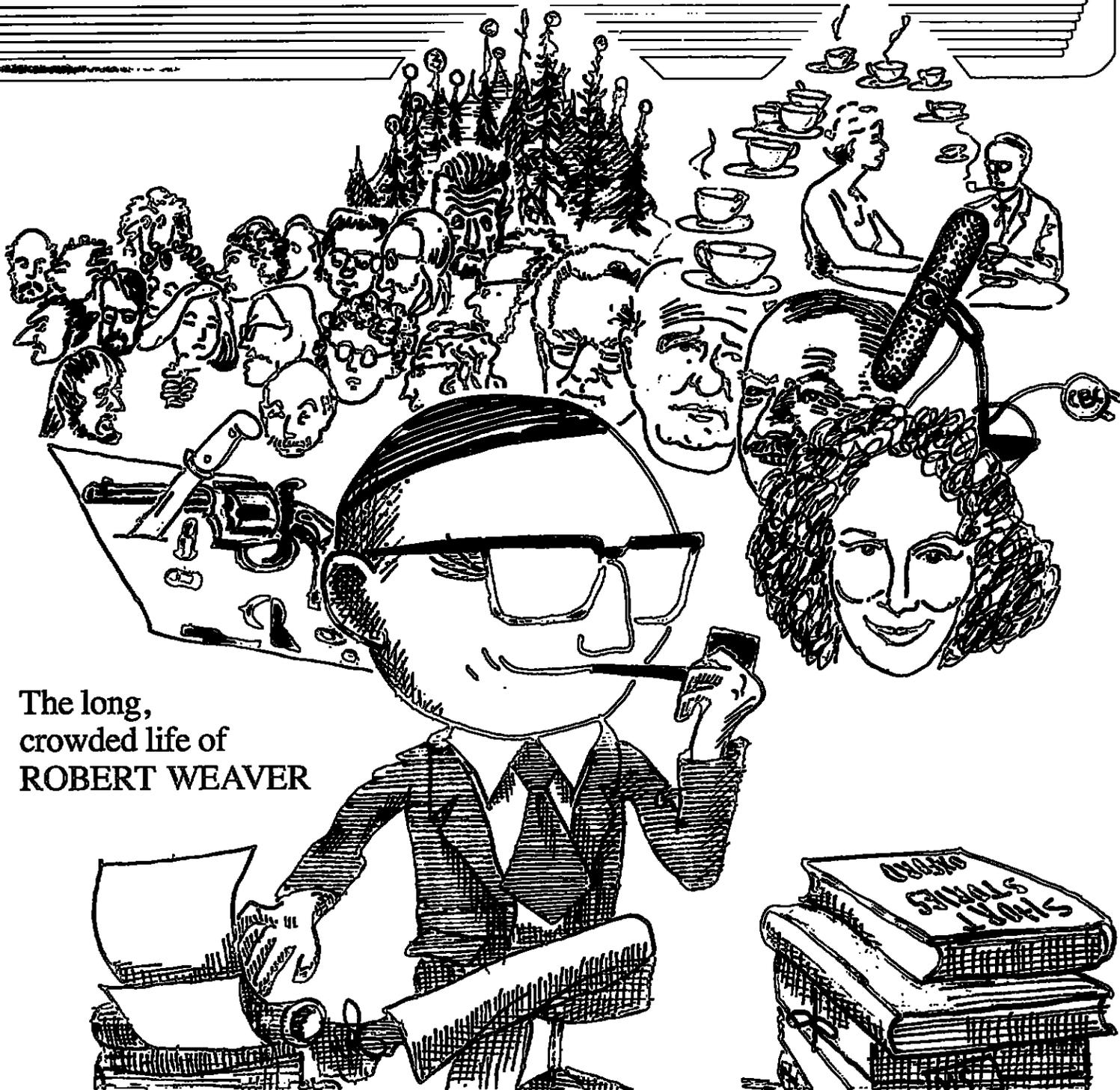


William French on the rewards and risks of being CanLit's Clive Barnes
Seven new literary faces from John Reeves' anecdotal photo archives
Woodcock on Thériault ◦ The Riel industry ◦ Lewis on Lougheed

BOOKS IN CANADA



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FEATURES

Bob's Our Uncle. The CanLit community owes a huge debt of gratitude to Robert Weaver. Mark Abley's definitive profile explains why	4
A Reeves Gallery: 2. Photo raconteur John Reeves presents seven new faces from his literary portfolio	10
It's the Kiel Thing. An essay by Donald Swainson examines how Louis Rid has become a media industry	14

REVIEWS

Agook, by Yves Thériault	15
The Habit of Being, by Flannery O'Connor	16
Children of My Heart, by Gabrielle Roy	17
Good as Gold, by Joseph Heller	18
The McGregors: A Novel of an Ontario Pioneer Family, by Robert Laidlaw	19
Zoom, by Andrew Brycht	19
The Back Room, by Ann Copeland;	
The Boathouse Question, by Jan Gould	20
Dragon Spoor and Final Act, by Jack H. Crisp	21
The Doctor's Sweetheart and other stories, by L. M. Montgomery	2
Somebody Told Me I Look Like Everyman, by Raymond Filip;	
Peeling Oranges in the Shade, by Jack Hannon; Tributaries, An Anthology: Writer to Writer, edited by Barry Dempster	23
Prairie Symphony, by Wilfrid Eggleston	24
Peter Lougheed: A Biography, by Allan Hustak	25
Violence in Canada, edited by Alice Beyer Gammon; The Prevention of Youthful Crime: The Great Stumble Forward, by James C. Hackler	26
The Do9 Crisis, by Iris Nowell	27
Silence is My Homeland, by Gilean	

Douglas; Love in the Dog House, by Molly Douglas; A New Kind of Country, by Dorothy Gilman; Recreational Farming, by Eric Winter	28
In Defence of Federalism: The View from Quebec, by Gilles Lalande; Canada's Third Option, edited by S.D. Berkowitz and Robert K. Logan	29
You Cannot Die, by Ian Currie	30
Multinationals and the Peaceable Kingdom, by Harry Antonides	31



ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover and drawings throughout the issue by Howard Engel	
Photograph of William French by Wayne Grady	38

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2

DEPARTMENTS

Endpapers, by Morris Wolf	32
The Browser, by Michael Smith	33
On/Off/Set, by Pier Giorgio Di Cicco	33
CanLetters, by Michael Thorpe	35
First Impressions', by Douglas Hill	36
Interview with William French, by Phil Surguy	38
Letter6 to the Editor	40
CanWit No. 43	41
The editors recommend	42
Books received	42

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In more grateful and discerning countries, Robert Weaver would be designated a national monument. But in Canada, the best we can say is that

BOB'S OUR UNCLE

by Mark Abley

WHEN JAMES THURBER looked back on the first editor of *The New Yorker*, Harold Ross, he thought of "the eloquent large-fingered hands that were never in repose, but kept darting this way and that to emphasize his points or running through the thatch of hair. . . . Ross was, at first view, oddly disappointing. No one, I think, would have picked him out of a line-up as the editor of *The New Yorker*. Even in a dinner jacket he looked loosely informal, like a carelessly carried umbrella. . . . He was usually dressed in a dark wit, with a plain dark tie, as if for protective coloration." Robert Weaver — once described by Al Purdy as the most important literary figure in Canada — prefers tweeds to dark suits, and his

"James Reaney said to me one day, 'You don't have any creative talent but you're a very good organizer.' I was irritated at the time, but it seemed rational enough. He spotted me."

hands rove busily over wisps of hair that no one could mistake for a thatch; but in other respects the description is exact. Weaver doesn't look like a broadcaster or editor. He doesn't dine in the chic cafés; he doesn't fly south in March. He looks like an employee of a bank in the days before banks began to strive for glamour. In fact, at the start of the Second World War he was an employee of a bank.

Like most grey eminences, Weaver is uneasy with titles. Rarely if ever does he refer to the honorary D.Litt. conferred on him at York University in 1976. He talks with undisguised nostalgia of the halcyon days at CBC-Radio when he was simply a member of the producers' pool. Dozens if not hundreds of writers must have phoned the CBC switchboard and asked to speak to Bob Weaver; it's doubtful if any of his friends, acquaintances or protégés have ever asked for the "Executive Producer, Literary Projects, Radio Drama and Literature." He is perhaps best known for his anthologies of Canadian short stories, four of which have appeared. Yet he's also been an editor of five other books; the creator of the CBC's *Anthology* and its producer for more than 20 years; an editor of *Tamarack Review* since its inception in 1956; and a friend in need to writers all across the country, some of whom he was responsible for bringing to light in the first place. "I am," he once confided to Marian Engel, "the still point around which everything moves." Hugh Garner, in his autobiography *One*

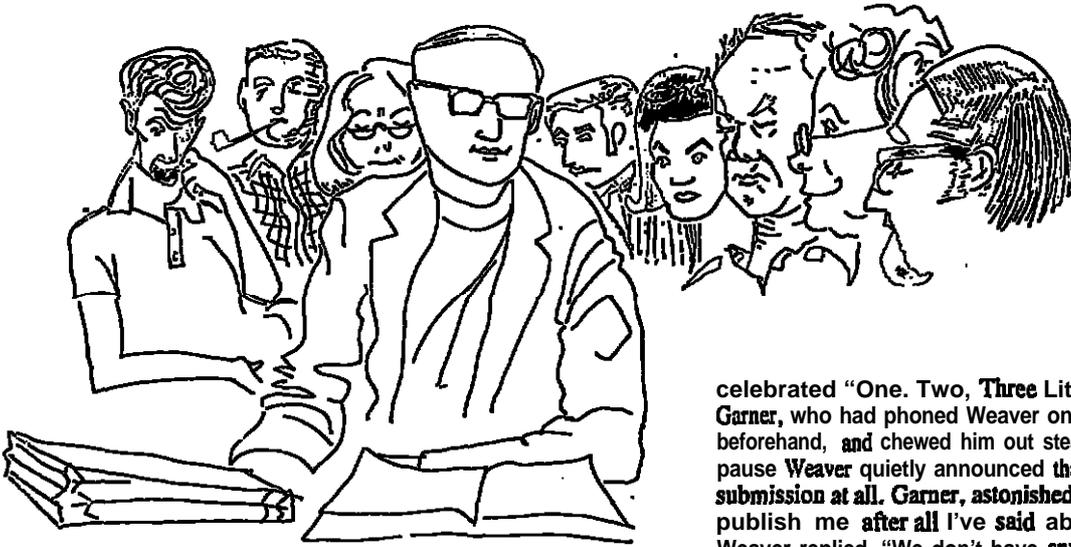
4 Books in Canada. May 1979

Damn Thing After Another, calls Weaver "a man who has done me so many favors and saved me from so many disasters that I shall always be in his debt." Nor is Garner alone.

Yet Weaver has a wry humility about his work. "What saves my life," he says, "when I think of the past 30 years is that it's all so funny." Other producers speak of the singular respect in which he is held at the CBC; Weaver tells a different story. "I'm tabbed as belonging to the older generation, looked on with benign tolerance but not really taken seriously. The CBC has always thought that the literary world is a little peculiar." Weaver views the CBC with irony and affection. A couple of brief ventures into television left him with no desire to try his luck a third time: "I don't understand some of the radio wars, but I don't understand the TV wars at all." One great gift, however, is his profound understanding of writers, and his willingness to put up with them even at their most bull-headed. Harold Ross, according to Thurber, "regarded writers as temperamental mechanisms, capable of strange behavior, and artists were just as bad, or even worse. Complexes, fixations, psychological blocks, and other aberrations of the creative mind had him always on the alert." Weaver is no less aware of such aberrations, but he's a charitable man. Garner, Al Purdy, Mordecai Richler, Austin Clarke, Hugh Hood, and John Robert Colombo would scarcely have dedicated books to someone who regarded writers as men mechanisms.

"He has," says Ivon Owen, an editor who has known him since 1943, "changed very little over the years. He's just gone doggedly on, doing the things he wants to do." Kay MacIver, a CBC colleague for 30 years, says, "He's always had the same rather quiet manner, always the sense of humour and the tremendous interest in writers. In fact he was astonishingly the same as he is now, except much thinner." Weaver's tastes and recreations are about what you might expect of a middle-class boy born in Niagara Falls in 1921. He likes movies and football; he knows the subtleties of a martini as intimately as the subtleties of prose. He likes to watch *Lou Grant* and *The Rockford Files*; he's keen on TV golf. In the second issue of *Tamarack Review*, he inserted into an affectionate article called "John Sutherland and *Northern Review*" one of his personal regrets: "Rankest heresy in the literary world - he occasionally played golf.. (We never had the game we said we must play together.)" Ivon Owen recalls confessing to Northrop Frye one day that Weaver was out on the golf course. Frye, surprised and severe, replied, "I didn't know that Robert went in for the executive sports."

The joker in this homely pack is Weaver's imagination. Without it he would never have been more than a competent editor, and he



certainly would never have developed the eye for fresh talent that has, over the years, distinguished him so highly. Like many artists Weaver lost his father when he was young, and grew up amid the company of women (an Aunt Emily was a writer of sorts). His father, a doctor, had gambled on gold mines and left little money, and at the age of 18, living by now in Toronto, Weaver began to work in the Dominion Bank. Initially he was earning \$8.50 a week — “More than I would have made in a small town. Anyhow I rather liked it. I liked meeting the people.” He was reading widely: Wolfe, Norris, Dreiser, Orwell, but very few Canadians. Then came war.

Weaver first joined the RCAF, “but I flunked a course that required scientific ability so I ended up in the army.” They were not the best of days for him. A misfit private, he acquired the nickname of Muscles. In 1944 he was thankfully discharged and sent to the University of Toronto on Veterans’ Aid. Weaver has a long memory: every year he gives money to the Salvation Army, whom he found to be the most helpful of all the wartime charities. (He is not a religious man.) At the U of T. “overwhelmed by marching feet,” he blossomed and he wrote. Besides doing reviews and editing a college magazine, he produced some poems, a few stories, even part of a novel. Ales, they weren’t much good. “James Reaney said to me one day, ‘You don’t have any creative talent but you’re a very good organizer.’ I was irritated at the time, but it seemed rational enough. He spotted me.” Nowadays Weaver claims to have no regrets about the writing: “I long ago lost the attitude, ‘Yes, but I would have done it differently.’ I don’t think I’d have made a very good writer.”

Nonetheless, his prose style is a delight: crisp, clear, clean, muscular, and never showy. Its lucidity could serve as a model for most journalists and not a few novelists. “If there’s anyone I’d like to write like,” Weaver says, “it would be Orwell.” The style, like the character, was formed when he was young: while still at university, he had a piece accepted by *The Nation* in New York, a success that was partly responsible for his entry into the CBC in 1948 as a program organizer in the Department of Talks and Public Affairs. Weaver by this time had acquired a B.A. and experience as a shipping clerk, doing assorted joe jobs and reading Canadian literature on the side. He soon became responsible for the program *Canadian Short Stories*, along with one or two other shows; and in 1952, together with the producer Helen James, he edited an anthology of stories that had been broadcast between 1946 and 1951. His career was well established on a path it has never left. The anthology, published by Oxford University Press, was the original *Canadian Short Stories*. Two of its 24 entries (including the

celebrated “One, Two, Three Little Indians”) were by Hugh Garner, who had phoned Weaver one day, having had a few beers beforehand, and chewed him out steadily for 20 minutes. In a brief pause Weaver quietly announced that he wasn’t rejecting Garner’s submission at all. Garner, astonished, inquired, “Are you going to publish me after all I’ve said about you?” “I’m an editor,” Weaver replied. “We don’t have any feelings.”

Not all the volume’s contents stand up as literature, and Weaver recognized as much in his preface. “It seemed to us that the stories had not been chosen merely to satisfy a rigid editorial policy, but to reflect some of the variety of life in Canada today. . . . We realize that the stories broadcast by the CBC have varied a good deal in quality.” Some of the authors are no less familiar today than Garner: James Reaney, Sinclair Ross, Joyce Marshall. (“I’ve known Joyce for more than 25 years,” Weaver happily confides. “and it’s still difficult.”) But others, equally promising in 1952, have faded into the night. Where is William S. Annett, born in Alberta in 1928, once employed on Wall Street? Where are Rigmore Adamson, a lady editor born in Norway, and Ernesto Cuevas, an erstwhile legal stenographer from Newark, New Jersey? The pieces by Douglas Spettigue and a trio of other writers were their first published stories.

The 1950s were busy years at the CBC and happy ones for Weaver: “My favourite decade. It was a fairly civilized time, even though everyone says it was dreary.” The only political party for which he’s felt so great warmth was the CCF, “which stood for reform and also for moral rectitude. I suppose my ideal for a Prime Minister would be M. J. Coldwell.” (It was, moreover, the time when one of Weaver’s favourite films was made — Ingmar Bergman’s *Wild Strawberries*. “It’s a great Canadian movie,” he remarks drily. “Isn’t it a pain we didn’t make it ourselves?”) The *Canadian Short Stories* program died, to be replaced by *Anthology*, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. “It’s pretty well unique,” Weaver says, “and the CBC deserves some respect for that. There have been no moves, not even covert, to get it onto FM. I’ve always wanted *Anthology* to stay on the AU network: the writing community in Canada is small-town as well as big-city.” The audience for *Anthology* is not only loyal, it is also surprisingly large. Weaver could be contented if 30,000 listened regularly; the best estimate is about 45,000, and one rating recently suggested that 75,000 people tuned in. Whatever the exact figure, more Canadians listen to *Anthology* than buy all the little magazines put together.

One of the best and most famous of the little magazines is *Tamarack Review*, which began in 1956 and has been published almost continuously from Robert Weaver’s office at the CBC. “The CBC has always been rather amused by this thing operating out of its backyard,” he says. Although the idea for the magazine was Weaver’s, the name was suggested by Ivon Owen. As Owen tells it, Weaver had said, “I want to have a name that sounds like the Canadian Shield.” Owen had been dubious; wouldn’t such a name also sound like the Salvation Army? *York Review*, *Humber Review*, *Laurentian Review*, none was right. Thee Owen, who had been staying in Muskoka and had bought a boat from a hotel

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called the *Tamarack Lodge*, suggested *Tamarack Review*. Much to his own amazement, the name was taken up at once. Its existence was noted by the government, for the editors regularly used to receive promotional material from the Department of Forestry. Owen, who wistfully remarks, "I seem to spend my life being interviewed about Bob Weaver; I wish someday somebody would interview Bob about me," is himself a distinguished figure in Canadian letters. As well as directing Oxford University Press's Canadian division, he worked as a *Tamarack* editor for nearly 20 years.

The current profusion of small magazines in Canada is a recent and welcome phenomenon. Twenty-three years ago, but for few university quarterlies and the indomitable *Fiddlehead* of Fredericton, the field was virtually empty. Nor was it as if dozens of good but unknown writers were clamouring for publication. To begin a professional magazine with no financial support from academia and every intention of paying the contributors was a bold venture; Weaver has threatened to resign from *Tamarack* if the U of T Press were to take it over. "You wouldn't believe," Ivon Owen says, "how hard it was in the early days to find four good stories a year for *Tamarack*." "Yet there was always the uneasy suspicion," Weaver later wrote, "that the cause of the drought might be the lack of markets and of editors greatly concerned with the short story. Which was the root of the trouble, the thorny, solitary, often abused and exploited writer, or the editor by turns enthusiastic or morose, usefully nagging or glumly unresponsive?"

The first issue appeared in the autumn of 1956. The editors included Weaver, Owen, Kildare Dobbs, William Toye, Anne Wilkinson, and Millet MacLure. Among the contributors were Brian Moore, Ethel Wilson, George Woodcock, Margaret Avison, Jay MacPherson, and Timothy Findley, whose short story "About Effie" was the first he had ever published. Their work was prefaced by a cheerful editorial: "We're committed, as all editors should be, to the proposition that saying something well is the basis of civilization. . . . We remember those who have foiled barbarism by a well-turned sentence: Cicero, Swift, Arnold; and remember, too, that they did not address themselves to a little coterie of initiates but to the people at large." We seem to have come a long way since the time of the early *Tamaracks*. Only the audacious or the foolish could say, as Weaver did in the second issue, that Canadian literature "has still the shakiest of foundations." And to read the third issue is to multiply the feeling of distance: an editorial condemns the Hon. J. J. McCann, Minister of National Revenue, who was responsible for Customs and had banned from this country *Peyton Place*, Beckett's *Molloy*, and *Playboy*. ("Very popular among college students and in some intellectual circles," according to the editorial. In the heart of those circles stood Robert Weaver: "He was the first person I knew of to have a copy of *Playboy*," the journalist Joan Irwin has said.) Yet even now Renaissance Canada and the book-banning Rev. Ken Campbell flourish, and copies of *Penthouse* are occasionally seized at the border; as in so many other ways, the 1950s are less distant than they appear.

The standard of excellence achieved during the first few years of *Tamarack's* existence has rarely been matched among Canadian periodicals. Besides constantly encouraging — and constantly paying — Canadian writers, the editors took risks. In 1960, for instance, they devoted the whole of an issue to West Indian literature. One of the few regrets that Weaver will today admit is that *Tamarack* hasn't published more work from outside Canada. Occasionally an issue aroused controversy (though the editors never received invective of the calibre once directed by a parson at Margaret Anderson, founder of *The Little Review*: "I earnestly request you to discontinue sending your impertinent publication to my daughter who had the folly of indiscriminating youth to fall into the diabolical snare by joining the ungodly family of your subscribers. As for you, haughty young woman, may the Lord have mercy upon your sinful soul!") In 1962 Weaver compiled the best work from *Tamarack Review* into what may be his least-known yet most delightful anthology: *The First Five Years*. Containing the work of 40 writers, the book is a triumphant vindication of that 1956 leap in the dark. The volume, like its

editor, has very little pretence; as Robert Fulford wrote in the introduction, "Humour, modesty, and the atmosphere of recent Canadian intellectual life deprived the *Tamarack Review* of that luxurious self-righteousness which stamps so many little magazines."

The First Five Years was Weaver's fourth anthology and his third to be published in three years. In 1960, answering a request from the World's Classics division of Oxford University Press, he had produced a new collection with an old title: *Canadian Short Stories*. (As this anthology later acquired two sequels, it's sometimes known informally as the First Series.) It contains the work of 26 writers, dating back to the 19th century and forward to Alice Munro and Mordecai Richler, neither of them yet 30. Three translations from Quebec authors were included, making this, as Weaver said in his introduction, "the first comprehensive anthology of Canadian stories to make any attempt to include fiction from both cultures." Again he showed himself acutely conscious of what, for better or worse, Canadian fiction lacked: "What we do not have is much of that sophistication and intellectual intensity that distinguishes a good deal of the contemporary fiction appearing in the older literary societies abroad. It seems that the Canadian writer still feels able to indulge a certain naïveté...."

A year later came *Ten For Wednesday Night*, published by McClelland & Stewart. Like the 1932 *Canadian Short Stories*, *Ten For Wednesday Night* sprang directly from Weaver's work at the CBC. (He has never drawn a sharp distinction between his work in print and on air: both involve the marketing of good literature, the sustenance of writers, and the establishment of a Canadian literary tradition.) Weaver's introduction suggests how the climate was changing: "The stories in this book were broadcast at various times during 1960 on the CBC's *Wednesday Night* program. They came from an invitation by the CBC to a small group of writers... Most of the contributors to this book belong to the new generation of Canadian writers who began publishing after the Second World War. It is the most diverse, professional, and mature generation of writers we have had, and it is a generation able to write and publish in an improved, even though still inadequate, literary atmosphere."

Earlier this year *Books in Canada* spoke of a short-story "glut." But when Hugo McPherson wrote the chapter on recent fiction in *Literary History of Canada*, published as late as 1965, he could still call the short story "a special, if currently neglected, genre" and a "difficult, exacting, and now declining genre." "It still flourishes," he admitted, "in small reviews and student literary magazines, but the majority of young writers abandon it after their apprentice years." Thanks in part to Weaver's vigilant nurturing of writers such as Richler and Munro, McPherson's glum deliberations are of purely historical interest. Weaver began to work with Munro while she was still a student at the University of Western Ontario, and continued to do so after she had moved to the West Coast. Yet they didn't meet until Weaver was on a western tour. Not knowing what to expect, he knocked on her door in North Vancouver one day and was startled to be met by a "smashingly beautiful" woman. He was even more startled when she informed him, "You don't look right — you were supposed to look more fatherly."

