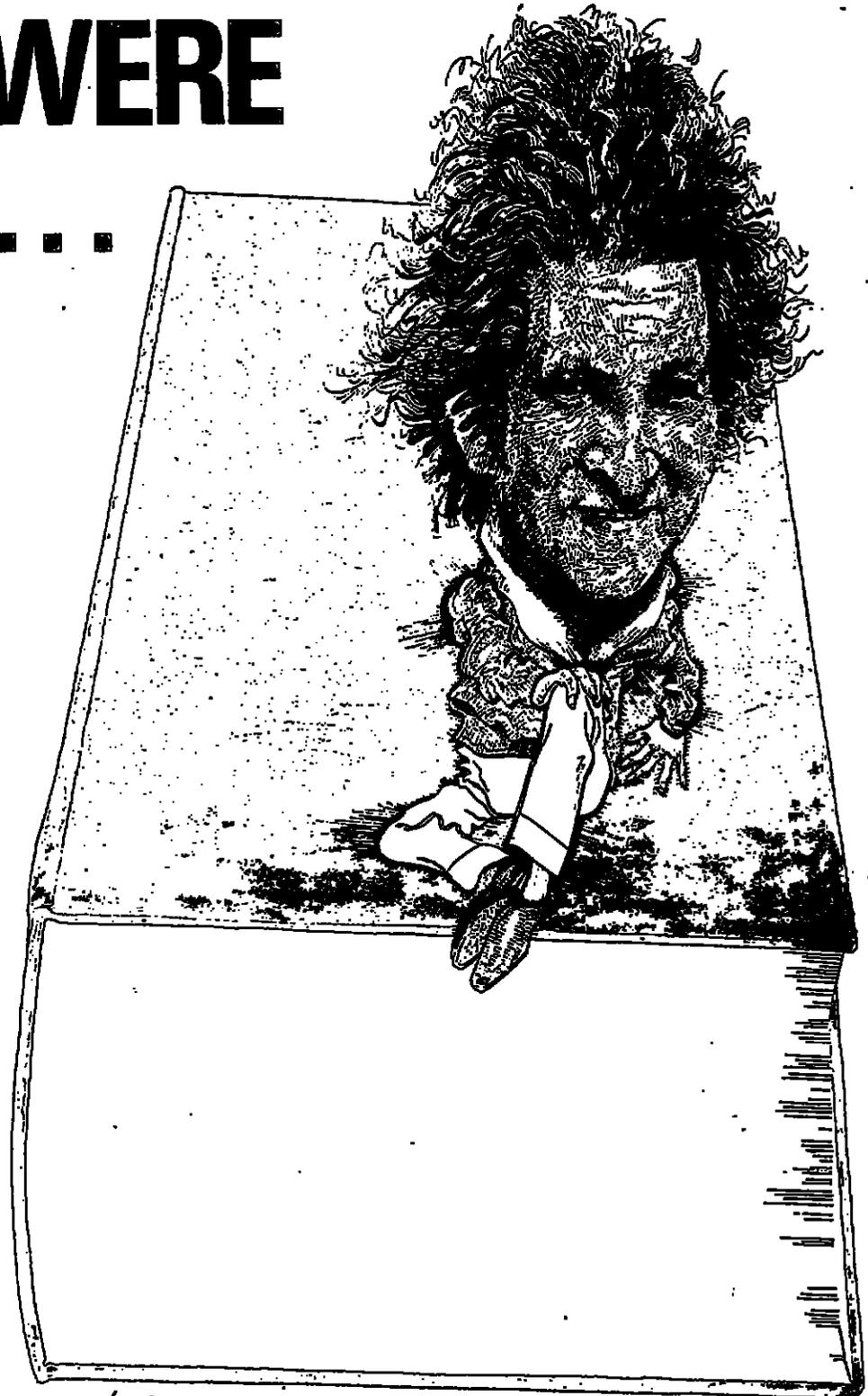
By DOUG FETHERLING

LONG BEFORE ITS publication, *Colombo's Canadian Quotations*, the massive compilation by John Robert Colombo, was widely and variously promoted in print, on the air and by word of mouth. Its progress was something one heard periodic gossip about and comment on. People mentioned it with an offhand familiarity, as they would mention the CN Tower to a taxi driver as its construction pushed skyward, as the meter clicked away dimes. It was, even then, a famous Canadian book, and this prenatal reputation seems to be having a favourable effect upon sales.

This unusual history only points up the fact that the book is remarkable in other ways; for *Colombo's Canadian Quotations* is a volume with at least three distinct intents and uses, each of them accounting in some measure for the literary and fiscal success of the whole.

Like *Bartlett's* and its other predecessors, it is first and most obviously a work of reference — but with a difference. It is limited to remarks by Canadians and near-Canadians and to remarks by outsiders about Canada, and is thus more a source book than a guide. That is, it's not a book to which one would go to check for accuracy or identification, since few quotes in these categories are familiar enough to war-

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Bickerstaff

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CONTRIBUTORS

Doug Fetherling's most recent collection of poems is *Achilles' Navel* (Press Porcépic); Gary Michael Dault is the Toronto *Star's* art columnist; Linda Sandler is a freelance Toronto writer; John Grube is Honorary Vice-President of the Rhinoceros Party; Clive Cocking is a freelance writer in Vancouver; Anne Roche is a freelance writer who lives in Welland, Ontario; John McMurtry, formerly a professional football player with the Calgary Stampede, now teaches philosophy at the University of Guelph; Carl Hamilton, former General Secretary of the CCF under M. J. Coldwell, is a lawyer and alderman in Guelph; Bob Blackburn writes a television column for the Toronto *Sun*; Michael Smith, a frequent contributor to these pages, is a short-story writer in St. Marys, Ontario; Len Gasparini's most recent collection of poems is *One Bullet Left* (Alive Press); Richard Lubbock is the scriptwriter for the CBC-TV show *This Is The Law*; Robert Carlgren is a Toronto freelance writer; Carla Wolfe does research at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; Richard Landon is Assistant Head of the Fisher Rare Book Room at the University of Toronto; Paul Stuewe, a frequent contributor to these pages, runs an nth-hand bookstore in Toronto; Sandra Esche is a freelance Toronto editor and writer; Catherine Orr is a freelance writer; Diana Filer is a CBC-Radio producer.



Drawing by C. W. Jefferys from *Fences*, by Harry Symons, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$4.95 paper.

BOOKSⁱⁿ CANADA

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Editor

DOUGLAS MARSHALL

Assignments Editor

MORRIS WOLFE

Art Director

MARY LU TOMS

General Manager

SUSAN TRAER

Business Manager

ROBERT FARRELLY

Consultant

JACK JENSEN

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NOTES & COMMENTS

ONE TREND IN Canadian publishing that is beginning to bother us more and more is what we call the commissioned hagiography. The authorized (or "official") biography has long been with us, and most readers can recognize it for what it is — a highly flattering view of a subject usually redeemed by the author's access to hitherto privileged information. By the same token, it's fairly easy to spot the biographical and autobiographical rubbish that gushes off the vanity presses. But commissioned hagiographies, which now make up an alarming proportion of the non-fiction books published in this country each year, are something else again.

Essentially they are promotional or "puff" books, the creative costs of which have largely been paid for by the estate, institution, or government department that dreamed them up. Yet they are written by "name" professional authors and appear under the imprint of a reputable publishing house. Say, just for example, that Canadian National Railways decides it wants to honour its late president, Donald Gordon, and at the same time polish its own image. What better way than to manufacture a best-selling book? CN approaches, again for example, McClelland & Stewart. M & S agrees to publish the book if CN will subsidize it, and together the two organizations sally forth into the writing market waving a CN-backed cheque for, say, \$50,000 as an advance on royalties. Eventually they find a reasonably respectable writer who, lured by \$50,000, is prepared to shelve his principles and become a CN hack. The result: a year or so later the M & S fall list is heralding a potential best seller called *He Ruled the Rods: The Heroic Story of CN's Donald Gordon*.

It's a beautiful system. The writer is happy; he or she has been paid roughly 10 times the normal advance for such a book and can count on further royalty payments. The publisher is happy; assured of substantial bulk purchases by CN, he has a best seller on his lists without incurring any real financial risks. And CN is happy; it has purchased a long-term promotional property for a fraction of the cost of a good TV ad campaign. The only group who lose by the deal are you, the general reading public. You are being conned into buying what purports to be a legitimate, objective book but what in fact is nothing more than a piece of sophisticated advertising.

AT A RECENT question-answer-cum-reading at the Ontario College of Art, Margaret Atwood was asked what she thought the recent flurry of *ad feminam* attacks against her meant. (By Ian Drummond in the *Canadian Forum*, for example. And by Bernice Lever, the editor of *Waves*, in the Letters to the Editor column of the *Globe and Mail*.) Miss Atwood replies that it was because people resent her fame, which is undoubtedly true. But we think there's a better answer: Canadians don't know how to cope with the fame of those within their midst and therefore turn such people into institutions. Now if there's one thing Canadians *do* know how to deal with, it's institutions. We attack them. Note the CBC.

WITH THIS ISSUE, we introduce two new features designed to amuse and inform our readers. The "Books in Canada Acrostic" (page 31), devised by CBC-Radio producer Diana Filer, should appeal to students of CanLit. Each acrostic is based on a recent or well-known Canadian book. The other feature, "The Editors Recommend . . ." (page 30), is a list of recent Canadian titles we consider to be of superior value. Two points about the list: the books on it are not necessarily (or even probably) best sellers; and we reserve the right to disagree with our own independent reviewers.

OCCASIONALLY *Books in Canada* publishes two reviews of the same book. Sometimes that's because a particular volume is so important or controversial that it seems essential to present two points of view. Such was the case last month, for example, when Greg Curnoe and Léandre Bergeron both reviewed Barry Lord's *The History of Painting in Canada*. But sometimes we do it; not because of the particular book, but simply because we think it might be interesting. In this issue we have two reviewers commenting on *Woman's Eye*, an anthology of 12 British Columbia women poets, edited by Dorothy Livesay. Linda Sandler (p. 6) wonders whether it makes any sense at all to anthologize women poets; Len Gasparini, on the other hand (p. 21), delights in "the eternal ovum" that emanates from the women represented.

GABLES, GALOSHES, AND Ghiberti

The Gaiety of Gables: Ontario's Architectural Folk Art, by Anthony Adamson and John Willard, McClelland & Stewart, unpaginated, \$17.95 cloth.

Winter, by Morley Callaghan and John de Visser, McClelland & Stewart, unpaginated, \$18.95 cloth.

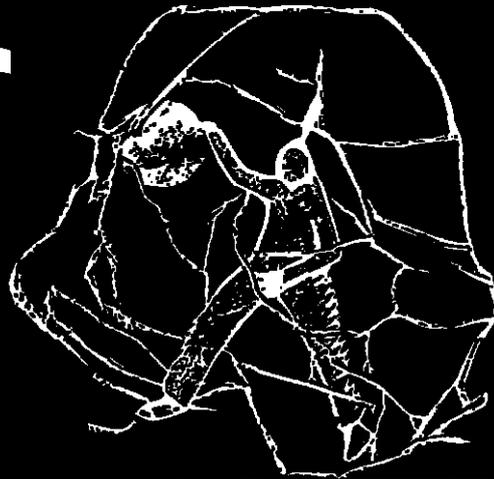
Roloff Beny in Italy, by Roloff Beny et al., McClelland & Stewart, 428 pages, \$40 cloth.

By GARY MICHAEL DAULT

THREE LARGELY photographic books to consider here, all of them elaborate and expensive, all of them new releases from McClelland & Stewart. Two are considerable successes, one is a depressing failure.

The first success: *The Gaiety of Gables: Ontario's Architectural Folk Art* with photographs by John Willard and a text and some line drawings by Anthony Adamson. The most modest in scope and in format of the three books, *The Gaiety of Gables* is also the neatest, most focussed, most accessible, and most useful of them. The book is advertised on what is admittedly too cute a title page (mostly because of Mr. Adamson's annoyingly tight and whimsically picky line drawings — which unfortunately occur throughout the text as well) as "The Story of Ontario's Barge Boards, also called Verge Boards and by the unversed, *Gingerbread*." Which is assuredly what the book turns out to be. Fortunately, Adamson's wit and general lightness of touch are much more prettily conveyed in prose than in line drawing

Canadian Wonder Tales



by Cyrus MacMillan

This great Canadian children's classic has been out of print for many years and the publication of this new edition illustrated with woodcuts by Elizabeth Cleaver represents an important event in Canadian children's publishing.

One portion of this book was published by Oxford University Press and won the 1957 Book-of-the-Year Medal awarded by the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians. It is now out-of-print and is being replaced by this complete edition of *Canadian Wonder Tales*.

Cyrus MacMillan was an eminent Canadian Professor at McGill University who was Head of the Department of English and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in the 1940's. He had a brief political career in the 1920's and served on

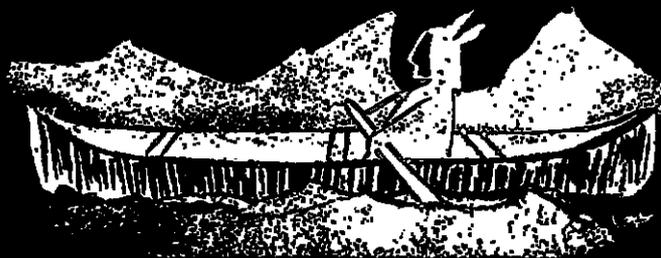
several Royal Commissions. His lasting contribution to Canadian history has proved to be his self-appointed mission to collect from oral sources stories derived from Indian myth and legends and early European-Canadian fairy tales complete with giants, dragons and wicked stepmothers.

