

Indian-European relations in Canada, like Aboriginal-European relations in Australia, have until recently been much neglected by historians.

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*Reluctant Mission: the Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea, 1891-1942.* By David Wetherell. University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1977. xiv, 430 pp., maps, illustrated. Aust. price: \$14.95.

*Grass Huts and Warehouses: Pacific Beach Communities in the Nineteenth Century.* By Caroline Ralston. Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977. xii, 268 pp., maps, plates, endpapers. Aust. price: \$10.95.

IT IS a truism among publishers that theses are not books, and that publishers do not publish theses — only books. Many a thesis writer knows the shock of having a manuscript that impressed an examiner, and earned a degree, rejected by a publisher or returned with a demand for extensive re-writing. Nevertheless, it is also true that theses can be made into good books. Those under consideration are cases in point. Wetherell's, in fact, draws on both a masters and a doctoral thesis. Both his and Ralston's books derive from work done in the Pacific History department of the Australian National University. They are worthy additions to the now extensive volume of monographs from the same source by people who were given scholarships and guided by the late J.W. Davidson, foundation professor of the department. In their careful scholarship and island-centredness and in the personal interest of the authors in their subjects they reflect his influence.

Caroline Ralston's book stems from her wish to follow up a line of enquiry discussed by H.E. Maude, Davidson's chief lieutenant, in his well-known study of 'Beachcombers and Castaways'. She is concerned to trace and compare the growth of European settler communities in the Pacific Islands. At one end of the time scale there were a few beachcombers, individuals who, to ensure their survival, had of necessity to come to terms with their island hosts. At the other, with the increase in European numbers, the 'beach communities', so-called from their location on the shoreline of the more frequented harbours, were turning into European-dominated urban centres, with little place for the islanders. The communities discussed here are those that developed at Honolulu, Levuka, Apia, Papeete and Kororareka. Although they were widely separated and developed at different times and rates the character and growth pattern of these settlements were markedly similar. They shared, for instance, common features such as the difficulty of maintaining law and order, the boredom and tension endemic in small foreign enclaves, and the steady deterioration of the Europeans' relations with the native inhabitants.

Although much of Dr Ralston's material is not new and she has drawn heavily on published sources, her book is a useful contribution to Pacific scholarship. For in making clear the links and similarities between the beach communities she has provided a synthesis, pan-Pacific in its scope, which

highlights a major theme in the history of the European penetration of the islands. It is a book that will be welcomed by any teacher of nineteenth-century Pacific history.

Wetherell's book, in contrast, is a more specialized yet grander affair – and its faults are more obvious. Organisation is not Wetherell's strong point. For instance, although dealing primarily with the work of the Anglican missionaries in Papua New Guinea, he also deals to a confusingly large extent with the neighbouring Methodist and Kwato (L.M.S.) missions. A further element of confusion arises from his rather jerky handling of time, from the thematic rather than sequential narrative form in which Wetherell has told his story. Yet, like Michelangelo's 'Moses', with a chip out of its leg, *Reluctant Mission* rises magnificently above its blemishes. It is based on very extensive research, is rich in anecdote and characterization, carries a strong sense of place and is presented in clear lively prose. The following passage illustrates some of these qualities:

It took the mission schooner a fortnight, when seas were rough and head winds strong, to sail the 350 kilometres between Dogura and the Mamba River. The visitor to the station at Manau on the Mamba mouth came ashore on the mud flats. Crossing the flats to a creek known as Duvira, he reached down into the slime, felt for a chain, and pulled a creaking punt across Duvira Creek with the bubbles plopping behind as a reminder that the creek harboured crocodiles. The punt system had been installed after the station of All Saints was established in 1921. Next there was a climb of forty metres up a path lined with the houses of Papuan workers, and at the top of the hill a mission house came into view which gave fair warning of the eccentricities it accommodated. On its walls were medieval prints and carvings; massive black sea chests stood at the side, and on the open verandah, a brass-bound 'lazy Susan'. The mission priest, a small bespectacled man wearing home made clothes, was Romney Gill. (p.78)

Gill was a descendant of the L.M.S. missionaries George and William Gill and a brother of Eric Gill, the craftsman-artist who was a noted prophet of anti-industrialism in the tradition of William Morris.