These days Weaver is avuncular and portly, an expert raconteur but no one's image of grace. Yet behind the heavy, black-rimmed glasses lurk two very clear eyes. A pipe, always ready to be tamped or fiddled with if not actually smoked, acts as a virtual security blanket. Others may think of him as one of the most established members of our entire literary establishment; Weaver has his doubts. "I hope I have a kind of outsider's feeling about what I do," he says. His domestic life lacks fanfare or glamour. Weaver lives with his second wife Audrey and their two children in a duplex in north-central Toronto, and resolutely refuses to have any truck with the trendy. His habitual lunchtime watering-hole, the Hampton Court, was long ago vacated by the Beautiful People at the CBC; Weaver did not follow them to Fenton's or the Windsor Arms. "He has a peculiar trait," reports Clive Mason, Director of Program Operations at CBC-Radio. "He knows more quiet places to stay and to eat across Canada than anyone I've known. I've never known him to stay at the recognized hotels."

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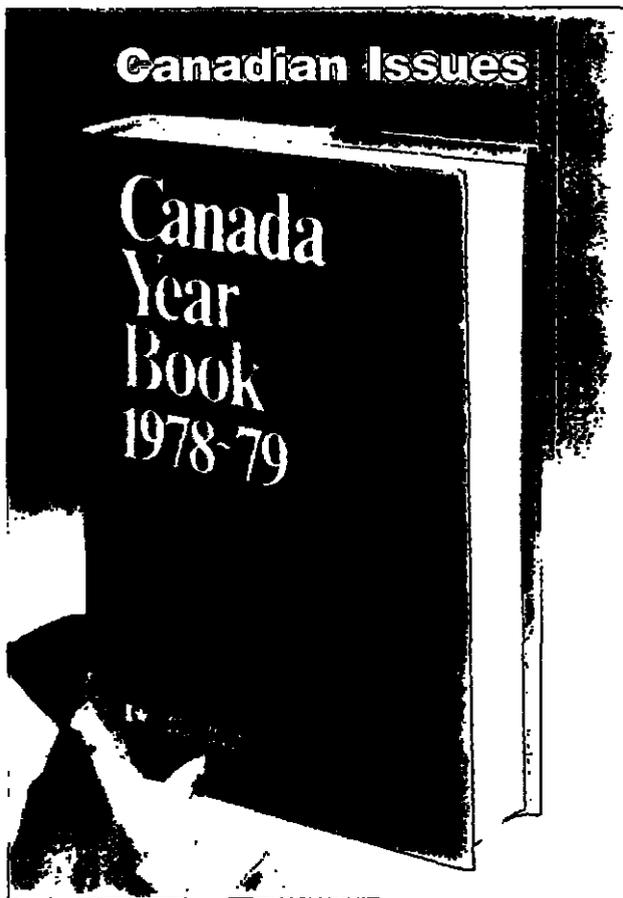
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Given a quiet couple of hours, he's fond of reading mystery novels, which he has reviewed for the Toronto *Star* for the past 15 years. "I like writing for the *Star*," he explains, "because I don't have any idea who reads me. Anyway I have a catholic temperament." Yet it's no secret that he prefers a goad whodunit to anything avant-garde. Why are there so few good Canadian thrillers? "It helps if the locale is accessible to the mythic, like Paris or California or the south of England. and only recently has it become possible to think about Canada that way. Also thrillers tend to come out of urbanized societies, and we've been slow catching up to that. And they require professionalism and a relaxed feeling that we haven't fought our way through to yet. It's much easier to write about growing up in a small town."

Weaver's CBC career in the 1960s and 1970s resembles a man being pushed up a mountain he never wanted to climb, and leaping down from near the top (just about landing on his feet) because he didn't like the rarefied air. When his bosses decided to "rationalize" radio, he ceased to be a nebulous special programs officer and became Supervisor of Special Programs. Eventually and with some reluctance, he took over as Head of Radio Drama and special programs (that is, arts) and had he wanted, could have become Program Director of CBC-Radio. Weaver was never temperamentally suited to administration, which is not to say he was a poor administrator. Thanks to a further strict definition of roles — an agreement with the Producers' Association that all programs had to be made by recognized producers, not by people classified as management — he relinquished control of Anthology to Howard Engel in 1975. After nearly two more years of dry administration, Weaver resigned as Head of Radio Arts and became once again an executive producer, a greying eminence who would like to be more than merely eminent. He speaks with an amused irony of "what I regard as my somewhat declining career." Even if he is, as Kay MacIver reports, "tremendously respected at the CBC both for his knowledge and for his dedication to writing," he may well feel that he's outlived much of his usefulness.

Yet in the last dozen years, in addition to the CBC work, he has edited five more books. One of them, a CBC publication limply entitled *Poems For Voices*, consists of six long poems he had commissioned for *Anthology*. Weaver has always been more at ease with prose than verse, and this is the sole occasion on which he edited a book of poetry. More characteristic is the selection he made, together with his wife ("I browbeat her into helping me from time to time"), of the best stories of Mavis Gallant. Published by the New Canadian Library as *The End of the World*, the volume includes seven stories that had not appeared previously in any of her books. Weaver is one of the few Canadian literary figures whom Gallant, a notoriously difficult lady, trusts. In his introduction he took a sharp swipe at nationalists: "Now that cultural nationalism is turning us in on ourselves. Mavis Gallant's work may have even less chance than before of attracting much attention in her own country. That would be a pity, because she is simply too fine a writer for us to ignore."

"I'm sorry now," he says. "that I wasn't more actively anti-nationalist. 'Citizenship' can easily turn into something that kills people. I always dug my heels in about nationalism, but I've never liked confrontation." Still, Weaver's attitude has been evident for at least two decades. In November, 1958, he wrote: "Those same years since the Second World War have also been a time of cultural nationalism in Canada (much of it centred in our universities) and the Canadian writer who published abroad for practical reasons may incidentally do something to diffuse and contain that cultural nationalism. Writers in small countries inevitably search for readers abroad, and the situation of the writer in Canada today is neither unique nor especially discouraging." About 10 years ago Weaver found himself under attack from a few vehement nationalists, notably Dave Godfrey — who had once been quoted as saying, "For the young English-Canadian writer, Bob Weaver is probably worth three Canada Councils and a Guggenheim Foundation." Not only was Weaver philosophically hostile to nationalism, however, he was also fond of America. The irony is that, unlike a clear majority of well-known Canadian writers (14

out of 13. for instance. in his most recent anthology of stories), Weaver has never lived outside Canada.

His Second Series of *Canadian Short Stories* appeared in 1968, his Third Series late last year. Weaver's prefaces display a justified pride and pleasure in the development of Canadian fiction, a development in which, one is tempted to say, he has been less the enthusiastic bystander than the coach, trainer, and part-time accountant. "I know all of the writers who have stories in this book [the Third Series]," he wrote in 1978, "and in some cases I have known them and worked with them from the very beginning of their careers." While it is doubtless true that there must be writers in Canada who deserve a place in such an anthology but do not know Robert Weaver, it is also true that no better collection of Canadian short fiction has appeared in the 1970s. Nor has Weaver stuck with the old warhorses — Morley Callaghan, Ethel Wilson, W. O. Mitchell, and the like. Only two of the writers in the book are older than Weaver himself. He does not expect to prepare a Fourth Series.

He's a great procrastinator, always liable to be putting somebody off; sometimes, as in the case of an anthology he had suggested to the English firm of Faber & Faber, a project is put off for so long that it dies altogether. And yet it seems now and then that Weaver has moved mountains. His longest book is the *Oxford Anthology of Canadian Literature*, co-edited with William Toye and issued in 1973. The editors introduce the book by taking sly issue with Margaret Atwood's trenchant polemic, *Survival*. After granting the essential rightness of Atwood's argument, Weaver and Toye go on to say that her themes "are not, of course, uniquely Canadian preoccupations. Indeed, alienation is worldwide: the victim can be discovered everywhere. . . . The mood is most often sombre — not unlike that of other literatures in the twentieth century." It's typical of Weaver to avoid outright disagreement without exactly fudging any issues. He does not like to make enemies; he may have no enemies. He does like to be liked. When *Books in Canada* asked him several months ago to name the books of authors he thought to be the most underrated and overtaken in all Canadian literature, he refused to respond. "I'm not fond of these literary games, and anyway I don't dislike anyone enough." In fact he almost certainly does dislike some writers enough to mention them: he just doesn't want it known who they



are. His candidates for the most underrated books are characteristically disparate and fascinating: John Buchan's *Sick Heart River* (his last novel, perhaps his best, and one with a northern Canadian setting), and Charles Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture* (written by a former teacher of Weaver's at University College, Toronto, and almost unread in spite of praise from W. H. Auden and Reinhold Niebuhr).

Weaver's remarks in print about the progress of our literature have been generally so hopeful and pleased that it's a melancholy surprise to find him striking a different note in conversation: "I don't feel that the '70s have been a particularly good period in Canadian writing. Putting aside the economics, my feeling is that there was a very short period in the late '20s that was interesting; and 1945-60 was a good period, optimistic and rather free. But

beginning in the early '60s, there's been too much emphasis on the politics and economics of the literary world, to the detriment of the literature. The dominant writers are still those from the earlier period." It might also be noted that the 1970s have been an uneasy time for the old guard at CBC-Radio who would like to see the AM network devoted to something more than a stream of magazine-shows.

But Weaver lumbers on. His latest venture, the \$18,000 CBC literary competition which he organized last year, exceeded all expectations. Having hoped for as many as 1,500 submissions, he found his desk buried under 3,000 manuscripts. At one stage he was reading 50 a day ("That's why I'm so g&t," he says with a chuckle). Many of the entries, especially in the memoir category, were dire, and Weaver began to regret having suggested the contest at all: "So much enthusiasm, so much goodwill, so many terrible manuscripts." He had begun the competition after resigning his management post, and, he frankly admits, he was looking for something to do. He began to realize he was doing it right when he received an indignant letter from a well-known writer saying, in effect, "You only wanted unknown people to win; that's why you sent back my manuscript." At much the same time he received an equally irate letter from an unpublished writer saying, "I would have won if only you hadn't been after somebody famous!" The results, at any rate, are a kind of vindication; Weaver would not have been happy if all the new and unknown writers had been losers. A few of the 10 winners — Helen Weinzwieg, Sean Virgo, Gail McKay — are known mainly to adepts in Canadian writing; a few more — James Harrison, Ruth Andrishak, Michael Hennessy (the Registrar of the University of Prince Edward Island) — have published little or nothing. Weaver was especially delighted when he phoned Ruth Andrishak, who lives 25 miles outside Calgary and had won second prize of \$2,000 in the short-story competition, and found her to be a part-time waitress who runs a small farm. "Oh wow!" was her first reaction. "Now I can buy some cattle!" The contest will be repeated at least twice.

Weaver is approaching 60, and new projects continue to occupy his mind. "I would love to do an anthology of *Stories From the Americas*. I've toyed with the idea of an Ontario anthology. And I want to do one on immigrant writing — stories, poems, and non-fiction by and about immigrants, and going back at least to the early 19th century. It could be enormous. . . . Yes, it's a couple of years off at least." In the meantime, Weaver will carry on doing what he's done for the past 30 years: helping writers, if necessary by lending or giving them money from his own pocket. "I'm proudest," he concludes, "of being open to writers, and sticking with writers, even in hard periods." He is a humane man, a decent man at a time when decency is a much-maligned virtue. "A tremendously kind man," Ivon Owen says. "You may feel neglected but you never feel slighted. And in an emergency there he is. When Andrew Allan died, it was Bob who went to see him all through the last illness, and it was Bob who first found him in a coma."

Occasionally Weaver resembles a refugee from the 1950s, adrift in a more turbulent age; but without a good deal of will and toughness, no one survives three decades at the CBC. Even his foibles — distinct tendencies, for instance, to be garrulous and dilatory — seem to endear him to people. It's a rare if not unique accomplishment to have been able to reduce the formidable Nathan Cohen to sentimentality. "I get sort of choked up," Cohen once confessed. "when I consider that beautiful man." Weaver has been valuable for so long partly because, though he takes great pride in his role of literary middleman, he has few illusions about it. When Alice Munro is read and remembered, Weaver will be forgotten. As Randall Jarrell advised all critics, "Remember that you can never be more than the staircase to the monument, the guide to the gallery, the telescope through which the children see the stars. At your best you make people see what they might never have seen without you; but they must always forget you in what they see." Unless (to alter the metaphor slightly), emerging dazed and delighted from the gallery, they glance at an inscription on the wall and read, "Gallery built by Robert Weaver." □

A REEVES GALLERY: 2

by John Reeves

Top photographers seldom come away from a portrait session without an insight or two about their subjects that even the best-held camera can't capture. A year ago (May, 1978), 40-year-old photo raconteur John Reeves

interrupted his mid-life crisis long enough to meander back through 16 years of files and prepare for us an annotated portfolio of 11 CanLit figures. Now he's one and 40 and here are seven more:



Bert Sheppard (1978)

BERT SHEPPARD is a cowboy. He has lived all his life in the magnificent foothill country around High River, southwest of Calgary and since 1981 he has been a partner in the famous Rio Alto (O-H) Ranch. Bert writes books and publishes them himself. His first book (now out of print) was a personal memoir called *Spitzco Days*, published in 1971. His latest book, *Just About Nothing*, is a sequel to *Spitzco Days*. *Just About Nothing* can be bought at the Gift Shop in High River or from

a carton under Bert's bed in the Rio Alto bunkhouse. The book contains contributions from Senator Dan Riley and R. M. Patterson. It is extensively illustrated by such cowboy artists as Galle Gallup. Bert had 1,900 copies of *Just About Nothing* printed in Calgary and to date he has sold about one thousand of them at \$11 each. Clearly, vanity publishing doesn't have to be unprofitable. A man can buy a lot of rye whiskey with the net from \$11,000.

BARBARA AMIEL and SANDRA MARTIN: There was a time when most reviewers were men. They tended to be an unlovely lot inclined either to neurotic pudge or gin-diet gauntness. They said unpleasant things in their columns, and often they were easy to ridicule and to dislike. Times have changed. Consider two of the current crop of book reviewers, freelancer Sandra Martin and Barbara Amiel of *Maclean's*. They are women; they are tall and

slender; their eyes are clear and lustrous; their complexions are as burnished alabaster. Soft sweet sounds emanate from the orchid splendour of their lips. During the past year both Martin and Amiel have asked me to take their picture, and somehow, with full knowledge that they have both been saying appalling things about books by my best friends, I managed a strangled "yes" to both of them. They were disturbing presences in my studio; unmentionable desires stirred in



Barbara Amiel (1978)



Sandra Martin (1978)

my viscera. Phrases like "concocting with the enemy" passed before my glazed eyes. I am a Tri-X betrayer, Judas with a Hasselblad. The years have made me not only older, but also much loss pure.

MORLEY CALLAGHAN: Both his sons are friends. I have passed by his house countless times. But no one ever asked me to produce a portrait of Morley Callaghan until last summer. During the photo session Callaghan reminisced about being photographed by Karsch many years before; he felt the encounter had not been altogether comfortable and Karsch had never released any of the photos. Not long after my visit with Mr. Callaghan, Karsch's *Canadians* hit the book stores and lo and behold, there in the section for people with surnames beginning with "C" was the never-before-published Callaghan by Karsch.

MOLLY LAMB BOBAK was born in Vancouver, the daughter of the arts critic and collector W. Mortimer Lamb. She studied painting at the Vancouver School of Art. In 1942 Molly joined the Women's

Army Corps, eventually becoming Canada's only female War Artist. For many years her lush, exuberant landscape paintings have been widely exhibited in Canadian art galleries, both private and public. In 1978 she became the author of a delightful illustrated autobiography called *Wildflowers of Canada*. I took this photograph of Molly Bobak in Fredericton where she and her husband Bruno have lived for the past 19 years. The Bobaks are very hospitable and Molly is a superb cook. I am glad that my visit to Fredericton revolved around photographing Molly; for if matters had been otherwise, I might — Heaven forbid — have had to eat dinner in the Beaverbrook Hotel.

NORTHROP FRYE is at once a very courteous and a very shy man. Courtesy is hard to photograph, so only the shyness was evident in my photos, and I wasn't sure how happy my client, Nicholas Steed, Editor of *Quest* magazine, was going to be with a picture of a great man being shy. However, Judith Finlayson's text for the *Quest* story made much of Dr. Frye's



Morley Callaghan (1978)

chynco and Stead ran my picture next to a herding that read "The Fearful Shyness of Northrop Frye," and a sub-heading that said, "The Most Formidable Mind in Canada: The Man Behind the Mask." An editor can do a photographer a lot of harm, but he can also do you an awful lot of good.

CECILIA JOWETT: People are seldom at ease with their own portrait. The physical image and creates of them rarely conform with the mental image they have created for themselves. There are, however, a few exceptions to this rule, and Cecilia Jowett was one of them. Jowett spent the greater part of her life working as a country nurse. She worked first in a pioneer community near Cochrane, Ont. After some years she moved south to Longford Mills, a village nine miles north of Orillia, on Lake Couchiching. While living and working in the Orillia area she became acquainted with Stephen Leacock, who encouraged her to write about herself. Jowett's autobiography, *No Thought for Tomorrow*, was published by Fyercroon Press in 1954. Cecil Jowett is an old family friend, and when she learned that I had become a photogra-



Molly Lamb Bobak (1973)

pher, she asked me to produce a portrait of her, which I did in March, 1965. Her poignant response to the pictures I shipped to Longford Mills was unexpected and touching. I quote her latter in part: "The photographs came safely and I do thank you, for the honour you have shown me in granting my wish that they are

yours, *your work*, and much more to me therefore. One pose, quite unconsciously on my part, is like 'Whistler's Mother', so nothing is really new under the sun. The strain and stress of the past years shows dearly in my face ('faces') and they are truly real and characteristic. The large photographs I will hang at

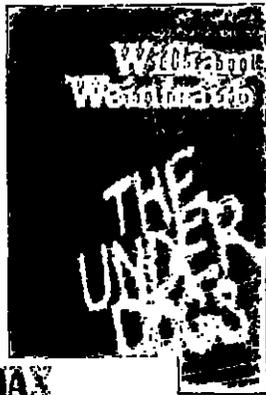
some distance, to get the best effect and ask myself often, 'See what I have done to the pretty girl in the locket, at 16 years of age.' ... The lack of money for good skin cream over the past 35 years didn't help the wrinkles; but then, again, it is myself as I am today and neither Heaven nor — can alter it."



Northrop Frye (1978)



Cecilia Jowett (1965)



MAX BRAITHWAITE
The Commodore's Barge is Alongside

A Very Political Lady
A novel by
Judy La Marsh



MATT COHEN
The Sweet Second Summer of Kitty Malone

Diane Giguère
Wings in the Wind
The Goodly Man

THE NEW NOVELS

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A VERY POLITICAL LADY
Judy La Marsh

"When I wrote my memoir, everyone said it was fiction. Now I'm writing fiction, and everyone says it's fact." — Judy La Marsh. \$12.95

CHILDREN OF MY HEART
Gabrielle Roy
Translated by Alan Brown

Critically celebrated and honoured in its French-language original with the Governor General's Award for fiction, *Children of My Heart* is the newest novel by Gabrielle Roy, the highly-acclaimed author of *The Tin Flute*. \$12.95

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Max Braithwaite

Max is back! After a *Lusty Winter* in Ontario, Canada's hearty humorist returns to the prairies with a naval spoof that's awash with nautical nonsense. \$12.95

THE SWEET SECOND SUMMER OF KITTY MALONE
Matt Cohen

"Matt Cohen's novel is a triumph..." — *The Toronto Star*. \$12.95

WINGS IN THE WIND
Diane Giguère
Translated by Alan Brown

"Dazzling... the style and poetic power captivate the reader from the opening lines." — *Le Nouvelliste*. \$10.95

HAMLET'S TWIN
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Translated by Sheila Fischman

A literary display of unrestrained genius — the novel that the Quebec press, both French and English, hailed as a masterpiece of Joycean proportions. \$12.95

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ZINGER AND ME
Jack MacLeod

For everyone who has ever come within a passing average of an ivy covered wall, author Jack MacLeod introduces *Zinger*, and the groves of academe will never be the same again. \$12.95

CHINA HAND
Bruno Skoggard

"Perhaps it all stems from my amah's birthday gift to me when I turned seven in 1928. She took me to see a beheading." \$10.95

THE WHITE SHAMAN
C. W. Nicol

The White Shaman is a tenderly poignant, highly visual and truly spellbinding story of contrasting realities, centring around a young white boy on the verge of manhood, who leaves the transient south to explore the eternal north, and in so doing fatally severs his links with the past. \$10.95

From McClelland & Stewart / The Canadian Publishers

AT GOOD BOOKSTORES EVERYWHERE

It's the Riel thing

The marketing of Louis Riel as pop history has reached the point of overkill. Hanging him was gentle compared to this

by Donald Swainson

MORE HAS BEEN WRITTEN about Louis Riel than any other Canadian. Both the man and his rebellions have fascinated readers for more than a century. However he is finally to be judged — as populist hero or fanatic — Riel has become a media industry.

The flood of Riel material has become inundation. G. F. G. Stanley published his standard, if somewhat prosaic biography, *Louis Riel*, in 1963. E. B. Osler's unfortunate *The Man Who Had to Hang* had been inflicted on English-speaking Canadians in 1961, and was translated into French shortly thereafter. Hartwell Bostfield presented us with a snappy life in 1971. Desmond Morton gave us, in rapid succession, *The Last War Drum* (1972). *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign* (1972, jointly with Reginald H. Roy), and *The Queen v. Louis Riel* (1974). Rudy Wiebe, following John Coulter (*Riel: A Play in Two Parts*, 1962) and Don Gutteridge (*Riel: A Poem for Voices*, 1968) has written two novels about Riel and his times: *The Temptations of Big Bear* (1973) and *The Scorched-Wood People* (1977). George Woodcock's *Gabriel Dumont* (1975) follows in the tradition of *Strange Empire* (1952) by Joseph Kinsey Howard. It goes without saying that the reprint people have cashed in on a good thing. A particularly bizarre example was the publication by Coles of the utterly worthless *The Story of Louis Riel the Rebel Chief* (1885, reprinted 1970; no confessed author). These influential books are allegedly works of history, but are informed more by mission-oriented imaginations than a meticulous use of evidence.

Among the other books, W. L. Morton's *Manitoba: The Birth of a Province* (1965) includes documentary material that is crucial to any real understanding of Riel's role in 1869-70, and completes his earlier *Alexander Begg's Red River Journal* (1956). In addition, Thomas Flanagan began to analyze Riel's religious thought several years ago. He has published several articles on his subject, and has given us two important books: *The Diaries of Louis Riel* (1976) and now *Louis "David" Riel:*

14 Books in Canada. May 1979

"Prophet of the New World" (University of Toronto Press, 216 pages, 515 cloth, ISBN 0 8020 5430 7).

Meanwhile, the CBC has entered the business in a big way. On April 15 and 17 CBGTV presented a three-hour production of *Riel*. The budget was more than \$2 million. The television show is only part of the enterprise. The sound track of the film is to be released in cassette and long-play record format. "A pop version of the *Riel* theme and a scored version of Riel's final speech," the publicity blurb tells us. "will also be released as a single." NC Multimedia ensures that our little ones are included by putting out an "audio/visual" kit. The TV show's sponsor is giving us "a full colour poster" and Compass Film Sales will distribute the TV film to movie theatres. Finally, Roy Moore's screenplay has been translated into a novel by Janet Rosenstock and Dennis Adair (*Riel, Paper-Jacks*, 202 pages, ISBN 0 7701 0102 x). All in all it should be a good spring for Riel buffs.