They were originally collected for scientific and academic purposes but his easy-flowing writing style makes them excellent reading for children. Some of the chapters are: Glooskap's Country, How Summer Came To Canada, Glooskap and The Fairy, The Indian Cinderella, The Northern Lights, The Coming of the Corn, and The Strange Tale of Caribou and Moose.

\$14.75

at all good book stores

Clarke Irwin, the national publishers



and the author settles down into a prefatory essay that is deftly informative, its learning (which is considerable) carried easily, its enthusiasm infectious. The essay is in fact entirely a delight from its initial quotation of Herrick's "... a wild civility/Do more bewitch me, than when Art/Is too precise in every part" to its happy conclusion that our beautiful barge boards represent the triumph of native exuberance and invention over academic correctness and pedantic methodology — especially as it was codified in such authoritative manuals of instruction and exhortation as Augustus Welby Pugin's *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841). Pugin, Adamson writes, "made a lot of scathing remarks ... about what we — and others — were beginning to hang on our gables. He even drew up for ridicule a plate (it is reproduced in the book) showing what we were doing and then another plate as precept for what we should be doing with barge boards. But we did not do it." Of course the essay is necessarily more than an investigation of barge boards and how they got that way. It ends by being an extremely compact and useful tracing of our domestic architectural style in general from about 1800 and how it was modified or in most cases roundly withstood modification by British Regency style changes, Pre-Victorian predilections, American Federalist imports, The Greek Revival, 1837 itself, Ruskinian Neo-Medievalism, Church of England Gothic, The Italian Villa Cottage, and sundry other threats to our indigenous spatial needs and aesthetic integrity.

John Willard's photographs are everything they should be as an expansion of Adamson's essay. They are clean, unaffected, informative, handsomely but unobtrusively composed, classical in their clarity and restraint. The colour photos are delicate and accurate capturings of crisp washed Ontario country light. "Near Carluke" and "Near Bell's Corners" possess an enormously effective presence, an immediacy, a sense of being there. The photos are also effectively placed, both within the book page and in juxtaposition to the photographs on the adjoining page. A fine job.

Almost everything that is right about *The Gaiety of Gables* is wrong with the Morley Callaghan-John de Visser volume *Winter*.

Except for the excellence of the prefatory prose. Callaghan's text is a longish prose meditation on winter. It looks at first as if the reader is in for a bad time with a kind of warmed-over *Child's Christmas in Wales*: "If you said tell me about the winters, I'd say what do I know about the winter, I have seen too many of them, they have been with me too long, they are a part of my life, I can't separate myself from them, nor would I want to." But this plangency soon straightens up into something more particularized and evocative and eventually turns into a chatty anecdotal and often memorable bit of writing.

Given John de Visser's reputation, given his past performances in *This Rock Within The Sea* and Scott Symons'

To say that [Beny's] photographs are fine is inadequate. They repay endless inspection of their superb composition, colour, dark-and-light articulation, and silky ambience.

Heritage, it is difficult to account for the badness of his work in *Winter*. It is all downhill from the crowded incoherent title page. Perhaps some of the blame should go to



Photograph of a gable near Colborne from *The Gaiety of Gables*.

bad production: the cheap oily paper; the non-deliberate bad focus; a lot of abysmally insensitive placing of the photos on the page. But there is a lot of archness of composition, greyed-out dullness of subject, a lot of triumph of filter over matter, and too much self-indulgence by de Visser of his penchant for silhouettes of stark bare branches against snow.

Back to success with *Roloff Beny in Italy*. This is a beautiful book. There is, I am told, a feeling abroad that it is over-produced. I don't think it is. I think it is opulent and masterful. True, it's a sort of committee production. It was designed and photographed by Beny. The text and an anthology of bits and pieces about Italy culled from the poems, letters and journals of the literary great are by Anthony Thwaite and Peter Porter. The historical notes on the plates are by Brian de Breffny. (These notes are printed on fold-out leaves that allow the reader to refer to them as he encounters each photograph without the annoying flipping back of these extremely large pages. But, hell, when you pay \$40 you expect this kind of consideration.) And there's an unpardonably silly epilogue by Gore Vidal ("Certainly, in the altogether too likely demise of our race, I recommend Mr. Beny's photographs to the visiting android"), the only blot on the production. Yet having been produced by committee this way, the book is all the more remarkable for the feeling it presents of being one thing — Roloff Beny's personalized and well-loved Italy. To say that the photographs are fine is inadequate. They repay endless inspection of their superb composition, colour, dark-and-light articulation, and silky ambience. I like the book's unembarrassed commanding indulgence in terms of point of view. This book isn't for tourists; it's for people who love Italy from the inside out. It assumes a lot. For example, there is no standard shot of Ghiberti's doors but rather a scene from one of them. Instead of Michelangelo's *Pieta* or the *Moses*, we have two views of the unfinished *Rondanini Pieta*, the artist's last sculptural work. No usual photo of Pisa's leaning tower but instead a fine picture of the more beautiful but less looked-at Baptistery at Pisa. This sort of thing is one of the book's ruling aesthetic approaches to its subject. I do not think it perverse. Elitist I suppose, but what of that? And Beny is a consummately skilful designer. One of the greatest pleasures *Italy* offers is the delight in the playing off of picture against picture across the page, always to the enhancement of both pictures. In this book, that activity alone is an entire and absorbing study in itself. Format as fine art, as fine as content — and at one with it. □

COLLECTIVE FALLACIES

Ninety Seasons: Modern Poems from the Maritimes, edited by Robert Cockburn and Robert Gibbs, McClelland & Stewart, 160 pages, \$6.95 cloth.

Woman's Eye: 12 B.C. Poets, edited by Dorothy Livesay, Air, 104 pages, paper unpriced.

Lobsticks, edited by Clare MacCulloch, Alive Press, 188 pages, paper unpriced.

By LINDA SANDLER

THE POETRY anthology, like the camera lens, is capable of framing a landscape — outlining shapes and tensions we were not aware of. Toning and blurring of distinctions have an aesthetic function in photography, but in anthologies they look like falsehoods. Cockburn and Gibbs' *Ninety Seasons* is organized around two fallacies: the supremacy of the geographical muse and the continuity of the Maritime poetic tradition. The editors' declared aim was to select a range of the best Maritime poems; they were "frankly surprised" when they discovered a continuous poetic line, originating in Roberts and Carman — the pastoral reflective mode, updated by irony and the plain voice,

But it's impossible to think of the interesting Maritime poets in a simple regional context — and however careful the principle of selection, the poets don't fit very well into

the hypothetical tradition. The editors recognize this in their triumphant explanation that these poets have the Maritime gift for ranging between localism and cosmopolitanism.

A. G. Bailey's intricate metaphysics can't be anchored in time, place or event, so that he enjoys a wonderful freedom; Alden Nowlan's sinister medieval forests, and his own vibrant terrors, have little to do with pastoral sanity and simplicity; his disciples, Terry Crawford and Joseph Sherman, now are moving beyond regional sketches; John Thompson's crystal lyrics may include images of firs, frost and crab apples (images being one editorial measure of Maritime-ness) but they might have been written elsewhere; Elizabeth Brewster's Blakean songs illustrate the transformation of borrowed modes, but they are not overly rooted in place (and if Brewster has been conscripted as a *woman* poet, can she be *regional* too?).

Editorial double dealing is most evident in the treatment of two Maritime giants: Milton Acorn and Fred Cogswell. Even allowing the problem of overlap with other anthologies, they are badly represented. The Acorn selection is mainly country stuff with a philosophical twist ("Hummingbird," "The Trout Pond") and a bit of love ("As True a Lover's Knot") — nothing that is bitterly ironic at the expense of his region, and not a hint of his radical humanism.

Cogswell is marginally better represented by the inclusion of "Star-People" and "Paleontology Lecture," but his more complex and ornate poems are excluded in favour of slender lyrics ("Like Two Slant Trees," "Direction") and three early clodhopping poems in the pastoral and moral mode.

CANADIAN CLOCKS AND CLOCKMAKERS



Ten years ago there was little interest in "Canadiana" and even less interest in "Canadian Clocks". Since the celebration of Canada's one hundredth birthday in 1967 the overall interest in "Canadiana" has grown extensively. At the same time the growth in the hobby of collecting clocks has been nothing short of fantastic.

Recently many books have been written on various aspects of "Canadiana" but until the publication of this book there was little information available about "Canadian Clocks and Clockmakers". In fact few people realized that clocks were actually manufactured in Canada and that there are numerous examples of beautiful Canadian clock craftsmanship on display in museums across the country.

With this book the author has made a substantial contribution to the recognition of the clock industry in Canada.

506 pages, hard cover \$24.95

Also available: CLOCKS, The Arthur Pequegnat Clock Catalogue 1904-28.

52 pages,
soft cover \$4.50

SAANNES Publications Ltd.
BOX 6209-A, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5W 1P6

None of the poets I have mentioned is heavily burdened by his or her regional identity, but the wide range of their subjects and styles has been narrowed down, if not quite edited out, in *Ninety Seasons*. George Woodcock objects to the structural approach to literature because, he believes, it masks the individuality of the writer's vision. Cockburn and Gibbs are torn between the desire to mask the individuality of Maritime poets by fencing them into a regional tradition, and an equally strong desire to allow them to swim in "the mainstream of contemporary technique and sensibility." Irony and the plain voice are part of the technical mainstream, but complex vision is its better half. The pastoral mode *can* be a vehicle for the expression of complex feelings and insights, but the editors have favoured simplicity. And where is the city? Where is politics? Where is the evidence that half these poets are under 40, and many of them nomadic?

Ninety Seasons seems to have been compiled with a certain audience in mind: the nostalgic inhabitants of a disappearing region, and urbanites longing for rural simplicity. The book reflects a popular trend — a movement of retreat from the complexity of society — but popular obsessions are not the most reliable index of "mainstreams," particularly when they are swimming in the opposite direction.

Dorothy Livesay's *Woman's Eye*, a sequel to *Forty Women Poets of Canada*, is an uninspired selection from 12 British Columbia poets. Livesay wastes no time looking for family resemblances in style or theme, in terms of region or gender. She states flatly that women have a distinctive way of looking and feeling. This may be true — if the subject is sex, childbirth or abortion — but literature is not the simple

expression of feeling, and it overcomes the mechanical ascendancy of time, place and gender; remember George Eliot. Marya Fiamengo's poetry reflects strongly her identity as a woman who is over 40, but its power doesn't derive from those facts. Susan Musgrave is not locked into her fate as a Western Canadian woman under 30, but it's worth noting that her tough ironic "masculine" poetry — her best, I think — cannot appear in a book proclaiming the distinctiveness of the woman's eye. Most of the poems were chosen for qualities of empathy and delicacy of perception. But these are not the female preserve; look at Tim Inkster or Peter Stevens.

Anthologies such as this can perform an essential function by providing a platform for unknown or neglected writers. But Livesay's assumption is dysfunctional — a variant of the regional fallacy. No real writer wants to be split up in this way, or reduced to the status of a psychic document.

Lobsticks, edited by Clare MacCulloch, is the most interesting of these anthologies — a small masterpiece of book design and thematic unity. MacCulloch has assembled recent poems by "a cross-section" of currently active poets — but her aim is neither modest nor haphazard. The publishers' blurb tells us that lobsticks were pruned spruce trees marking the advance of civilization across the Canadian wilderness. Reviewers are offered this gift of "a debatable point" to bite: Is *Lobsticks* a pointer to the future of poetry? Of civilization?

Lobsticks is in fact the reverse: it marks the poet's retreat from civilization across the continent. The dominant tone is tortured and bitter. The vision is modern primitive — ranging from myth and magic in Margaret Atwood and Fred

Mindszenty

MEMOIRS

is an extraordinary contribution to contemporary history — an eyewitness account of a country and its people under Communist domination in the Cold War era.

"In my memoirs I want to show the reality as it was. This is the first time I am speaking after decades of silence. The reader is entitled to ask whether I am telling everything. My answer is: I mean to tell everything and shall preserve silence only when it is required by decency. . . . I am publishing all this only so that the world may see what fate communism has in store for mankind."

—JÓZSEF CARDINAL MINDSZENTY

(With a "Chronology of Events from 1944 to 1956"; 32 pages of photographs; 85 documents; and Index) \$10.00



Cogswell to the elemental simplicity of bill bissett (Paul Klee in typescript). Style, like the lobster, is pruned and stripped; only Miriam Waddington, Peter Stevens and Cogswell are allowed the beauty of ornament. These lobstersticks are signposts to the country of violence and alienation.

Warlike relationships are featured as grotesque comedy in Atwood's bestiary (now included in *You Are Happy*) and as domestic ironies in Joyce Carol Oates. For Alden Nowlan, love is a kind of disease. bill bissett's songs of innocence and Miriam Waddington's songs of experience express the pain of love in a world of social violence and political tyranny. Peter Stevens shifts from political violence to the stillness of nature. Cogswell examines the poet's role and

his retreat into nature or legend. The city of dreadful night is present everywhere, but most graphically in Nowlan's "Broadcaster's Poem," Richard Hornsey's "Wilderness Poem" and Dave Cavanaugh's consciously clever satires and metaphysics.

