

sales by persons 'desperate under the repeated delays' (147) Still, Flanagan insists, the evidence of purported sales vitiates any culpability of Canada and Manitoba In Flanagan's view, Canada's recognition of the supposed purchaser of riverlots was equivalent to recognizing the original occupants, and Manitoba's legislation concerning 'half breed lands' was 'beneficial' to the nominal recipients of children's allotments To make such a case even minimally plausible, Flanagan must show that the sales of Métis lands were genuine contracts between consenting parties competent to enter into such agreements, and that there were reasonable returns to the purported vendors The documents filed at the land registry and Dominion Lands Office were certainly intended to create both impressions Except for the signatures by Métis vendors and subscribing witnesses (usually an X), 'they appear to be normal' (231) To maintain that there was wholesale fraud one must have a plausible basis for impugning the validity of the records of 'more than ten thousand separate transactions' We do We have the sworn testimony of witnesses including the chief justice of the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench to the effect that 'all sorts' of devices were resorted to and the prices indicated by the sales documents bore little relation to value received Because of that cloud, we have great difficulty in determining which sales were bogus and which were genuine That is the reality Flanagan ignores

The overall effect of Flanagan's anti-critical bias, his citation of documents in the wrong chronology, and his inflated claims for certain evidence while ignoring or distorting too much of the rest is a work that asserts more than it proves On that account, disinterested readers should remain acquainted with the truth as told from the plaintiff's side, as well as the version offered in evidence by Flanagan and the other historians retained by the Department of Justice<sup>1</sup>

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*Saskatchewan's Playground. A History of Prince Albert National Park* BILL WAISER  
Saskatoon Fifth House Publishers 1989 Pp x, 148, illus \$29.95

This book has become a model of park histories in the Canadian Parks Service (CPS) Most national parks have their biographies – some good, some not so good – but this is among the best Although commissioned by an arm's-length organization, Friends of Prince Albert National Park, it reflects also the strong historical capability of the Prairie Northern Regional Office of the CPS

<sup>1</sup> See D N Sprague, 'Dispossession vs Accommodation in Plaintiff vs Defendant Accounts of Metis Dispersal from Manitoba, 1870–1881,' *Prairie Forum* 16, 2 (autumn 1991) 137–55

and was one of the books that contributed to that office being awarded a regional history prize from the Canadian Historical Association in 1990.

For the most part, Professor Waiser succeeds admirably in describing the various and often competing interests behind the development of the park. Part of his success in this regard is due to his avoidance of a single narrative thread, building each chapter around a self-contained topic that cumulatively takes the reader through a chronology of the park's history. The first chapters, for instance, treat the topics of native land use and subsequent Euro-Canadian settlement and resource exploitation in the area. Chapter 3, 'The Political Art of Park Making,' shows how the park was established not from rational planning, but largely through the ability of Prince Albert enthusiasts to lobby their MP, William Lyon Mackenzie King. It helped that Mr King was also the prime minister, who was immensely grateful to the Prince Albert riding for accepting him on such short notice in 1925. Other chapters treat topics such as the early warden service, the development of the townsite of Waskesiu, Grey Owl, and wildlife policies.

A principal theme of the book is the tension that arose between the local perception of the park as a summer cottage resort and the federal government's desire to preserve the area as a national resource. This tension existed even before the park was created. The Prince Albert citizens lobbied for the park's establishment when the parks branch of the Department of the Interior sought a more geographically interesting park elsewhere in the province. The parks branch accepted PANP, however, and set out to establish it as part of a system of national parks. But despite efforts to promote national and international visitors, it remained primarily a local resort and the park never achieved the status of a Banff or a Jasper. Waiser argues that the predominance of this local constituency influenced the development of Waskesiu as a resort instead of as a supply base and jumping-off point for back-country adventures. This further aggravated the Prince Albert-Ottawa tension, with the locals endeavouring to entrench and enlarge their rights in the townsite, and the parks branch striving to curtail and even reduce local control.

In the postwar years this struggle became focused on the prolonged shack-tent controversy. During the 1930s locals had been allowed to erect tents with wooden floors and walls for the summer season. These became a distinctive feature of the Waskesiu resort and were generally referred to as shack tents. Although the shack tents had to be dismantled at the end of the summer, the lot could be rented for the entire season and reserved for the following summer. A growing number of families established proprietary rights over these lots and came to regard the townsite as theirs. After the war, increasing visitation made the shack-tent community congested and increased pressure for expansion, while a new consciousness in the parks branch sought to remove this perceived blight on the townsite. The conflict was never really

resolved, although a series of plans and compromises mitigated much of the crisis

Professor Waiser's history is an excellent account of the history of a national park and it provides a useful chapter in the larger, as yet largely unwritten, history of the Canadian Parks Service. In this larger sphere, however, the book has some flaws. The narrative structure of some of the chapters, particularly that of chapter 6, is anthropocentric, presenting park development from a purely human perspective. Thus, the situation where depression-related fiscal restraint curtailed development in the 1930s is seen as bad, while depression relief projects that allowed for man-made intrusions into the wilderness are seen as good. Another limitation is the failure to account for historical change in the policies of the parks branch. The views of the branch are presented as being largely static, when in reality there were profound changes taking place. Still, the author largely succeeds in accomplishing what he set out to do – that is, write a readable yet scholarly account of one of Canada's national parks. In this respect the book is both fish and fowl.

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*White Bears and Other Curiosities: The First 100 Years of the Royal British Columbia Museum*. PETER CORLEY-SMITH. Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 1989. Pp. 148, illus.

This publication is a worthy celebration to mark the centenary of the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria. Well researched and particularly well formatted for a popular audience, the illustrated text is sensitive to the needs of the non-specialist reader – for example, in photography and the treatment of specimens (22, 32–3), dioramas (38–9), and in changing styles of display cases and exhibits (100, 103, 110, 113). At the same time, enough detail is included to inform historians and scientists with more specific concerns. The museum's links with Emily Carr, the British Columbia artist, and W. Kaye Lamb, the future dominion archivist (94–8) are a case in point, as are the accounts of 'academic skirmishing' over the proper classification of alleged specimens of caribou, polar bears, and plumed egrets found in the province (50–1, 54–7, 72–3).

The text is divided into four parts chronologically ('A Growing Anxiety', 'Consolidation', 'Crossroads', and 'The Clifford Carl Years'), yet subdivided into so many titled sections as to obscure the thread of a main argument about the museum's history. As a result, the reader is left with little more than the march of time and the rise of progress as the driving forces of this historical account. Superimposed upon this basic chronology is an implicit periodization by director, so that the eras of John Fannin (1887–1903) and Francis Kermodé (1904–40), while not demarcated separately like that of