Why are Canadians endlessly fascinated by this strange cod largely misunderstood man? He must appeal to something deep within us.

Canada has always been a troubled country. This is true of many of the countries with which we share our cultural heritage, but most of our sister societies are

reasonably certain that they have a future. We are not; we often fear that our country will disintegrate. We have reason to fear. Canada was created by political and economic managers. No political philosopher, major poet, military genius, or messianic leader had the slightest place in the confederation movement. As a people we were created by the Macdonalds, the Mowats, the Tupperts, the Galts, and the Cartiers — all politicians and/or businessmen of the line. We cannot study our origins through the kind of greatness exemplified by Paine, Washington, Napoleon, Robespierre, Cromwell, Milton, or Gustavus Adolphus. We cannot turn to documents like *The Federalist Papers*, *Magna Carta*, *The Communist Manifesto*, the *Petition of Right* or *Areopagitica*. Rather, we must focus on debt allowance, repatriation, tax equalization formulae, Section 92, the federal-provincial interface, and the potash tax.

Canada was created by managers and has been sustained by managers. That which cannot be managed threatens our existence. We do not function within national myths and ideologies. Movements and philosophies that might transform some societies are often seen as menaces to the very existence of this society. Within this context it is not difficult to understand why Louis Riel occupies a huge place in our historical imagination.

The acquisition of the West was our major managerial coup. After appropriate negotiation we simply purchased the Prairie region. We then bound it to central Canada with a railroad that was largely financed by the sale and gift of western lands. If the West symbolizes our managerial syndrome, Riel symbolizes the opposing forces. Depending on time, current issues, philosophical bent, and regional bias, Riel can be seen in an almost infinite number of ways: he threatened national unity; he gave coherence to regional identity; he represented Prairie biculturalism; he was a victim of Anglo-Saxon bigotry; he was the first of a long line of Prairie reformers; he represents a lost opportunity to treat fairly with our



Raymond Cloutier as CBC-TV's Riel.

native peoples; he represents the concept of "cause" as opposed to the practice of brokerage management. He is, in short, the ultimate Canadian example of the usable in history.

It is not accidental that the bulk of the works listed above were written by non-professional historians. The focus is not on attempting to understand Riel as an historical figure; the focus tends to be on "sing poor old Riel to advance one's cause or, as is now clearly evident, to make a lot of money.

In the 19th century opinion concerning Riel divided pretty much along linguistic lines. French Canadians supported him; English Canadians regarded him as a devil. As the *Winnipeg Free Press* put it in 1885: "Riel was fairly tried, honestly convicted, laudably condemned, and justly executed." This all changed by the 1960s. Riel now is revered by all sorts of people. He is a Prairie reformer who loved the oppressed, he is a regionalist and a victim. Riel makes us feel deliciously guilty, and we "see him to flog" ("opponents and vaunt our virtue.

Commenting in any detail on the plethora of recent works concerning Riel is impossible in a short article. However, three recent books illustrate important trends: the scholarly, the mythic, and the commercial.

Thomas Flanagan's concern is to analyze in a scholarly way Riel's religious thought. His cork is superb, and his *Louis "David" Riel* is probably the best single item ever written about the rebel leader. Flanagan argues that Riel should be seen "not as a madman, but as a millenarian leader. The thesis has its implausible facets, and Riel can easily be seen as both - that is, as a mad prophet. Nevertheless, we now know what Riel thought, at least after the mid-1870s, he was most emphatically not an early version of Tommy Douglas or Ed Schreyer. He was an ultra-conservative, whose "ultimate hopes for the reorganization of mankind under clerico-theocratic rule were the antithesis of liberalism." Riel advocated incest, probably because of his unhealthy attitude towards his saintlike sister, Sara. He wanted polygamy, because of a strong desire "that women should be put back in their proper station of subservience." His fantasies about the future of the Prairies involved the creation of "a new Ireland, Italy, Bavaria, Scandinavia, Poland, even a new Judea for Jews who agree to recognize Jesus Christ as the only Messiah. . . ." In 1885 Riel led his follower, to death and defeat because for him rebellion was not a political and military operation, but a "politico-religious movement." It could succeed, but only with a miracle. Riel defined himself as "the telephone of God." If Riel is to continue as our most usable historic¹ personage, Flanagan must be ignored.

Rudy Wiebe's *The Scorched-Wood People* represents the mythic option. Wiebe's Riel is devoutly religious, hot in a kind of NDP manner. Wiebe has Riel say, "Why don't we make a heaven here in the

North-West, where we can have peace between all people, no killing. . . ." This is what it's all about. Riel and his friends love life, flowers, and children; they laugh a lot. Anglos of course are the reverse. They are cold, calculating persecutors. Metis people represent the burgeoning West, freedom, life, love. . . . History is routinely distorted. The result is bad history, bad myth, and a singularly unsuccessful novel.

And finally, the commercial option. Rosenstock and Adair, in their *Riel*, have managed to Harlequinize the West. They have written an unrelievedly unfortunate "novel". It does not claim to be history; it claims even more: "What is real is the spirit of the history." What we have is a fairly straightforward piece of propaganda. Riel is a saintlike leader attempting to save a small and very virtuous nation from the relentless evil that emanates from Ottawa. Louis Riel is part social democrat and part liberation theologian. The history is rewritten to suit

the views of the authors. One example will have to suffice. Riel's crazed pronouncements about the settlement of the West are transformed into liberal policies of the 1970s: "The government, in 1971, also adopted Riel's suggested multicultural policy within a bilingual framework." Perhaps the most offensive aspect of this book is some of the dialogue, which might well have been written by William Henry Drummond. A Metis explains the Buffalo Hunt, "We get everything ready — the bows, arrows, and guns. The women, they get their things ready to claim the buffalo, sharpen all the knives good. The Bishop of St. Boniface, he appoints a priest to 8" on the hunt."

The Riel industry has been with us for a long time. If anything can slow its growth it is the ponderous overkill approach of the CBC. In 1885 we hanged a defeated and deranged man. Must we punish his memory in perpetuity? □

Short days journey into night

by George Woodcock

Agoak, by Yves Thériault, translated from the French by John David Allan, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 160 pages, \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 0 07 082847).

IT IS MORE than 11 years since Yves Thériault published the novel he is best known by, *Agaguk*, in which he narrated the powerful story of an Inuit hunter's emergence out of the darkness of a primitive and harsh life among the ice and tundra. *Agaguk* became and has remained a best seller beyond the dreams of most Canadian writers; up to now it has sold more than 250,000 copies and in sheer financial terms it has certainly been Thériault's most successful novel.

It may also have been his most successful in terms of fictional art, for though Thériault has been a consistently productive novelist, he has written nothing since that caught the imagination quite so powerfully. His later hooks took him back to the Quebec marginal farmlands of his earlier novels, into the slums of Montreal, and - in novels such as *Ashini* (perhaps the second most important of his works) - into the boreal forest of the northern Indians. Almost always, whether his protagonists were native Canadians, or habitants, or Italian immigrants, he was concerned with the way in which men lived under extreme conditions, and at times the powerful merged into the grotesque, the drama shifted over into melodrama.

Thériault "ever lost his interest in the native peoples of the Canadian North. In

1969 he returned to the Inuit way of life with a sequel to his earlier masterpiece, *Tayaout, fils d'Agaguk*, in which the old hunter is corrupted by the commercialism that emerged during the popularization of Eskimo art in the 1960s, and is eventually killed by his son Tayaout, who is appalled when his father sells images in which are secreted the most sacred traditions of the Inuit. Tayaout himself, the upholder of the primitive past, is killed by a great white bear.

The same inescapable conflict between the primitive past and the civilized present dominates Thériault's most recent novel, *Agoak*, in which he returns after another decade to the world of the Inuit. During the time that has elapsed since *Tayaout*, there has been a further shift in the relationship of the Inuit to the modern world. *Agoak*, grandson of *Agaguk* and so" of a full-time stone carver, enters the commercial world of the North and as the novel begins seems poised on the verge of a successful career as a computer expert.

The links with the earlier novels are tenuous, for though *Agaguk* and his wife Iriook and their travails in the wilderness are recalled in *Agoak*, the drama of *Agaguk* and *Tayaout* is "of mentioned, and *Agoak*'s stone-carving father is evidently another son of the old hunter; he has departed so successfully from the ancestral life that *Agoak*, when the novel begins, has almost no knowledge of the hunting techniques that

were essential to the survival of his Forefathers.

In *Agoak* the civilizing process that is central to *Agaguk* goes into reverse as circumstances force Agoak back into the wilderness and relentlessly primitivize him.

In the earlier part of the novel. Agoak is portrayed as an Inuit eager to adopt the skills of white men and to succeed in a way that will make him indistinguishable from them. In Frobisher he masters the white men's ways of organization, and dreams of going south to Montreal to make a career in the centre of Canadian financial power. The more traditional Inuit regard him as a traitor, and even his wife Judith, passionate as their sexual relations may be, fears leaving the North lest she lose her Inuit identity.

But they do achieve a kind of emotional compromise, and a happy future seems assured. Then two visiting Americans break into Agoak's house and rape Judith. Agoak

catches them in the act, kills and mutilates them, and then, rather than risk life imprisonment, steals sleighs and teams of dogs and, with Judith, sets off across the ice with Ellesmere Island as his final destination.

As they travel, the primal Inuit emerges in Agoak; the self-preservative instincts of his people reassert themselves, and he becomes the adept hunter he never was before, surviving, and for months successfully evading the police. As the hidden knowledge emerges, so does the harshness of behaviour that went with the old life, and Agoak becomes brutally dominant towards Judith, who begins to lose her traditional inclinations and to think even prison preferable to the enslavement she now feels herself experiencing. She tries to escape, but in a scene of t&mental terror Agoak kills not only two Mountie pursuers but also a whole family of nomad Inuit whose ammunition he needs. The final assertion of primitive domination is a bitterly ironical

reversal of one of the key scenes of *Agaguk*. In the earlier novel a crucial point in the civilizing of *Agaguk* occurs when Iriook prevents him, rifle in hand, from murdering in the traditional manner the girl child she has born him. Judith is too defeated, when her child comes, to defend it, and at this point, as he crushes his daughter's head with a rifle butt, we know Agoak has been wholly recaptured by the primal past.

Agoak builds up in a steady crescendo. The early chapters in Frobisher are rather prosy, and the long discussions between Agoak and Judith about their future are improbably self-conscious. But once we are in the world of ice and danger, where Thériault portrays the life of the hunter with unsentimental ferocity, the novel gains steadily in strength, and in its final chapters, if not in its beginning, *Agoak* is a darkly powerful book, bitterly pessimistic in its view of the regressive potentialities of human nature. □

As she lay dying

Flannery O'Connor's letters chart a short life in which pain and peacocks are constants and the Church is everywhere

by Douglas Hill

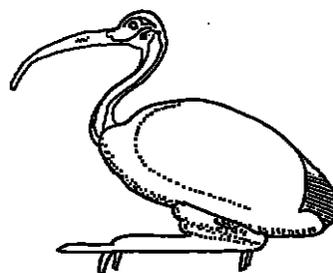
The *Habit of Being*, by Flannery O'Connor, letters edited and with an introduction by Sally Fitzgerald, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 617 pages, \$19.95 cloth (ISBN 0374 167 69 9).

FLANNERY O'CONNOR died in 1964 at 39, after a 14-year struggle with *lupus erythematosus*, the wasting metabolic disease that killed her father. With the exception of two years at the University of Iowa for a Master of Fine Arts in writing, a year at the Yaddo colony, and another in New York City and Connecticut, her life was spent in Georgia, first in Savannah and then, during her illness, with her mother on the family farm at Milledgeville. Her published work comprises two short novels, *Wise Blood* and *The Violent Bear It Away*, two books of stories, and a posthumous volume of critical writing. And now this monumental collection of letters.

O'Connor's talent, by any account, is unique: thus the temptation to the commentator (there have been more than a dozen books and scores of articles on her work since her death) to classify and label. There are a few points of agreement among her readers, however, which these letters support: that her faith — enormously strong, informing — is Roman Catholic; and her

world is a Protestant South spiritually blasted by the Civil War, fallen from grace to the farther refuges of fanaticism; that her characters are grotesques — deformed, maimed in body and spirit, Christ-haunted; that her vision sustains irony and compassion, outrage and love. So saying one has not captured her, one is still not prepared for the fusion of humour and horror or the bizarre expressions of mutilated faith (what she calls "do-it-yourself" religion). None of it seems random or gratuitous.

The letters date from 1948 to 1964, from the diffidence — hiding steel — of the 24-year-old searching out her markets, through the self-confidence of the mature, successful artist expanding her acquaintance, free to talk — needing to talk — about her work, to the calm bravery of her final year, the requests for prayers, always



her own prayers for troubled friends, the composition of one of her best stories on what was literally her deathbed. The editing here is firm but unexceptionable: personalities develop, friendships form, continuities of character, situation, and argument are established. The range, diligence, responsiveness, and sheer volume of her correspondence are astonishing.

Habit counted much for O'Connor. "Vocation implies limitation" is her refrain; acceptance of that imperative implies routine. She tried to write for three hours every morning; she tended her ducks and swans and peafowl; she received visitors, made numerous hips for readings and "liturgical" conferences, and wrote letters. All this against the uncertainties of diets, drugs, crutches, a disfigured and disintegrating body. "I don't make no plans."

Patterns emerge — of life, religion, art. The pain and the peacocks are constants, as are relatives, townfolk, tenants — the "good country people" whose behaviour and locations she reveled in. The Church is everywhere: "I write the way I do because (not though) I am a Catholic." More precisely: "There are some of us who have to pay for our faith every step of the way and who have to work out dramatically what it would be like without it and if being without

it would be ultimately possible or not."

Her favorite authors - the "influences" — are Hawthorne, James, Conrad, Faulkner: her closest fiction-writing friends were Caroline Gordon and John Hawkes. The reading described in these letters is timely, various, and immense, the critical opinions tough but appealing ("anybody that admires Thomas Wolfe can be expected to like good fiction only by accident"). There's not a lot about specific matters of craft — O'Connor liked to think of herself as "only a storyteller" — but one sees distinctly that her characters and their difficulties have come alive and remained so in her imagination. There's also virtually no pontification about literature, just some careful effort at defining and clarifying her own part in it.

Limitation. then: short storks, short novels, short life — "What you have to measure out, you come to observe closer, or so I tell myself." For all its size, this collection seems, like everything else about O'Connor's work, a distillation, a paring-down — 600 pages of essential insight and self-confrontation. (Compare Faulkner, whose recent *Selected Letters* is for the most part scrupulously arranged tedium.) O'Connor deserves to be read and known in Canada: there is value in her lucid example of how to make cultural and regional uniqueness a source of purity and strength. Begin with the fiction, begin with the letters: either way you'll be startled, intrigued, caught by this remarkable life in art. □

In praise of younger men

Children of My Heart. by Gabrielle Roy, translated from the French by Alan Brown, McClelland & Stewart. 171 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7710 7838 2).

By SHEILA FISCHMAN

"MY PUPILS," says the narrator of *Children of My Heart*, "with their joy, brought back my own childhood. To complete the circle, I tried to magnify their joy so that it would go with them all through their lives." The narrator is a young woman, scarcely more than a child herself, who teaches her pupils to read and write — all the while learning with them poignant truths about the world of which they are all part.

The book begins with the young, unnamed narrator facing her first class, "the very smallest," while at the end she bids farewell to a tender initiation to the world of childhood regained and innocence lost as she leaves behind a country school and with it, Médéric, the child-man barely younger than she, with whom she has discovered the first hints of a less innocent kind of love.

I must digress here to express some irritation at the form that has been given to this English version of *Ces enfants de ma vie* (for which Roy won her third Governor General's Award). The original book was presented as a series of stories, each with its title, linked simply by setting and narrator, and opening eloquently to take in her ever-developing experience of joy and pain; of wisdom too. The contents are unchanged, but the collection of stories has been presented so as to suggest a novel — which the book most assuredly is not. Surely English Canadians, of all the readers in the world, are accustomed to reading collections of short stories and needn't be tempted, like so many children facing some nasty-tasting medicine, with the disguising sugar of another literary form.

Aside from that criticism, for which neither the author nor the translator is to be blamed, I can only say that *Children of My Heart* is a jewel, one of the finest examples of the great art of Gabrielle Roy. She who has written with such grace and understanding of the dying bank clerk Alexandre Chenevert, of the indomitable Rose-Anna Lacasse, of the Inuit woman and her half-American child, here returns to her own Prairie beginnings, where she too was a country teacher.

Like Michel Tremblay, who seems to be the writer most likely to inherit his literary mantle, Roy obviously loves her characters, and she writes of them always with generos-

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ity and compassion. The sometimes naive narrator is presented with affection; she and perhaps her real-life model would surely have magnified her pupils' joy so that "it would go with them all through their lives." The range of characters is vast, from the loutish series of Demetrioffs to the frightened, angelic Italian child to Nil, the Ukrainian boy who sings like a lark, almost able through the power of his song to heal. The women — mothers, small sisters, colleagues — might seem to play secondary parts, but each is essential and fully realized through only a few words or gestures. Finally, though, it is Médéric — who rides

to school on his white stallion and shams with his teacher the first frightened glimpses of a nascent sexuality — who most impresses the reader and perhaps his creator too.

Roy's writing is limpid, controlled, elegant, and spare, and Alan Brown has recreated it hem with such diffident skill that reading him is like reading the original French. Never is a false note struck, never is there any doubt whose voice the reader is hearing. And although the translator is quite properly, invisible — indeed, because of this — the book is as much Alan Brown's as it is Madame Roy's. □

prevail: the familial one cloaks sibling and generational rivalries beneath a pseudo-frankness and pseudo-aggression in speech that produces the paradoxical "You've got to be kidding to say anything that awful" response that releases hearers from the burden of taking the talk seriously. Larded with Yiddishisms and always spoken around a table covered with fatty food, the chatter turns expressions of hatred and contempt into buzz-words. It is *King Lear* played at a bagel joint by a man in checked trousers and plastoid white loafers that match his belt.

The Wasp talk of the White House doesn't bother to conceal its emptiness: the antecedents of any pronoun are never clear, the passive voice always fogs the agent for any action. Nobody writes his own speeches or even thinks his own thoughts. As an emblem of this world, Heller chooses Kissinger. Master of doubletalk, ass-kisser to any regime willing to serve as his patron, wire-tapper of his friends, surrounded by enemies indistinguishable from his friends and, as Israel at the time of the Yom Kippur War could testify, surrounded by friends who have him for an enemy: Heller holds up Kissinger to ridicule in terms that have become familiar over the years. To the indictment, he adds one new charge: Kissinger is a Jew. How, then, can Judaism mean anything, stand for anything that is decent in American life?

Here, after a series of very minor plot complications, we stop. The public world is awful, and Gold is finally turned down for the job anyway. The family world is awful, and its most decent member dies. Gold is awful, as a husband, teacher, and cultural commentator. Oh yes, America is pretty awful too. Lots of its old urban neighbourhoods are decaying and changing as new folks move in.

Such a message neither dazzles nor depresses nor exalts me, but only makes me wonder as to why it took 447 loosely plotted, repetitiously written pages to tell me that. While I would not want to bear Kissinger's baby, I see no more reason for Jews feeling ashamed for him than for me. Irish-American by birth, to have felt ashamed because Cardinal Spellman was so horrible about the war. If one senses a certain split now happening in Jewish life on this continent, and wants to know more about it, Mordecai Richler's *St. Urbain's Horseman* is still the place to look. Richler remains under the delusion that believable characters, interesting events, and stylistic economy form narrative necessities, and I hope he stays that way. The fact that *Good as Gold* was hailed as a "bestseller before publication" might convince him otherwise.

On the whole, the novel reminded me of Animal House. One can make films, good films, that deny the possibility of the ethical enterprise, that sneer at eve" the hope of decency. The Marx Brothers did so, after all. But their style, energy, and inventiveness scarcely marks *Animal House*, a cry of boorish despair from a group of people who

Annals of the wondering Jew

by Dennis Duffy

Good as Gold, by Joseph Heller, *Musson*. 447 pages, \$17.50 cloth (ISBN 0 671, 22923 0).

BRUCE GOLD is a Jewish American trying to find out what it means to be a Jew in America. In view of the impressive Jewish presence in the American cultural fabric, the quest may appear a trifle unnecessary. Any cultural grouping that includes both Louis B. Mayer and Judy Garland, Saul Bellow and Helen Frankenthaler, Leonard Bernstein and Barbra Streisand, may be said to have left a rather distinctive impression upon the ingots of the Republic. And certainly decades of the Jewish-American literature and drama of the family, from Henry Roth to Philip Roth, have made Jewish mores and intonations as widely available pieces of Americana as Irish cops and Italian hoods. Of course, the passing into mythology scarcely guarantees cultural survival. Instead, it often indicates the opposite, while being fed into the omnivorous digestive system of American, pop culture can distort not only outsiders' perceptions of a group, but the group's own sense of self.

Generations of American novelists have assured us that to find one's life in America is to lore it: herds of individualists in flight from their family, culture, and birthplace crowd the classics of American literature. Instead of following this tradition of alienation through an examination of a single figure examined in depth, Heller takes a satirically conceived non-person, a *nebbish*, for his subject, seeking to give him the status of a tribal representative.

The sense of America as a closed system of tribal discourse marks Heller's previous work. Everybody in *Catch-22* except Yos-

sarian suffered from severe military-industrial complexes. The author's skill in making the Second World War an instant foreplay of the Cold War not only influenced (to their detriment) an entire generation of American radicals, but telegraphed to its audience the conviction that their lives had become part of an endless, absurd, impersonal power bip that patently revealed itself in the total corruption of language. Since the most corrupt portion of this mt lay in its rhetoric of duty, responsibility, and personal sacrifice for social goods, Heller's hem-in-fliiht repudiated the public world. What seemed to his audience, however, as a novel and rebellious gesture was in fact no more than a classic lift-off from a scene forever troublesome to American heroes.

The Huck Finn world of bizarre cross-talk caught by *Cm-h-22* yielded to less entertaining vignettes of mendacity in *Something Happened*. Still a most useful text for anyone seeking to understand the habits of thought that produced the Nixon White House and its corporate supporters, the too-lengthy novel sometimes becomes what it beholds, and thus merely reflects rather than renders the boring evasions it deals with.

The corruptions in *Good as Gold* include both the personal and the public domains. Using the writer-writing gimmick that has become a staple of modernist fiction, Heller shows a careerist cynically attempting to fabricate a book on the Jewish experience in America. Part of that book lies in the one we are reading. At the same time, Gold lies under consideration for a White House appointment to a regime whose chief passes most of his lime in pretending to write deceitful memoirs of a do-nothing administration. Two kinds of evasive discourse

got no closer to the barricades than the six o'clock news. That sort of easy contempt that releases one from the burden of technical excellence, that big raspberry to an obstinate old universe is what his novel is all about. It's selling well. □

Heather and yawn

The McGregors: A Novel of an Ontario Pioneer Family, by Robert Laidlaw, Macmillan, 176 pages, 512.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1711 0).

By I. M. OWEN

THE PART OF Ontario that stretches westward from the Niagara Escarpment to the shore of Lake Huron is a land of comfortable-looking farms and little towns beside placidly flowing rivets. Their streets lined with heavy Homer Watson trees and gracious houses that look as if they have been, and will be, there forever. This is the setting for most of Alice Munro's stories: stories of lives whose apparent rural simplicity conceals undercurrents and dark complexities that, like the houses and the trees but in a different way, suggest a community whose roots in the land are deep and ancient.

Now comes a posthumous novel by Alice Munro's father, Robert Laidlaw, to remind us how very lately this green and pleasant land was harsh, challenging frontier country. The McGregors of the title are Highland Scots who don't belong to the very first wave of pioneers: they arrive in Bruce County in 1853, buying their farm from the original settler. But the land is still untamed and the life is primitive.