It's hard to say whether MacCulloch was aware of the near consistency of vision, but the book could do with a preface formulating a principle of selection. Part of *Lobsticks* is dead wood, but there are good poems by each poet and superb selections from Waddington, Atwood, bissett, Cogswell and Nowlan. There is not much real humour, but none of the poets retreats from the central realities of his world — and on the whole, *Lobsticks* is a well-contrived mosaic of disenchantment. □

LE CHEMIN DE FERRON

The doctor, journalist, politician,
joker and 'Godfather' of Quebec letters

Dr. Cotnoir, by Jacques Ferron, translated by Pierre Cloutier, Harvest House, 86 pages, \$1.95 paper.

The Saint Elias, by Jacques Ferron, translated by Pierre Cloutier, Harvest House, 120 pages, \$2.50 paper.

By JOHN GRUBE

JUST WHO IS Jacques Ferron? This question has finally begun to obtrude on the consciousness of English-Canadians, what with the re-opening of the controversy surrounding the War Measures Act crisis of October, 1970, in which Ferron played a role, with the appearance of articles and even theses on his literary work, and finally with the publication of translations in English Canada of some of his minor masterpieces. The question is not an easy one to answer.

First of all he is more or less the "Godfather" of Quebec literature, keeping a paternal eye on the careers of troublesome young Quebec writers, understanding their problems and occasionally smoothing their way. This can only be done by someone who quite literally knows everyone who matters in Quebec well, who is by birth and professional standing a "notable," who understands better than anyone else his people's history, and who is, finally, prepared to give that history a powerful imaginative projection in his own literary work. Not that he would ever take himself that seriously. Quite the contrary. His conversation, his correspondence, his novels, his celebrated letters to *Le Devoir* are full of the most delightful and self-deprecating irony. And yet he really was there at the beginning of the Automatiste movement in the 1940s, and in *Le ciel de Québec* gives an excruciatingly sensitive account of Borduas' artistic agonies, and of Claude Gauvreau's in *Dufond de mon arrière-cuisine*. He really was the only person Trudeau and Paul Rose could agree on to arrange the peaceful surrender of the FLQ's Chénier cell in December, 1970, and that was only possible because he knew personally and understood both men. And he really is the only person ever to have received the praise of the

conservative Catholic head of the St. Jean Baptiste Society, and of the revolutionary Vallières of *Les nègres blancs d'Amérique*. The point is that you cannot separate the medical doctor, the writer, the mischievous practical joker, the tough-minded Quebec politician, the family man and the journalist without misunderstanding the real Jacques Ferron. They are the same integrated and perfectly delightful person. That is why good translations are so much more important than doctoral dissertations.

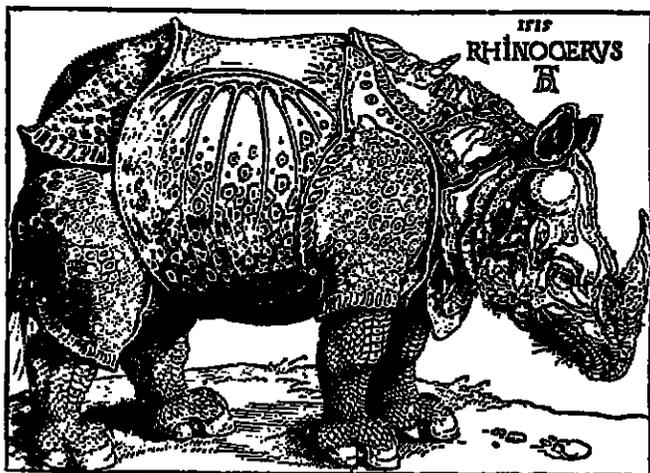
Pierre Cloutier's first translation of Ferron, *Dr. Cotnoir*, is technically adequate but jerky, much too full of short, clipped sentences to reflect at all the style of the original. And style is frightfully important to Ferron, who once remarked that his writing had developed naturally out of his personal correspondence. It follows of course that much of his published work is really a loosely woven collection of letter-essays, filled with humorous anecdotes, family jokes, references to real and imaginary persons, historical allusions and bold new hypotheses. The sort of thing you would say to a friend in a letter. But the style was formed by the classic French of such works as Alain's *Vingt leçons sur les beaux arts*, and has much more in common with de Gaulle's than it does with Hemingway's. Probably Cloutier had begun exchanging letters with Ferron by the time he sat down to translate *The Saint Elias*, because his translation here shows an appreciation of Ferron's classic style that makes it the best entry into the master's work for an anglophone of goodwill attempting to understand Quebec's literature and history. I shall pay the translator the supreme compliment of saying that after a few moments reading you forget it is a translation and become lost in the story.

The Saint Elias is the name of a ship, one of the very rare ships built and launched entirely by Québécois during the last century. Without being at all heavy-handed about it, Ferron turns the ship into a symbol of Quebec making contact again with the outside world after years of seclusion. This comes through most clearly in the bishop's blessing of the ship at Batiscan:

It's the name of my country which is out there wherever outsiders haven't got it licked. We're free here, we have the initiative. We're not under anybody's thumb, we're men. We've been locked in but a country isn't a jail . . . Thanks to that windjammer, the craftsmanship of the carpenters, the guts of the crew and the skill of the captain we've broken out of this land and we've gotten back in touch with the big wide world . . . My friends, I drink to *The Saint Elias*, I drink to my country's freedom, I drink to the whole wide world.

Within this symbolic framework the story takes us back through several generations of doctors, priests, farmers and merchants in the small Quebec community of Batiscan. Particularly interesting is the running battle between medical doctor and priest, traditionally the two most respected persons in any Quebec town. The medical doctor has always shown a dangerous tendency to support revolutions, change, rationalism — the October crisis of 1837 was full of radical doctors — whereas the priest tends to denounce the evils of nationalism, historically so damaging to the Roman Catholic Church. While there is no doubt where Ferron's sympathies lie, through various anecdotes he makes clear that a *modus vivendi* was in fact arrived at, and that the Church was essential to the survival of the Quebec people as such, providing the unifying shadow-structure of a national state that the Quebec people have still to achieve.

This all sounds rather heavy but in Ferron's hands it becomes a fascinating and slightly scandalous series of quarrels and love affairs, carried along by his natural gift as a story-teller. While the main characters, Dr. Fauteux for example, are purely imaginary and marvellous fictional creations, the book is peppered with mischievous references to real people. Bishop Gérard Bessette, who has retired to a diocese in Ontario, is the well-known Quebec novelist of the same name with whom Ferron has quarrelled. The drunken coachman is called Marchand a beggar who finally hangs himself when he realizes what he has done is called Trudeau. These deft but savage caricatures pop up everywhere in Ferron's work; no one who has read *Le ciel de Québec* will ever forget the absurd Frank-Anacharsis Scott, or the Thérèse Casgrain who slides down the bannister. It is by such means that he gradually assimilates everything in sight into his great fictional world, and few people would not be flattered by a mention, even a savage caricature, as the epic of our own history as well as Quebec's is gradually made clear to us in the long series of novels of which *The Saint Elias* is only a small part. □



Among Jacques Ferron's several accomplishments, he is the High Great Horn of the Rhinoceros Party, founded in 1972 and dedicated among other things to uniting Canada as one magnificent "polyethnic, rhinoceroïd, and papist" country "from sea e' en to sea."

URBAN SPOILS OF GASSY JACK

Vancouver Recalled: A Pictorial History to 1887, by Derek Pethnick, Hancock House, illustrated, 96 pages, \$3.95 paper.

Exploring Vancouver: Ten Tours of the City and its Buildings, by Harold Kalman, photographs by John Roaf, University of British Columbia Press, 264 pages, \$5.95 paper.

The Vancouver Soundscape: World Soundscape Project No. 5, by Murray Schafer et al., Sonic Research Studio, Communications Studies Department, Simon Fraser University, 72-page booklet and two-record stereo album, \$1.

Vancouver, by Walter G. Hardwick, Collier-Macmillan, 214 pages, \$5.95 paper.

By CLIVE COCKING

VANCOUVER, AS ITS most severe critics say, is really just another Moose Jaw with mountains. And traffic jams, I hasten to add. Now that may be unfair to Moose Jaw, but it certainly isn't to Vancouver. This city has never lived up to its lushly beautiful mountain-sea setting. In fact, if ever there was a city in Canada with the potential for becoming one of the world's great cities, it is Vancouver. But so far, potential is all it is.

I have to admit to a deepening sense of culture shock at what my city (mine because I was born here) has become. With every trip downtown, I feel more and more alienated; the traffic and the noise are horrendous; the sterile new office towers are cold and repelling — and they block out the old vistas of water and mountains. It's becoming a place for automatons, not people.

But, of course, this compulsive drive to self-destruction is happening to cities all over North America. It just seems tragic here because of Vancouver's great potential. That is why immersion in these books (and records) was, for me, a saddening experience. For collectively they are a reminder of what has been destroyed, what has been irrevocably lost and what might have been.

Derek Pethick's *Vancouver Recalled*, which chronicles the city's beginnings from the early Indian settlements, to the charting of the harbour in 1792 by Captain George Vancouver, to the all-important extension of the CPR in 1887, is essentially a picture-filled piece of coffee-table nostalgia. But it does touch on some of the formative influences on Vancouver's character — the lumber trade, the Cariboo gold rush, the railroad (without it there wouldn't be a city) and the sheer fact of rampant growth.

And that's a continuing part of the problem. Since the first sawmill was built on Burrard Inlet in 1862, the city has grown and spread like some uncontrolled bacterium. When "Gastown" — significantly named after the first saloon-keeper, John "Gassy Jack" Deighton — was incorporated as the City of Vancouver in April, 1886, it had a population of 600; when the first CPR train pulled in a year later it had more than 1,000. Vancouver had 100,000 people in 1910, some 260,000 in 1927, and today the metropolitan area has more than one million.

The rapacious growth of the city is reflected in its architecture, as University of British Columbia architecture

historian Dr. Harold Kalman shows in *Exploring Vancouver*. While an irritating size (10 inches by 4½ inches), the book — which consists of photographs of buildings with descriptive notes arranged for walking tours — provides an interesting history of Vancouver through its architecture. It depicts, for example, such pleasant echoes of earlier times as the old brick waterfront warehouses, the dignified Marine building, the Chateau-like Hotel Vancouver, the mansions of Shaughnessy and Chinatown. But what strikes you most is the utilitarian drabness of much of the modern architecture — and how little respect Vancouver continues to show for the old, the beautiful, and the charming in its buildings.

The great part of Vancouver's troubles lies with inadequate civic leadership. It was only two years ago that the long fusty rule of the local babbity was ended. . . .

Like most North American cities, Vancouver either devours its past, or packages and merchandises it as ersatz history — as it is currently doing with its “redeveloped” Gastown. Even as *Exploring Vancouver* was going to press, the fine, white, terra cotta-faced Birks building — described in this book — was knocked down to make way for a new office tower. The emerging new face of Vancouver is symbolized by the much-loathed “Black Tower,” the first of a series of dark-glass and steel towers planned for the Los Angeles-designed Pacific Centre.

The city affronts not only the eye, but the ear as well, as Simon Fraser University communications professor Dr. Murray Schafer documents in *The Vancouver Soundscape*. Consisting of an attractive booklet and a two-record album of sounds and talk, *The Vancouver Soundscape* is probably the most important piece of urban research done in Vancouver in recent years. The fifth study in The World Soundscape Project (funded by the Donner Foundation), this is an excellent discussion of the sonic environment of Vancouver — and how under the impact of growth and modern technology it is becoming steadily more irritating to the human ear.

The Vancouver Soundscape reminds us of the pleasant sounds we have lost owing to changing technology — the clickery-clack of streetcars — and the enjoyable natural sounds obliterated by the city's rising noise level — the wind in the trees, the varied sound of rain, the cry of seagulls. Fortunately, the city's unique “soundmarks” (like landmarks) can still be heard — the Nine O'Clock Gun, the noon O Canada Horn, the bells of Holy Rosary Cathedral. But Dr. Schafer details how serious Vancouver's noise pollution problem is becoming, notably downtown with traffic (now reaching dangerous levels at some intersections) and at the airport, which has become a “sound sewer.”

What Dr. Schafer stresses is the need for tougher laws against noise pollution, for the incorporation of good acoustic design into our urban environment, and for all of us to become more sensitive to our sonic environment:

Man continues to prefer natural sounds to those of technology and among the sounds of technology themselves there is a distinct



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preference for the older. We must return to the Vancouver soundscape the flavour of its original elements — cataracts, swift flowing waters and ocean waves, the inimitable sound of wind in evergreen trees and the natural resonances of wood, shells and stone.

As with any city, the great part of Vancouver's troubles lies with inadequate civic leadership. It was only two years ago that the long fusty rule of the local babbity was ended, with the mildly liberal new civic party, The Electors' Action Movement (TEAM) taking control of city council. The intellectual conscience of that movement has been UBC urban geographer Dr. Walter Hardwick — soon to step down after six years as a TEAM alderman — one of whose main points in *Vancouver* is that many of the city's serious problems are rooted in out-dated conceptions of the city.

