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**Review of *Swords and Ploughshares: War and Agriculture in  
Western Canada* by R. C. Macleod**

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**Swords and Ploughshares: War and Agriculture in Western Canada.** R. C. Macleod, ed. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1993. Maps, charts and references. xv + 262 pp. \$19.95 paper.

The title of this collection of articles may suggest to some readers that its subject, in the tradition of John Thompson's *Harvests of War*, is the impact of war on prairie agriculture. This is not the case, though, since the articles are not confined to prairie subjects and since most of them are not directly related to both "war" and "agriculture"—indeed, some have only a tenuous connec-

tion with either. However, what this rather oddly matched collection lacks in focus it makes up in other ways, presenting a number of pieces which address important issues and which deserve a wide readership.

The first section, "Western Canada in the Era of the Rebellion," contains eight articles dealing with a wide range of topics. Donald Smith focuses on the *St. Catherine's Milling Case*, famous dispute that pitted Canadian Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and his centrist view of the federation against Ontario Premier Oliver Mowat and his hopes and ambitions for the province of Ontario. It was also a watershed in the development (if that is the correct word) of Aboriginal rights in Canada. It is this aspect of the case that has attracted the most attention in recent years and is the focus of Smith's consideration of the case. He explores the reasons why Judge Boyd, who heard the case in first instance and whose statements on Aboriginal rights still echo today, may have reached the decision he did.

John Gilpin examines the Settlers' Rights Movement in the Edmonton district during the years leading up to 1885. Concerns there were similar in many respects to those which are believed to have provoked the Saskatchewan Rebellion, but in the Edmonton district a peaceful settlement was reached.

Other articles in this section include an autobiographical essay on George Stanley, a preliminary report on the excavation of a Métis settlement in Alberta, law and order in British Columbia, an assessment of Canadian drama centered on the 1885 Rebellion, the career of the noted Indian Affairs administrator Hayter Reed, and the early formation of an "urban system" in southern Manitoba.

The second section, "The Agricultural Experience in Western Canada," contains three articles—the strongest in the collection. David Smith assesses Jimmy Gardiner, the prominent Saskatchewan Liberal, as a leader of the agricultural community.

J. E. Rea examines the aftermath of the 1921 election when the Progressives briefly challenged the traditional party structure in Canada. Based on the papers of T. A. Crerar, leader of the Progressives during this crucial period, Rea provides a persuasive analysis of the negotiations between the Liberals and the Progressives following the election, the decision of the Progressives not to become the official opposition, and Crerar's resignation as leader of the Progressives, and must cause historians to significantly alter the conventional account of the demise of the Progressives.

In a provocative essay, Gerhard Ens explores the nature of Métis agriculture at Red River, suggesting that beginning in the 1840s some Métis chose, for economic and cultural reasons, to emphasize the hunt rather than

“peasant agriculture.” This choice proved to be “an unsuccessful strategy for adaptation to the new order in the west after 1870” (p. 256), and helps to explain why some Métis left the region so quickly after 1870.

It must be admitted that this collection is a bit of a miscellany, but that is not to say that it has no merit, however, the lack of a unifying theme will render the collection accessible primarily to readers already conversant with the history of western Canada. **Ken Leyton-Brown**, *Department of History, University of Regina*.