The novel is the life story of Black Jim McGregor from his arrival with his parents at the age of six to his death 70 years later. It's not, and doesn't set out to be, particularly interesting as a novel; there are no remarkable events, complex characters, or powerful emotions. Essentially, it's social history conveniently cast in the form of fiction, a description of the everyday life of a community during its transition from colonial frontier to prosperous hinterland of an urban civilization. It concentrates on Scottish settlers and their descendants, keeping the (I should think) more numerous

Irish in the background and at a distance. Appropriately to the Scottish atmosphere, it's a firmly instructive book. It teaches us about deer-hunting, barn-framing, the construction of log cabins, threshing, and much more — all interesting and valuable for its own sake. And the quite believable though not wildly interesting fictitious characters are a help in bringing it to life and inducing us to read on, though they are not strong enough to transmute the social history into a work of art. But a book can be a good book without being a work of art.

Having been put in a didactic mood by the book, I most point out a couple of slips that could have been corrected without injury to the text. When Jim McGregor goes to school, in 1855 apparently, the schoolroom is decorated with an illustrated map of the world; in the middle of Africa it shows Stanley greeting Livingstone. That greeting took place in 1871. Since no dates have been mentioned up to this point in the text, the chronologically minded reader may be confused for some time about the period of the story. No doubt the anachronistic map is a childhood memory of the author's that found its way into this book by accident.

Occasionally, though not usually, Laidlaw's Highland characters talk Lowland Scots. That's not what Highlanders do when they speak English. Rather they speak, as Stevenson's Lowlander David Balfour remarks, "with a pretty accent, most like the English (but more agreeable)." □

Voyeur gets his clicks on the Rome-Moscow line

Zoom, by Andrew Brycht, translated from the Polish by Kevin Windle, Simon & Pierre, 154 pages, 510.95 cloth (ISBN 0 88924 070 1).

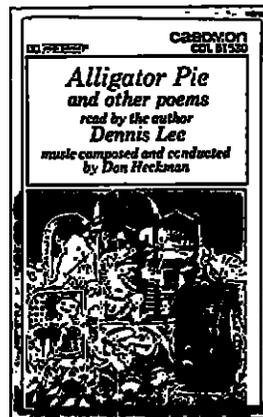
By CHRIS SCOTT

ANDREW BRYCHT, who came to Canada in 1972, was born in Warsaw in 1935. He has been a soldier, miner, heavyweight boxer, and a Polish press correspondent in North Vietnam and China. Brycht is the author of *Dried Grasses* (1961) and *Dancing in Hitler's Headquarters* (1966), works acclaimed in Europe as part of the post-Holocaust literature. *Zoom*, translated by Kevin Windle, a Ph.D. in Slavonic Studies from McGill, is his first novel to be published in English.

Like his German contemporary, Jakob Lind, Brycht is a man obsessed by the 20th-century bureaucracy of death, and an unnamed concentration camp (probably Maidanek, possibly Auschwitz) is one of the locales of this book. *Zoom* is about four

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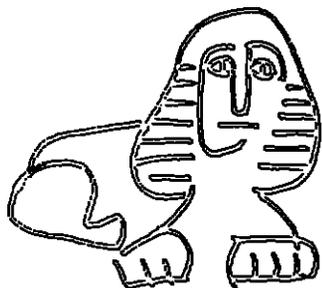


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men: the anonymous narrator, a young and aspiring press photographer: Robert Wolf, his cynical and world-weary mentor, and Father Gerber, a Catholic priest who sacrificed his life in the concentration camp for Adam Gil, a railway linesman.

Gil has been sent on a world propaganda tour by the Church as a token survivor and a kind of stand-in for the martyred Gerber. He returns, seemingly unchanged, to his job tapping the rails of the Moscow-Rome express. In the mornings he walks first in the diition of Moscow, then in the direction of Rome: before sunset things are the other way around. After the dubious experiment of the Lublin Poles and the failure of Polish nationalism to run along Soviet lines, there is no third diillion for modern Poland. Gil, philosophizing with a hammer, is owned by a state to which he *doesn't* belong, and the Church lays claim to his soul. Something, according to Wolf, has got to give, and something does -violently.

Wolf sets the narrator to spy on Gil, with a zoom lens and a tape recorder. Wolf lives vicariously: he is a voyeur with a mission. "As soon as I hear the word intellectual," he declares, echoing Herman Goering, "I slip the safety-catch off my camera." The camera may not kill, but Wolf does like to have his photos composed. On location in Africa, he interrupts an execution to get the perfect shot. (The method is head-bashing by an iron club swung personally by a dictator called Scorpion.) "Well, what really happened?" he asks the bemused narrator.

"They lived a minute longer."

Voyeurism of another sort lies behind one of the *extremely* sad and funny scenes in this book. A priest, using local kids to play the prisoners, has written a morality play out of the Gerber-Gil story, featuring an "Angel" who hauls Father Gerber's corporeal spirit up a ladder to heaven, and a "Devil" as a concentration-camp guard. The priest explains to the narrator: "As the author — and, I would admit in confidence, sometimes as a human being — I consider that evil exists immanently, just as good does. But since good stems from God and evil from the Devil there's no room for futile debate. The whole thing's perfectly straightforward. That's how it's shown in the play." Indeed it is.

Three quarters of the way through this short novel, Brycht kills off his most interesting character when the Rome-Moscow express jumps the rails. The narrator is on the scene to record Giis revenge and Wolf's death, becoming, like his mentor, a thanatographer. Zoom closes as it opens with the narrator in hospital after he has crashed his Porsche Carrera — a contrived "full-circle" ending. No doubt the black lens-like motifs that crater the text are meant to make this more arresting. (The production job was absolutely hideous: the book looks as if it's been set by the square inch, blotch 'n' fade printing with lines uneven enough to detail the eye.) A pity all this. I suspect a restructured book, and it throws Zoom out of focus, blurring its

moral and metaphysical resolution so that the background of the death camp falls away, a faded image in a long lens. It was surely mote than that. □

Tidy endings, plain wrappers

The Back Room. by Ann Copeland, Oberon Press, 149 pages, \$15 cloth (ISBN 0 88750 307 1) anti \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 88750 309 8).

The Boathouse Ouestion. by Jan Gould, Gray's Publishing Ltd., 207 pages, \$6.95 paper (ISBN 0 88826 073 3).

By MICHAEL SMITH

THE CHIEF VIRTUE of Ann Copeland's first collection of short stories. At *Peace* — published just last fall — was her portrayal of the "manipulative nuance, the religious masks of power" that exist behind a convent's walls. Perhaps her fluency inside the cloister is partly to blame for her perception of the outside world. The eight stories in her new collection, *The Back Room*, are seldom divorced from Catholicism (several feature priests), and tend to share a notion of tidiness that only survives inside a dosed community. Too often,

Spring Bestsellers

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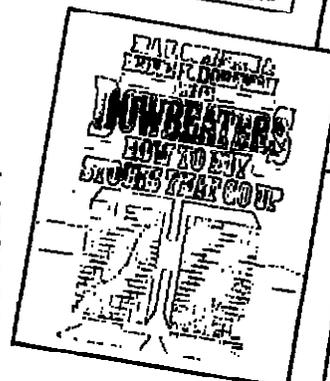
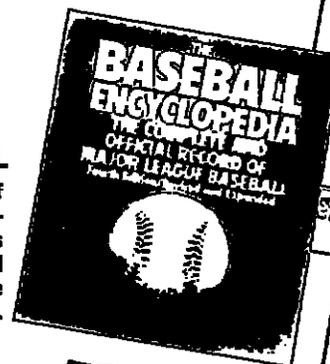
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Collier Macmillan Canada Ltd.

when exposed to the *real* world, Copeland's own manipulative nuances take refuge in the guise of rather phony coincidence.

In the title story, for instance, a fitting-mom attendant in an exclusive shop is describing her favourite customer — an elegant, heavily made-up matron who tries on dozens of dresses, but never buys. The narrator, a widow, is worried about her teenaged daughter, who's getting serious with Hubert, some bard-luck boy who lives with his aunt. On her way to meet him for the first time, the narrator witnesses an accident in which she victimizes her cherished customer. She soon discovers the customer was Hubert's guardian, an impoverished dishwasher whose shopping trips were nothing but wishful fantasy. Similarly, in "My Father's House," austere Great Aunt Anna reveals to her niece that she once had a suitor who died in battle overseas. When the aunt has a seizure during a sermon by a new young priest, the girl discovers that the priest and the suitor share the same last name.

These are the two most obvious plot twists — the kind of easy wrapup you expect at the end of a TV show (which is, of course, another closed world). Other stories are marred by their neatness, such as the glib fates of three spinster sisters in "A Woman's Touch." Copeland deals in "character" stories but, like television, the characters are frequently packaged into stereotypes — Great Aunt Anna, for example, or the selfish priest in "Mis-carriage," or a milkop father in "Cassie." They are well-made stories — once the ideal in story writing — but, as such, they flirt with the pitfalls of cliché. By contrast, though both have flaws, "Beginning" (in which a divorced mother goes to university) and "Return" (about the train trip home from visiting a first grandchild) are more interesting, because their conclusions aren't foregone.

Jan Gould's *The Boathouse Question* is a first collection of plainly written stories about the people who live on one of the gulf islands off the coast of British Columbia. Though their subjects are somewhat similar, there's none of the narrative flash of a Jack Hodgkin here. Gould's stories owe more to the workmanlike tradition of Hugh Garner, and W. D. Valgardson's Manitoba stories, mostly because they're plotted (things happen to the characters, and that's what makes them characters). All of the stories are competent, and while something holds them back from being brilliant, still, none of the eight comes up hopelessly lame.

Several are set-pieces. In "An Early Morning Message" a snobbish mainland nurse doesn't recognize the worth of a young fisherman until she's bound to lose him. In "The Glories of Greece" a womanizing farmer kills his brother and the brother's wife because she was the only woman he didn't manage to charm. In "Oh, That Virgin Hair" a girl must choose between her future on the island and the proposal of her first lover. Only once, in "The Latest Island News," does Gould

stack things too much in his own favour — by melodramatically giving a drunken, rednecked motel owner, in addition to lots of other reasons for hating long-haired, dope-smoking kids, a brother who died from an overdose.

This is the first book of fiction to come from Gray's Publishing Ltd. Printed on newsprint, it's nothing fancy. But it is a good choice to start with. □

Stalking stuffers

Dragon Spoor (ISBN 0 88924 076 0) and *Final Act* (ISBN 0 88924 077 9), by Jack H. Crisp, Simon & Pi, each 218 pages and \$10.95 cloth.

By PHIL SURGUY

THESE ARE THE first two books in what is planned as an open-ended series of spy-adventure thrillers. Each one is labelled "A Special Operations Executive Novel." The SOE was an actual British espionage outfit that carried out dangerous operations in occupied Europe during the Second World War. The general premise of the series is that the SOE is still in existence and empowered to shanghai its former members back into active service whenever it needs them. Thus each novel will have a different hem and supporting cast.

Dragon Spoor is a dismal effort, reminiscent of the glut of grade-C ripoffs of the James Bond and Michael Caine movies that came out in the 1960s. It was never clear whether the writers and producers of those pointlessly violent, inanely plotted secret-agent flicks were totally ignorant of what a good thriller is, greedily contemptuous of the form, or impelled by a ghastly combination of both attitudes.

Final Act is a much better book, though not anywhere near being of the first rank. It's about a middle-aged Canadian playwright who gets mixed up in a war between two British criminal organizations and turns to his old SOE commander for help. The violent physical action is generally a lot less random than in *Dragon Spoor* and the author does a good job of keeping hero and reader guessing for a long time about what's really going on. But there is a distressing lack of sophistication about the story and the people in it. There are also too many annoyingly illogical and silly details, sure signs that the author hasn't yet completely thought out, hasn't thoroughly imagined, the fictional world he is trying to create; and that is something he must do if he and his publisher have any ambitions beyond scooping out a little niche in the cheap paperback market. Two more SOE novels have already been written and a fifth, *Dateline Rio*, is at the outline stage. □

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New tales for the Maud squad

The **Doctor's Sweetheart and other stories**, by L. M. Montgomery, selected by Catherine McLay, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 190 pages, \$7.95 cloth (ISBN 0 07 082790 7).

By MARY AINSLIE SMITH

LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY called herself an indefatigable scribbler. Born in 1874 in Prince Edward Island, she began writing as a young child, and had her first poetry and stories published at 16. Before she turned to longer fiction end hit the jackpot in 1908 with her first novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, she was already an established writer, selling both juvenile and adult pieces to the leading journals of her day. Even after the success of *Anne*, she continued to produce short stories as well as 19 more novels before her death in 1942. *The Doctor's Sweetheart* contains 14 of these stories, published between 1899 end 1935, searched out and collected by Catherine McLay of the University of Calgary.

McLay says in her introduction that Montgomery's notebooks record the sale of more than 500 stories. Fewer than 50 have previously appeared in book form and McLay has a double purpose in presenting this new collection. First, she wants to make more stories available for the enjoyment of Montgomery readers; secondly, she suggests that as the stories are arranged chronologically, spanning most of Montgomery's career, they show her development as a craftsman and as a writer concerned with a wide range of themes and issues.

The first of these aims presents no problem. Sentimental and dated as they may seem today, Montgomery's writings still matter a great deal to a great many people who can think of Prince Edward Island only in terms of her fictional creations. She was a talented story-teller who could create a wonderfully strong sense of place end time: *The Dam's Sweetheart* provides another glimpse of this secure world. True Montgomery fans will recognize that characters and events from some of these stories are used again in later novels.

But es for the second purpose — to show that Montgomery had a greater depth to her writing than has previously been suspected

— McLay asks far too much of these stories. Montgomery herself cynically admitted a difference between writing something good enough to please herself and writing to please editors end make money. Obviously many of these stories were written to conform to the conventions of the time, and, as such, are hardly more than historical curiosities. They are romances with stock characters in melodramatic situations. For example, in "Emily's Husband," a young married couple have lived apart for five years following a quarrel. Emily hears that her husband is dying of typhoid: she struggles through a severe storm to his bedside; he recovers, and they are reunited. In the title story, a country doctor waits faithfully for the return of his young sweetheart whose rich guardians, disapproving of her rural attachments, have taken her off to the city. She does return to marry her doctor, again after a five-year separation. In fact, all but three of the 14 stories end with conjugal uniting — or reuniting.

Some stories do provide a change of pace. In "By Grace of Julius Caesar," two middle-aged women, canvassing for the church, climb a ladder to a rooftop to escape a vicious-looking dog. The dog's owner, a lonely widower, removes the ladder end refuses to let them down until one agrees to marry him. Stories like this, which break from melodramatic patterns and are intentionally humorous, are the best of the collection.

Bet essentially, all the stories are — as Montgomery intended them to be — women's magazine fiction. To treat them as anything more significant is inappropriate and, for this reason, McLay's introduction jars. She discusses theme, character, plot structure, setting, point of view, humour — laying it all out like the introduction to a high-school English textbook. Somelimes this serious treatment borders on the ridiculous, as when McLay tries to justify Montgomery's outrageous use of coincidence in some of her plots.

The book also provides a concise chronology of the events of Montgomery's life end a list of books by end about her. Annoyingly, a couple of the facts in the chronology are inconsistent with the information in the bibliography.

Montgomery admitted that her strength was in writing for young girls and these stories — presumably for adult readers — are not as good as her best juvenile fiction. If these represent the best of her hundreds of still uncollected stories, Montgomery fans probably won't have to make much room on their bookshelves for future volumes. □



Restless alien, ceaseless flux

Somebody Told Me I Look Like Everyman, by Raymond Filip, pulp Press, 61 pages, 33.50 paper (ISBN 0 88978 058 7).

Peeling Oranges in the Shade, by Jack Hannan, The Paget Press, unpaginated, unpriced, cloth (ISBN 0 920348 06 8).

Tributaries, An Anthology: **Writer to Writer**, edited by Barry Dempster, Mosaic Press/Valley Editions, 112 pages, \$10.00 cloth (ISBN 0 88962 092 x) and \$4.95 paper (ISBN 0 88962 091 1).

By A. F. MORITZ

THE DISAFFECTION and pain of the wounded outsider in a technical society that defies the "normal" — this is what strikes us in a turbulent eruption of language from Raymond Filip's first full-scale collection of poems. *Somebody Told Me I Looked Like Everyman*. The style is tumultuous, packed, laden with parodies of jargon and officialese and pseudo-intellectual Slang, studded with puns and word games. often

leading from one point to another as much by sound pattern as by thought.

Filip's signature is the bitter, hyper-active, truly restless wit of this style. Though he is capable of lyricism, even in il his words are nervously active, as in this passage:

*Uprooted, tap her life, my mother,
Milk and honey wine maiden from the
Old World;*

*A shy thing in her wooden-shoed youth,
Working beneficently within singing distance
Of blue jasmynes beside roadside shrines
Of her native land.*

His subject, roughly speaking, is defined by a single line he utters in the person of the Canadian Immigrant: "I am the inalienable tight N alienation." Wip lives in a human world crushed and pushed aside by the technical, managerial, and industrial procedures for which the human is simply material.

Hi social criticism develops organically from an uncompromising engagement with autobiography and the concrete situation around him. The book starts with Filip's own physical deformity, accepting it as a sign of honourable alienation from (and opposition to) a society that is truly "deformed." It progresses through vignettes of family breakdown, and moves into broader consideration of Canadian society. Always Filip sticks close to real sights, sounds, experiences, and speech. He re-

fuses to symbolize and universalize, but through struggle with realities manages to make hi images into concrete examples of man's present status as "Displaced Person."

This writing is far from perfect, and slips of tone and even grammar indicate that Filip is an "unschooled" poet. But with a certain abandon he attempts to take on the whole of contemporary confusion. The result is withering chunks of frenetic and aggrieved wit such as "Snow White and the Group of Seven," "Message parlor Tricks," and "Auditions Before a Mirror."

Jack Hannan's *Peeling Oranges in the Shade* introduces a poetry altogether different: calm, intimate, meditative, visionary. Although this is a first book, it is distinguished for the perfect finish of its rich and unique language.

Working in the Mallarmé tradition of style, Hannan attempts to mirror and explore the ceaseless flux of experience, conceived mainly as the individual's inner sensory, emotional, and intellectual dialectic. But the work rejects symbolist aestheticism, and also avoids revelation, dogma, chance, miracle, surrealism: "Dreams and happenstance," Hannan says, "are not prime value." Instead, the poetry is muted firmly in common realities — or rather, in our subjective experience of them.

For the contemporary human being, adrift in complete relativism, Hannan's

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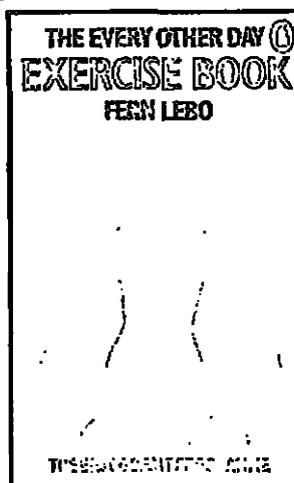
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poetry implies at least a temporary resolution. Though the fears and despairs are not ducked, Hannan basically portrays a mind that takes flux not as a threat but adventure, and derives from some mysterious depths a silent faith:

*The light goes off in a glance of fire,
only in one stew toward distraction,
the same way the first and each
hot brightness fanned out to allow for
other additions to life, other days'
duties and desires*

*You dress for a stroll in the rain
whenever it's warm, whenever
the rain is warm you
put on comfortable clothes and take a walk,
say it's time for thoughtfulness
as one who was once a bolter and who now
chews his food like a maniac
tiny bites, fed and digested fully
before saying o,*

*she leaves
all up to providence*

Hannan's work, full of silences, infinitely suggestive, startlingly original and accomplished, feels like a classic of the 1970s.

It is interesting that both Hannan and Filip are young Montreal-based poets, as is August Kleinzahler. The work of all three has been coming to attention over the last two years, yet all three were excluded, whether by decision or oversight, from Véhicule Press's highly publicized 1978 anthology of recent poetry in Montreal. Their work is clearly superior to that of all but two or three of the anthologized poets.

Tributaries is an anthology whose theme is poets willing to and about other poets. This makes for rather thin, easy-reading stuff that is often mildly entertaining and sometimes a bit cloying. Editor Barry Dempster has managed to corral a good proportion of the most widely known Canadian poets, who address each other and also oiyne on various literary luminaries including Rilke, Pound, and Cavafy. A few of the poems achieve memorable quality, such as Al Purdy's ramble and M. Travis Lane's tribute to Derek Walcott. □

New tune, same old steppes

Prairie Symphony, by Wilfrid Eggleston. Borealis Press, 271 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919594 99 9).

By WAYNE GRADY

"MUCH OF THE range land of Alberta and Saskatchewan," wrote Wilfrid Eggleston in *The Frontier and Canadian Letters* (1957), "especially that part within 'Palliser's Triangle', is similar in general character to the steppes of eastern Russia and western Siberia, and destined forever to be sparsely settled either by ranchers or large-scale wheat farmers. Such areas have not elsewhere in the world ever been the home of vigorous cultural manifestations of a literary type..." Eggleston argued that "native letters in any new areas must await the growth and development of adequate educational facilities, publications... stimulating associations of artists," and the like. Twenty-two years later Eggleston is singing the same song: *Prairie Symphony* masquerades as a novel, but it is really a clumsy novelization of the frontier thesis of Canadian literature.

Christopher Niles is a young man who, in the mid-1920s, finds himself ill-suited to life on a farm in Palliser's Triangle, that area of bald-headed prairie in southeast Alberta between Medicine Hat and Lethbridge known during the Depression as Next Year Country. Stunned by a vision one day while hoeing Russian thistle in his truck garden, Christopher decides to devote the rest of his life to poetry. He promptly leaves the farm to take a job in Web You's Cafe in Judith River, but "his fastidious stomach"

soon finds "the odours of the place repulsive" and un conducive to proper study of "the English classics," and he manages "by happy coincidence" to land a job as a teacher only foot miles from where he started out on page one. A year later he becomes a hermit in a shack on his cousin's farm, where he denies himself the temptations of the flesh and waits for "the circumstances to conspire so' that great poetry could spring almost spontaneously into being." After a suitable period of inspired but unprofitable creativity — about four years — he moves to Calgary, where he manages to write an epic poem which brings "to pulsating vivid reality the magnificent pageant of evolving life and drama" of the Prairies, "from the exotic and fabulous em of the dinosaurs to the Red River carts and the echoing whistle of the locomotive and the covered wagon of the optimistic homesteader" before being mercifully hit by a train and, presumably, knocked to his senses.

Part two takes Christopher back into society. He wakes up in the home of Stephen Heller, editor of *The Alberta Farmer*, the publication of the United Farmers' Association. Christopher is caught up in the association, the Wheat Pool, agrarian reform movements, reconstruction, socialism, the CCF, and other popular diversions of Prairie life in the Dirty Thirties. Only after this social rehabilitation, you see, can a true artist settle down with a good woman and get on with the business of writing poems that capture "the tragedy and comedy of life." The novel ends with Christopher driving madly to Clover Hill to meet up with Gail, the beautiful exponent of educational reform, reciting lines from the poetry of Thomas Hardy and "watching out for sharp rocks."

Like the earlier book, *Prairie Symphony* tries to show that true native art cannot simply spring out of the soil, but most be nurtured by a sophisticated, cultural community freed from the frontier struggle for existence and having plenty of leisure and education to appreciate art. It's a thesis novel, and the thesis is painstakingly spelled out again and again. "Had anyone," Christopher wonders at one point, "ever lived solely from his singing? Yes, in a happier age, in a much more appreciative society. But did it happen any longer? Certainly not on the frontier."

