

Combining both dramatic and compassionate description, Tucker propels his story along at a rapid clip by highlighting a multiplicity of events and affairs associated with the construction and evolution of the railway. Included are the discovery of both silver and gold, the response of the T. & N.O. railway in assisting victims of three major conflagrations, the extension of the railway from Cochrane to James Bay, and the intimate service provided to the farmers and townsfolk along the route. Portraits of personalities, individual and collective, are woven into the story with a refreshing dash of colour.

Problems do arise, however, when Tucker ventures beyond the confines of the narrative. Armed with a battery of sources ranging from taped interviews to the premiers' correspondence files he attempts to demonstrate that the story of the railway underscores broad political and economic issues which shaped the development of Northern Ontario. Blatant examples of political patronage originating with either the Liberal or Conservative Party establishments are exposed. Little credence is given to the notion that the T.&N.O. was the peoples' railway. Rather the imperial influence of the Toronto business community and the clearly intrusive power of the premier over the Commission are shown to be factors which more accurately define the nature of the public utility. The recognition of these wider issues is one thing and their development into a continuous, sound argument is quite another. In this respect Tucker's work is lacking. New ideas are abandoned too often at their germinating stages and chapter endings signal what is to follow with tiresome predictability.

Similarly, Tucker does not appear to utilize the potential of the extensive range of materials outlined in his footnotes. His linear narrative offers little more than a clipped and at times superficial analysis of the underlying issues. The absence of a bibliographic evaluation of the major archival resources is unfortunate, given the meagre output of Ontario historiography. Viv Nelles pointed the way to a new understanding of Ontario's north in his *The Politics of Development*. Albert Tucker has broken new ground still with his story of the Northland Railway, but others will need to examine carefully the spaces left in his book before embarking upon a more rigorous study of Northern Ontario in the twentieth century.

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Archives of Ontario

The Lumberjacks. DONALD MACKAY. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, © 1978. 319 p. ill. ISBN 0 07 82727 3 \$19.95.

The Lumberjacks is one of a series of popular oral histories which have been appearing in the last decade in an effort to record the lives of working people. Donald Mackay has chosen, for his volume, a group of working Canadians which more than any other might be regarded as Canada's folk heroes. As a long-time journalist and broadcaster, Mackay has travelled from coast to coast to interview over one hundred and thirty men and a few women who spent from months to lifetimes in the lumber camps of the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. He delivers in *The Lumberjacks* what its dust-jacket promises: "a story of the men who cut and hauled timber from the birth of the industry until the internal combustion engine changed lumbering techniques in the 1950's."

Despite its claim to begin at the beginning, the book is essentially about lumbering during this century — of pulpwood cutters in the East and cutters of sawlogs and pulpwood in the rainforests of British Columbia. The first century of the industry — the square timber beginning in the early years of the nineteenth century and sawn-lumber appearing at mid-century — is quickly covered in the first three chapters. Here the contents are disappointing. Mackay's approach to this period is fragmented and thin.

Philemon Wright, pioneer of the Ottawa square timber trade in 1806 and traditionally viewed as a colourful eccentric, receives considerable treatment, while other equally important lumbermen of the period are barely mentioned at all. It would appear that, since his real interest lay in preserving the oral record of people who are still alive, Mackay did not have the inclination to wade through the mass of information available for the early period in print, in theses and in manuscript sources.

The strength of the work comes in the recounting of the story of the timber cruisers, the choppers and sawyers, the skidders and teamsters, the river drivers, the cooks and cookees, and the countless others who have played a role in hauling out logs from the early years of the century. Using lengthy quotations, often several pages long, Mackay lets old-timers in their seventies, eighties and nineties tell their own stories. They do, with wit and humour. From story to story, the process of the lumbering season can be followed and the tasks each process required from the initial timber cruise to the setting up of camp, through to the cutting and hauling of logs and the river drive in the spring. It is pure social history of the lumberjack's daily life, from his eating and washing habits to the tales he wove to while away lonely winter nights. At the same time, *The Lumberjacks* is an account of the technology which the men served and Mackay has furnished an excellent selection of over two hundred photographs and illustrations to reveal how this was so.

There are some inaccuracies which are glaring to those who have studied the documentary record of lumbering, such as a claim that "until the 1900's . . . a lumberman could choose his 'logging chance' or berth, as casually as he might go fishing". This would have been disputed by men in Eastern Canada during the 1820's. Nevertheless, Mackay has completed a task which was desperately needed and fulfilled the plea of *Sylva*, the house review of the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, which in 1948 lamented that: "Soon the old lumberjack will be forgotten. He has had his day. The rising generation will not know him. Canada owes much to the old-time lumberjack who was one of the most fearless pioneers of our land. May his memory never die."

Sandra Gillis
Parks Canada

Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement 1899-1919. A. ROSS McCORMACK. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977. 288 p. ill. ISBN 0 8020 5385 8 bd. \$15.00; ISBN 0 8020 6316 6 pa. \$4.95.

Fools and Wise Men. DAVID J. BERCUSON. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, ©1978. xvii, 300 p. 8 leaves of plates. ill. map, ports ISBN 0 07 082644 7 bd. \$12.95; ISBN 0 07 082645 5 pa. \$6.95.

Labour history in Canada has, until recently, been a field of historical research where the moments of crisis and a few prominent individuals attracted most of the attention. In part, this reflects a past preoccupation with other areas of history or may even reflect an element of institutional or class bias on the part of historians in Canada. The last two decades, however, have seen many talented historians trained to work in the field of labour history. Their publications are appearing in increasing number. Ross McCormack and David Bercuson's current studies are two of the best in recent labour history writing dealing with western Canada in the early decades of the twentieth-century. Together the two produce a much clearer interpretation of the complicated labour movement in western Canada between 1899 and the 1920's than had previously existed.