

Richard Somerset Mackie. *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793–1843*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997, 440 pp.

Review by Carl Beal, Department of Indian Studies, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.

Richard Mackie's latest book attempts to fill a void he perceives in the history of commercial policy and historical geography. The Columbia Department of the Hudson's Bay Company is relatively untouched in the literature, with historical geographers having covered Rupert's Land to the east, the Russian trade to the north and American trade to the south. Histories of the B.C. region have not covered the topics of commercial geography and commercial history. (A notable exception is E.E. Rich's *Hudson's Bay Company, 1670–1870*, especially book 5.) Mackie covers his selected topic in an engaging, highly readable, and beautifully illustrated book. These qualities should not belie the scholarly effort; more than 20 percent of the material between the covers includes notes and references. Mr. Mackie draws on the correspondence of the companies involved in this story, HBC Governor George Simpson's correspondence and journals, as well as on the extensive materials of the HBC archives, and the important correspondence and historical research gathered in the volumes of the Hudson Bay Record Society.

The subtitle of the work is misleading. This is not a fur trade history, certainly not as that field has developed over the past quarter-century. The work is a history of commercial rivalry and policies in the Northwest, focusing on the HBC after 1821. There is scant attention to the role of First Nations as partners and participants in the fur trade and as players in the unfolding of commercial rivalry and policy. The material on the role of the First Nations peoples is largely partitioned into a final chapter. In delimiting the scope of his work, Mackie specifically notes that the niche for this book is distinct from the literature on Native-European relations. The final chapter, "Native Foundation of Trade and Labour," appears as an afterthought. It provides no new insights. While noting Native involvement as trappers, provisioners and labourers in the trade, no attention is paid to how the articulation of the Euro-Canadian capitalist trade and Indigenous societies shaped the trade itself. This is not only a commercial history, but one deeply steeped in the modern tradition, making no effort or pretense to engage with the methodological and theoretical insights on the nature of the fur trade which constitute a massive literature over the past twenty-five years.

Mackie credits H.A. Innis's work, notably *The Fur Trade in Canada*, with delineating a distinctive set of commercial strategies worked out to the east of the Rockies. Mackie aims to apply these to the study of the HBC on the Pacific coast. But Mackie is not a mere disciple; he develops a distinctive, and controversial, thesis. He suggests that the application of these strategies on the Pacific coast led to the development of a uniquely diversified economic base. The diversification of the economic base was led, in Rupert's Land, by the necessity to deal with the high overhead costs of provisioning an extensive supply network. On the Pacific coast, however, Mackie proposes that, from as early as 1793, in the musings of Alexander MacKenzie, and again in 1824–25, during Governor George Simpson's first tour of the district, a new commercial strategy was envisioned that included a diversified economy. The combination of abundant resources, coastal and maritime transport, and mild climate created an opportunity for economic diversification and potential for settlement quite different than the circumstances found along the river waterways of Rupert's Land. Mackie hints that the diversification of the economy, and the accompanying diversity of skills in the labour force, may have prefigured the features of the late 19th- (and even 20th-) century economy of British Columbia, not to mention B.C.'s unique vision of itself a province looking westward from across the mountains. Certainly, these developments preceded any significant settlement of the region, and it will be an intriguing project for some researcher to trace the development patterns from 1843 to the turn of the century to find the nature and extent of any enduring links from the past.

Mackie makes a detailed examination of the HBC's subsidiary enterprises such as salmon and lumber. He does not claim that these diversified activities overshadowed the trade in furs. However, by placing an emphasis on these commodities in the latter half of the book, he puts these activities in sharp relief and provides a new perspective on the scope of the HBC's commercial activities in the Columbia District. The book deals mainly with the period from 1821 (the date of the merger of HBC and the North West Company). The first two chapters quickly set the stage for the arrival of George Simpson in the 1820s, and the bulk of the text is devoted to the commercial strategies and policies of HBC. Chapters 3 through 11 trace the HBC policies in dealing with its rivals and developing the coastal trade. As the HBC sought to develop its commercial trade into the Pacific, and into Alaska and California, new exports such as salmon and lumber were developed. These did not become immediately profitable, but Mackie shows how the HBC worked to develop the trade, eventually developing offices in Oahu to manage the trade in the area.

Mackie's thesis is at odds with that of E.E. Rich, the noted biographer of the HBC. Rich gave little attention to salmon and lumber. These figured mainly in connection with the HBC's rivalry with American and Russian interests and struggle for domination of the coastal trade in furs. Rich's work indicates that the economic potential for these goods was generally unappreciated, and small in any event, so that plans for their development were regularly put aside due to other compelling concerns, or due to weak markets in the Pacific. Mackie succeeds in showing that HBC established a regional export economy in the 1830s, with destinations along the Pacific coast (California and Alaska), and Oahu. Climatic conditions favoured an abundance of farm products, the surplus above provisioning needs finding its way into the market. The HBC established an agricultural and livestock-raising subsidiary; developed coal resources for steamship power; and formed other economic ventures along the coast. Mackie shows that, as fur trade resources diminished (although remaining dominant), HBC profits were supported by sales of other products, such as lumber and salmon.

This is a welcome addition to the literature of commercial policy and history of the Pacific west coast. Its chief weakness lies in its dated and inadequate treatment of the role of Native participants in the trade. It is principally a history of commercial rivalry and policy, and can be duly appreciated once it is accepted that this alone is its concern.

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Joanne Tompkins. *Teaching in a Cold and Windy Place*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998, 153 pp.

Review by Maisie Cardinal, University of British Columbia.

In my initial evaluation of *Teaching in a Cold and Windy Place*, I found the book to be an insightful and wonderful reference for administrators and teachers who wish to teach in an Aboriginal community, whether it be Inuit, First Nation or Metis, or at a school for a visible minority.

While I was reading this book, I felt that this life experience story could have taken place in any northern First Nation reservation, Metis colony or Inuit community where there is poverty and despair, and resulting poor school attendance. There is a lack of educational continuity for the Inuit children and young people because the educators only stay two years in the community. Tompkins believes that she can make a difference and therefore makes the conscious effort to learn about the Inuit culture and become principal of their school. Other strategies that she employed were hiring Inuit educators, developing a more child-centred curriculum, and developing