Vancouver traces the development of the city and its urban policy from its earliest beginnings as a mill and warehouse city until its emergence today as a financial and management centre. Dr. Hardwick emphasizes how differing views of the function of the downtown core have shaped the development of the city as a whole. He points out, for example, that underlying the fiery downtown freeway debates of the late 1960s — a watershed for the city — was a conception of the city held by the civic leadership that no longer suited the reality of that day:

Much of the conflict about the role and direction for Vancouver in the 1960s was between the spokesmen for the old order and the new — those cultivating an industrial and merchant city and those cultivating "the executive city." As in so many cases, though, just at a time when one view — "the industrial city" — is giving way to another — "the executive city" — still another becomes identified — "the post-industrial city."

Dr. Hardwick maintains that Vancouver is now evolving into a post-industrial society, "a spaceless city based upon communications" where the majority of people will not be involved in the production and distribution of material goods, but in service industries, in the marketing of recreation or experiences, and in occupations developing new ideas and techniques that accelerate technological change. The development of civic planning, in his view, must reflect this new conception of the city.

Vancouver as post-industrial city. That does have a nice ring to it. But let's hope that some of that planning also goes toward making the city a more enjoyable place for people to live in. □

ODE TO FREDERICTON

*White are your housetops, white too your vaulted elms
That make your stately streets long aisles of prayer,
And white your thirteen spires that point your God
Who reigns afar in pure and whiter air,
And white the dome of your democracy —*

*The snow has pitied you and made you fair,
O snow-washed city of cold, white Christians,
So white you will not cut a black man's hair.*

(From *Light Bird of Life: Selected Poems*, by Fred Cogswell, Fiddlehead, \$2.50 paper.)

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Memoirs of a campus C.-in-C.

Halfway up Parnassus: A Personal Account of the University of Toronto 1932-1971, by Claude Bissell, U of T Press, 197 pages, \$12.50.

By DOUGLAS MARSHALL

WHEN CLAUDE BISSELL returned to the University of Toronto as its new president in the fall of 1958, the elaborate installation ceremonies were nothing less than the coronation of a philosopher-king. A proud and strong institution, conscious of its medieval roots and convinced of its traditional values, was on the brink of an unprecedented expansion. It wanted a leader who could keep its essential structure intact during the changes that lay ahead. Bissell, then 42 and the youngest president in the U of T's history, was an ideal choice: a respected scholar, a seasoned administrator, an attractive personality, and a deft hand at political negotiation. A photograph taken at the installation ceremony shows Bissell in academic cap and gown radiating confidence as he promised to preserve the best of the past in dealing with "a future clamorous with problems."

For Bissell that photograph, which is reproduced as the frontispiece of *Halfway up Parnassus*, must be poignant indeed. Had he known then what we all know now about just how clamorous the future was to be, he would probably have fled the stage of Convocation Hall and sought sanctuary as the junior English master in some remote prep school. Too often what the U of T needed during the tumultuous 1960s — what every university in the West needed — was not a philosopher-king in cap and gown but a commander-in-chief in steel helmet and flak jacket.

The circumstances of the 1960s help explain the peculiar and contradictory tone of *Halfway up Parnassus*. In part it is a modest celebration of some notable achievements by the distinguished former president of a great university. Yet in his Preface Bissell, who resigned in 1971, feels compelled to warn that "the book is unapologetically prejudiced and deeply biased." Such statements flow more naturally from the pens of retired generals trying to justify their handling of a controversial

campaign (see Lord Tedder's *With Prejudice*).

In the event, the U of T's reluctant C.-in-C. proved to have a better grasp of tactics than many at the time seemed to realize. (Perhaps his wartime service helped; he was made an intelligence officer "on the grounds, I presumed, that since I possessed a Ph.D. I had had some dealing with intelligence.") His isolated command post halfway up Parnassus drew fire from all directions. Entrenched above him was a sullen Board of Governors, reluctant to yield an inch of ground in the matter of its own abolition. Ranged around him was an ill-organized and disputatious faculty, jealous of its academic powers and a fair-weather ally at best. And spread below him was an increasingly hostile student body, angrily demanding a greater say in university affairs.

Bissell was able to contain and defuse most of the emergencies that threatened his campus by a combination of cunning and sweet reason. The board eventually capitulated and the U of T underwent a radical reorganization. The faculty finally agreed to give students a voice in determining academic programs. And the student activists tossed down their placards, picked up their degrees, and departed for the real world. Understandably, Bissell is bitter about the role he was forced to play: it won him few friends; it exposed him to numerous personal indignities; and it diverted his energies away from what he considered his proper goals as president. His prejudice — and his bitterness — shows through mostly clearly when he discusses the campus radicals:

Most student activists I have known would have been disasters if given power. They were consumed with a sense of their own over-weening self-importance; of the centrality of what they were doing and saying; always teetering on the edge of absurdity, but convinced that they were marching up the central path of truth. The revolution made by humourless ideologues always ends up in violence and a worse repression than existed before.

In the end a revolution did take place at the U of T. It was not the revolution Bissell had hoped to preside over — and he is far from sanguine about its repercussions. The process of tearing down the old rigid hierarchical structure and opening up the university has destroyed what Bissell, quoting Henry James, calls "the great good place of my youth." No more philosopher-kings will be crowned in Convocation Hall. Perhaps Bissell has reason to be bitter. But at the same time, he has no reason to be ashamed. □

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Contraceptive fecklessness

Family Planning in Canada,
edited by Ben Schlesinger, U of T
Press, 291 pages, \$3.95 paper.

By ANNE ROCHE

THE FAMILY-PLANNING evangelist had reached the peroration of her lecture to a group of United Church ladies. "Our goal must be," she declaimed, "to ensure that every girl from the age of puberty carries the birth-control pill in her purse." Came the sardonic remark from an old woman in the audience: "They're not going to do her much good in her purse."

And there, for the family-planning effort, is the rub. "Why are so many unplanned pregnancies occurring in a society where a great range of contraceptive devices are available?" asks one of the contributors to *Family Planning in Canada*, a collection of essays intended as a resource book for the training of social workers. That's a good question. And, as this collection admits, the answer isn't that people don't know about contraceptives. A study of 175 girls who visited the Scarborough, Ontario, Family Planning Clinic showed that though nearly all had some knowledge of birth control, 42% had never used any method of contraception. Not surprisingly, 41 of the 175 were pregnant.

This book's solution to the problem is more, and earlier, education in sexuality and fertility control. The theory is that you catch your kids early, show them how they work physically, teach them how to enjoy sex without consequences, relate such studies to demographic and ideological concerns, give them your blessing and non-judgmentally point them at each other. A good time is had by all, and no little bastards get born.

This, if true, would be nice. Unfortunately, it doesn't work out that way, as the failure of massive educational campaigns against drugs, tobacco and alcohol has already shown. Remember the joke about the man who, after the first *Reader's Digest* scare story was asked if he'd given up smoking? "No," he answered, "I've given up reading." Social workers, as a class, fail to allow for the incorrigibility of human nature. So when education fails

to correct sexual fecklessness, the answer is more education.

They can't be blamed for this. Social science is, after all, only the creature of society, always patiently trying to figure out what society wants and how to help it get it. The social worker is the missionary who expounds the dogmas of white affluent liberal Western society to the heathen at home and abroad. Since the current dogma is that the world must cut down its fertility rate to ensure a high standard of living ("Fewer people mean a bigger slice of the pie for all" as the *Toronto Star* candidly put it), then this is the goal uncritically accepted and striven for by social work. Which is why, at the recent Bucharest Population Conference, Canada's family-planning apostles, oblivious of Third World disapproval, joined the U.S. in resolving to hit *everyone* in the world with contraceptive propaganda by 1985.

However, like the society they serve, social workers are beginning to doubt the perfect efficacy of education. That accounts for their quick acceptance of abortion as an inevitable part of family planning. For this book puts paid to the insistence of family planners that they do not consider abortion an acceptable part of their approach. Even those who, like Susan Watt, think that "abortion is a financial, medical, and social disaster area as a method of birth control," who find it repulsive, immoral and murderous, despairingly accept it as a "last ditch resort" and urge broad access to abortion services. The tragic irony of this is that the greatest enemy of a good family-planning program is liberalized abortion. Countries with abortion on demand have quickly found that abortion becomes the principal form of birth control, a fact explicable only by a strong belief in the aforesaid incorrigibility of human nature.

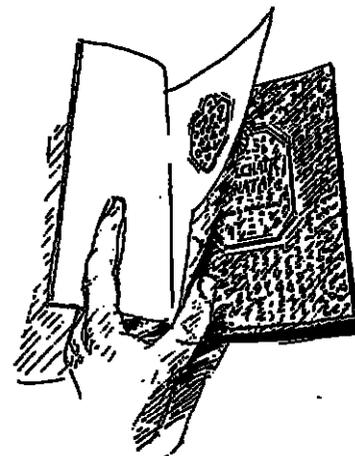
Therefore, professionals planning to recommend this book to students ought to bear in mind its pro-abortion bias. The polite inclusion of two anti-abortion articles — Louise Summerhill on the *Birthright* alternative, and the Alliance for Life brief to Parliament on the protection of the unborn child — does little to balance the argument.

For the rest, the style and language are what you might expect, sober, humourless and moralistic. There are the reflex swipes at religion (especially at the Roman Catholic Church), and at the "other" morality, the one that says you shouldn't fornicate, or pass on VD, or kill for convenience. This catechism of secular attitudes towards the

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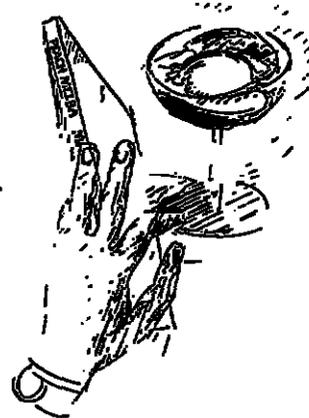
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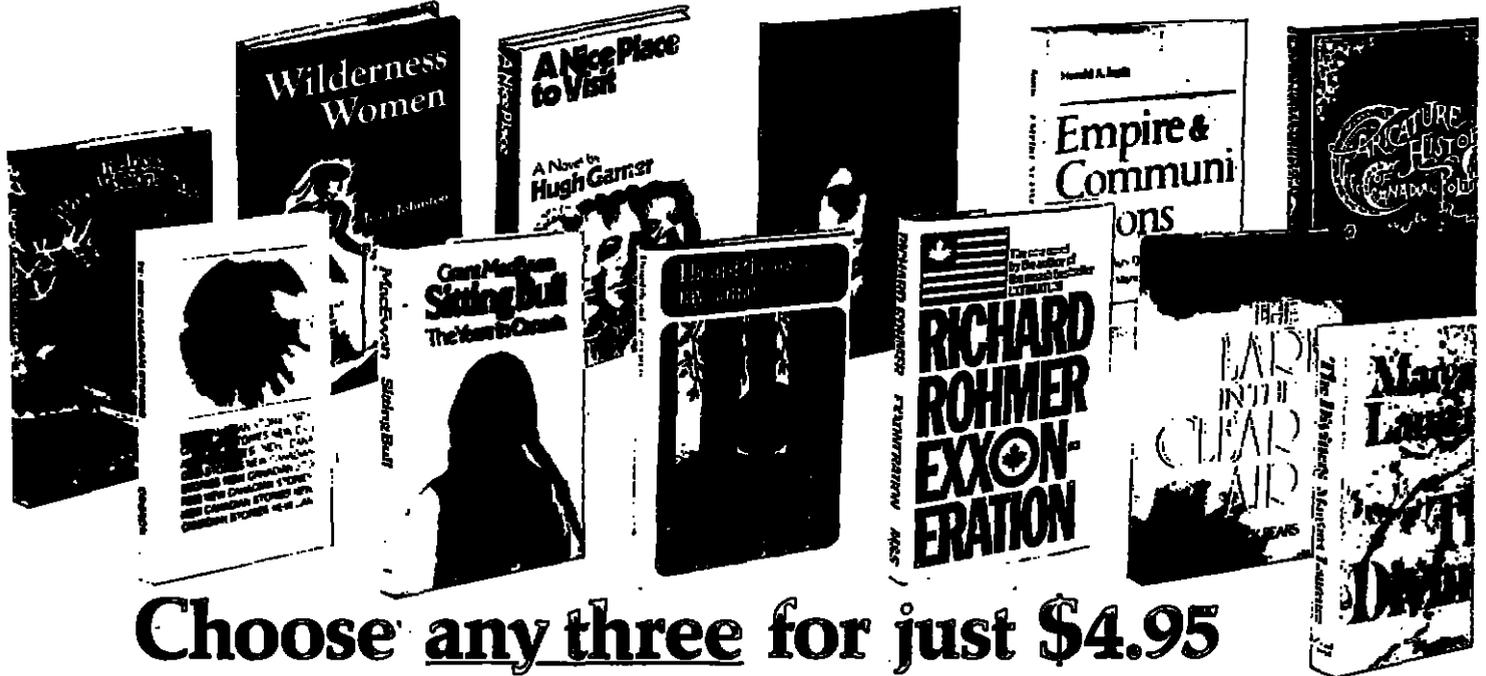
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transmission of human life will turn up immediately on the reading list of every community college social-services department. Reverently consulted, it will hang about until, probably fairly soon, its views on abortion and population will seem as ludicrous and archaic as those Victorian attitudes towards sex so ridiculed in it by Dr. Lise Fortier, one of the "Canadian Pioneers in Family Planning" to whom it is dedicated. □

Zowie! To be 10 years old again

The Mad Men of Hockey, by Trent Frayne, McClelland & Stewart, 191 pages, \$8.50.