It is a measure of Wetherell's grasp of his subject that he is able to present rounded accounts of both the 'missionary' and 'indigenous' dimensions of it. Himself a son of the vicarage, he presents with detail and subtlety the quality of the Anglicanism, mainly Anglo-Catholic, which was brought to Papua New Guinea; and which often bedevilled the mission's relations with its non-Conformist neighbours and reinforced the parsimony of the predominantly Evangelical-to-Broad Church Anglicanism of Australia, to which it had to look for support. Similarly for the non-European side, topics such as the role of Pacific Islands teachers, the nature and process of conversion, and the intellectual and social impact of missionary activity are all dealt with in new and illuminating detail. *Reluctant Mission* is an admirable complement to David Hilliard's history of the Anglican mission in the Solomons and New Hebrides, *God's Gentlemen*, which is published by the same press.

Also deserving comment are the quality of production of *Reluctant Mission* and its generosity of illustration. These are hallmarks of the University of Queensland Press, which is currently establishing itself as the leading university press in Australasia. As for Dr Ralston's book (which incidentally has a particularly fine lithograph of a lynching in Samoa in 1877), it is pleasing to see that it is not marred by any carelessness in

production. Not all recent publications of the Australian National University Press have been so blessed. At the same time it is to be regretted that there is no indication given in the notes, placed at the back of the book, as to what page they refer. For ease of reference such indication should be *de rigueur* for all academic publications.

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*The Fiji Indians: Challenge to European Dominance 1920-46.* By K.L. Gillion. Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977. x, 231 pp. Aust. price: \$9.95.

THE AUTHOR views the history of Fiji Indians, 1920-46, as a challenge to European dominance. He fails to explain either the nature of the dominance or the challenge. He does not state whether the dominance was one asserted by officials or settlers or both. As for the challenge, it was a myth created by Europeans. Fiji Indians saw their efforts, 1920-46, in more positive terms: as attempts to find acceptance as citizens in a new and permanent home. They sought neither to displace Europeans nor Fijians; they could not have, since they lacked (and still do) the skills to govern alone. By 1921, 44.2 per cent of the Fiji Indians were Fiji-born and by 1936, 71.7 per cent. These, with their Indian-born parents, desired the restoration of their *izzat* (self-respect) lost through *girmity* (indenture). Gillion is aware of this and recognizes 'there were different paths to *izzat*' (p. 130), but he does not explore them. Had he done so, he might have produced a lasting work of history.

We are taken through the main events in Fiji Indian history, 1920-46, seen overwhelmingly through official records interspersed with references from the *Fiji Times*, the voice of European settlers for most of its history, and Colonial Sugar Refinery (C.S.R.) files; occasionally other sources intrude into the footnotes. The data leads, the historian merely transcribes; and the prejudices of the sources are scattered through the pages. Indians, we are told, were 'vulnerable to the demagogue' (p. 19); in the 1920 strike 'bands of hooligans intimidated' (p. 27); there were Indians who were 'extremist leaders' (p. 144), 'bully-boys' (p. 167) and 'hot-heads' (p. 167); often these words have been heard in Fiji, but not from scholars! Those writing history should evaluate their sources and probe beneath the surface. Why are some branded demagogues? Why are so-called demagogues successful? By what criteria are some branded hot-heads, bully-boys or extremists? Gillion fails to ask and answer these questions.

Then there are generalizations made without evidence. Of Manilal, Gillion contends, 'he emerges from the record as touchy, resentful, underhand, and careless with truth' (p. 21). What record we are not told! He had a tendency to exaggerate; he employed two indentured labourers, and he was sensitive to the racism of colonial rule. These do not warrant outright condemnation. Those Indians who knew him admired him and to this day Indians speak with