

and its environs. Because of the way many readers are likely to use this book, the index is very disappointing. To find the pages on which Fred Quilt is discussed readers need to scan the long entry under “people,” and to learn about the Thompson Land and Cattle Company they have to consult “stakeholders.” Readers prescient enough to look under “aboriginals” to find “Sarich Commission” will then be directed to the non-existent entry for “Cariboo-Chilcotin Justice Inquiry.” Nevertheless, this well-deserved winner of the Canadian Historical Association’s Clio Prize for British Columbia provides us with a very valuable and nuanced look at the history, and the historical memory, of the Chilcotin plateau.

Theodore Binnema
University of Northern British Columbia

Gerald Hunt and David Rayside, eds., *Equity, Diversity, and Canadian Labour* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

Labour activists and historians have debated for many years over whether or not to focus on the divisions among workers and unionists or on the elements that unite those in the labour movement. We might characterize this debate as one that pits “splitters” against “unifiers.” More recent scholarly writing in this field tends to come down more on the “splitter” side of the equation. In their edited work, *Equity, Diversity, and Canadian Labour*, Gerald Hunt and David Rayside attempt to deal with the problem of how to create a more united, equal, and, ultimately, stronger labour movement that will welcome workers from a diverse array of backgrounds. Hunt and Rayside’s text is of a piece with earlier works such as Linda Briskin and Lynda Yanz’s *Union Sisters* and Briskin and Patricia McDermott’s *Women Challenging Unions*; it also provides a good companion to recent historical works like David Goutor’s *Guarding the Gates*. On the whole, the book is a strong addition to an area that needs more study and it is a text that will be read by academics and activists alike, particularly those who struggle with issues surrounding equity and diversity in unions.

The editors have assembled a strong group of scholars who offer a variety of perspectives on the labour movement and its engagement with marginalized workers: race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability are the most prominent “sites” of discrimination that are interrogated here. Of particular note for historians, Julie White’s selection “Looking Back,” presents an overview of the history of racial, gender, and gay and lesbian oppression from the 1890s to the 1980s. In keeping with the text’s overall thrust, White suggests that, although unions did not always take a stance in favour of equality, they generally have moved in a progressive direction on these issues over the course of recent history (46-47).

In general, the tone of the book is pro-union and optimistic both about the future of equality within unions and the prospect for future union activism and radicalism. Anne Forrest suggests that unions need to do more to ensure pay equity for part-time and seasonal employees, many of whom are women (72). Judy Haiven, in her discussion of a pay equity case in the Saskatoon Catholic School Board in the mid-1990s, implies that splitting women workers into separate union locals might be a step toward wage parity between men and women and a means toward challenging sexism in the union movement (95-97). Gerald Hunt and Jonathan Eaton chronicle organized labour's engagement with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender workers' rights. They argue that, while much work still remains for the future, unions have become progressively more supportive of the rights of gay, lesbian, and bisexual workers (130). David Rayside and Fraser Valentine and Tania das Gupta deal, respectively, with the labour movement and its attitudes toward disabled and racial minority workers. Reflecting the text's overall perspective, both chapters argue that although significant strides have been made toward a more progressive agenda, unions have not yet reached the goal of representing all workers equally, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or ability (178-179, 182).

The text's optimistic tone provides a healthy antidote to the cynicism and disillusionment that dominates much recent writing on labour's present state. It is refreshing to see scholars who express strong support for the goals of the labour movement and its agenda for equality. Linda Briskin's afterword to the text offers a useful blueprint for future activism and radicalism.

There are two fairly small issues with the text. First, it is unfortunate that the text focuses heavily on labour struggles through official, legal channels. It might be argued that unions have achieved more for marginalized workers by undertaking illegal actions in some circumstances: the various sit-down strikes of the 1930s, which involved many immigrant workers and women, immediately spring to mind. Second, in the book's introduction, Gerald Hunt notes that 30 per cent of the Canadian work force belongs to a union (3); he argues that this is a testament to the relative strength of the union movement in Canada. While this may be true from a comparative perspective, 30 per cent seems like a relatively small number of unionists. In keeping with this, the text might have spent more time considering the strong neo-liberal trend in Canada and its successful attacks on unions and, in particular, on struggles for diversity within and outside the labour movement. These quibbles aside, this is a fine book, one that will provide essential reading for left historians and for all of those who care about unions in Canada and their fight for equality.

Brian Thorn
University of Toronto, Scarborough