The trouble is that Eggleston himself knows less about art and the inner life of the artist than he does about the steppes of eastern Russia and western Siberia. A competent journalist, he charts Christopher's progress from embryonic Bymn to triumphant master of *vers libre*, but what it is that compels Christopher to make that journey is not even hinted at. There is much talk of "visions" and "inspiration," but little evidence that these have anything to do with genius. Christopher somehow exudes poetry as neighbours exude odours of the barn. We are told he is a voracious reader, but not one of the books he devours is named (except for a passing



reference to *Look Homeward, Angel*); we are assured of Christopher's mature and prolific development as a poet, but we are not shown a single line of the master's work. It's as if Eggleston were writing a biography of a man he had never known, and about whose mental life he can only guess. "Why would a healthy youth sit for hour after hour with his nose stuck in a book," wonders Christopher's cousin. "or making scribbles with a pen?" The question is crucial to the novel's only theme, and it is "ever answered." □

The Peter principle

Peter Loughheed: A Biography. by Allan Hustak, McClelland & Stewart. 249 pages. \$14.95 cloth (ISBN 07710 4299 x).

By DAVID LEWIS

THE AUTHOR AND publisher were obviously in a hurry to put this book on the market before the 1979 Alberta election. for one does not find either a table of contents at the front or an index at the back. The chapters are headed only by Roman numerals. so there is no key anywhere to the themes of the book or the contents of any section of it.

I mention this annoying lack of guides because it typifies the book itself. Although the work succeeds in painting a picture of Loughheed, it lacks adequate explanation of the political, social, and economic conditions that enabled Loughheed to take over a party for which he had done nothing before he became leader. This is a pity because, if the author's reportage is accurate, Loughheed is indeed a remarkable, though not admirable, political leader.

Here is a man who never attended a political meeting before deciding to seek the leadership of the Alberta Conservative Party. Nowhere in the book is there a suggestion that at the time he had any political ideas or aims other than winning, first the leadership, then the government. Indeed, according to the author, Loughheed might just as easily have become a Liberal. "It could have gone either way," he is alleged to have admitted.

If the facts the book describes are accurate—I must emphasize this because I do not myself know the Alberta Premier—Loughheed knew nothing about party programs or about the organization he set out to lead. This may well have been an advantage, since he could build everything in his own image, and this he did. His image is drawn by the information that "a select group of Conservative businessmen in both Calgary and Edmonton... considered Peter an ideal representative of their class." These are the elements in the province who went after him, and he has not disappointed them.

What astounds a person with my political

background is not only that a man so lacking in elementary political commitment should think of becoming a party leader, but that those in control of the party should seek him out. Loughheed had been a smart corporate executive with the Mannix Corporation, was a reliable corporate lawyer, and his grandfather had been a Tory senator. Apparently this was enough for the brass. And they have every reason to be proud of their judgement, for their choice learned fast □ of only how to win but also how to govern.

The book shows Loughheed to be authoritarian and ruthless. "Peter NM the government like a corporation," we are told. He holds the reins of power exclusively in his hands and exercises tight control over his cabinet and the civil service. This may explain why so many of his former ministers did not run in the recent election despite the fact that there was no doubt about the result.

The Premier apparently intimidates media people to such an extent that the author, a veteran reporter himself, is moved to write. "Conscientious political reporting is rare in Alberta," and to add: "Any critical reporting of Loughheed in Alberta is seen by the Premier as Eastern Canadian propaganda." We are told that when television was introduced into the Legislature, Loughheed insisted on a physical arrangement that results in the camera always facing the government benches. so that opposition speakers "appear on the screen as disembodied voices." This is more than partisan; it is ruthless.

Finally, the author expresses the view

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that "Lougheed's administration reflects the hopes, prejudices and ambitions of the upper-middle class to the exclusion of all others." Thus, the book is not sycophantic. The events are described in straightforward fashion, but there is a lack of depth in the analysis of the man and of the developments in which he has played a key role. □

Boning up on hard knocks

Violence in Canada, edited by May Alice Beyer Gammon, Methuen, 286 pages, \$10.95 paper (ISBN 0 458 93170 5).

The Prevention of Youthful Crime: The Great Stumble Forward, by James C. Hackler, Methuen, 252 pages, \$10.95 paper (ISBN 9 458 93180 2).

By ELRANOR SWAINSON

VIOLENCE AND DELINQUENCY are on the upswing these days, and if these recent sociological works are any indication, we can't expect much improvement. In *Violence in Canada* the editor's stated purpose is to examine violence from different perspectives in order to identify areas requiring further research. Fifteen contributors from several disciplines approach the topic in strikingly different ways, and the curious thing here is that all the interesting articles were written by non-sociologists.

The book is divided into four parts, dealing respectively with an "overview of the origins of violence," "domestic violence," "violence and the administration of justice," and "violence and the media." Since this volume purports to be about Canada, a more effective first section (and one which might have lent this study some cohesiveness) would have included, specifically, an "overview" of violence within the Canadian context, viz. Kenneth McNaught's "Violence in Canadian History." Since Gammon is acquainted with this article, I find its exclusion surprising.

Domestic violence is discussed in terms of wife-beating and child abuse. Though of interest for Dr. James Wilkes's brief but comprehensive article (one of the more intelligent statements in the book), this section adds little to our present knowledge.

The topic of rape is inevitable in such a trendy collection, and Maureen McTeer has contributed a useful essay that clearly illustrates why existing Canadian legislation is inadequate. Also included in part three are some fascinating figures on Canadian murder, courtesy of Statistics Canada.

No discussion of violence these days would be complete without a look at the media. And so included in part four are a touch of McLuhanism, an unbelievably silly article on youth hockey, and a rather suggestive article by the Queen's Printer on

the roles played by the media, the police, and the participants in public demonstrations.

That violence is inherent in mankind is clear from even a cursory reading of the Old Testament. That it assumes different forms and values in varying circumstances should be obvious. Yet a number of contributors to this pretentious study labour these points at tiresome length, couching them in sociological terminology that strikes this reader as little more than common sense dressed up in contemporary jargon.

James Hackler's honest and meticulously researched volume is a refreshing change. Hackler states at the outset that his purpose is to discuss not the causality of juvenile delinquency, but what to do about it. The problem, he argues convincingly, is enormously complex and must be approached with a sense of adventure tempered by reason and moderation.

Hackler believes that Canada should avoid mistakes made in the U.S. in the past, and he discusses a number of these in considerable detail. Study after study is quoted, leading to the conclusion that few advances have been made in the field of delinquency. Incarceration is known to be expensive and is widely regarded as inhumane. Prevention and treatment programs, it seems, don't work in most cases and may exacerbate the problem. Uncontrolled control groups and a variety of vested interests make accurate evaluation virtually impossible: even the most promising data, cautions the author, should be viewed with scepticism. "Experts" are too often inexperienced, and in any case, social policy is formulated, not by experts, but by politicians who are not always governed by the rationale of scientific findings.

What then of the future? Hackler wonders whether juvenile delinquency is one of the prices we pay for individualism and whether sometimes doing nothing might in fact be the wisest course. Alternatively he suggests a pot-pourri of possible programs, ranging from old-fashioned censure and punishment to diversion, vocational training, and transactional analysis. Such measures, he points out, have some intrinsic value, are cheaper than incarceration, and may prove to have some impact on delinquency in the long run. At any rate, they don't appear to do any harm.

Hackler would like future research to reveal how social problems come to be defined, and why people so often insist that something has to be done. That the public will continue to demand programs to prevent and/or treat delinquency is an underlying premise of this book. Perhaps the editor is mistaken. Given the current public mood, I suspect that a widespread knowledge of the statistical data so scrupulously presented by Mr. Hackler might be more likely to trigger a demand for the return of the lash. □



Out, damned Spot

The Dog Crisis, by his **Nowell, McClelland & Stewart**, 270 pages, \$7.95 paper (ISBN 0 7710 6795 x).

By **W. A. MARSANO**

A COUPLE OF interesting things happened in Toronto in 1977. (Yes, that many.) One was this: during the summer, an 11-year-old shoeshine boy was lured to a homosexual party, sexually abused and then murdered — drowned in a sink — resulting in an inflamed public outrage. It was one of those few times one could honestly say “the people took to the streets.” There were angry anti-homosexual rallies that came dangerously close to mob violence. There were instances of homosexuals being beaten on the streets. Toronto’s police and municipal government came down on the “sin strip” of lower Yonge Street like a billy club, and its message parlors were shut down in almost no time at all.

Another was this: there was a small rash — two or three cases — of small children being horribly savaged by vicious pet dogs, resulting in no civic outcry whatsoever. Two of the beasts were Nazi Shepherds; they got off with little more than a “Bad doggie!” The third, a Doberman, was gassed at the pound while rallying Doberman owners paraded without, trying to save the brute’s life.

I don’t want to be suspected of approving the harassment of homosexuals. I do want to point out the callousness of people who remain indifferent to crimes caused by man’s best friend. I admit that the dogs’ victims did not, at least, lose their lives — but they will live to fear another day. A three- or five-year-old child who has been facially disfigured by a savage animal — to the extent of requiring more than 140 stitches — will live in unavoidable terror for the rest of its life. And I will admit to prejudice, to not sharing the prevailing Disney-coloured view of the animal kingdom. Nevertheless, I can clap with only one hand for Iris Nowell.

Nowell has tackled an emotional subject with mere reason, and the result is an informative but ineffective tract that preaches to the converted and misses the sinners by a mile (1.6 kilometres).

She tries to be fair. She bears no grudge against the honest dog, or the intelligent owner who keeps his pet from fouling lawns and menacing children, who keeps it leashed and keeps it quiet. But, heavy-handed and moralistic in the worst Naderesque way, she can’t resist disapproving: of the huge quantities of food that pets eat (some of which would do more good, admittedly, in the protein-starved Third

World); of the billions of dollars spent in pet boutiques: of stupid fads like dog psychiatry. Dumb? Yes. But none of out business. If a man wants to send his dog to summer camp and later bury it in Paw Print Gardens, it’s his money, not ours. And it never pays to be humourless: the fact that Queen Elizabeth II’s pet promenade has a New York City fire hydrant for American dogs and an Edwardian lamppost for British ones suggests satire, not insensitive extravagance.

But the intelligent dog owner can learn something from him. Nowell reports that many “pedigreed” dogs are frauds sold by breeder who are amateurs at best and crooks at worst, and that lack of control of pedigree papers may make them about as reliable as a purchased diploma. She covers the pet-food industry well, making it clear that some manufacturers encourage unhealthy feeding through their advertising and that, as of the book’s publication, only one Canadian packer’s pet foods have passed the nutritional tests of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, even though adoption of CMVA standards would cost only four cents a case, or one sixth of a cent a can. There is a detailed chapter on dog-borne diseases, most of them revolting, that are dangerous to human beings, but this, too, is flawed by an apparent urge to indict: the worst disease covered (toxoplasmosis, which affects pregnant women and results in crippling birth defects) is spread by cats.

Those who don’t like dogs, their ceaseless barking and the old familiar faces that foul the streets and lawns, will also learn a lot; about the apparent ineffectiveness of free spaying and neutering clinics (which is how dog lovers make us pay for their pet care); about the millions of strays that are rounded up, killed (by injection, gassing, or “high-altitude decompression”) and later incinerated (much to the dismay of that odd breed of dog lover whose interest in animals is expressed only when the animals are about to be killed); and about the very small chance of getting elected officials to do anything about the problem.

But the irresponsible dog owner will be untouched by all of this — unless he is moved to irrational hostility of the kind that resulted in the leader of the Children Before Dogs organization being attacked by dog lovers, who pelted her with dogshit. (Pardon the vulgarity, but, as Nowell points out, that is what it is.)

The plain fact is that such people care more for their dogs than for their fellow man. They don’t believe that their dogs bark, bite or defecate — or that anyone has a right to complain about them. For now, the only response to this smug, uncaring denial is inarticulate rage — but it has gone beyond that in the past. In the 1830s, in New York, small boys with clubs killed dogs in the streets, and were paid a bounty of 50 cents a head. Is something like that a possibility? Maybe. Nowell says North America’s dog population will double by

Nancy-Gay Rotstein TAKING OFF

“HER VISION
IS STILL 20/20...”
—Irving Layton

I am greatly impressed by the economy and precision of this new collection, as well as by the widening of her concerns. Her vision is still 20/20, but she's seeing a great many more things with her optics. — Irving Layton

In this new book, written in response to the enthusiasm that greeted her earlier collection, *Through the Eyes of a Woman*, Canadian poet Nancy-Gay Rotstein takes the reader on three exciting adventures in one — the “Distant Journey” to faraway places and exotic locales; the “Human Journey,” where universal emotions and experiences that transcend culture are explored; and finally, the “Homeward Journey,” the most emotional and personal of all experiences.

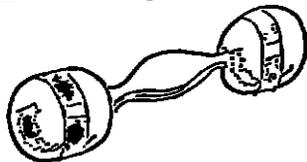
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1984; dog-home diseases and dog attacks will probably rise proportionately.

Too many dog owners don't care, and the dog* aren't at fault. They are, really, associate victims. The problem is the SOBs who inflict their dogs on the rest of us. They come in all shapes. Recently I took my three-year-old daughter Emily to the park to play with my neighbours' kids in the snow. As we trudged along, Emily towed on the toboggan behind. I spotted a woman and en



unleashed dog heading toward es, about 50 feet away. I began angling my little group away to the right, bet we couldn't get far enough away, and es we drew abreast, the dog charged my daughter, barking terribly. Emily, seated, is about 20 inches high; the dog, a huge, malemutish thing, towered over her, tensed end threatening. I was frightened stiff and Emily was screaming. Fortunately, two of the other children interposed themselves, and I turned to the dog's owner, trying to say not what I felt, which was fear and hatred, but something intelligent, like "Call off your dog." The women understood, the deer, in her limited way. She flashed a criminally stupid smile at me and said brightly, "Don't worry — she's only playing." □

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Job

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Victoria Branden

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Bluffing it in the bush

Silence Is My Homeland, by Gilean Douglas, Thomas Nelson and Sons, illustrated by Stephanie Scott Brown, 160 pages, \$10.25 cloth (ISBN 0 8117 1521 3).

Love in the Do8 House, by Molly Douglas, Nelson, Foster and Scott, 160 pages, \$10.95 cloth (ISBN 0 919324 32 0).

A New Kind of Country, by Dorothy Gilman, Doubleday, 125 pages, \$7.95 cloth (ISBN 0 385 13628 5).

Recreational Farming, by Eric Winter, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, illustrated, 1 6 2 pages, \$12.95 cloth (ISBN 007 0827087).

By SUSAN LESLIE

CATHARINE PARR TRAILL begs" her *Canadian Settler's Guide* by suggesting that all would-be Canadian homesteaders pose themselves the sobering question, "Have I sufficient energy of character to enable me to conform to the changes that await me in my new mode of life?" A century later, life in the Canadian backwoods still requires energy of character, end all those embarking on it — and certainly those attempting to write about it — should take measure of their moral resources. Mrs. Traill was, of co&se, a tough customer, and did not recommend homesteading for "idle sensualists" or otherwise self-indulgent persons. I suspect that, faced with these four books on country life in Canada, she would find three of the four authors unsuitable material.

Eric Winter, author of *Recreational Farming*, would, I think, meet with Mrs. Traill's approval. He is practical, dignified, and not without a sense of humour. But he is basically concerned with getting on with the job. He, like Mrs. Traill, obviously believes it is "better to be up end doing" than to spend much time considering where one is, or why one is there.

Mr. Winter writes for the city-dwellers who are not prepared to starve organically, but would like to free themselves hum their 33-foot lots and the local supermarket. Part-time farming, or amateur farming — assuming some reliable cash income from other sources — seems a reasonable compromise between country peace end city comforts.

Recreational Farming begins with a detailed discussion of how to find a suitable piece of land. The details are all practical: how to read plant hardiness-zone maps, the significance of degree days, and the important attributes of barns. Mr. Winter goes on to deal with soil survey maps and the merits ofhedgerows. While he has not attempted a complete compendium for part-time farmers, Mr. Winter does write enough about different modes of small-scale farming —

raising pigs, bee-keeping, trout-fanning, grazing beef cattle, breeding rabbits and growing hay — that one can begin to think seriously about them. He sensibly finishes his book with a list of free government publications that might be useful to his readers.

While this is all very business-like stuff, *Recreational Farming* is no dreary manual. Mr. Winter confesses in his preface that he set out to write this book because he wanted to "write something long end loose after five years with nothing more to show than office notes and small papers." Well, the year spent writing *Recreational Farming* was a productive one, and he ought to feel content that he has written something that is not only long and loose, bet also useful end consistently readable. Looseness, I assume, means warmth, humour, end occasional expansiveness, end *Recreational Farming* certainly possesses these qualities.

And now for the also-rans, though in fairness to Dorothy Oilman, Molly Douglas, and Gilun Douglas, it should be mentioned that they were not necessarily in the same race es Mr. Winter.

If Gilean Douglas sees herself in a backwoods literary tradition, it is one established by Henry Thoreau, and not by Mrs. Traill. Her *Silence Is My Homeland* is a collection of wilderness musings, end not a guide to anything. A former newspaper writer (among other things), she discovered en abandoned cabin somewhere in southwest British Columbia, and decided on first sight that this cabin would be home. She is obviously a sturdy woman. She has managed to be self-sufficient, living off what her smell garden provides, and what she can forage or fish for in her surroundings. She is also quite knowledgeable about the woods. Like Mrs. Traill before her, she is fascinated by wildflowers, and makes frequent reference to them. She is also a birdwatcher, and unashamedly writes on about the doings of Mrs. Barrow's Goldeneye Duck and Gussie the Grebe. Eve" this coy nonsense, however, does not disguise her genuine love of the bush.

But affectionate field notes just aren't enough. Nature wiling is extremely difficult to do well. Many of us are deluded into believing that our encounters with scenic grandeur are profound, unique moments. Well, the greatness of the great outdoors ain't news. And since it doesn't have novelty going for it, nature, es subject matter, has to be worked by a special sensibility before it can be presented in a fresh, unsentimental way. Douglas recognizes the problem:

It is so difficult to describe the happiness of simplicity, the joy of little things. Perhaps I sound sentimental and unreal when I write of what the trees, the mountains, the rivers and my little cabin meant to "le.

I'm afraid I think she does.

A New Kind of Country by Dorothy Gilman resembles *Silence Is My Homeland* in certain trivial ways: older women writer moves to the country, thinks about her life.

and proceeds to record and publish her reflections. But while Gilean Douglas is engaged in serious subsistence agriculture, Gilman think' occasionally of raising herb'. She is not attempting to survive done in the bush: her country home is a house in a Nova Scotian fishing village. With the proceeds (one assumes) from her previous books — described on the jacket as "the widely read Mrs. Pollifax novel" — she has settled into a life of solitude and contemplation. Her book is subtitled "an exploration into our essential aloneness and the wonderful country of the inner self." Gilman is hardly breaking trail in virgin territory: he refers frequently to such predecessors as Thoreau, Maurice Nicol, and Abraham Maslow. That 'he is not contending with crops or livestock or the raw elements doe' not diminish the scale of Gilman's adventure. She h's set out determined to find rebirth:

I insisted on bring. On mattering, at least. to myself. Without props. Cold turkey.

Lighting out for these territories of the spirit requires some courage, though I'm sure Mrs. Traill would dismiss it as utter trifling.

It is clear that Gilman is a practised writer. She knows the value of anecdote, and writes a strong, efficient prose. But while *A New Kind of Country* has large ambition, it is a modest book. It is thin and not very taxing and I left it feeling I'd had a mildly stimulating conversation with a therapist.

Molly Douglas, author of *Love In The Dog House*, doe' not have the same high aspirations as Dorothy Gilman or Gilean Douglas. I assume her aim is to be a brisk and amusing 'tory-teller. Her bock is definitely chatty, and this, I gather, is the intended effect. Molly Douglas, her husband Christopher, and their sons moved to a dairy farm in Manitoba some years ago. (This adventure is chronicled in a previous Douglas work, *Going West with Annabelle*.) Because the dairy business was rather uncertain, they fell into dog breeding to supplement the family income. The dogs — mostly long-coat chihuahuas — are introduced about page 20, and from there on in, they are the 'tory. There are tragic dog death' and heroic dog rescues; there is coy dog romance and sniggering dog sex. But then, right at the beginning, Ms. Douglas does give the reader fair warning. She announces that "Christopher and I are English and we love dog." I'm sure that other people who 'hare these traits will find *Love In The Dog House* delightful.

The enduring mythology, as Eric Winter puts it, of "the goodness of the country and the badness of the town" has resulted in many books. Some, one feels, have more to do with producing a cash income for country dweller', than they do with literature or love of the outdoors. About such books there is always the sense that the authors have entered on wilderness or country life for it' own sake, and then decided to make literary hay from their experience. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with that motive — except that it

seems frequently to lead to self-indulgent books. Maybe such authors would be better advised to turn their efforts to some more fruitful enterprise. Macramé, perhaps, or bee-keeping? □

Rephrasing the big question

In Defence of Federalism: The View from Quebec, by Gilles Lalande, translated from the French by Jo LaPierre, McClelland & Stewart, 128 pages, \$5.95 cloth (ISBN 0.57104563 8).

Canada's **Third Option**, edited by S. D. Berkowitz and Robert K. Logan, Macmillan, 282 pages, \$8.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7705 1589 4).

By JOHN GREGORY

MOST BOOKS ON the national unity question in recent year' have asked, "What does Quebec want?" or, "What can the rest of Canada do for Quebec?" Professors Lalande, Berkowitz, and Logan now have published works that go beyond these often plaintive questions and add new voices to the debate.

Lalande's *In Defence of Federalism* addresses the pertinent question. "What does Quebec have now?" Published in French in 1972, and well translated by Jo LaPierre, the book remains remarkably up to date. It opens with a useful review of the main theories of federalism as a political and social organization. It then builds on this foundation to argue against the most common challenges heard in Quebec against Canadian federalism, many of which, say' Lalande, spring from a narrow legalism to which the French Canadian élite, traditionally (and conservatively) educated in the law, are particularly susceptible.

Lalande goes on to attack the contention that Quebec must always be a minority within Confederation. This point, always more psychological than political, results from the trauma of the Conquest. Lalande calls it an excuse for inaction in the same vein as the "colony" theory and other political programs basal on cultural insecurity. Even where he is less convincing, such as in his criticism of Quebec's right to self-determination, he does raise many difficulties usually ignored in popular rhetoric on the subject. While Lalande does not pretend that all has been, or is, perfect for Quebec in Confederation, he will not condemn federalism on the basis of it' history. A political and social system that allows the progress and assertiveness of Quebecers over the last 15 years simply does not deserve summary dismissal. Had Wandé revised his work for this translation he might have noted that the current sep-

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From Fitzhenry & Whiteside

artist leaders almost all formed their opinions in the early 1960s or before., and still justify their policies with statistics from. for example, the Bi and Bi Commission, which used the best data available --in 1965.

Berkowitz and Logan expand the second question to. "What can Canada do about everything?" Canada has three options: to continue the status quo as well as Possible: to let Quebec go its separate way; or to make fundamental constitutional and social changes in a systematic way. The editors admit that there is no risk-free choice, but strongly urge the third option.

The contributors to the volume set forth the shortcomings of the present society and propose more or less radical solutions. From the conventional political discussion, leading off with federal and Parti Québécois cabinet ministers, the book examines the cultural crisis with Milton Acorn, Marshall McLuhan, and Bi and Bi Commission members; regionalism and the economy, including welfare, health services, conservation and resource management; and social threats to unity, such as legal inequities, health and education problems and environmental and scientific failings. In summation, Senator Lamontagne pleads for a new basis for consensus and the editors tie up the contributions and make their recommendations. The volume closes with a thorough list of names and addresses of organizations across the country that are concerned with national unity in the broad sense.

If there is a common theme in the third option, it is a strong faith in the state end, behind it. "the people." This shows at best a great deal of wishful thinking. Most of the authors are academics, with the predictable academic weakness of building models from abstractions, of talking in universals -both for damning and praising -and of ignoring obvious political objections to their schemes. As a result, many of the innovative suggestions veer off into unacceptable absolutes. Anthony Scott proposes an interesting reallocation of political competences according to the economic potential of public service. Unfortunately he then writes off politics as irrelevant, even though the Quebec debate is more political than economic, and in a world of scarcity the allocation of revenues among levels of government will always be contentious. The editors propose that Canada should be completely bilingual. Considering the fierce opposition to the present policy of official bilingualism, mere tokenism in much of the country, how can such dreaming be helpful?