By **JOHN McMURTRY**

THIS BOOK IS about Canadian machismo. Not your run-of-the-mill violence, greed and vanity, but *hockey* machismo. We may in the end be international jackals in everything else, but the way Trent Frayne tells it, in hockey we come into our manly own. Boy are our guys bad! Rough, tough, dirty, swaggering, bullying, money-smart bastards who'll do anything for the sheer joy of it — as long as it pays off. Players, coaches and owners, past and present — they're one long parade of legend-making madmen igniting our national game into the great spectacle it is.

It's a fast rap. Frayne has been in the sportswriting business for decades and there may be no one in the country better than he is at the craft. As carnie-barking advertisement, it could hardly be better. Frayne is also well-informed. Stories my old man used to tell me about Eddie Shore and Connie Smythe and the rest, stories he'd learned at first hand, they come out here in minted form. Frayne has the raconteur's love of his subject matter, and the copywriter pen to make it live on a printed page.

Between the ages of eight and 12, *The Mad Men of Hockey* was a book I would have devoured. I would have been a little confused about all the butt-end dirt that's glorified — where I played we used to see that sort of stuff as slumming (the secret to pro hockey?) — but still the buccaneering toughness and speed of the book's pageant of heroes would have captured my imagination.

Yowie to be one of them! Like just about every Canadian kid, I dreamed in and out of *that* day and night. Sports page in the morning. Looking forward every moment after that to NHLing it myself on the school cushion. And going to sleep to the hockey games on the radio at night. The Canadian Dream our ideologues search for? It was right there. And still is.

Our nation has never really grown out of this pre-adolescent fantasy. Hence the near identity-trauma these last few years over the Russians' playing maybe better hockey than us. If they beat us, our machismo myth is shattered. It is this threatened rupturing of our childhood balloon Frayne's book would save us from. It could hardly be a more enthusiastic celebration of our hockey greatness — we've got the Sprague Cleghorns and the Gordie Howes for sheer meanness, the Smythes and the Patricks for millionaire wheeler-dealers, the Shacks and the Eaglesons for premier hustlers, the Howie Morenzes and the Bobby Orrs as peerless wonder boys, and on and on and on. One legend spins out after another for a 190-page kaleidoscope of hockey lore that cannot but entrance the reader yet again with the clear vision of our historical mission as the world's swashbuckling supermen of hockey. Even the *names* — there's a kind of magic of sound and memory in them that makes you want to bellylaugh and root and be 10 years old again with the wild tales of it all. You can feel it in your veins. To be Canadian is to glory in hockey. Its very language swells with myth, and the old pro writer Trent Frayne taps our golden bough for everything its got.

In short, a superb piece of hype that strikes to the very core of the pubescent Canadian archetype. We can knock hell out of anyone on blades, and walk away bowlegged with bucks from doing it.

Yahoo.

This is Frayne's ninth book, of which *Goaltender*, with Jerry Cheevers, *When the Rangers Were Young*, with Frank Boucher, and *Famous Hockey Players* are the most recent. Hockey, it seems, has its Boswell. □



Power to and for the people

The Politics of Development, by H. V. Nelles, Macmillan, 514 pages, \$21 cloth.

By CARL HAMILTON

PROFESSOR NELLES' book provides a wealth of detail on the history of resource development in Ontario. He traces this development and, more particularly, the role of government in promoting it in three fields — mining, forestry and hydro-electric power.

The free-enterprise myth that the growth and development of Ontario resulted from fearless and unfettered private enterprise is challenged in the early pages and demolished by the end of the book. The author points out that our colonial heritage resulted, from our very beginnings, in a positive state role in the economy. Mineral rights, for example, were largely reserved to the Crown and the government owned and supervised vast tracts of Crown lands.

In the early days of industrial development, the Ontario government exercised the sort of supervision over resource development and processing that one might wish it would exercise today. In the latter 19th century and early years of this century, numerous interventions were made to encourage resource exploitation by Canadians and to require the location of processing establishments in Ontario. The outstanding example, of course, was the establishment and growth of Ontario Hydro, the history of which the author reviews in detail.

Ontario Hydro has been much studied before. However, no one has explained as clearly as Prof. Nelles just why it developed as such a unique example of public ownership. He points out that "the monopolistic nature of the industry and a tendency towards public ownership at the local level, though significant contributing factors to Ontario's unique state intervention, were continental, even international, phenomena and not in themselves decisive."

One has to look to Ontario's unique social and political environment for the answer. A number of factors converge. Businessmen were concerned to have cheap electricity and public ownership was the way to assure it "primarily because the private electric companies

at Niagara refused to guarantee them an immediate, inexpensive supply." Municipal governments actively endorsed the principle of public ownership partly because they were largely influenced by businessmen, but also because they were determined to keep this vital resource under their own control and not to permit it to fall into American hands. Credit must also go to the outstanding leadership of Adam Beck and the decisive influence he had with the Conservative caucus and government.

Even an element of political perversity entered the scene, at least from the political radical's point of view. Prof. Nelles says that it would have been much more difficult to have had public ownership of power in Ontario if there had been a vigorous socialist group advocating general nationalization. He says, as was the situation in certain parts of the United States, that "where labour and leftists were vocal and militant, public ownership of utilities made the least headway, because advocacy of the principle from these quarters tended to frighten a defensive middle class into an alliance with the financial community in defence of all private enterprise."

Hydro was undoubtedly the dramatic and outstanding example of government intervention. Mining and forestry received their share as well. Governments built access roads, extended financial assistance, provided information and technical education and generally promoted resource development. Though the author does not bring his study sufficiently up to date to permit this conclusion, one feels that he is trying to tell us that the Ontario government must again become an active participant in resource and industrial development if our heritage is to be truly preserved for the people of the province. □

Coming next month:

o A review of 1974 prose, by George Woodcock

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A la recherche du tempos perdu

The Bands Canadians Danced To,
by Helen McNamara and Jack
Lomas, Griffin House, illustrated,
118 pages, \$10.95 cloth.

By **BOB BLACKBURN**

YOU DON'T HAVE to be middle-aged to read *The Bands Canada Danced To*, but it would help a great deal.

Helen McNamara, longtime jazz columnist of the late Toronto *Telegram*, and Jack Lomas, prodigious collector of band photographs, have combined their specialties in a slim, intriguingly square (10 inches by 10) volume that is a compelling invitation to Canadians over 45 or so to wallow in nostalgia for an hour or two. That's about it.

This was the era of the big dance band, of the ballroom, of the Depression — and of radio. The book covers the rise of the bands in the 1920s, but its main focus is on the 1930s, when it all came together. The demand was for escape, and cheap escape at that, and radio, says McNamara, couldn't have come along at a better time.

Canadians were going to U.S. movies and reading U.S. books and magazines. And, to be sure, they were listening to a lot of the U.S. name bands.

But the remote ballroom broadcasts, which were among the main sources of programming at the time, were just as attractive to Canadian broadcasters as to their U.S. counterparts. And so it happened that dozens of Canadian musicians became household names in their own country.

Radio for a time wiped out the U.S.-Canadian border, and the flow was both ways. So radio gave a tremendous impetus to Canadian bands.

Everyone old enough remembers a few (and many are still around), but McNamara and Lomas remember just about all of them, and there were more than you might want to remember. The list is apt to make you lose the beat after a while unless you're a particular buff. There are dozens of pictures, but after a while it seems to be like looking through an old yearbook from someone else's high school.

The prose, of which there is no great amount, is relentlessly journalistic and

almost wholly innocent of those evocative literary flights that can sometimes prevent nostalgia from being the short-trip euphoric it so often is.

The book is not all about the likes of Luigi Romanelli, Dal Richards, Benny Louis, Horace Lapp, Mart Kenney, and the rest. Glenn Miller, Ben Bernie, Benny Goodman, Wayne King, and other big U.S. names of the era get a look-in, and there are pictures and reminiscences of some of the great ballrooms, from Casa Loma in Toronto to Dunn's Pavilion in Bala and the Hotel Vancouver Roof Garden.

It may at best stir ripples on the surface of the reader's memory, like skimming through an old Eaton's catalogue will, but it fails to evoke the era, and leaves the job of telling the full story to someone else. □

Ampersands and aquafans

Flycatcher and Other Stories, by George Bowering, Oberon, 114 pages, \$6.95 cloth and \$3.50 paper.

Bodyworks, by George McWhirter, Oberon, 151 pages, \$6.95 cloth and \$3.50 paper.

By **MICHAEL SMITH**

IT'S HARD to fit these writers into their niche, perhaps because they both write like poets. Hard to tell, because so many other poets (James Reaney, Irving Layton, Margaret Atwood, Alden Nowlan) can write such good straight prose. George Bowering and George McWhirter do not — at least, not always — and this is sometimes hard to endure.

Fairly recently Bowering said he had decided to give up more conventional forms to write instead about anything that came to mind — lists of things about his friends or whatever — and in some of the stories in *Flycatcher* he seems to have fulfilled his threat. Adopting the thinly veiled narrative guise of George Delsing, poet and academic, Bowering presents gross, frantic, sometimes joyous accounts of literary coming-of-age in Vancouver. Often he strikes a conversational pose, frequently directly addressing the reader.

Bowering is at his best, I think, when he writes about alienation, as when he explains of a local character in the title

story, "... on the street he had to do what no man wants to do: stand out in a crowd all the time. ..." In the opening story, "The Elevator," George Delsing leaves his barren apartment, fights off a mugger whose face he never sees, then later has sex in a stalled elevator with a girl who refuses to let him see her. By contrast, the alienation is bittersweet when he writes of sexual initiation in the final story, "Apples."

I can do without Bowering's cute affectations — his fractured spellings ("askt" for "asked," "thru" for "through"), acres of ampersands, and the genuinely juvenile photo and blurb on the back cover. For the rest, it's sometimes troubling to guess how much he's just writing about himself, spewing it out without much concern for telling a good story. In the end it's never really clear whether it serves his purpose to break the rules or whether he just doesn't care.

McWhirter forsakes the frenetic world of Bowering's literary freaks for a dreamy, fantastic realm that nonetheless frequently becomes vituperative and demolishing. McWhirter, who is Irish by birth, is reminiscent at times of the Irish-American J.P. Donleavy. He's more the satirist than Bowering, and, as with Donleavy, it's sometimes difficult to decipher where the real world and his fantasies meet, especially since so much of his work seems written with a smirk.

Bodyworks progresses through three sections in which McWhirter seeks something he calls "the other place." In the first, we meet the aquafanatic Hermoin who seeks to build a better world in water; in the second, such questionable cretins as H. Andronaegui whose perverse predilections extend to all greenery. In time, this becomes a distasteful parade of grotesques, as, for instance, in "The Sphincter" a child constantly defecates a mountain of stone.

I liked the third section the best, perhaps because it's the gentlest (and admittedly the most conventional), and yet, even from the farthest reaches of his imagination McWhirter can still get off a good image: "navels ... like ... the mouthpiece of a balloon." □

Mythopoeic hits and Ms.

Woman's Eye: 12 B.C. Poets, edited by Dorothy Livesay, Air, 104 pages, paper unpriced.

The Fat Executioner, by Myra McFarlane, Valley Editions, unpaginated, paper unpriced.

With Our Hands, by Margaret Randall, New Star Books, unpaginated, paper unpriced.

Routes/Roots, by Elizabeth McLuhan, Griffin House, 64 pages, \$3.95 paper.

Landscapes, by George Allan, Fiddlehead, 40 pages, paper unpriced.

Parentheses, by Bernell MacDonald, Fiddlehead, 71 pages, paper unpriced.

By LEN GASPARINI

IN HER FOREWORD to *Woman's Eye*, an important anthology of 12 women poets of British Columbia, Dorothy Livesay postulates the mythopoeia of the eternal female: "What we seem to have in common is a way of looking that is distinctly from woman's eye; and a way of feeling that is centered in woman's *I*." With that kind of perception in focus, the poets proceed to tell us what makes them and their sex tick.

