

Review

Author(s): Hugh A. Dempsey

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the 1840s. Tribes expected that the sharing relationship would be reciprocated when they faced tough times.

Indian rationales for acting as they did were often bewildering to the fur traders. When economic opportunity beckoned, the traders' Indian compatriots might mysteriously act in contradictory ways, or even abandon the argumentative trader and his goods, leaving him stranded in the middle of the wilderness. Indians marched to the tune of their own drum, what Thistle refers to as the "principle of least effort" and "Zen road to affluence."

Success in the fur trade in the early period lay in the trader's abilities to accept and adapt to the Indian way of life. In that regard, he notes that the French, often believed to enjoy good relations with the Indians, may have been overrated. They had a sense of cultural superiority and were overbearing and threatening towards Indians, an attitude which was not conducive to good relations.

Unable to maintain their advantage as middlemen, the Indians eventually became marginal to the fur trade. Thistle's use of an ethnohistorical approach and analysis involving anthropological theory on intergroup relations and culture change has enabled him to marshal an impressive argument against many of the existing stereotypes.

It has always been my suspicion that the history of that time and era was always told too much from the perspective of the fur trader, and that there was too little understanding about the lives and thoughts of the Indian majority.

Thistle hints about the differences between Indian and European perceptions of the fur trade. What one side saw as essentially a profit-making venture, the other appeared to see in terms of social relationships. More analysis of Cree religious and political traditions could have been obtained through oral testimony of Indian elders and would have provided a valuable addition to the material. Nonetheless, I found this book to be interesting and enjoyable reading.

Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

A. Blair Stonechild

Titley, E. Brian. *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986. viii + 245 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$19.95 cloth.

Duncan Campbell Scott was an unusual Canadian who was both a famous poet and the chief administrator of the nation's Department of Indian Affairs. Indians often were the subjects of his poetry and his admirers saw in it a warm and earnest compassion. As one literary critic noted, "His concern with Indians as wards of the Canadian government was sincere and deep; within the somewhat narrow limits set by government policy he laboured unceasingly for them" (p. 30).

Brian Titley proves the opposite was true. During the period from 1913 to 1932 while he was Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, Scott was a typical federal bureaucrat. His concerns were for fiscal restraint, de-

partmental efficiency, political expedience and, above all, the preservation and wielding of personal power.

Titley examines several aspects of Scott's role as the administrator of Indian affairs at a time when his wards were in the difficult transition from their own lifestyles to that of the culture of the white society. He looks at Scott in relationship to treaties, education, general administration, and Indian culture. He also examines Scott's reactions to the problems of the Six Nations' status and the land claims in British Columbia, as well as his attitude towards the budding political organizations. In just about every instance, Scott's interest in the Indians was secondary, if it existed at all. His primary concern was with the authority and management of his department in order to carry out its role as he perceived it. He seldom consulted with the Indians, for he believed he already knew what was best for them.

When discussing Scott's activities in negotiating adhesions to Treaty No. Nine in northern Ontario, Titley believes it is apparent that the official made no effort to fully inform the Indians about the implications of the pact. Later, under Scott's administration, further adhesions were signed, causing the author to conclude that "the glaring disparity between what was offered to the Indians and the potential wealth whites hoped to realize from the surrendered land makes it difficult to dispute that fraud of a high order was involved" (p. 73).

In the field of education, Scott was a strong supporter of the belief that the only way children would "progress" was to separate them completely from their homes and parents. Boarding and industrial schools were considered to be the best way of achieving this goal. As Titley observes: "Education was to be nothing less than an instrument of cultural annihilation, which would at once transform the Indians into an unskilled or semi-skilled workforce while forcing them into the mold of Anglo-Canadian identity" (p. 93).

In 1909, when Scott was appointed Superintendent of Education, the department's medical doctor reported on the high death rates in the schools, due primarily to tuberculosis. He recommended better ventilation, better food, and exercise for the students. However, Scott vetoed the life-saving programs, commenting that they would "add considerably to the appropriations" (p. 85).

His attitude towards Indian organizations was one of confrontation, believing their leaders to be troublemakers who were trying to interfere with the good administration of his department. At the same time, he strongly opposed the Iroquois who wanted to maintain their traditional leadership. Furthermore, he virtually ignored the rights of British Columbia Indians while he carried out a protracted battle with their provincial government. In the end, the settlement with the British Columbia authorities which he tried to effect shortly before his retirement was a compromise for the convenience of Ottawa, not for the good of the Indians.

One might argue that Scott's attitudes were in keeping with his times, and that critics of today have the advantage of hindsight. Yet it would be more accurate to say that Scott in many ways molded opinion of the period. In his powerful position as Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, he was virtually unopposed in formulating and developing Canada's policies towards its Indians.

While one might have expected a man who wrote poetry about Indians to be sensitive to them, it is apparent that Scott was able to keep his two

worlds separate. Scott the poet had no place in the Department of Indian Affairs.

Titley has made an excellent study of Scott's career. His ability to sift through masses of public records and to produce a book which deals personally with Scott as an individual is a tribute to his skill. While solid and authoritative, the book is readable and interesting. It is an important addition to a period of Indian history which has received very little attention in the past.

Glenbow Museum
Calgary, Alberta

Hugh A. Dempsey

Langdon, Steve J., ed. *Contemporary Alaska Native Economies*. Lanham, New York: University Press of America, 1986. ix + 183 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. \$25.25 cloth; \$11.75 paper.

When reviewing a collection of essays one is often perplexed as to how to go about discussing the entirety of the book. The problem is particularly compounded in this instance where there is no coherent theme or integrating essay tying the whole together. The main message of this collection of papers appears to be that the native people of Alaska want to maintain a link with their traditional subsistence economy. (By "native" apparently only Eskimo and Aleut are meant, as the Athabaskan, Tlingit and other native populations are almost totally ignored even though they represent a significant portion of the Alaska Native population.) A subsistence economy increasingly faced with problems of overharvesting, competition with non-natives, time commitments to wage labor, and changing technology presents the problem of how to integrate a subsistence-based economy with limited opportunity in the market economy, while faced with possible loss of control over land and resources, but this issue is largely ignored.

The collection is divided into two sections. The "macro" section, consisting of three essays, discusses certain aspects of economic development as it relates to the State of Alaska, Native Alaskans, and the role of subsistence in an area of limited economic opportunity.

The essay by Tuck and Huskey discusses development strategies for rural Alaska, an area where the costs of development of natural resources would generally outweigh any economic benefit that would accrue. They conclude that economic development, as it relates to rural Alaska, is not a well-defined concept. The special circumstances that rural Alaska presents means that alternative strategies to mainstream concepts of economic development must be sought.

The essay by Lonner discusses the lack of consensus over what exactly is meant by "subsistence". Often subsistence economies are valued by comparing their net worth to items purchased with cash through retail outlets. As Lonner points out, this ignores certain social aspects of the subsistence economy that are equally worthy of consideration. Lonner believes that certain theoretical discussions of subsistence economies elsewhere in the world are necessarily applicable to Alaska.

The third essay in the macro section, by editor Langdon, is entitled "Contradictions in Alaska Native Economy and Society". This essay again