For writers who profess faith in "the people," the contributors feel free to condemn policies that have strong popular support, such as harsh prison sentences and cheap gasoline. They will often not allow that people of good will have built the present society, and that it has not been done completely wrong. Writing as if we could all get along together happily with a bit more clear thinking and a bit less foreign domination will not take us very far. The

30 Books in Canada. May 1979

possibility of creating an effective political will is even further from their minds than from Professor Lalande's. Being sensible is never very inspiring, of course, and it can prevent one from seeing the really new idea. The purpose of this collection is laudable, and it is often stimulating. If the contributors, and editors, had relaxed some of their academic passion for absolutes, it would have been even more helpful and much less irritating. □

○ tempora, ○ mors

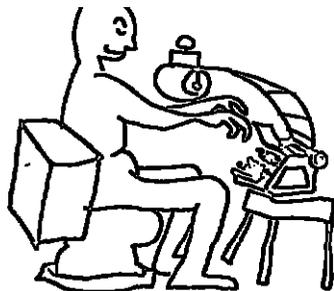
You Cannot Die. by Ian Currie, Methuen, 288 pages, \$9.95 cloth (ISBN 458 93750 9).

By RICHARD LUBBOCK

THIS IS THE original bad-news book. There we were, paddling along among the ice and wreckage of the late-20th century, happy and confident that we would soon pass through the gates of all-merciful Death, and succumb to the obliterative psychotherapy of acute mors (as it is known to the readers of medical dictionaries), when along comes Ian Currie and assures us, cool as custard, that it cannot happen. You Cannot Die, he insists. I do not wish to know that.

Fortunately for the sceptical reader, note single idea of this work is credible despite, or perhaps because of, repeated incantations in the name of Science. Science is said to prove this, and to prove that. Irrefutable scientific tests litter Currie's pages as far as the eye can see. It's enough to make a fellow believe in the curative powers of Neo-Citran, but not in survival after death. To be more precise, metempsychosis, the transmigration of souls, is the ultimate target toward which Mr. Currie relentlessly drives.

"I change but I cannot die," sang the poet Shelley, but neither Shelley nor his ghost sing in these wooden pages. The Augustan poet Ovid devoted the entire 15th book of his Metamorphoses to a charming and seductive interpretation of the metempsychosis conjecture, as originally set forth by the Greek philosopher Pythagoras during the sixth century B.C. But neither Pythagoras nor Ovid is mentioned by Currie, and



there's nothing poetic or charming in his manner. Perhaps Currie is ashamed that his subject matter has such an ancient history. Fearful lest it appear old-hat, he makes his speculation "scientific" and hot-diggerty-dog up to date. After all, science is what drags the crowds in, in this day and age of Star Wars and hand calculators. Although, to be fair, he does toss in an occasional epigraphic chapter heading from Keats, Heraclitus, or the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

Argumentum ad hominem seems to be the chief persuasive strategy of this tract, and doctors of philosophy and medicine and university departments are referred to repeatedly by title as though the mere incantations of the syllables of their names provided the slightest guarantee for logical thought or rational understanding. On the contrary. To judge from You Cannot Die, exposure to university training even at the lowest level leads to irreversible rotting of the little gray cells. On page 173, for example, the author brandishes a cluster of four American Ph.D.s at the reader, followed in short order by the names of a Brazilian psychiatrist and a Chicago physician. Such a fusillade of degreedom may stun the critical powers of the naive reader, but I feel impelled to interpret the references as evidence of the neurotoxic properties of "higher" education, and think it a matter to lay before Ralph Nader or the Sierra Club.

The book consists largely of a pollution of experiences reported by people who have hovered at or near the point of death. I suppose you could call them "periomortal" experiences by analogy with periodontal disease (or pyorrhoea). I cannot doubt the reality of the experiences any more than I doubt that some people see stars when they are punched in the eye. In fact, I have met people with periomortal experiences to recount, and they seem to me to be completely sane and sincere. But that does not ensure that these people have actually "died" in the strictest sense of the word (meaning rigor mortis, cooling of the body, clouding of the corneas, and so forth) and even at that it would not entail that their visions must necessarily be interpreted as evidence of an afterlife. There are other possibilities, such as the action of stress on the nervous system, to be disposed of before we fell back with despair upon the immortality hypothesis.

Currie has accumulated dozens of periomortal and related "psychic" anecdotes in his book, apparently labouring under the delusion that a mere collection of evidence produces, by some sheet mess-effect, the result of scientific Proof. That simply isn't so. Science, as is well known, proceeds by the method of conjecture and refutation: conjectures, such as a theory of gravitation, are plucked out of the air, and then attempts are made to test them to destruction. Solon.9 as a conjecture remains unrefuted it is tentatively held to be true, but no scientific theory is ever expected to survive forever. Science can disprove things, but has never proven anything.

The most that can be said for the yarns related by Currie's pseudo-dead subjects, and for all other research into the parapsychological realm, is that they do not appear to consist entirely of fraud and lies. I do not believe that existing methods of scientific investigation have any value in the study of metempsychosis, or anything remotely like it. On the other hand, Currie and his friends and readers are free to assert and believe any damned rubbish they please.

I choose not to credit a single shred of it. If there is any good at all in this world it lies solely in the fact that I can look forward to death and eternal annihilation. And that, I trust, marks the end of the matter. □

The man upstairs is not amused

Multinationals and the Peaceable Kingdom, by Harry Antonides, Clarke Irwin. 248 pages. \$13.95 cloth (ISBN 0 7720 11966).

By DAN HILTS

IN THE 18th and 19th centuries it wasn't uncommon for those with the time, the money, and the proselytizing zeal to publish

at their own expense their version of how the world worked, what was wrong with it, and what could be done to fix it. The author would mail copies to his friends, pass them out at parties, and try to get booksellers to stock them. Sometimes important or interesting works gained attention this way. *Multinationals and the Peaceable Kingdom* is in that tradition, except that it was not printed privately, it is not an important work, and it is interesting only to those with a penchant for arcane dogma.

Harry Antonides is a follower of the Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea, formulated in the Netherlands in the 19th century, refined in the 1920s, and nurtured at the Free University of Amsterdam and the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. This group has "developed a new philosophy taking its starting point in biblical revelation and concentrating on the themes of creation, sin and redemption."

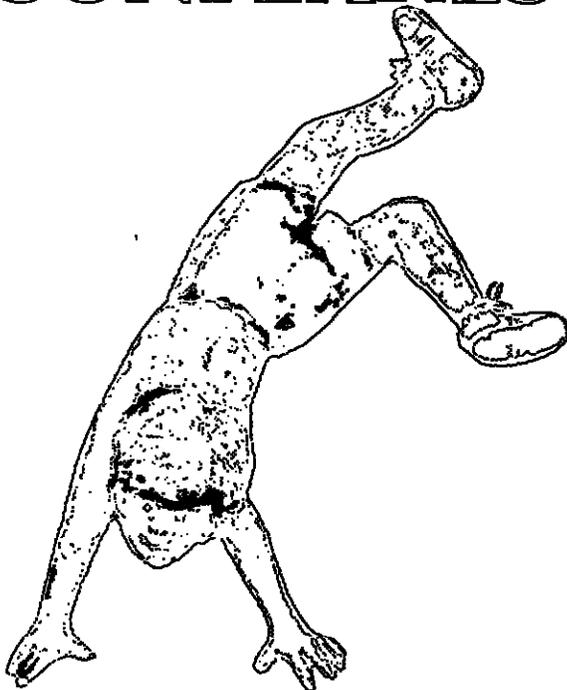
The book is divided into three parts. The first deals with the origins, growth, size, and influence of the multinationals. The author takes a deep breath, a firm grip on the reader's lapel, and after 67 pages of facts and figures, statistics and tables, concludes that the multinationals are large, wealthy, and powerful. Part Two deals with responses to the multinationals, and Part Three looks at the roots of The Problem. Each part ends with a two-page summary end at the back of the book are the conclusions and 34 pages of notes.

Antonides believes that the multinationals are the most visible and worrisome result of modern business and technology, which have diverted man from his innate spirituality to a destructive materialism. That's why things haven't been going so well lately. The beleaguered multinationals not only have to worry about fluctuating exchange rates, class-action law suits, nationalization, taxes, kidnappings, and bribing politicians, but now they must also look nervously to the heavens — God is not amused.

Antonides is well-versed and not afraid to show it. Each chapter begins with two, usually three, long quotations, and throughout the text there are long quotations from a wide variety of sources. The book wasn't so much written as assembled. It covers so much economic, political, and philosophical ground that a detailed discussion of the ideas is not possible here. But how does the author manage to go from global economic problems, some of which are caused by multinational corporations, through modern men's social, motel and political quandaries, including Canada's relations with the United States, to some possible solutions? He does it with God instead of a good editor. The book should have been reduced to the preface, the three summaries, and the conclusions — which would have been fewer than 20 pages — and published as a lone article in a small magazine. □

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A surfeit of bodies: French skeletons, Miller's anatomy, and the plague years

THE LAST TIME I reviewed Raymond Souster — in the *Globe and Mail* six or seven years ago — I suggested that he was a somewhat overrated poet. I was particularly troubled by his didacticism, an inability to restrain himself from adding trite punch lines to some of his best poems. Souster responded to my criticism in his next collection with a two-line poem titled "Thanks to Morris Wolfe": "It's finally out," he wrote, "I've been over-rated -/Now I'll be more loved and far less hated."

I don't know whether it's because I've been immortalized by Souster, or because my critical faculties have matured (or degenerated), but reading Souster's latest collection, *Ranging In* (141 pages, Oberon, \$6.95). I found myself much less troubled by what I complained about earlier. Oh, there are still poems that are two or three lines too long — "What to Do With the Robin," for instance, or "Fallen Apple Blossoms." And then are still poems that are a bit too cute — the one about the cat, for example, who's "always cat-napping/when I go by in the morning/(no doubt dog-tired/ from a hard night's mousing)."

But these seem hut minor flaws in a poet whose quiet perceptions are an almost constant delight. "Souster, you bastard"/he writes. "Admit now your first reaction/on hearing of his death by heart-failure/in a lousy New York cab,/was this most unfeeling, callous thought:/just think, from tomorrow on/the prices of my Lowell firsts/could easily double!"

As always, many of his best poems deal with the past, sometimes nostalgically, sometimes ironically: the Maple Leafs' Busher Jackson and Charlie Conacher playing street hockey on a Christmas morning; Bobby Hackett blowing "that sweet right horn" of his on his final visit to Toronto; Souster's father digging a gun-pit at Vimy Ridge "and finding the skeletons/of two French *poilu*, shreds of uniform I still clinging to their bones,/who'd died there attacking I in a not-so-good year/of a war supposed to end/what all wars are started for." Maybe the time has come for a collected Souster.

MANY OF us know the wonderfully eclectic Dr. Jonathan Millet through such work as his satirical revue *Beyond the Fringe*; his film version of *Alice in Wonderland*; his *New Yorker* (and other) essays on a variety of subjects; and his perceptive little book, *McLuhan, in the Fontana Modern Masters* sties. (Reading McLuhan, says Miller, altered the way he looked at the world. The

irony is, he writes, "I can't remember a single observation [by McLuhan] which I now hold, to be true, nor indeed a single theory which eve" begins to hold water.")

Now Miller has made a major contribution in his "own" field — medicine. The *Body in Question* (352 pages, Clarke Irwin, \$21.50) based on his 13-part, BBC television series, is a compelling history of our perception of our own bodies. Particularly surprising (to me, anyway) is Miller's suggestion that it's only tally in the past quarter century or so that we've come to understand how the body works and protects itself as its own "private hospital." This growth in understanding has come largely, says Miller, from machines that in one way or another replicate the functions of the body. We didn't really understand how the heart worked until we'd invented the pump (in the 17th century); the invention of automatic gun-turrets has given us an understanding of voluntary muscular movement; and so on.

Miller delights in raising questions that seem simple-minded: What is pain? What is blood? He the" proceeds, in beautifully clear prose, to demonstrate that the answer isn't nearly as simple as we might believe. Even when he's telling us things that we have some knowledge of, he does so in a way that's fresh and that pushes our understanding. "We have retained in the blood-s&am," he writes, "active representatives of our original one-celled ancestors, white blood cells, and these stroll freely through the circulation, ready to make themselves available when the inflammatory call is raised." There's a similar freshness about Miller's choice of illustrations. At first glance they seem curiously idiosyncratic, at times eve" grotesque. But they almost always force the reader to see things at least slightly differently. In that sense, *The Body in Question* reminds me of John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*. I hope a" inexpensive edition of the book becomes available soon.

THE TORONTO *Star* devoted a full page to Margaret Trudeau the day before her serialized autobiography began. Two thirds consisted of a" advertisement urging people to read the sordid tale that would unfold in the *Star* over the next live days. The rest was a" article headed "Maggie's antics have 'shattered' her parents"; it offered us what purported m be inside gossip "bout just how humiliated the Sinclairs are.

If I ran a bookstore, I would have pinned that page over a display of Christopher Lasch's new book, *The Culture of Narcissism* (268 pages, Musson, \$15.95). The

juxtaposition would have bee" iust right. For according to social critic Lasch, capitalist society is on its last legs. The symptoms are to be found everywhere — in our private lives we've all become voyeurs and hypochondriacs, on the one hand eager to have the goods on one another and on the other ever searching for ways to assuage our own battered egos. Meanwhile, the institutions that have been the focus of our public lives — church, school, and government — are in decline all around us. "Even Canada," writes the gloomy Lasch, "long a bastion of stolid bourgeois dependability, now faces in the separatist movement in Quebec a threat to it's very existence as a nation."

Obviously, there's some truth in what Lasch has to say. But there's much that's irritating about his book. His style is ponderous. And he tells us nothing that the best American social critics — me" such as Paul Goodman and Edgar Z. Friedenberg — haven't told us before and better. Nevertheless this hook should do extremely well. The word "narcissism" in the title guarantees that it'll nuke voyeurs tbnk that they're getting the goods and hypochondriacs that they're getting the cure.

* * *

I HOPE LASCH takes the time to read Barbara Tuchman's brilliant new book. *A Distant Mirror: The Catastrophic Fourteenth Century* (677 pages, Knopf, \$21.00). Because, as Tuchman (pronounced Tuck-man) points out, "If our last decade or two of collapsing assumptions has been a period of unusual discomfort, it is reassuring to know that the human species has lived through worse before." Despair, she implies, is folly.

Tuchman set out to discover the effects on society of the worst disaster in recorded history — the Black Death — which killed one third of the population between India and Iceland in the years 1348-1350 alone. But she found it difficult to isolate the effects of pestilence from the effects of all the other travails of the period. It was a horrendous lime. Feudalism was breaking down. The knighthood failed to protect: the Church failed to lead. No government was able m maintain order. Bands of unemployed mercenaries ravaged the countryside. "People," says Tuchman in her exquisite prose, "felt subject to events beyond their control, swept, like flotsam at sea, hither and yon in a universe without reason or purpose. They lived through a period which suffered and struggled without visible advance. They longed for a remedy, for a revival of faith, for stability and order that "ever came."

I'm not competent to judge medievalist Geoffrey Barraclough's criticisms of Tuchman's historical scholarship. He argues that she ought to have stayed clear of a period in which she is not a specialist. But much of the appeal of *A Distant Mirror* is that an intelligent generalist has provided us with something that all the specialists with all their knowledge have failed to do — a fascinating overview of a period about which most of us are almost totally ignorant. □

Here comes the Master Gatherer, wasting trees to make himself a target once again

JOHN ROBERT COLOMBO is a self-made target. There's such a glut of his trivial books that they practically beg to be criticized; and of course, since his main concern seems to be self-promotion, any publicity is good publicity. He trips from publisher to publisher as if the entire industry were his own private vanity press. I mean, trees have given their lives for such books as Colombo's *Names & Nicknames* (NC Press, 212 pages), stupendously overpriced at \$1 1.95 cloth. After all, this self-styled "checklist" is barely half a book, since it's printed double-spaced and everything's entered twice, like an English-French, French-English dictionary. Thus a reader may look up Judy La Marsh and make the astonishing discovery that her nickname is Judy, then look up Judy, and discover Judy La Marsh. Naturally, the names that interested me most were writers' pseudonyms (for example, John Glassco, a.k.a. Nordyk Nudleman and Hideki Okada, among others), but many more are lost to obscurity because there aren't any explanatory notes. I'm sure, for one thing, that nobody except Colombo really thinks of Alexei Kosygin as Chief Golden Eagle, but there's an entry to that effect. He also confuses Barry Broadfoot, the author, with Dave Broadfoot, the comedian, and there are cryptic double entries for football players Normie Kwong (Lim Kwong Yew) and Normie Quong (the China Clipper). Since these aren't cross-referenced, presumably they played for different teams. Old football fans will be curious, too, about William Lougheed (the Blue-eyed Sheik), reportedly Premier of Alberta. (Does Peter know?) Colombo's self-gratifying entry for himself is Master Gatherer. In the interests of increasing his collection, allow me to suggest another: Schlock Absorber.

Earle Birney's *Big Bird* in the Bosh (Mosaic Press/Valley Editions, 95 pages, \$4.95 paper and \$10.00 cloth) is another book that probably wouldn't have been published if its author weren't so well known. It includes Birney's short stories "Waiting for Queen Emma" (which I recognized from public-school days as "Enigma in Ebony") and "Mickey Was a Swell Guy," and an excerpt from his Depression novel, *Down the Long Table*. Much of the rest is literary marginalia, such as a guest column for Eric Nicol from the Vancouver *Province*, a light piece on university students' illiteracies from *Saturday Night*, and an interesting discourse on duelling. The title story is about a dumb East Kootenay bush rancher who discovers a phoenix (he calls it a "feenick") on his

property. Written in dialect, it was wisely rejected by Canadian magazines for two years before *Mademoiselle* bought it "for about five times what any Toronto editor would have paid." Birney feels smug about this.

Then there's a handful of genuine vanity books. Mahony's *Minute Mm* by Chris Stewart and Lynn Hudson (Stewart & Hudson Books, Box 157, Riverhurst, Sask. SOH 3P0, 121 pages, \$4.95 paper) is a history of the Saskatchewan Provincial Police, a force that existed under Commissioner Charles Augustus Mahony from 1917 to 1928. One of their cases so interested the w-authors that they've expanded it into a separate 35-page pamphlet. Murder in Uniform — the story of a Royal North West Mounted Police officer, John Wilson, who murdered his pregnant wife in 1918, then married another woman only 48 hours later. Around the same time a half-pound container of opium could be made for \$4.50 (the price of a soporific paperback today) in Stanley, B.C., according to *And So ... That's How It Happened* by W. M. Hong (Box 229, Wells, B.C. VOK 2R0, 255 pages, \$9.95 paper). A retired prospector, Hong, 77, has included a lot of technical information, plus maps and photos, in his recollections of the Stanley-Barkerville area

from 1900 to 1975, but some of the early historical materiel about Chinese immigrants is fascinating. Also noted: *Historical Bells* (89 pages, f5.95 paper), research into various school bells, church bells, and others in Northern Ontario, funded by the Canada Council and compiled by Verna Stasiuk Freed (Box 665, Station B, Sudbury, Ont.).

I don't know why Jim Brown's *The Prime Minister's Pocket* (Blue Mountain Books, 56 pages, \$4.95 and \$12.95 cloth) was published as a book — though judging from the number of times his name appears on their backlist, Bmwn most know the publishers pretty well. It's a very little fable (large type, lots of space-filling illustrations by Julie Zangmo) about what happens when the beaver, caribou, and Queen, who live on various coins in the prime minister's pocket, decide to hop on the *Bluenose* (the ship on the dime) and vamoose. In short, nothing much.

And finally, let me add to my list of Ideas Whose Time Has Come and Gone: *Louisa Clark's Annual, 1843* by Beverly Fink Cline (Press Porcépic, 64 pages, \$2.95 paper), the third volume in a series of annuals featuring 19th-century verse, illustrations, music, and commentary. Anyone who feels driven to study the archaic maunderings of such historical figures as Dr. William "Tiger" Dunlop can find them in profusion elsewhere, rather than read them in snippets here. Besides, Dunlop, Susanne Moodie, Catharine Parr Traill, et al. do it better than the semi-fictional entries interspersed among the documentary items by Cline in her guise as Louisa Clark. Evidently Cline is dedicating her life to the production of these books. Somebody should tell her? to stop. □

on/off/set

by Pler Giorgio Di Cicco

Doing splits between man and God and bridging schisms with a found brassiere

THE MOST DELIGHTFUL book of poetry in this column's crop is Marty Gervais' *The Believable Body* (Fiddlehead, 47 pages, \$3.50), a versatile collection of love lyrics, portraits, and meditations on friends and men-woman relations. Gervais shows himself to be a virtuoso of free verse, long poems, anecdotal pieces, found poems, and imagistic poems — all handled equally well. The poetry is informed by a generosity for its subject. Gervais has a point of view, but he admits that the world he lives in is the oily "believable" one, and he isn't out to change it. It's perhaps for this reason that he can provide some hilarious poems on women's liberation, male sexuality, and the media manipulation of our schisms. The title poem is a found poem from a *Weekend*

Magazine brassiere advertisement: "When I you give, it gives. Wherever you touch, / it touches back. And against your body I it feels like your body." Gervais' book subtly argues for the organic and against the split between mind and body, sexuality and emotion, form and content. The poems themselves have no such imbalance. Meanwhile, here's a book of poems that doesn't leave the concern with sexual politics to the "matriarchy" of Canadian writers. The "mountain man" school of poets should follow suit.

Patrick white's poetry (*The God in the Rafters, Borealis*, 72 pages, \$3.95) is more concerned with the visionary, the split between man and God, heaven and earth, the wished-for world and the world as is.

These are important themes, but the danger is that the reader may feel left out of these Herculean dialogues. As in the poetry of Irving Layton, one must identify with the human stance and be persuaded to hear a spokesman on behalf of the human condition. In the lesser poems, pomposity overtakes boldness: but where the poems succeed, as in White's "An Attempt at Prayer," the reader is grateful to have left the mundane world for those debates for which the mundane is only a disguise. One doesn't want to argue with such an opening line as: "Lord, I am in love with your planet." If the thesis is artistically tenable, then the poem becomes a welcome addition to that rarest of Canadian genres, the celebrative; if the poem fails, it is accused of the ridiculous or the maudlin. Short of either extreme one should recognize that the reach has exceeded the grasp. White's sense of rhythm is impressive. It never fails him, though the poems occasionally do.

Mike Zizis (*Intrigues in the House of Mirrors*, Absolute 0 Kelvin Ink, 42 pages, \$4.95) gives us an apprenticeship volume, exploring his Italian roots, but more fundamentally exploring language. As the title suggests, the exploration is fragmented and tentative. The problem is not one of roots, but of methodology. Zizis is trying to forge a voice out of influences as disparate as Tom Marshall and Diane Wakoski. This leads him into open-field composition, prose poems or free verse in stanzas even when

the tone doesn't require these mode changes. The book is poignant if seen as a quest, a painful progress report from the house of language.

M. C. Warrior (*Quitting Time*, Macleod Books, 350 W. Pender St., Vancouver, 28 pages, unpriced) is a West Coast poet writing out of his experience in British Columbia logging camps. Warrior has a definite voice, unclouded, undistracted by either the metaphysical or the existential: "After a certain/point all rational/thought ceases." In fact Warrior's poems forestall intellectualization. He reacts immediately to his physical environment, to corrupt politics, or to the hazards of class oppression. This is the poetry of revolt, necessary, urgent, spontaneous, and unmindful of the other side of the argument. If Warrior is regional, he is regional in the best sense. Like Wayman, he is rooted in the West Coast landscape and writes of global injustices in Chile, in Ottawa, or anywhere else. A commendable first book.

