

BOOK REVIEWS

The North West Company. By GORDON CHARLES DAVIDSON, Ph. D.
(Berkeley: University of California Press. 1918. Pp. 349.)

This is the most important book, so far as the Pacific Northwest is concerned, yet published by the University of California Press. In giving expression to his grateful acknowledgements, the author includes the Order of the Native Sons of the Golden West, "whose generosity made possible his year of study in England." The book shows that he made good use of that year, and now the rest of us must also be grateful to those generous Native Sons. The editors of the series, in which this volume is VII., Professors H. Morse Stephens and Herbert E. Bolton, add a note to the effect that while the book was in press Dr. Davidson was in service as a lieutenant in the First Canadian Mounted Rifles, saying: "This absolves him from responsibility for any shortcomings of editorial supervision which the book may show."

The author says: "A complete history of the North West Company is lacking. Chapters concerning its activities have appeared in books dealing with the Hudson's Bay Company and in similar publications. Interest has been evinced chiefly in connection with the work of a few explorers like Alexander Mackenzie, with the Astoria incident, and, above all, with the events arising from the settlement commenced by Lord Selkirk on the Red River in territory which now forms part of the province of Manitoba." He hopes his book will help on the study. "But the final word," says he, "will not be said until the business papers of the company come to light, providing they are still in existence." He was unable to find those papers. He thinks there may be some of those papers in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company in London, but he "was unable to obtain permission to enter those preserves."

The North West Company was organized in the winter of 1783-1784, and was merged with the older Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. In those years it reached northward to the Arctic and westward to the Pacific. Its fur hunters and traders were alert, aggressive and successful. Its geographers and officers were courageous and efficient.

Careless writers have frequently referred to the work of these men as if they were of the Hudson's Bay Company. One reason for this is the fact that the missionaries and first settlers came subsequent to 1821, and after the name of the North West Company had been

merged into that of the older concern. No Hudson's Bay Company work was done in the Pacific Northwest prior to 1821. All was done by the rival North West Company,—Mackenzie's first trip to the Pacific in 1793, Fraser's discovery of the river that bears his name, David Thompson's great geographical work on the Columbia and other rivers, the purchase of the American fort Astoria, and its change of name to Fort George, and many other transactions of historical importance.

Dr. Davidson has rendered a real service by gathering this material into a good usable book. Besides a full general index, he has added an index of geographical names. There are six valuable maps and notations and nineteen appendices. These give important documents in full or in part. One of the most interesting to readers of this *Quarterly* is "Bill of Sale of Astoria to the North West Company," pages 293-296. It was the finding of that document in the Public Record Office at London, where it had been sent by a former governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, which encourages Dr. Davidson in the belief that other North West Company papers may yet be made accessible to students of history. EDMOND S. MEANY.

Catalogue of Materials in the Archivo General de Indias for the History of the Pacific Coast and the American Southwest. By CHARLES E. CHAPMAN, Ph. D. (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1919. Pp. 755.)

The industrious and painstaking author has listed and prepared annotations for 6257 documents here catalogued. The first thirty pages are devoted to an introduction describing the Archivo General de Indias, the Native Sons' Fellowships which made possible the two years of searching in Spain by Dr. Chapman, and plans and rules of the work.

While the title correctly indicates that the greatest value is for the history of the American Southwest, the Northwest is also represented. Dr. Chapman says, page 39, that he had hoped to "find additional materials about foreign voyages to the Northwest Coast in the years covered by the correspondence, 1785 to 1795, and, in particular, some further light on the Nootka affair. In this respect, the *legajos* were disappointing." However, the index shows ninety-one references to the Northwest Coast, including Nootka.

The book is not for the general reader. It is a working tool for historians, who will not cease to be grateful to Dr. Chapman, to the