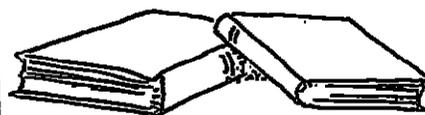
There are so many good poems in *Woman's Eye* that space does not permit me to mention all of them. Their styles and themes vary in the most individualistic sense, from the overtly sexual-political poems of Marya Fiamengo to the haunting lyricism of Susan Musgrave; from housekeeping to having babies, or as Pat Lowther wryly observes in "Doing It Over":

*Once we've had babies
we can't stop
dreaming them
nor can we ever
be done with newness
but make beginnings
over and over again
in the roots of ourselves,
in the dark
between our days.*

The rhythmic life-cycle, the eternal ovum underlies everything in this anthology. In Dorothy Livesay's "The Survivor," an earthy sensuality is symbolized by those idols of the cave in which we see womanhood as a Jungian anima figure evolving through the ages,

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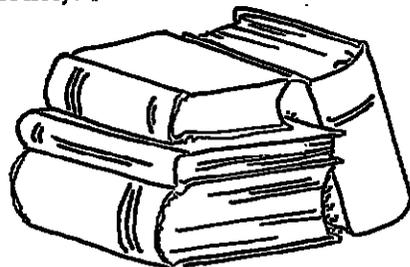
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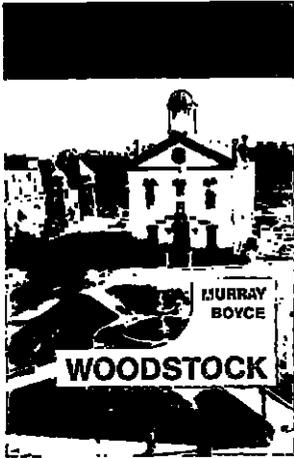
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yet mysteriously intact as an anthropomorphic carving:

*the body of the woman I ate
moves over me
her mouth
devours my mouth.*

Other poems by Skyros Bruce, Leona Gom, and Myra McFarlane celebrate the intricately defined province of their sex. In one way or another, what these poets seem to be driving at is the notion that men should likewise suffer the wound of menstruation. Whatever the motif and the reasons for it, *Women's Eye* is an engrossing collection.

The Fat Executioner is a pamphlet of 20 poems by Myra McFarlane. Her verbal ability is quite evident, and the mordant humor she injects her subject matter with is often an effective ploy for expressing the truth and dispelling myth. In "Magician Of Words" she excoriates the male ego intent on sex:

*Somewhere behind yur myth
is a child with a ball
throwing it in the air
and never catching it . . .*

McFarlane's poems are traditionally stanzaed, but she thrusts her persona much deeper than many of her contemporaries. Her imagery is intensely physical, and the attempt to utter raw feeling before time, conventional reassurance, or contemplation have alleviated it, is the beginning and ending of her work. I am reminded of her similarity to the late Anne Sexton.

How many of you remember Margaret Randall's *El Corno Emplumado*, an exciting little magazine that she edited from Mexico City in the early 1960s? If you do, you are undoubtedly familiar with the revolutionary zeal of her poetry. *With Our Hands* is her latest collection, and it contains the same explosive rhetoric that marked her previous books. Randall's political poems are a source of enlightenment to a society sickened and confused by the likes of Watergate, the Chilean *coup d'état*, and other poisons. This time she writes about Attica, Wounded Knee, and the brothers who fought there against "imperialism's unchanging (genocidal) strategy of dealing with liberation's struggle . . ."

With Our Hands is vital reading, and with it Randall remains, along with Diane Di Prima, a revolutionary voice of her generation.

The attractive format of *Routes/Roots* by Elizabeth McLuhan is worth singling out if only to introduce readers

to a new name among Canadian poets.

McLuhan's first book is an impressive one, and the poems (most of them untitled) combine irony with an ingenious phrasing:

*no matter what you see be silent
it's not life but only news that's really violent
or so the hangman said
be silent.*

A peculiar intellectualism glosses many of her poems; sometimes they try to be too stylized, or they take on a moral tone, ending with a philosophical punch line. But these are immaturities common to any young poet, and McLuhan will best serve her capacity to transform experience into creative expression when she finds new forms to extend her lines and relies less on the deliberate see-saw rhythm of short syllables.

George Allan's *Landscapes* is a well-ordered, impressionistic verse travelogue. His poems range the North American terrain like a sightseeing locomotive, and the usual points of interest are eloquently mapped out with regard to the poet's triumvirate relativity of space, time and imagination. "Dayghost At The Silo" is perhaps the best poem in this slim collection. It evokes the tranquil strangeness of an abandoned silo in a summer field, and infuses the familiar with an aura of mystery. Other poems are only stop-overs in the Adirondacks, Niagara Falls, and the Monterey Peninsula. For anyone travelling cross-country, *Landscapes* would be more of a diversion than a guide.

"All roads being finite/ lead exactly nowhere." Thus, Bernell MacDonald concludes after "5 Years Of Writing Poems." If this is the case, then I'm afraid MacDonald's third volume of verse, *Parentheses*, makes a somewhat prosaic detour around external reality. A character in Albee's *Zoo Story* expressed the same existential dilemma with more perspicacity: "Sometimes it's necessary to go a long distance out of the way in order to come back a short distance correctly."

What seems to be lacking in *Parentheses* is a central unifying theme. The poems are flimsily structured, and many of them need revising. MacDonald has yet to discipline his craft; when that comes one hopes that his poetry will be *poetry*.

And so, another batch of poetry appears — to be read and reviewed, then put aside for yet another batch. If the poet is a diver who longs to levitate, the poem must be a bridge spanning the abyss. □

Missing the point

The Treasury of Great Canadian Humour, edited by Alan Walker, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 413 pages, \$12.50 cloth.

By RICHARD LUBBOCK

IT'S TERRIBLY difficult for a writer like me, of the "New Canadian" persuasion, to pronounce on the achievements of his adoptive colleagues. One has to be so terribly tactful, you understand. Oh well, the hell with tact, and I'll tell you what I really feel about *The Treasury of Great Canadian Humour*, edited by Alan Walker.

Some nations have characteristic funnybones, but an antic humour has never been a notable quality of the Canadian mind, if there is one. The British have a comic style expressed in merrily vulgar and well-informed publications such as *Private Eye*, and even the Aussies down under are developing a nice vein of brutalist wit, as witness the famous exploits of Barry (Sparrow's Fart) Mackenzie.

Canadians in general seem incapable of attaining the top class of sadism that perfectly skewers and penetrates both intellect and emotions with the gleeful, savage truth.

Compare Rich Little with Max Ferguson. You can tell that Rich Little is blessed with a deep and life-enhancing hatred for his victims, especially Richard M. Nixon. As a result of his ungenerous craft, Little has won fame and fortune, in the United States. But Ferguson, who is just as much a virtuoso of mimicry, is pathologically kind, and is therefore a benevolently morbid bore, untainted by any suspicion of hilarity, except in the minds of "old" Canadians. This disturbs me.

Most of the selections chosen by Alan Walker for his anthology are exemplary specimens of traditional but-terball pleasantries in the Max Ferguson tradition. Walker himself gives away his bias against bloodletting when he asks in his Introduction: "How can I do a book of Canadian humour and leave out Wayne and Shuster?" Forgive me, Mr. Walker, but how can anyone do a book of Canadian humour and *not* leave out Wayne and Shuster?

All humour is really redirected aggression, and it is because most Canadian writers shrink from digging sharp

knives into their victims' entrails that most of the pieces here fail. There is no such thing as victimless comedy.

Mr. Walker has included one or two Canadian writers who do understand the cruel facts of wit. The immortal Stephen Leacock appears twice with a couple of scalpel-sharp putdowns. The equally immortal Mordecai Richler is on hand, too, to cut the treacle with a stab of sharpness. But the incomparably forgettable Pierre Berton is also, alas, present, three times no less, and for no perceptible or risible reason.

But perhaps the laughs fail because anthologizing deprives authors of a chance to develop their humorous premises. Humour has to build, then take you by surprise. It is unfair to rip out a few paragraphs or even a chapter and hope that the reader will intuit the point.

Anthologies have to be unfair, both to those who are left in and those who are left out. But why did the editor exclude my colleague Hart Pomerantz, one of the best comic minds in print on this continent? Or Larry Zolf, who has also been known to dip his pen in top-grade vitriol from time to time? Are they too mordant for Mr. Walker's reverential, 1935ish sensibilities?

I suppose anthologies do provide a necessary showcase or catalogue, especially for the children. But children as they grow must be reminded that humour has to be vicious, or infantile, or in the most despicably bad taste — and preferably all three. Until we encourage these essential graces in our writers, anthologies of omnidirectional insipidity such as this can only set a bad example for the young. □

IN BRIEF

TO HAVE GROWN up in the purse-lipped, whispering atmosphere of a small Ontario town, as I did, is to have roots any normal person would just as soon let wither. (Unless, of course, they can be ground up for literary spice, à la Alice Munro.) The road sign claimed there were 850 persons in my town. It failed to mention there were also 14 churches, one of which is splendidly enshrined in *Ontario Towns* (Oberon, \$25) by Douglas Richardson and Kenneth Macpherson and with 99 excellent photographic plates by Ralph Greenhill. This sequel to *Rural Ontario* (U of T Press, 1969) almost succeeds in making me feel homesick. The text

FOCUS ON CANADA

Indians in the Fur Trade

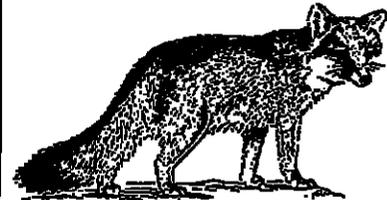
ARTHUR J. RAY

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University of Toronto Press

explains things about the historical and architectural development of these towns that I've always wanted to know. And Greenhill's photographs, reproduced in matt grey and glossy black, present buildings I've long been familiar with in an entirely new and clarifying light. I'm still not convinced I would want to live in my home town. But after reading this book, I would certainly like to go back and visit it — while it's still there.

DM

FOOD LOVERS and aspiring wine amateurs will be delighted with *The Pennypincher's Wine Guide* (Peter Martin Associates, \$2.95) by Gail Donner and Lucy Waverman, a brace of amply accredited Toronto gourmets. In terms often no less piquantly acerb than some of the wines in their lists, they offer candid assessments of most of the table wines under \$5.00 stocked by the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (but cross-indexed for every province), suggest dishes to accompany them, and recommend a selection of "best buys." Unfortunately, the fortified dessert wines (ports, sherries, etc.) are nowhere mentioned, and the glossary of wine terms should be expanded; but there's a large section devoted to menus and recipes ranging from the simple to the fairly sumptuous, and some useful suggestions for wine-tasting parties. If you want to enjoy good food and wine without bankrupting yourself, get this pleasantly full-bodied little book.

ROBERT CARLGREN

IF YOU'RE AN antique buff, then you should put high on your shopping list *The Book of Canadian Antiques*, edited by Donald Blake Webster (McGraw-Hill Ryerson, \$27.50). Mr. Webster, Curator of Canadiana at the Royal Ontario Museum, has assembled a distinguished group of experts, who discuss Canadian furniture, glassware, silver, tools, photographs and a number of other topics. The book is handsomely bound and illustrated, with an extensive bibliography and useful supplementary sections on, for example, dating, restoration, and how to recognize fakes. The text isn't for the beginner; most chapters assume some basic knowledge of periods and styles. For the rank amateur, a useful first book is *The Canadiana Guidebook: Antique Collecting in Ontario*, by William Philip Wilson (Greedy de Pencier, \$3.95 paper). Sketches by David Simmons complement a clear and simple text covering the essentials in most areas of collecting. A straightforward little book

in a specialized area is Elizabeth Ingolfsrud's *All About Ontario Chairs* (House of Grant, \$3.50 paper), with a number of useful black-and-white photographs. It's the second in a series by Ms. Ingolfsrud which began with *All About Ontario Chests*.

CARLA WOLFE

NEW FROM Hakkert is *Canada Since 1867: A Bibliographical Guide* (edited by J.L. Granatstein and Paul Stevens, \$3.50). It attempts to provide students and teachers of Canadian history with an annotated account of the best works in such subject areas as foreign and defence policy, business and economic, history, and social and intellectual history. It also contains articles on the West, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. Each article is written by a different specialist and no attempt has been made to co-ordinate the critical remarks of the different authors. The result is a rather curious mixture and invites one to play the popular party game: "Why X really panned Y's book." Still, there is a great deal of information in this collection and the thousands of students who, as always, suddenly find that the deadline for their term papers has drawn nigh rather faster than might reasonably have been expected will undoubtedly be grateful. The index is woefully inadequate.

RICHARD LONDON

FRED McCLEMENT's *The Strange Case of Ambrose Small* (McClelland & Stewart, \$7.95) recounts the mysterious circumstances surrounding the 1919 disappearance of the Toronto businessman and *roué*. All the ingredients of "stranger than fiction" — secret love nests, bungling detectives, religious fanatics — are here, and while the author has no new or startling revelations, he tells the curious tale fairly well. McClement's penchant for false climaxes and failure to sketch a convincing social background seriously diminish the book's impact, but Small's story is sufficiently bizarre to carry things along under its own steam. All in all, a good yarn and not a bad read.

PAUL STUEWE

AS WE WERE SAYING . . .

continued from page 1

rant lapses of memory. We all know that it was Laurier who prophesied wrongly that the 20th century belongs to Canada. We all know that it was Marshall McLuhan who coined the phrase "the medium is the message."

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VOICE is a newly established writing group in Toronto, composed entirely of former psychiatric inmates who've been institutionalized in Canada's 'mental hospitals'. We are now working to get a book together, tentatively titled *Just Echoes*. The book will be an anthology of readings based upon people's *personal experiences as 'mental patients' in any psychiatric institution or facility in Canada*. The Editor: Don Weitz — a former psychiatric inmate and community health worker; the Associate Editor: Len Gasparini — a Canadian poet and playwright. We will soon have a publisher and expect the book to come out next year.

Despite an encouraging response, VOICE still needs much more material, more manuscripts, published and unpublished — articles, essays, political pieces, short stories, diary excerpts, letters, poems, etc. from men, women and children who've been 'mental patients'.