Borealis Press has released its second in a series of Ottawa anthologies entitled *Poets of the Capital II* (136 pages, \$5.95). It provides a generous sampling of the work of Brenda Fleet, George Johnston, Joy Kogawa, Christopher Levenson, Robin Mathews, Seymour Mayne, and Carol Shields. These are fairly good choices, but one hears little of the work of newer poets in the capital. Brenda Fleet publishes so rarely that it is at least good to see another

selection of her poems. Kogawa is at her consistent best. She is an underrated craftsman eclipsed by her more topical contemporaries. Johnston's selection, on the other hand, suffers from topicality and references to Ottawa. Levenson's selection is representative and includes his outstanding long poem, "The Journey Back." Carol Shields's talents lie in the area of fiction, and naturally her more notable poems are character portraits. And then there is Robin Mathews who, if not a poet, is at least in the capital, lamenting the foreign influence of Pablo Neruda on young Canadian poets.

The quarterly magazine *Review Ottawa* (Box 4789, Station B, Ottawa) has changed its name to Author to avoid confusion with *The Ottawa Review*. Since the colourful death of *The Canadian Review*, it is now one of only two magazines devoted to publishing poetry regularly in Ottawa. The format of *Anthos* is attractive, the editing judicious, and its scope international. The winter, 1978, issue boasts good contributions from Seymour Mayne and Mike Doyle as well as translations of Nordic Poetry by George Johnston and translations of Eugenio Montale by Antonino Mazza. Ottawa's other poetry magazine is *Arc* (Department of English, Carleton University, \$4.00 for two issues). Its first issue includes poems by Don Coles, Claude Liman, and Robert Gibbs among others as well as provocative essays by D. G. Jones and Doug Barbour. □

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Why does CanLit say okay to John McCrae but insist that Frank Prewett blew it?

CANLIT: WHAT IS IT? The responses to *January's Books in Canada survey*. "Balancing the Books." prompted me to ask this question yet again — following as it did upon a curious experience arising from an article of mine. The questionnaire inevitably provided some instances of the issue in its crudest form. Among the so-called Canadian novels dubbed "underrated" were works by two English writers. Malcolm Lowry and Wyndham Lewis, both of whom happened to live and write in Canada for a while. Neither, however, made even the formal gesture that strangely enrols Brian Moore in the CanLit regiment — taking citizenship (then taking off for Hollywood and a confirmed reversion to non-Canadian subject-matter). But should citizenship be the criterion? After all, Lowry at least felt a strong spiritual affinity for that part of the West Coast where he lived. He even took pride in the thought that in *Under the Volcano* he had written "the great Canadian novel." But in what sense it could have been that I cannot see, since not only was its author utterly English in birth, upbringing, education, and mental outlook, but also the novel is set entirely outside Canada (recalled from a hot distance as Firmin's "genteel Siberia"). I suppose Lowry was influenced by his possessive Canadian supporters and felt, gratefully, Canadian. The preposterous acquisition of Lowry has by now become a mere reflex; casual allusions such as this, from 'W. J. Keith's introduction to the New Canadian Library edition of Ruby Wiebe's *The Blue Mountains of China*. are frequent: "Whenever I am asked to name the Canadian novels that I consider worthy to stand with the best from other countries and cultures, *The Blue Mountains of China* (along with Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano*) is invariably the first to spring to mind." *Under the Volcano* a product of Canadian culture? Surely so precise a critic as Keith knows better.

As for Wyndham Lewis, if *The Self-Condemned* is a Canadian novel — as George Woodcock, for one, persists in asserting — then *Kangaroo* is Australian, *Aaron's Rod* Italian, and *The Plumed Serpent* Mexican; but I am not aware that any of those countries feels the need to strengthen its culture by appropriating D. H. Lawrence as a national author. Why should Canadians go on making these anomalous attributions? Is CanLit so impoverished, still, in its native tight? I don't think so.

So far, it may seem I am pleading that nationality should determine what is Cana-

din. Since several admired writers long resident in Canada remain technically American citizens, I can see why that criterion might appear uncomfortably rigid. Yet it is the only one that makes sense in international practice. The French didn't claim Henry Miller or Vladimir Nabokov (Samuel Beckett belongs to French literature because he has written in French, but only in the same sense as all writers in English belong to that universal entity, English literature); the Americans will not attempt to enrol Sokhenitsyn. Let's try to be clear who's who, without making anyone suffer for it.

This brings me to the more personal experience I referred to, which recently sharpened my sense of the absurdity of the situation. It arose from a critical essay I wrote on an overlooked Canadian poet. Rank Prewett (1893-1962). Prewett grew up in his native Ontario, won a place at Oxford before the First World War, but quickly joined up. During the war he met Robert Graves and Siegfried Sassoon, both of whom encouraged his poetic efforts. He was also noticed by Eddie Marsh, who included him in his *Georgian Poetry anthologies*. After the war and Oxford, Prewett returned briefly to Canada, then went back to England where, apart from a few more years spent here in the 1920s, he published his poetry. He did so continually for at least his last 30 years. His *Collected Poems*, selected and introduced by Graves, was posthumously published by Cassell in 1964. My article was declined by two journals specializing in CanLit. Their refusals were polite: one could not give the space to an (admittedly) minor figure; the other, while complimentary about the article's style, turned it down on the quaint grounds that Prewett was not really Canadian except "by bii" and that his poetry lacked Canadian content. It was suggested, perhaps because I have published studies of two English war poets, that I might be interested in attempting an assessment of John McCrae.

Here, then, were three curiosities worth pandering. While evidently an Englishman who chooses to live in Canada for some years may be adopted as a Canadian writer, a Canadian who does the reverse is not Canadian enough. Not, I suspect, unless he earns a considerable reputation; the nationalist critics come running then (for example, to Mavis Gallant). Secondly, what is Canadian content, in poetry of all things? Mention of Canadian places, manners, social and political issues, perhaps. But what of the universals that move a poet such

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as Prewett (and countless others, Canadian or not) — love and loss, solitude, belief and doubt, moral choice, the “placeless” experiences of the human condition? This was not the point, of course. Prewett’s Canadianness was too little evident in his poetry or his life. (The article was, at the time, accepted by a Canadian journal that takes a broad view of the supranational quality of modern poetry in English.)

My third cause for reflection stems from the kind suggestion that I might try my hand at assessing McCrae. Now, if Prewett won’t do, why will McCrae? Well, he went to McGill (not Oxford) where he was rightly admired as both man and surgeon, and it was with a McGill unit he joined the British Expeditionary Force. Of course, it was McCrae, we all know, who made the famous Canadian contribution to First World War poetry, “In Flanders Fields.” Is that a Canadian poem? No, it’s a poem. And what of the 30 fugitive pieces posthumously collected and published under that poem’s title by the Ryerson Press in 1920? There is a romantic-historical fragment on Quebec — “Helen, guardian of the strong” — but the rest could have been written anywhere at that time by any minor poet saturated in the English Romantic tradition, as were McCrae and most of his 19th-century Canadian forerunners. Prewett is a more individual poet, with a more complex sensibility struggling against the limitations of conventional form; McCrae’s is meagre, immature verse that gives no promise of greater things had he lived. The notion that the author of “In Flanders Fields” merits Canadian interest and identity, while Prewett does not, has no grounds in logic or critical consistency — only in muddled nationalistic sentiment.

On the strength of one poem’s popular reputation, McCrae’s Guelph home has become a place of pilgrimage. Imagine similar reverence being accorded by the English to the birthplace of Laurence Binyon, the author of a comparable piece of popular sentiment, “For the Fallen”! But then the English have Wilfred Owen, Sassoon, and Isaac Rosenberg. Does McCrae’s slight achievement really deserve so much fuss? When will this kind of thing be outgrown?

No one who reads can doubt that it is deep-rooted and spreading. The obligatory reminder, in publishing and reviewing in this country, of the nationality of a writer everyone knows is Canadian has degenerated into a sort of infantile possessiveness. The plain silliness this leads to is illustrated by blurbs such as this (from a New Canadian Library edition): “A unique autobiography, filled with the passionate agony, and paradox of a vital Canadian talent — novelist Frederick Philip Grove, who gave us *Master of the Mill*, . . .” It was written about *In Search of Myself*, an excessively lying autobiography by a writer born and reared in Germany, who was 30 when he came here, having already published in Germany, and whose “memoirs”

breathe nothing so “passionately” as a regret for the loss of Europe and its cultural centres, “Vital Canadian talent” indeed!

A piquant further irony is that this particular Grove book is one of his worst, its language anything but vital, its romantic fabrication of his early life the stuff of novelettes. This is not to deny that, from the publication of *Over Prairie Trails*, Grove entered Canadian literature. What seems absurd is the anxious stress on his Canadianness, especially in such a book. Grove’s place in Canadian literature may be compared to Conrad’s in English: Conrad’s novels belong there, but no one ever has or ever will puff them as those of “a vital English talent.” Now that we do have a Conradian figure among us, the Czech novelist in exile Josef Skvorecky, it will surely not be long before an eager critic presses him into the CanLit regiment.

The ramifications of this issue are seemingly endless. I am taken aback when I find included among Oberon’s 77: *Best Canadian Stories* one by an American writer living here, set in Nashville, Tennessee. Or another in the 1978 volume, a story set in 19th-century Massachusetts, by Joyce Carol Oates, who just happens to live in Canada. What both stories share is publication in Canadian journals, and their authors happen to live here. Are these sufficient criteria? Not in any other country I know of. I doubt that American readers will take the Oates story for one of the best Canadian stories of 1977.

I do not suggest that all whose opinion — in criticism, reviewing, teaching — is influential in forming a canon of Canadian literature contribute to the kinds of confu-

sion I’ve illustrated. The chief culprit is the pushing publisher, but there are quite enough opinion-formers prepared to sid and abet him. Too many who may deplore the situation let things go by default. Too rarely one meets so cheering an example as Mordecai Richler’s acknowledging as Canadian in “Balancing the Books” so good a poet as David Wevill, who has now been resident in England almost as long as Prewett was. Richler, of course, knows there’s another London.

We are far from establishing a canon of Canadian literature, but surely we can agree that the work of a native Canadian belongs to it whether he has limited himself to the parish pump or spent most of his writing life in Timbuktu. Equally we can surely agree with W. H. New (in *The Literary History of Canada*) in regarding a Joyce Carol Oates as “the distinguished American novelist . . . resident in Windsor since 1967 [who] did not turn her attention to Canadian life at all.” Would that she, and Lowry, and Wyndham Lewis, were Canadian writers: the two Englishmen we should surely notice as writers who make some creative use of Canada and whose Canadian work must interest us without becoming ours. Similarly, the West Indian immigrant writers, the late Harold “Sonny” Ladoo and Austin C. Clarke belong to Caribbean literature. Readers will, I hope, supply further examples themselves. If we begin to look at this critically, clearer lines will surely emerge. Let’s have more common sense, less special pleading: the canon will take shape and the Canadian identity become, in time, less of a hodgepodge and more of a genuine mosaic. □

first impressions

by Douglas Hill

Biological thrills, Labrador chills, and teachers’ rites in rural Alberta

POLITICAL THRILLERS of the biological sort — “One of our gums is missing, General!” — have become commonplace in recent years, stimulated by the horrific technological advances of Vietnam and the more lunatic endeavours of the North American defence and security establishments. Much of this fiction, some of it Canadian, is so bad, so contrived and formulaic, that I gave it up for a while. *Hambro’s Itch*, by Howard Robens and Jack Wasserman (Doubleday, 301 pages, \$9.95 cloth), though hardly perfect, is the real thing again.

I’m not sure about the novel’s qualifications for this column. Though the action begins in Vancouver (where both authors live) and ends in the high Arctic, the book is pitched to a U.S. readership: check out the casual description of Canadian money (“one purplish bill, one gray

green”), the predominantly American geography and context (San Francisco and Washington, D.C.), the presumption of audience familiarity with the interrelated structures, official and underground, of American governmental power. But since it has two other ingredients in full measure — topicality of subject and plausibility of gimmick — why not claim it?

Hambro’s Itch works the convention of the naive observer (here a newspaperman) drawn (by the mysterious death of his fiancée) to attempt to unravel a just-imaginable conspiracy of apocalyptic implications (the germ thing). The plot is intricate, carefully pieced together for suspense and full of surprises, though a few minor strategic improbabilities intrude. The authors package their central issue-world, overpopulation — neatly. The requisite technical information is worked in con-

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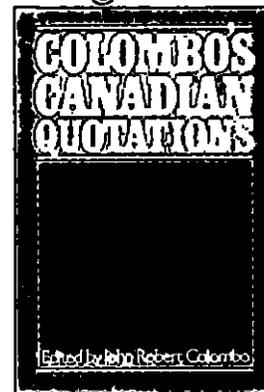
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vincingly; only once, with a dozen pages of explanation inserted heavy-handedly near the end, does the story falter.

Slickness keeps *Hambro's Itch* from the first rank in its genre. It's all quite expert, but it's synthetic, sterile. The style is cool and taut, yet the narrative fails to create atmosphere, and the stilted, almost ritualistic dialogue precludes insight into the characters' motives. Finally, of course, one's pulse must be the test of a thriller. And mine perked up.

* * *

Williwaw, by P. S. Moore (*Breakwater*, 457 pages, \$2.50 paper), is also a thriller, but it's certainly not slick. It's one splintery edge, crack, and knothole after another. But what it lacks in finesse it more than compensates for in raw energy and unself-conscious, unadulterated Canadianness.

The book has flaws - oh boy! It suffers by turns from preachiness, prolixity, and journalese; it lacks commas frequently and hyphens entirely, and now and then perpetrates an awesomely jumbled and ponderous sentence. But again - it moves, it convinces, it works. It's got an inventive, violent scenario (the invasion, in the late 1960s, of a newly independent Labrador by the military force of a revolutionary Quebec separatist party) and strong, interesting, if essentially stereotyped characters.

The political mix of the novel is fascinating. I can best describe it as Down-North home-brew - a ferment of reactionary anarchism that seems pure bushcamp and outpost. From the first glass of Tang for breakfast to the last angry xenophobic belch against bureaucracies, welfare, and unemployment insurance, *Williwaw* tastes authentic. It's strong stuff, about as subtly refined as Screech or Serno, but it gets the job done with a kick.

* * *

THE MYTH OF the novice teacher learning about life and love in a one-room school in the West is an indispensable element of the Canadian epic. One conjures up a dignified procession of elderly memoirists, all impelled by forces greater than themselves, each, sensibility in one hand, strap in the other, adding a voice to the collective record.

Thistlecreek (Borealis, 231 pages, \$4.95 paper), by Neil Hanna (the dust-jacket calls her Hanna Nell, but never mind about that), is a more rewarding version than most. It starts slowly, but develops into a clear-eyed, sensitive, occasionally moving account of a teacher's first year in Alberta in the late 1920s. Hanna is "stylist - the writing is uncomfortably precious at times, forced or mechanical at others - but on the whole she explores her subjects with care and respect, and the rhythms of season and school-year carry things along pleasantly. The book feels like just barely fictionalized autobiography, but the experience offers the heroine enough challenges and predicaments - from forest fire to learning disabilities to bedbugs - to fill three novels. □

38 Books in Canada, May, 1979

interview

by Phil Surguy

Eureka! How William French discovered the First Law of Reviewing in his bath

WILLIAM FRENCH was born in London, Ont., in 1926 and in 1948 was a member of the first class ever to graduate in journalism from the University of Western Ontario. Apart from a year at Harvard on a Nieman Fellowship, he has spent his career with the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. Since 1960, when he succeeded the venerable William Arthur Deacon, he has been the *Globe's* literary editor. Until 1971 he was responsible for producing the Saturday book page and contributing to one review and a chat column. Then the administrative side of the page was handed over to other people and French assumed his current responsibility for three columns a week, usually two book reviews and either an author interview or comment on developments in the publishing industry. He has won several awards, including this year his second consecutive National Newspaper Award for critical writing. Many book people regard him as the most influential literary critic in Canada. French does most of his work at home. His office off the main newsroom at the *Globe* is just large enough to contain a desk, two chairs, a filing cabinet, and a large wooden cabinet crammed with and buried under books. When Phil Surguy visited him there late on a Friday afternoon there were 12 new books ("Today's mail") on the desk:

Books in Canada: *What are the most apparent differences between the Canadian literary and publishing climates now and when you began nearly 20 years ago?*

French: I guess it breaks down into two distinct periods: before 1967 and after. Things happened as a result of Expo and the Centennial, and the rise of all the new publishers, Anansi and so on. But before '67 there were Canadian books being published. There wasn't a traumatic watershed in '67 as far as authors go. I think as far as publishers go there may have been, because it was in the euphoria of post-Centennial that the new publishers came along. I suppose the significant thing that happened as a result of Expo and the new publishers was the rise of cultural nationalism, which resulted in the split in the Canadian Book Publishers' Council. The Canadian-owned publishers split off and formed their own group and there was a lot of tension there for a while, and that still isn't resolved, of course. But I can't remember thinking, "My God, this has been a terrible year for Canadian literature." There's always been something interesting going on, some years more than others, but it's been a steady growth, I think.

BIC: *Does that mean things are better today than they were yesterday, at least in terms of publishers and publishing?*

French: We have to separate the two things: the health of publishing and the quality of what is published. Publishers say they are in trouble, but they always say they are in trouble. The decline of text books as a source of revenue certainly hurt some publishers, and those that relied on income from text books to support their trade market obviously are feeling the pinch. McClelland & Stewart? God, I don't know. Are they in trouble?

BIC: *You keep hearing fantastic stories about their huge debt.*

French: Yeah, sure. But year N year they publish more and more books, so I don't know. I've learned to take publishers' prognostications with some cynicism. Most of them are still publishing. There are more Canadian books published now than there were when I first started. Whether it's better quality, I guess in some ways it is. If only because there are more people publishing, the chances of getting better quality are greater. We have not yet, I think, reached a literature of world stature, but we're getting there. More and more Canadian authors are published routinely in the United States and Britain, because what they write is of such quality that it doesn't matter that their subject is somewhat exotic for the average American or British reader.

BIC: *How many books come through here?*

French: It varies with the season. September to Christmas is chaos, then it falls off dramatically and we have to rely on a lot of the American and British things that we haven't had time to look at. Canadian publishing seems to be more cyclical than most other countries. Hardly anything is published in January and February and



William French

nothing in June and July. I remember Jim Lorimer complaining about the low number of Canadian books that were being reviewed by the *Globe and Mail*, and he had taken a base period when nothing was being published. We couldn't review any Canadian books because there weren't any!

BiC: *You are regarded by many people as the most influential literary critic in this country. How heavy is that mantle?*

French: I try not to be conscious of it. First of all, the *Globe and Mail* book section as a whole, not just my contribution, the whole section, does attract attention, and it's generally pretty good. But part of the claim it gets is because there isn't all that much competition. What else is there? I don't know what *Maclean's* is doing these days with its book section. It's hard to find any pattern, any controlling philosophy. It's a hodgepodge. *Saturday Night*, well it's once a month. It's nice to get a reflective view, but if you want to keep really up to date you have to be more frequent. *Books in Canada?* Readers have to go to find the magazine; it's not dumped on their doors like the *Globe* is. The *Toronto Star*? It goes up and down. The *Star* doesn't seem to have the keen interest and respect for books that the *Globe* does.

BiC: *How aware are you of your personal position? Do you ever find publishers or authors "cultivating" you?*

French: Not as much as you might think. Publishing is really a very civilized occupation. Publishers will expect publicity, of course, but there's no strong-arming, there are no heavies. One of the hazards of this business, of course, is that the literary community is really very small. And you can't help but encounter authors and meet them and like them or dislike them on a personal basis. But say you like somebody, then become friendly with them even, then they write a book and you have to review it. It's a lousy book.

BiC: *Have you done that often?*

French: Not that often, but I've done it.

BiC: *Has it ever cost you a friend?*

French: There's been a certain coolness. But I think they respect my right to say what I think, whether they agree with me or not. They usually don't if it's negative. Ideally, the reviewer should be a monk, live in a cave and come down for the mail once a week, but I'm not monkish. So you just have to take the risk of offending people. And I do. Of course. I'm in a privileged position because, unlike the movie reviewer or the drama critic, I don't have to review all the books. If I don't want to review one, I can give it to someone else.

BiC: *It's been said that authors get even angrier when they're not reviewed at all.*

French: Yeah. I get more calls from authors wanting to know why we didn't review their book than from authors whose books have been criticized. It seems to be a kind of

unwritten rule in the business that an author doesn't respond to a review. The only incident I can think of recently when an author did respond was M. T. Kelly on a radio program the other morning. He wrote a book called *I Do Remember the Fall*, a first novel, which I didn't like - and said so. He didn't identify the reviewer or the paper, but he said it was the first review of the novel that appeared and I guess mine was first. He said he wanted to firebomb my office and take a baseball bat to my kidneys, which I thought was rather over-reacting.

BiC: *Is it much effort to continue reading a book when you know you're going to have to give it a bad review? When you dislike it?*

French: I tend to fall asleep easily when I'm reading a boring book and I have to keep jabbing myself to stay awake. I've never reviewed a book I haven't completely read. But, my God, sometimes it's so effort and I wish that I'd made a different choice. But by that time I've invested too much time in it and, with an imminent deadline the next day, I can't retrace my steps; I've got to stick with it. But there are other books that, while they may get negative reviews, are bad in interesting ways and there's no problem with them. Over the years I've developed one method of determining the value of a book. During the winter when it's really cold outside I read a lot in the bathtub. It's warm and cozy and, instinctively, if I like the book, I try to keep it dry; if I don't like the book instinctively and it gets wet and splashed on, I don't give a damn because, who cares, it's not a good book anyway. So that's French's First Law of Reviewing!

BiC: *Do you give priority to Canadian books over American and British titles?*

French: Between September and Christmas. I would think without checking back, that 90 per cent of my reviews are of Canadian books. And it's not from any sense of obligation or nationalism. I'm not a nationalist. But we're published in Canada, in Toronto, our audience is Canadian and these are the books that we should give priority to. But if I have to choose between a middle-level Canadian author and a middle-level American author, I'll choose the Canadian. Now, if I have to choose between a middle-level Canadian and an Updike or a new Graham Greene, the problem gets more complex. Well, it doesn't really; I choose the Greene. Then again, somebody else will do the Canadian one I have decided not to do.

BiC: *With reference to the Stout Maple versus the Tender Trillium schools, have you ever been conscious of coddling or giving the benefit of the doubt to Canadian works?*

French: I've never been conscious of it and I hope I've never been guilty of it. I don't think the double standard goes any good to anybody.

BiC: *Can you see any specific direction that CanLit is taking at the moment? Are you*



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COLLINS PUBLISHERS

optimistic, pessimistic, or are things just chugging along?

French: It seems to be chugging along in the same old groove, with no real breakthroughs that I can see at the moment. I don't know of any author with a worthwhile manuscript who couldn't get it published these days. I suppose one of the main threats at the moment is in the retail book store situation, because of the price-cutting. I feel very ambivalent about that. I would deplore anything that undermined the independent bookseller, because I think we need them.

BiC: *Who's undermining them?*

French: The chains. Coles and Classics first and then Smiths got into discounting books. There'll be an attempt to bring in a net-price agreement, fixing the price of books, but somehow that doesn't seem the answer either.

BiC: *Do you not agree with a net-price policy, or don't you think it will work?*

French: If it came to a crunch and we had to choose between having nothing but chain stores or the kind of system we have now with a wide variety of independent book stores supported by a net-price agreement. I would support the net-price agreement. On the other hand, I'm not sure that I want Jack McClelland setting the price of books. The forces of the market have to come in there somewhere. But there has not yet been a system devised that can take care of both problems. From the consumer's point of view, the lower the price the better. But there comes a point when it starts undermining the industry and you have to say "Whoah!" But as far as the writing goes, new authors seem to be coming along, there doesn't seem to be any shortage of authors, and I'm optimistic about that part of the future. □

Letters to the Editor

COMPACT WAS THE DEVIL

Sir:
Long after reading your March issue, I wonder why you bothered to publish Daniel Francis' article on William LeSueurs' Mackenzie biography.

