

The entries in the diary are too brief to be good reading, but they are solid sources and testimony to a busy life given over to constructive work. The reader wishes Loehr had included, in their proper time sequence, the fully-fleshed articles and addresses that Mason mentions in the diary and that Loehr exploits for lucid, enlightening quotations.

Since the diary is often cryptic or elliptic, the editor has properly supplied footnotes and has written introductions to the book, the chapters, and the subchapters. They are essential to the book. In them Loehr fits David Mason and his work into the appropriate historical contexts of the past half-century. The one unsatisfying result is an unbalance between author and editor. More than half of the first hundred pages are written by the editor, and the reader begins to wonder if the editor should not have written a biography of Mason, using bits of the diary and the papers to illustrate the forest consultant's career. Several times Loehr makes a point that Mason's diary makes a few pages later, and the editor repeats himself several times.

The admirable work of the Forest Products History Foundation is furthered by this substantial and germinal volume, which will be referred to by students of economic history, western history, the NRA, lobbying, conservation, and progressive forest practices. The book takes a point of view that contrasts with that in Pinchot's *Breaking New Ground*. Since much of the book is laid in Oregon and adjacent states, it supplements the subchapter on lumbering in Winther's *The Great Northwest*.

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*Strange Empire: A Narrative of the Northwest.* By Joseph Kinsey Howard. Edited and with a tribute to the author by Bernard DeVoto. (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1952, pp. xii, 601. Index, bibliography, and 11 maps by Irvin Shupe. \$6.00.)

The perennially interesting Riel rebellions in Canada (1869, 1885) form the subject matter of this, the last published work from the busy pen of the late J. K. Howard, Montana's first citizen and a leading swordbearer in the cause of non-academic historiography.

In dealing with the career both of the Bois-Brulés (Métis) and their unfortunate hero, the author has had to treat not only the race problem, but such difficult matters as Canadian-American relations, Canadian and American civil politics, railroad imperialism, geographic determinism, and Roman Catholic Indian policy, to mention only a few. To combine so many elements into a single narrative of more than ordinary interest, as the author has done, was work for no prentice hand. Howard succeeded where others might have failed because his thirty years' experience with the problem permitted him to perceive the direct relationship between the race issue and these other factors.

The Métis were the offspring of French and Indian parents (with later national admixtures), who moved progressively west until they located in what became Lord Selkirk's grant in the central portion of the continent then known as Assiniboia, a large area roughly comparable in form to the present state of Texas, with the southern half penetrating Dakota and Minnesota. Considering the obvious importance of the region, the Métis were certain to become the catspaws of rival capitalists, land speculators, and international schemers on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel. When the American section was consolidated through statehood, and the northern area included within the Canadian confederation (1867), the practical autonomy of the native residents was destroyed, and the stage was set for high tragedy; for the Métis—being neither wholly Indian nor wholly White—were incapable of making themselves understood. After aggressive Canadian politicians found themselves faced with armed resistance in 1869, promises of relief were made and broken, leading to further western migrations and a last stand in Saskatchewan in 1885. Riel, the ill-fated leader of both of these uprisings, combined in one short lifetime the virtues and follies of the American Indian everywhere, and his death on the gallows furnishes a fitting footnote to the infamous record of Indian-White relationships in the nineteenth century. That he should have been of both Indian and White ancestry himself is a fine piece of historical irony.

Because of Howard's demonstrated literary skill with the so-called popular style, now much in vogue among non-

professional historians, it is safe to predict that this book will adorn many American and Canadian homes, as it no doubt deserves to do; but whether the historical analyses contained in it measure up to the artistry of composition is a more difficult matter to assess.

We may agree that Howard's explanation for both rebellions—the high-handed Canadian attempt to apply alien land tenure systems—is the proper one. Riel himself is treated sympathetically, but realistically, we believe, and the diagnosis of his mental ailment as paranoid schizophrenia is as reasonable an explanation as could be made after so many years (323-24). The passage in which this view is advanced parallels in an interesting way the diagnosis by another historian of an earlier fanatical racial champion (Allan Nevins, *The Emergence of Lincoln*, II, 9-10, 93); and it was sure instinct that led American journalists, and Howard as well, to call Riel "the John Brown of the Half-Breeds."