Anyone who is seriously interested in contributing some of his/her own writing to the book should immediately call or write to:

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Although one can confirm these facts in *Colombo's* and can discover the dates of first utterance, the need seldom arises. When perchance it does, the reader will find the quality of Colombo's scholarship high. Certainly there are errors but they are inevitable in a work of this size: 6,000 entries, 3½ pounds and a useful 80-page all-purpose index. Doubtless these will be corrected in later editions. More importantly, one has the feeling Colombo has not skimmed on the tedious checking and re-checking on the assumption some user might want to check and re-check for himself.

That is one side of *Colombo's Canadian Quotations*. The second is that it is a poetical work, a laurel tuque on its maker's head, the watershed of his singular career. Even with *Abracadabra*, his first important book, published in 1967, Colombo was slightly more committed to found poetry than to the manufactured kind, and this interest has taken him through perhaps a dozen books and booklets since then. During this time, the experiments have proliferated and the general direction of his work has changed. First he was interested in collections of sundry found poems. Later he turned to portraits of historical figures using the same medium. Then came the portrayal of historical situations and events, as in *The Great Wall of China* and *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire*. Still later, he seemed to take a bibliographical turn. He became involved with advertising slogans, graffiti and general Canadian trivia — the stuff of found art rather than found poetry; statements complete in themselves that required no tinkering to be heightened and displayed. Of this career as a literary pack-rat, *Colombo's Canadian Quotations* is the ultimate expression.

Simultaneously with this publication, Colombo has brought out two new volumes of poetry. *Translations From the English* is perhaps the culmination of the found-poetry aspect of his work. It is something of a textbook on the form. The other new book, *The Sad Truths*, is comprised entirely of original poems. So Colombo has now come full circle as a poet. In doing this, he has developed into something more than a poet in the artistic genre in which he has chosen to work.

The third of the facts that give *Colombo's Canadian Quotations* its tri-usefulness or sesqui-schizophrenia is that it is a patriotic work, in the broad sense. In tracking down, for example,

the pithy remarks of scores of writers and personalities who've visited here through the centuries, Colombo has assembled a sort of found libretto for a never-to-be-performed comic opera in praise of the place. It's his way of making a strong nationalistic statement. Philosophers, political scientists, or economists would do it differently. This is the way Colombo has done it, in his capacity as the nation's foremost disseminator of oddments.

Most of the quotations in the category mentioned above — the ones from visiting notables — are very funny, as is much of the rest of the book. Few of the scribbling tourists, in the words of Mickey Spillane, liked what they saw. Most throw a certain humour on the project. John Wilkes Booth, for instance, obviously a man of discernment, was one of the few to comment favourably. He loved the place and foresaw the need (which a posse kept him from realizing) of immigrating as soon as possible.

Indeed, *Colombo's Canadian Quotations* is an hilarious book viewed from any or all of the three standpoints. Reading it, I, for one, was at several points tempted to hold my sides in glee. This was a reaction not just to the quotations themselves but also to Colombo's subtle little annotations. Presupposing a long life for the book, he finds it necessary to explain for posterity exactly who our current leading lights are. Even his indexing is amusing, at least from where I sit. To take an example, there is one entry that reads: "Worthington, Peter. See Ben Wicks." In Toronto, it would be difficult to find immediately anything funnier, more poetic, more quotable than that. □

TRADE & UNION

The book bourse
buys 'Kanadian'

By SANDRA ESCHE

OVER THE YEARS the Gutenberg galaxy known as the Frankfurt Book Fair has developed into the main international bourse of the printed word. The 1974 fair, held in October, attracted about

4,000 publishers from 62 countries. Throughout the week they shuttled on mini-buses among huge book-packed halls, buying and selling foreign rights. Frankfurt isn't a fun fair; it's 15 hours a day of hectic trading. The 250,000 books on display are merely sample products. It's the contracts that count.

"This is like a Moroccan bazaar," said a representative of Canada's Independent Publishers' Association, resting for a moment in the "Kanada" booth. "You've got to get out there and hustle."

The Canadians were hustling this year — and with success. Allen Davies of Bantam Books later described the Canadian booth as one of the busiest at the fair. Publishers, government officials, and organizers of next May's Montreal International Book Fair were constantly dashing in and out of the two meeting rooms at the back of the booth. There were wide, irrepressible grins and suggestions of bigger and better deals.

McClelland & Stewart's task force, which included Pierre Berton, concentrated on selling M&S coffee-table books. "We came here with the intention of doing \$500,000 worth of business," said Jack McClelland. "We've already done \$400,000 — and there are two days of trading left to go. Not bad." To say the least. General Publishing was another Canadian house reporting big-volume business.

The verbal currency was rewarding as well. Some sample comments from Europeans: "Margaret Laurence is better than anything in Europe today;" "Lace Ghetto is the best women's lib book I've ever seen." An English publisher was going around telling Americans that James Demers' *The God Tree* was must-reading. For the first time since Canada began to participate in the fair 14 years ago, Canadian design and production standards were being accepted as equal to (or even superior to) European standards.

Generally, the increased activity was the result of good advance promotion by the government and individual publishers. "It's impressive," commented a man from Virginia. "In the old days we'd get book matches with 'Canada' printed on them and that was the extent of it." And by contrast, there were hints of slower trading among the Europeans. "Ah, Canada," said a Swiss publisher. "That's the country with a future. Europe has had it. We're all washed up."

Despite such excitement, "Kanada" was still only one booth in a very big

fair. Frankfurt demonstrated that books by Canadians can find buyers in the international market. The Montreal fair — and next fall's effort at Frankfurt — will be the test of how ready the industry is to exploit that potential. □

SCRIPT & FILM

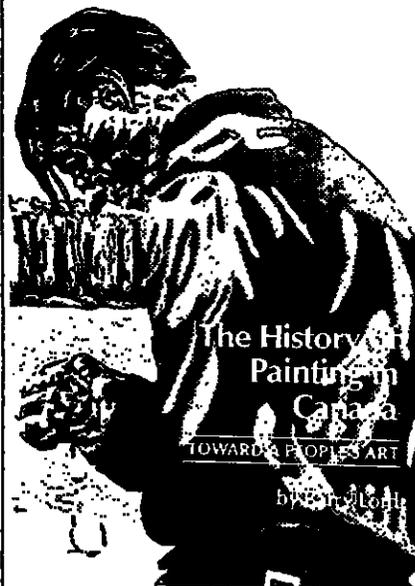
Why not rock the boat?

By CATHERINE ORR

THE MAIN PREMISE of the Montreal *Daily Witness* is that "what people are most interested in reading about is what they already know." The top news of the day for the *Witness* is a padded list of the prominent names at a high-class funeral. This is a cowardly principle of journalism to cub reporter Harry Barnes, 19-year-old hero of William Weintraub's novel, *Why Rock The Boat?* Harry can play along for the sake of easy security, but he is not about to settle for the unquestioning hack professionalism of the other *Witnessmen*. Harry can't help but make waves.

Written in 1961 and based on some of Weintraub's experiences as a junior reporter in Montreal, the novel presents an amusing study of the problem of innocence, circa 1947. A light satire, the book succeeds on the strength of Harry's personality. He is a tricky fellow, a wide-eyed innocent who wears his cloak of credulity with calculated effect. As in the practice stories he writes to improve his journalistic style, young Harry has a formula for success, both on and off the job. Nothing will deflect him from his goal, whether it be losing his virginity, or maintaining his position on the newspaper, or making Miss Julia Martin, who fancies a rebel for a lover, fall in love with him. His only problem is where to draw the line between rebellion and conformity. How Harry, the innocent, manages to survive the titanic sinking of the *Witness*, for which he is largely responsible, gives a marvelous, ironic twist to the old query: "Why rock the boat?"

AT LAST . . .



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a novel by Audrey Thomas

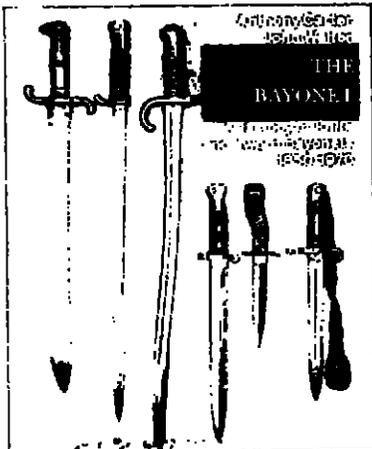
It was Anais Nin who wrote: "Out of chaos comes richness. Out of upheavals, new seeds It is in our work, by our work, that we reassemble the fragments, recreate wholeness." *Blown Figures* is not a trick, not an unsolvable puzzle. It is a novel about chaos. It is chaos. All the pieces, all the fragments are there: a journey that may or may not have taken place, a narrator who may or may not have been the heroine. It is not a book about madness or sanity, reality or illusion, but a book about edges. An exploration of the tension between things. Set in Africa — Africa as metaphor? Africa as dream? — with Isobel and Miss Miller — friend, confidante, nurse? — it is a novel about a woman who has gone in search of the child she lost there several years before. It is a book about anyone who has had to do battle with fear and with the past.

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In adapting his novel for the screen, Weintraub has had an eye to the commercial market, paring down his material to the ingredients he knows will sell — sex and comic farce. Under the direction of John Howe, the film achieves brilliant results on *one* level, offering us a rogues' gallery of superb supporting characters: Butcher, the man-eating editor of the *Witness*; Miss Shields, his sergeant-major secretary; Scannell, the City Editor who dreams of a Montreal version of the *New York Times*; Isobel, his wife, who relieves Harry of his awkward virginity; and above all, Ronny Waldron, the wily photographer, whose gleeful lechery nearly steals the show. But, in a film remarkable for its authentic sense of period — the postwar era when men wore their hair short and their trousers baggy, and women tried for that demurely sexy sweater-girl look with its ubiquitous string of pearls — a *total* reliance on caricature is both boring and unnecessary. When young Harry receives the same treatment, the humour begins to pall.

Stuart Gillard is a natural as the young innocent, but he is a watered-down hero, lacking that oddball mixture of naive earnestness and ironic

self-mockery that animates the original Harry. It is hard to imagine the film Harry having the crafty intelligence to inspire, let alone maintain, the interest of the cool Miss Julia Martin. Harry may masquerade as a rebel union sympathiser but his performance remains on the level of amusing idiocy. Without that subtle "knowing" quality, his relationship with Julia is unconvincing, drawing more of its energy from the comic results of his frustrated wooing than from any sense that their love is real. We are treated to scene after scene of the stylised and reticent love-making between Harry and Julia, all very entertaining but ultimately unsatisfying. The uneasiness stems in part from the character of Miss Julia Martin (Tiu Leek): she is both the idealised, unattainable woman, and the manipulative political activist. Neither of these roles comes off for the same reasons that cripple the credibility of Harry. Weintraub is so concerned with setting up a comic situation he doesn't give his two main characters room to breathe as real people.

The essentially flat personalities of Julia and Harry are indicative of the disturbing ambiguity of the film. Weintraub seems uncertain of the issues he

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wants to explore. Rather than hitting the blind sides of many social institutions as he does in his novel, he has decided to focus on one issue, the growth of unionism in the newspaper industry of the late 1940s. The film raises serious questions about the period, about the working conditions that gave rise to the unions, but it consistently refuses to deal with the implications of those questions. Any hint of this very real world of dangerous, urgent agitation is kept firmly under control, glossed over with the more central preoccupation with sex. Weintraub, by failing to take a clear, tough-minded stand in his film-script, has fallen victim, like the complacent Montreal *Daily Witness*, to the very irony which activates his book: Why indeed rock the boat? □

UMBRAGE & UNCTION

COCKY CHAUVINIST

Sir:
In the June-July issue, Barry Broadfoot (in "The Devil and Barry Broadfoot" by Kaspars Dzeguze) is quoted as saying: "People are the important thing." But obviously he only means half of the people, the male half of the population, for in the preceding sentence he says: "I'm only interested in people People are interested in people — we all have so many parts; a heart, brain, penis" (my emphasis).

Good Grief!

Gunilla Mungan
Calgary

RALLYING TO WIEBE

Sir:
You owe an apology to Rudy Wiebe for the yellow journalism of your headline, "Canada's Second Best Bad Writer," over Michael Smith's patronizing review of Wiebe's two books (November issue).

To win the Governor General's Award for the novel the writer must be judged by a committee whose judgment is surely to be trusted more than one short-story writer from St. Marys, Ontario. Moreover, it is very bad for a minor Eastern writer to smear a Western novelist.

How is Canada going to develop a national literature if a journal subsidized from the Canada Council clobbers a Prairie writer with a sledge hammer and then covers Wiebe's bleeding body with a tabloid headline?

I repeat: write Rudy Wiebe an apology. Try to get some reviewers with a national perspective. Develop some elemental respect for the integrity of an established writer like Wiebe.

Finally, I have always been suspicious of rating systems: Hugh Garner is Canada's best bad writer; then Wiebe; then Wiseman; then —? I like critical reviews but forget the yellow journalism

especially in a semi-official subsidized paper like yours.

Donovan E. Smucker
Conrad Grebel College
Waterloo, Ont.

Editor's note: Subsidized we may be, but in calling us semi-official Mr. Smucker may have given the Canada Council, bless it, grounds for a libel action.

HONI SOIT QUI . . . ?