To start with, I'm at a loss to figure out where he formed his opinion of the "conventional" view of Mackenzie. Having just looked into the matter myself, I can say that most easily available books alternately show Mackenzie as dangerously unstable or devilishly malicious, depending on the point they want to make at the time. The slow development of his radicalism, as well as the provocation the Family Compact gave him is seldom taken into account. In fact, almost all accounts of the Rebellion are based upon writings of various members of the colonial government. Many others rely on the Durham Report, which ultimately comes down to the same source. Nor has any book recognized that Mackenzie ranks as

one of the great political writers of his century, equal to Paine in logic and superior in style.

The Rebellion itself is treated as a farce. Only a few historians bother to mention the resulting executions, or the number of refugees from Tory reprisals. The fact that there was fighting for several years after the march on Toronto is usually mentioned only in summing up.

As for the Family Compact, there is no need to vilify them. Instead, it's hard to find much to give them credit for. As Mackenzie himself detailed, they were so closely related that nepotism's existence is undeniable. They ruthlessly attacked anyone who opposed them, often on flimsy pretexts — the passages for which Mackenzie was tried for libel, for instance, were far less abusive than many in which the Tory press attacked Reformers. Their election tactics included bribery and bullying. Strachan's university, as its charter makes clear, was not the start of public education, but a means of controlling education and training the Compact's next generation. Finally, the pillaging carried out by Tories after the Rebellion was so violent that even ministers who enjoyed the Compact's favors were horrified. And this is the group I'm supposed to see as the victim of historical conspiracy?

Francis, though, somehow manages to see the Compact's oppressive acts as part of an "alternate vision of society." In effect, he implies in this phrase that neither oppression nor democracy are right or wrong, and are mere "opinions" of how to run a country which are of equal weight. And, if the opinions are to be equally respected, then why not the systems themselves? Francis' view is clearly a dangerous one.

I haven't read the biography, of course, but if the article describes it accurately, it simply offers more of the inconsistent half-truths which already fill the history books. There's no justification for its publication — except, perhaps, as an indication of how long Canadians have been lied to about their history.

Bruce Byfield
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C.

o

Sir:

I was, naturally, very pleased to see the fine essay by Daniel Francis on William Dawson LeSueur's suppressed biography of William Lyon Mackenzie (March, 1979) which we are publishing this spring. For your readers' benefit I should point out that we are publishing the book in paperback, not cloth. More especially, it should have been noted that the book is being published in the Carleton Library Series, a piece of bibliographic information that is very important to your readers considering the distinguished reputation enjoyed by this series.

Virgil D. Duff
Executive Editor, College Division
Macmillan of Canada
Toronto

CITY MOUSE BITES BACK

In response to Sid Marty's letter (April) in which he damns my review of Charles Noble's *Haywire Rainbow* in the January On/Off/Set column: since Noble comes from Marty's part of the country, I am indicted on the grounds of cultural myopia and Toronto snobbery. What I wrote about *Haywire Rainbow* stands: "Noble fails to make a universal out of the particular." It should come as no surprise to Marty that this is called the parochial and is not exclusive to Alberta. Toronto, or Bangkok, Noble's poems do "talk of farming, of Alberta, of small towns and neighborhoods." Should I lie? Will Marty grant the fact

that there are images of farm machinery in the poems, country stores, fields, etc.? Will he translate that to mean "rustic" as well? So much for bathos. What Marty really wants is to get into the old tired debate between "country mouse" and "city mouse." How sporting! I congratulate Marty on managing to include in his letter a larger review of Noble's book than I originally provided for. His defense of Noble's work says more about his sense of public image than it does about Noble. If I've pinched his regional nerve, I was happy to oblige. His cheap shots at "multiculturalism" should add more fuel to Marty's nightmares about internationalism.

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco
Toronto

WITH FURTHER ADO...

Sii

Mark Abley's article "Without Further Ado..." (December, 1978) begs a response from one who has been on the other side of the poet's podium. Judging from the tone Mr. Abley affects, it seems he attends poetry readings for much the same reason others gloat over *The Gong Show*.

I question the assumptions Mr. Abley makes in asking: "Why 1,200 poetry readings in Canada last year?" Contrary to his suggestion that we need poetry readings "to keep the oral tradition alive," the exact opposite is true, and always has been. Poetry is first a spoken art, which in its purest form springs from the rhythms of speech (evidence: Wordsworth and W. C. Williams).

In his æsthetic indignation, Mr. Abley overlooks the pragmatic argument for poetry readings. After all, they are the prime source of income for the poet. I do not think that Mr. Abley means to be so ungenerous as to deny our poets their pay days — few and far between as they are — at least until some publisher antes up a \$50,000 award for a first collection of poems, blight the thought!

Mr. Abley holds the ill-bred notion that a writer indulges in public readings "to bask in the safe glow of his own artistry." As was tragically illustrated by the case of Dylan Thomas, the acknowledged master of the art in our time, poetry readings are far from a "safe" activity for the poet.

I concede to Mr. Abley that there is a poetry reading syndrome. I even sympathize with his disillusionment at failing to be "amused" or moved by most readings. For one, I agree with what one writer (I think it was Conrad) described as the purpose of all writing: "to entertain." However, I suggest that it is hard to entertain an audience if they are hellbent on contracting culture, a most malignant dose of it, or if they have ulterior motives, such as currying points on their freshman English exams.

I have long felt that poets (worth their salt) should extricate themselves from the academically claustrophobic circuit of university lecture theatres, public libraries, art galleries, and coffee houses. They should attempt to take their poetry to people who rarely have the chance to experience modern verse first hand and have no vested interest in accepting what they have to offer.

Two poet friends, Greg Cook and Sharon Lake, and two musicians of our extended family, Richard Knott and Carter Lake, set out in a van along the byways of Nova Scotia this past summer, to do just that. None of the 10 towns we visited have a population equal to many Canadian universities. We carried the tongue-in-cheek name, *The Dirge Poets & Their Merry Men*, a handicap that should convince the cynics they got an even shake.

I don't recommend the path we chose to the fainthearted, the pampered, or the unprofes-

sional. Along the way, we had to syncope our rhythms with the gearboxes of semis and Harleys; at the agricultural exhibition, we followed the ventriloquist's matinée performance, and had to compete with the showing marshal's bullhorn and pubescent squeals from the midway; in the fisherman's hell, we bed to talk down a belligerent character (tattoos bristling on his bared arms) who, for reasons of his own, thought one of our poems was actually mitten about him.

But there were compensations. To mention a few: the hush that came ova the children whenever Sharon began to read; the busload of elderly ladies from a senior citizens' home, who set through the hour program and thanked us after, despite the off-colour language that cropped up in the occasional piece; the working class Cape Bretoner who openly "confessed" his life-long love for poetry ad asked, in a sincere lone, my interpretation of a vexing verse by Robert Service.

I recount these experiences in the hope that Mr. Abley will recant his view that poetry readings must perforce be melancholy or maudlin affairs. Our experiment has laid to rest the popular theory that only English majors and professors, literary critics, poets themselves, and "hobby-doddies" (according to Dylan Thomas, an obsolete word meaning "a short, dell, dumpy person") are interested in the state of poetry in the seventh decade of these 1900s.

I can confidently assert that poetry readings need not be a "Dirge." Our Mary Men will vouch for that.

Harry Thurston
River Hebert, N.S.

QCQ CLARIFIES

Sir:

Can *Quill & Quire* have a little space in your lively letters page to set the record straight? In reference to your reply to Douglas Mantz in the March issue of *Books in Canada*, we'd like to note that our review pages are still devoted solely to reviews of Canadian books. Our policy of reviewing all Canadian titles received was in no way altered by the decision to publish a page of selected foreign tides reviewed in brief. The Foreign Affairs column, compiled by Peel Stuewe, does not detract from space for reviews of Canadian books. In fact, the number of Canadian titles reviewed in *Quill & Quire* is expected to increase this year. The intent of Foreign Affairs is not to note those best-selling titles amply reviewed in the American, British, and Canadian press, bet to bring to the attention of librarians and booksellers books that receive little review space anywhere.

Although necessarily selective, and shorter than our regular reviews, these reviews represent an expansion of our editorial coverage, one which we hope will add to the magazine's use as an ordering tool and a source of information on new titles.

Susan Walker
Editor, *Quill & Quire*
Toronto

THE GUESS WHO PRESS

Sir:

Regarding the [advertising] centerfold in your March issue.

This is all well and gmd, but wouldn't it be appropriate for the publisher to identify him/herself? You never knew: someone, somewhere might want to order one of his/her books. Maybe eve" a good book store.

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RESULTS OF CANWIT NO. 41

OUR REQUEST FOR possible back-to-back book titles brought enough double entries to sink the accountancy profession. Inevitably, there were a number of duplications. Our favourite: George Radwanski's *Trudeau* back-to-back with *A Man to Marry*, *A Man to Bury*, by Susan Musgrave. The winner is Jonathan Williams of Ottawa, who receives \$25 for these choice combinations:

□ James Simpkins' *When Was the Last Time You Cleaned Your Navel?* / *Sunday Afternoon in the Toronto AN Gallery*, by John Grube.

- Roch Carrier's *Floralie, Where Are You?* / *Up Against City Hall*, by John Sewell.
- Stephen Leacock's *My Remarkable Uncle/The Man With Seven Toes*, by Michael Ondaatje.
- James M. Minitic's *Who's Your Far Friend?* / *A Very Political Lady*, ludy La Marsh
- Al Purdy's *Love in a Burning Building / Fear of Frying*, by James Barber.

Honourable mentions:

- Iock Carroll's *Bottoms Up/The Right Cheek*, by Claire (Montreuil) Faucher.
- Margaret Atwood's *Dancing Girls/The Dainty Monsters*, by Michael Ondaatje.
- Morley Callaghan's *No Man's Meat/Grandma Preferred Steak*, by Gregory Clerk.
- Victor Coleman's *Speech Sucks/Exit Muttering*, by Donald Jack.
- Graeme Gibson's *Five Legs/The Mysterious Naked Man*, by Alden Nowlan.
—Mary MacPherson, Toronto
• **
- Robert Kroetsch's *The Studhorse Man/Hard Times*, by Charles Dickens.
—Lois Bergen, Calgary
• **
- Reed Lévesque's *My Quebec/Me Among the Ruins*, by Donald Jack.
—Heinz-Michael Voelker, Agincourt, Ont.
• **
- Henry Miller's *Sexus, Nexus, and Plexus / Pain*, by Vladimir Nabokov (four books in one).
—Linda Pyke, Toronto

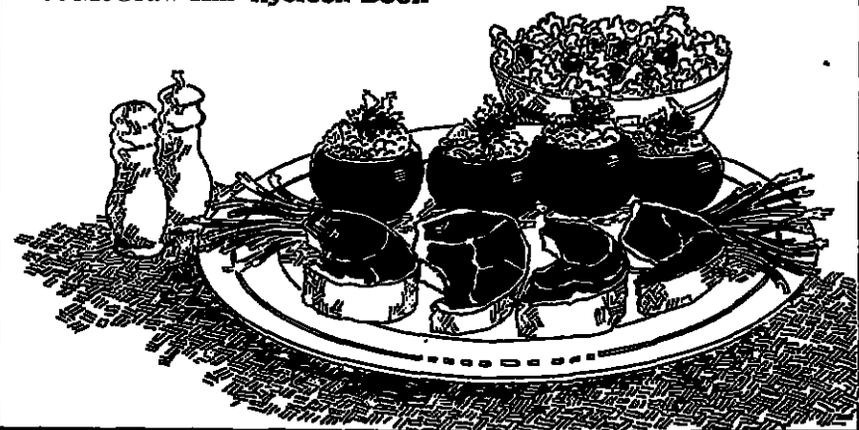
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- Alice Munro's *Who Do You Think You Are?* / Joe Clark, by Michael Nolan.
—Mark Cornish, Wawa, Ont.
- John Lee's *Getting Sex/Love Affair With a Cougar*, by Lyn Hancock.
—Mary Lyle Benham, Winnipeg
- Pierre Berton's *The National Dream! Europe on \$5 a Day*.
—Maureen Exter, Powell River, B.C.
- *The Collected Poems of Irving Layton! Wind Without Rain*, by Selwyn Dewdney.
—Ron Miles, Kamloops, B.C.
- James Fink's *The Complete Book of Running! Fools Die*, by Mario Puzo.
—John K. Porter, Mount Pearl, Nfld.

- Max Braithwaite's *Why Shoot the Teacher? / More Joy in Heaven*, by Morley Callaghan.
—Barbara Love, Gananoque, Ont.
- Gail Henley's *Where the Cherries End. Up! The Sweet Second Summer of Kitty Malone*, by Matt Cohn.
—Michael O. Nowlan, Ormocto, N.B.
- Irving Layton's *The Tighrope Dancer / Trudeau*, by George Radwanski.
- William Weintraub's *The Underdogs / A Pictorial History of Ontario*, by Roger Hall and Gordon Dodds.
—Miriam Bake, Montreal
- Robertson Davies' *The Table Talk of Samuel Marchbanks! The Flying Bull*, by Watson Kirkconnell.
—G. K. Johnson, McBride, B.C.

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42 Books in Canada. May. 1979

The editors recommend

THE FOLLOWING Canadian books were reviewed in the previous issue of *Books in Canada*. Our recommendations don't necessarily reflect the reviews:

FICTION

The Sweet Second Summer of Kitty Malone, by Matt Cohen. McClelland & Stewart. After an uneven 10-book apprenticeship, Cohen seems to have got his literary act together with a fine mortality tale about an Ontario Gothic romance.

Lucien's Tombs, by Marion Rippon. Doubleday. The fourth novel from a Canadian mystery titer who adds a touch of Simenon and a pinch of Ross Macdonald to brew her own excellent plots.

NON-FICTION

Men for the Mountains, by Si Marty, McClelland & Stewart. A requiem for a vanishing way of life by a poetic park warden in the Canadian Rockies.

Voice of the Pioneer, by Bill McNeil. Macmillan. One of the better oral histories to unwind this year. mainly because the 75 persons taped — famous and unknown — are undeniably authentic even if they are not all pioneers.

POETRY

Anniversaries, by Don Cola. Macmillan. An impressive second collection from a poet who speaks in a supple and urbane voice about the realities of our time — from TV wrestlers to cancer victims.

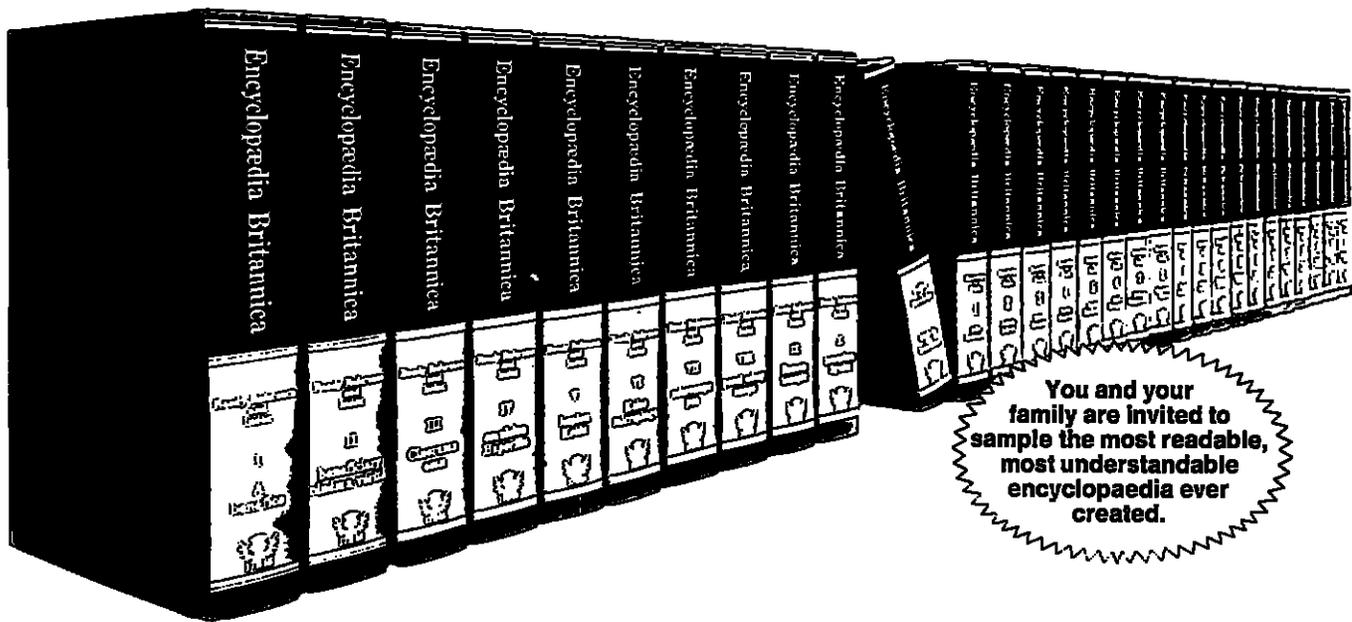
Books received

THE FOLLOWING Canadian books have been received by *Books in Canada* in recent weeks. Inclusion in this list does not preclude a review or notice in a future issue:

- Arctofle the Great, by Jezrah Heame, illustrated by Moina Weinreich, Leprechaun Books.
- Baraka: The Poems of Nellie McClung, Intermedia.
- The Beginning of Wisdom, by Robin Mathews, Steel Rail.

- Believable Body, by C. Y. Gervais, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.
- Bellefleur: Birth of a City, by Gerald E. Boyce, Quinte Kiwanis Club.
- Beyond Belief, Books 1 & 2, selected and edited by Lawrence Darby et al., Clarke Irwin.
- Blood Poems, by Sharon H. Nelson, Fiddlehead Poetry Books.
- A Book of the Hours, by David Helwig, Oberon Press.
- The Burial at L'Anse-Amour, by Robert McGhee, National Museums of Canada.
- Canada in the New Monetary Order, by Michael Hudson, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- The Canadian Curriculum: A Personal View, by Robin Barrow, Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario.
- Canadian Workers, American Unions, by Jack Scott, New Star.
- Close to the Sun Again, by Morley Callaghan, Signet.
- Communally Work in Canada, by Brian Whart, M & S.
- The Corvette Navy, by James B. Lamb, Signet.
- Crazy Horse Suite, by Morgan Nyberg, Intermedia.
- Cross-country Ski Routes: British Columbia, by Richard and Rochelle Wright, Antonson Publishing.
- Discourt Justice, by Daniel Jay Baum, Burns & MacEachern.
- Dry Point, by Mark Madoff, Pulp Press.
- The Economy of Canada: Who Controls It?, by Jorge Niosi, Black Rose Books.
- Equal Rights: The Jesuits' Estates Act Controversy, by J. R. Miller, McGill-Queen's University Press.
- French Canadian Prose Masters, edited and translated by Yves Brunelle, Harvest House.
- George, by Barbara Villy Connick, Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded.
- Government and You, by Charles Kahn and Richard Howard, M & S.
- Handbook of English, by Harry Shaw, Third Canadian Edition revised by William Barker, McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Henry Pellat, by David Flint, Fitzhenry & Whiteside.
- High School, by Michael Snow, Impulse.
- Issues in Canadian/U.S. Transborder Computer Data Flow, edited by W. E. Cundiff and Mado Reid, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- The Jones Boy, by Tom Walmoley, Pulp Press.
- The Legislative Process in Canada, edited by W. A. W. Neilson and J. C. MacPherson, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- The Little Boats, by Ray McKean and Robert Percival, Brunswick Press.
- The Luck of the Irish, by Harry J. Boyle, Signet.
- Mumming in Outport Newfoundland, by Gerald M. Sider, New Hometown Press.
- Murder Has Your Number, by Hugh Ganser, Seal Books.
- The Myth of Delinquency, by Elliot Layton, M & S.
- The 1979 Canadian Marathon Annual, edited and published by Eleanor Thomas.
- The 1979 Franchise Annual, Info Press.
- One Century Later, edited by Ian L. Getty and Donald B. Smith, University of British Columbia Press.
- The Perfect Accident, by Ken Norris, Vehicule Press.
- Perspectives on the Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration, edited by P. K. Gorecki and W. T. Stanbury, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Pioneers Every One, by E. Blanche Norcross, Burns & MacEachern.
- Poems for Sale in the Street, edited by Tom Clement and Ted Piantos, Steel Rail.
- Poetry Toronto Books' International Anthology of Concrete Poetry, Vol. 1, edited by John Jessop, Poetry Toronto Books and Missing Link Press.
- Political Choice in Canada, by Harold D. Clarke et al., McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Prelude to a Marriage: Letters and Diaries of John Coulter and Olive Clare Primrose, Oberon.
- Public Employment and Compensation in Canada: Myths and Realities, edited by David K. Foot, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Public Employment in Canada: Statistical Series, by David K. Foot, Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Quest of the Golden Gannet, by Dorothy P. Barnhouse, Breakwater.
- The St. Andrew's Chronicles (with bibliography and notes), by Gerald E. Boyce, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Belleville.
- Sara Jeannette Duncan: Selected Journalism, edited by T. E. Tausky, The Tecumseh Press.
- The Science Council's Weakest Link, by Kristian S. Palda, The Fraser Institute.
- The Secret Oppression, by Constance Backhouse and Leah Cohen, Macmillan.
- Selected Short Poems, by Kevin McCabe, published by the author.
- Shadows of a Violent Mind, by Dr. Guy Richmond, Antonson Publishing.
- Solplan 2: Solar Energy for Existing Homes, by Richard Kadulski et al., The Drawing-room Graphic Services Ltd.
- Son of Sacred, by Stan Pansky, New Star Books.
- Spider in the Sunace, by Paul Guro, Fiddlehead.
- Steep Rock, by Bruce Taylor, Quetico Publishing.
- The Sunday Habit, by Jim Mele, CrossCountry Press.
- The Tamed Puma, by Irving Layton, with illustrations by Carlo Mattioli, translated by Francesca Valenti, Virgo Press.
- There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do, by Michael Ondaatje, M & S.
- Towards Equality for Women, Supply and Services Canada.
- A Tribute to Paul Klee, by David Burnett, National Gallery of Canada.
- Two Women, by Doris Anderson, Signet.
- Understanding Capital: A Guide to Vol. 1, by John Fox and William Johnston, Progress Books.
- Virgins, Vamps and Flappers, by Sumiko Higashi, Eden Press.
- Westering, by Richard Thomas Wright, Antonson Publishing.
- Yesterstories: The Ghostly Trapper, by Elma Schemenauer, Globe/Modern Curriculum Press.
- Yesterstories: The Lost Lemon Mine, by Elma Schemenauer, Globe/Modern Curriculum Press.
- Yesterstories: The Lady with the Missing Finger, by Elma Schemenauer, Globe/Modern Curriculum Press.

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a spring preview

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Canadian Competition Law: A Business Guide

by C.J. Michael Flavell
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selected and compiled by Catherine McIay
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*Madame Benoit's Lamb Cookbook

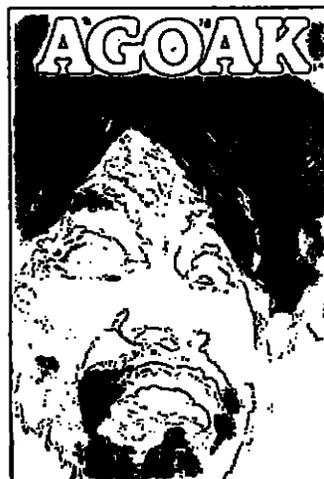
by Jehane Benoit
Cooking lamb is a subject Jehane Benoit knows a great deal about, since she and her husband own and operate Canada's largest sheep farm. This is as real labour of love for her in introducing over 120 delicious recipes and encouraging North Americans to take a tip from people of other countries and enjoy the pleasures of lamb. Full-colour illustrations, plus a two-page chart on how to identify the various cuts. \$9.95

The Delaney Report on RRSP's, 1979

by Tom Delaney
Everything you ever needed to know about RRSPs is covered by the crusading author, who, along with the Consumer Association of Canada, was largely responsible for the recent changes in RRSP law. \$6.95 pb

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