The attack on the Catholic priests surrounding Riel is very strong, but appears justified on the strength of evidence advanced in its favor, in spite of the author's admitted friendship for the aboriginal races. Vigorous assaults on the policy of the Confederation government, and especially on Sir John Macdonald, the first prime minister of Canada, likewise appear to be just.

These virtues, and many others too numerous to detail in a short review, are unfortunately not sufficient to obscure a serious historical misjudgment. In one important field Howard appears to have been carried away by his literary powers. The so-called "race for the west" (the northwest part of the North American continent) between Canada and America is badly explained, if at all. The author quotes various Canadian and American politicians (including Hamilton Fish) to show that an American annexationist movement was in the air during the initial troubles with Riel in 1869. Howard chooses to ignore the fact that at this very time Fish was laying the groundwork for the Washington Treaty of 1871 and incidentally closing his accounts with Charles Sumner, the most dangerous Anglo-baiter of the day. Even the reckless Grant refused to lift a finger to afford effective succor of the Métis. Still more emphasis is placed on the free-booters of the frontier and their cal-

culating leaders, yet Howard has to acknowledge that the chief agent in the affair was actually opposed to forceable annexation by the United States. On the Canadian side of the line the authorities seem to have been much more concerned with the Fenians than with American Métis sympathizers. See C. P. Stacey, "The Myth of the Unguarded Frontier of 1815-1871," *American Historical Review*, LVI (October, 1950), 1-18. As for the activities of certain jingo journalists in Minnesota, and various agitators elsewhere, Howard would have done well to follow the caution of Paul F. Sharp, who dealt with a similar situation arising three decades later. ("When Our West Moved North," *American Historical Review*, LV, January, 1950, 286-300.) The map supplied by DeVoto, depicting a proposed aggrandizement by the United States of the whole territory west of the ninetyieth meridian as "Yankee Dream" without an interposing article to show how many shared in it, is in the worst taste (p. 79), but one must admit that it merely follows the logic of Howard's arguments.

Indeed, the haste to find new "empires" in western studies nowadays can only be explained as an aberration of the litterateurs. The Métis in 1869 were willing to settle for simple autonomy within the Confederation, as Howard admits, and in 1885 they attempted nothing more than a military demonstration in order to force the Canadian government to settle longstanding grievances. The frequent misuse of such terms as "geopolitician" serves to emphasize the fuzzy thinking on such matters. We feel constrained to add that the "artificiality" of the international boundary between Lake of the Woods and the Rocky Mountains will hardly come as news to many readers of this book, and Howard's continuous harping on it gives his work an amateurish tinge that in fact it does not deserve.

Howard was guilty of the same kind of errors in his first book (*Montana, High, Wide and Handsome*), although DeVoto is unacquainted with this fact; but in the present case the blame is hard to fix. *Strange Empire* was incomplete when Howard died, and DeVoto finished the work. The manuscript was in such a state that no footnotes could be added, thus we cannot know if the author himself might not have toned-down his narrative. A bibliography was

added by two friends, but we are not told whether it was Howard's own. A curiously-worded acknowledgement, presumably by Howard, even raises the question of whether he was proficient in the French language. Undoubtedly he was, but proof is missing (pp. 587-88).

On the whole, the book is quite worthwhile to those who have some knowledge of the facts and are cautious in their reading, but with the general public, save for its excellent treatment of Indian grievances and the moving characterization of Riel, *Strange Empire* is apt to inculcate false notions which may require some time to efface.

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*The New Dictionary of American History.* By Michael Martin and Leonard Gelber (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952, pp. vi, 695. \$10.00.)

To write a one-volume "dictionary" of American history is obviously a forbidding task, and one which appears physically quite impossible when one considers the enormity of the material from which selections must be made. Yet the authors of this volume seem to have made a distinctive contribution in the type of book which they have produced. They have attempted to provide a ready reference source of the subject matter of American history. Significant developments in economics, finance and banking, labor relations, constitutional and administrative law, social welfare, literature, industry, science, religion, commerce, international relations, foreign policy, education, and the arts, as well as the traditional political and military events, are covered.

Naturally, the selection and emphasis of the items included must have been serious problems which the authors faced. One might not agree entirely on what should be included and what should be omitted, but this reviewer feels that this material has been handled quite adequately, recognizing the physical limitations of a work of this kind. Some topics included would seem very elementary to the teacher and scholar, but they may be very helpful in enabling the student and layman to pinpoint quickly the object of search, whether it be a name, place, event, catch-phrase, or any other item in the field.