Sir:

Re: Morris Wolfe's comments on Edgar Z. Friedenberg and R.D. Laing (Aug.-Sept. issue). Friedenberg is fascinating; Laing is fascinating. But I'd tip the scales in favour of Laing, because in Friedenberg's big article last year in *The New York Review of Books*, he complained that what Canadians lacked was a sense of evil.

With Americans around, who needs a sense of evil?

And does that make Laing a Canadian or Friedenberg a Manichean?

Marian Engel
Toronto

PUBLISHERS CHALLENGED

Sir:

I read, with interest, Susan Leslie's article "Juvenile Delinquency" (November issue). The figures concerning the publishing continue to amaze me. Our publishers are always bleating that they cannot sell more than 3,000 copies but it seems to me that they need to put their houses in order and examine the market and how to reach it.

For example, there appear, from Statistics Canada, to be over 700 library systems in this country. Let us assume that each of these systems will buy three copies of any good children's book, there is an immediate sale of 2,100 copies.

If you look at the statistics for schools, nurseries, kindergartens and private schools below the college level the statistics indicate there are 18,842 in Canada. Let us assume that only half of these will buy one copy of a children's book, this gives us a total of 9,421 copies. Add this to the library copies and we come up with a total approaching 12,000.

Of course we are not talking here about the trade to the general public, but only about institutional buying. Authors are agitating for some recompense from libraries for the books that are borrowed from them instead of being bought but it seems to me that they should be screaming at their publishers instead.

I know for a fact that teachers in this area are anxious to obtain Canadian materials at all levels but the publishers are not reaching them in a meaningful way. Instead of expensive catalogues would it not be better to produce flyers of material available? Would it not be profitable to designate an area in a province for a display library where new material could be viewed by prospective buyers? How about working with the provincial library and teachers associations for reviewing and outreach through newsletters and journals? Why not prepare display kits that can be shipped to some meeting and maybe sold off at the end?

Another thing that has always intrigued me is that I see all kinds of Newberry and Caldecott posters around, I've distributed some myself, but I never see any for the Canadian Awards. Is CBPC so hard up that it could not arrange for posters to be printed like the above-mentioned ones for books that won the CACL award? I work with a regional library and over fifty schools and would be happy to distribute such a poster to every one of them. If you combine the budgets

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CHILDREN'S FICTION

ALBERT THE TALKING ROOSTER A.P. Campbell, 1974

A fascinating story of what happens in a family when a beautiful red rooster has the gift of talking on critical occasions. Illustrated by the author's eight year old daughter. 33 pp., illustr. \$1.95
ISBN 0 919 594 247 Catalogue No. 4247

KAKI-WAHOO:

The Little Indian who Walked on his Head
A.P. Campbell, 1973

A story for children of all ages of an Indian boy who actually walks on his head, beautifully illustrated. A Canadian children's story. 29 pp., illustr. \$1.95
ISBN 0 919594 018 Catalogue No. 4018

SILLY SALLY

and the Picnic with the Porpoises
Frank M. Tierney, 1973

The charming happenings of Silly Sally, a little girl with a sense of wonder and a flare for mischief. Imaginative. One of a series of Canadian children's stories. A significant work. 26 pp., illustr. \$1.95
ISBN 0 919594 123 Catalogue No. 4123

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of these operations there is almost \$100,000 available for the purchase of English material, so you can't tell me that a good proportion of this money would not be spent on these books if the teachers knew about them. Come on, you publishers! Stop crying hard times and think big! This is a big country, figure out how to reach it.

Terence K. Amis
School and Extension Librarian
Albert-Westmorland-Kent Regional Library
Moncton, N.B.

TIME'S CORRECTION

Sir:

I feel I must take exception to a statement made by Paul Stuewe in his article in your November issue entitled "U.S. Book Clubs and Us," wherein he maintains that of some \$500,000 a year spent by Book-of-the-Month and Literary Guild respectively on advertising and direct mail promotions in Canada, "a hefty share of this is directed to the Canadian edition of *Time*, and thus does not help Canadian-owned periodicals."

I'm sure it will interest both Mr. Stuewe and yourself to know that in 1973 the Literary Guild spent \$9,510 in *Time Canada*, and the Book-of-the-Month Club \$73,265. This year the expenditures have been \$5,145 and \$70,045 respectively. We're indeed pleased and proud to have this business, but I'd hardly refer to it as a "hefty share". Would you? This is the type of irresponsible statement which tends to confuse issues.

H. M. Findlay
Time Canada Ltd.
Toronto

THE EDITORS RECOMMEND

In the opinion of the editors, the following books, all of which have been reviewed in these pages during the past several months, represent the best in current Canadian reading.

FICTION

Yesterdays, by Harold Sonny Ladoo, Anansi, \$6.50 cloth and \$3.25 paper. A posthumous satirical novel by the brilliant young West Indian writer.

Tribal Justice, by Clark Blaise, Doubleday, \$6.95 cloth. Culture shock, North American variety, is again the central theme of this latest collection of Blaise's short stories.

St. Lawrence Blues, by Marie-Claire Blais, translated by Ralph Manheim, Doubleday, \$8.95 cloth. A superb rendering of Blais' boisterous *joual*.

Crackpot, by Adele Wiseman, McClelland & Stewart, \$10 cloth. The somewhat flawed but nonetheless moving story of a Jewish prostitute's struggle to remain a moral being.

NON-FICTION

A Nation Unaware, by Herschel Hardin, J.J. Douglas, \$10.95 cloth. The best popular study of Canadian economics to appear in years.

The National Atlas of Canada, prepared by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Macmillan, \$56 cloth. *The atlas of Canada.*

The Gaiety of Gables, text by Anthony Adamson and photographs by John Willard, McClelland & Stewart, \$17.95 cloth. A beautiful book illustrating Ontario's architectural folk art.

Salt of the Earth, by Heather Robertson, James Lorimer & Company, \$17.50 cloth. A collection of first-hand descriptions and stunning photographs of homesteading on the prairies.

The History of Painting in Canada, by Barry Lord, NC Press, \$6.95 paper. A Marxist view of Canadian art that makes for infuriating and yet fascinating reading.

Without a Parachute, by David Fenario, McClelland & Stewart, \$3.95 paper. The journal of a young Montreal writer.

The Backbencher, by Gordon Aiken, McClelland & Stewart, \$8.95 cloth. One backbencher's highly anecdotal, well-documented perception of how Canada's Parliament wastes talent even more rashly than it wastes money.

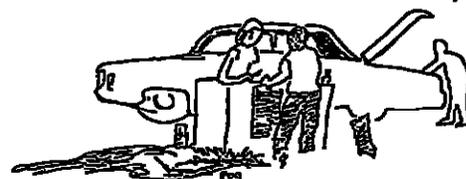
CHILDREN'S

The Sleights of My Childhood, by Carlo Italiano, Tundra Books, \$9.95 cloth. One of those books which really is "for all ages." Beautifully done.

POETRY

The Four Jameses: Canada's Worst — and Funniest — Poets, by William Arthur Deacon, Macmillan, \$4.95 paper. 'Nuff said.

Atlantic Crossings, by David Helwig, Oberon Press, \$4.95 cloth and \$2.50 paper. Helwig's most ambitious and best book to date.



- A. Author of *Life in the Clearings* 33 54 9 157 89 135
- B. Shrewd; sagacious 92 57 38 71 121 114
- C. Bowering's metrical extremity? (three words) 36 67 150 124 115 11 102 58 51
73 84 142 107 86 43 160 137
- D. Murdoch in flower 32 61 21 100
- E. Legal term for an excuse 125 65 108 5 37 148
- F. _____ de bois. 80 97 35 68 156 103 55 120
- G. "... 't is better to be _____ born."
(Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII*) 90 81 42 7 69
- H. Make exact 87 8 118 128 143 112
- I. Stating an inference (from Latin) 62 77 20 151 129 39 24 140
- J. Prairie sauce 6 27 49 145 96 153
- K. See at a distance 83 41 60 126
- L. The highs have it 139 59 138 106
- M. Manawaka's diviner 76 29 119 104 134 13 26 56
- N. Canadian heavenly body 18 133 75 141

- O. _____ Delight
(R. E. Sherwood) 25 31 15 95 45 154
- P. What the moon did on Mrs. Porter 63 130 105 44 117
- Q. Self-consuming title character (three words) 94 46 3 40 149 72 78 122 12
74 127 88 99 30
- R. Plains Indian, wrote *Seven Arrows* (full name) 17 52 131 82 64 101 47 113 144
1 85 155 111 70 93 53
- S. Author of *Pilgrimage the Death* 79 34 109 28
- T. Where the fat weed rots on Lethe (*Hamlet*) 14 2 50 116 66
- U. Eccentricity 159 136 146 91 16 132
- V. A machine you go into as a pig and come out as a sausage (Ambrose Bierce) 19 147 4 23 98 123 158
- W. Jeer at; flout 10 48 110 152 22

HOW TO DO IT

Acrostics are a lot simpler than they look at first glance. Begin by finding the solutions to some of the clues provided, filling in the letters in the blanks beside each clue. Then transpose the letters to the appropriate lettered and numbered boxes in the diagram below. When complete, the initial letter of each solution, read vertically, makes up the author and title of a recent Canadian book. (In this instance, the author has a three-word name and the title has two words.) When the diagram is correctly filled in, it forms a passage from the book. The solution will appear in this space next month.

1	R	2	T	3	Q	4	V	5	E	6	J	7	G	8	H	9	A	10	W	11	C	12	Q	13	H	14	T	15	O	16	U								
17	R		18	H	19	V	20	I		21	D	22	W	23	V	24	I	25	O	26	M	27	J	28	S		29	M	30	Q	31	O							
32	D	33	A	34	S	35	F	36	C	37	E	38	B	39	I	40	Q	41	K		42	G	43	C	44	P	45	O		46	Q	47	R	48	W	49	J		
		50	T	51	C	52	R			53	R	54	A	55	F	56	M		57	B	58	C	59	L	60	K	61	D	62	I	63	P	64	R	65	E			
66	T	67	C	68	F			69	G	70	R	71	B			72	Q	73	C		74	Q	75	N	76	M	77	I		78	Q	79	S	80	F	81	G		
82	R	83	K			84	C	85	R			86	C	87	H	88	Q	89	A	90	G	91	U	92	B	93	R		94	Q	95	O		96	J	97	F		
98	V			99	Q	100	D			101	R	102	C	103	F	104	M			105	P	106	L	107	C			108	E	109	S	110	W	111	R		112	H	
113	R	114	B	115	C	116	T	117	P			118	H	119	M	120	F	121	B			122	Q	123	V	124	C	125	E			126	K	127	Q	128	H		
129	I	130	P	131	R	132	U			133	N	134	M	135	A	136	U			137	C	138	L			139	L	140	I			141	N	142	C	143	H	144	R
145	J	146	U			147	V	148	E	149	Q			150	C	151	I	152	W	153	J	154	O	155	R	156	F	157	A			158	V	159	U	160	C		

HERE COMES THAT SALE AGAIN!

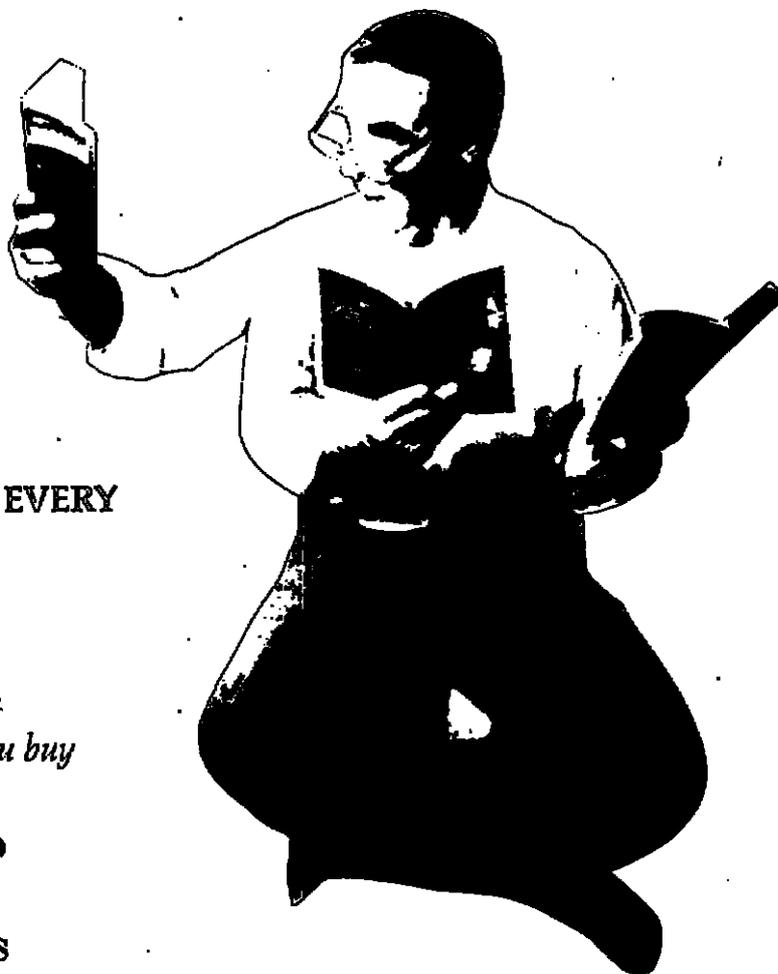
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